# THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN LEARNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Approved by Tom Lo Guidice

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# THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN LEARNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract**

# THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN LEARNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Everyone has areas of professional practice that they feel comfortable with in their work.. Conversely, there are particular areas where an individual may lack knowledge and skills. The traditional teacher-centered method of continuing education involves attending coursework and conferences, plus informal learning opportunities situated in the work place. It is likely a person will attend those in areas where they are competent but may avoid or neglect those in areas which may be an educational challenge. Reflection, with an educational mentor (an educational appraisal), can lead to identification of learning needs or career development needs and should form the basis for a Professional Development Plan.

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# Chapter 1

# <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Professional development refers to the skills and knowledge attained for both personal growth and career advancement by individuals in their professional roles.  It is the professional progress that an individual achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and systematically examining one's profession.  Professional development includes formal experience such as college degrees, participation in professional conferences and workshops; as well as informal experience such as reading professional publications.  A wide variety of people, such as military personnel, health care professionals, attorneys, accountants, engineers, and school teachers engage in professional development.

Adult learners have the responsibility for organizing their own learning and writing a Professional Development Plan (PDP) or action plan and this should be the basis of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).  PDPs are about meeting individual needs, but also about meeting the needs of the workplace.

## Statement of the Problem

What is the role of the Professional Development Plan in individual responsibility for learning and career advancement?

## Significance of the Problem

At the heart of professional development is the individual's interest in lifelong learning and increasing one's own skills and knowledge. Current professional development efforts at national, state, and local levels are fragmented at best. Professional development opportunities can range from a single workshop to a semester-long academic course. Knowing precisely what one wants to achieve makes clear what to concentrate and improve on, and putting it in the form of a Professional Development Plan prioritizes that goal.

## Assumptions

A review of the literature was the first step in developing a definition of professional development plan. This review led to the following assumptions about professional development:

1. The term professional development includes all types of learning opportunities, from formal coursework that results in college credit or degrees, to less intensive and more informal opportunities situated in practice.

2. The workforce consists of professionals widely diverse in occupations, roles, and organizational affiliations. Qualifications, education, and experience are also varied along with racial, ethnic, socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic characteristics.

3. The role of learners in professional development is to actively engage in learning experiences that lead to the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions and the application of this knowledge in practice.

4. The role of providers in professional development is to organize and facilitate learning experiences that respond directly to problems in practice.

## Definitions of Terms

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can be defined as facilitated teaching and learning experiences designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice.

A Professional Development Plan (PDP) is defined as a set of guidelines used to oversee, improve, or redirect a career. A PDP is also called a Personal Development Plan in some fields and a Personal Professional Development Plan in others. Individual employees create a PDP to improve their work methods, guide their educational development, and to focus their career goals. A PDP might also be used by an organization to ensure that the right resources and strategies are in place to efficiently achieve the organizational goals. This paper will concentrate on the individual Professional Development Plan and not the organizational PDP.

Andragogy is defined by Knowles (1970) as the art and science of helping adults learn. It is an approach to learning and a system of concepts that is focused on the learner. In contrast to pedagogy, which is the didactic, traditional, and teacher-directed approach to instruction; andragogy is learner-centered with the learner participating in the planning of the experience, by

determining what needs to be learned, formulating the learning objectives, designing the learning plan, and evaluating their learning.  The teacher is the facilitator of learning rather than what we have historically viewed as the all-knowing dispenser of knowledge utilizing a preset curriculum with rigid guidelines (Knowles, 1984).

## Delimitations of the Research

The research was conducted in and through the Karmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Primary searches were conducted via the Internet through EBSCO Host with ERIC, Wilson Web, and Academic Search Elite as the primary sources.  Key search topics included "PDP", "professional development", "adult education", "portfolio", "continuing education", and "mentoring".

## Method of the Approach

A review of the literature related to research, studies and anecdotal evidence of career development was conducted.  The findings are summarized, characteristics are described, and recommendations made.

# Chapter 2

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Overview of Professional Development

Economic growth is tied to a skilled labor pool.  The personal acquisition of knowledge in the workplace has become a requirement in today's global market to obtain and retain skilled jobs.  Careers requiring low skill levels have declined significantly in recent years.  Competition for new jobs now pit person against machine, as advances in technology eliminate the need for lower skilled employees.

Globalization requires successful organizations to use flat network modes, in which jobs are performed by teams of employees having broad knowledge of the organization.  Traditional career ladders are rapidly disappearing as reorganizations lead to flatter structures (O'Hair, Friedrich, Dixon, 2011).

There is an ever-increasing need for the individual employee to continue learning, to keep up with the rapid growth in knowledge and the rate of change of our workplace environments.  Employees must plan for their own future and not rely on their employers; they must take the initiative to seek out their own training to remain competitive in the labor pool.  Active involvement in one's own career development within the organization creates a feeling of ownership, fostering a greater commitment toward success (Mondy & Noe 2005).

Career development in organizations today hardly keeps up with the new technology and with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job and effectively accomplish objectives in the global economy.  Individual employees have to step up and take charge of the development

of their own learning and careers, to plan their future.  When there is a problem in the workplace where jobs are being scaled back, the individuals who have planned ahead with more training and development will more likely be kept on due to their educational background than those less educated and lacking a career plan.

Unless an individual is fortunate enough to work for a learning organization, training and development is becoming more and more the primary responsibility of the employee in the workforce.  Organizational career development has taken a backseat for many organizations in today's workplace as individual employees are ultimately responsible for developing their own careers (Foxman & Polsky, 1990). This relates to recent trends of disappearing corporate career paths and job security.  Just as the responsibility for employee retirement planning is no longer a corporate function in many organizations, the responsibility for learning and for the development of career paths has also been downloaded to the individual employees.

Personal development needs and an action plan to achieve that development are new ideas for most people, something for which they have not been adequately prepared. The good news is that taking this responsibility for personal development also brings increased control over one's learning and career development, and the opportunity for a more stimulating and motivating work life.  The process of creating plans for individual professional development results in a document that has been referred to as a learning contract, a personal "curriculum" for learning; a Professional Development Plan (PDP) (Mondy & Noe, 2005).

A wide variety of professions engage in professional development.  Most states have professional development requirements for school teachers.  For example, Arkansas teachers must complete 60 hours of documented professional development activities annually.  Indiana teachers are required to earn 90 Continuing Renewal Units (CRUs) per year; in Massachusetts,

teachers need 150 Professional Development Points (PDPs), and in Georgia, teachers must earn 10 Professional Learning Units (PLUs).  In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires educators to have a Professional Development Plan for licensure.  According to the Wisconsin DPI website, "writing a PDP allows the educator to direct his or her own professional growth and determine how that growth will have an effect on student learning" (WIDPI, 2011).

## Plan for Increased Productivity

The increased use of modern technology in the workplace is a strong argument for having a personal plan for professional development.  Many situations in business can cause anxiety and the loss of focus.  Some educational planning can alleviate the stress and put an individual ahead of the pack.  Using new communication technology, along with multitasking, and the pressure to do more with less, are some examples of the many situations that employees now face on a daily basis that can lead to anxiety-producing situations.

According to a recent technology report published in the New York Times, "juggling e-mail, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave," ultimately undermining our ability to focus.  "Technology is rewiring our brains," said Volkow, director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse and one of the world's leading brain scientists (Richtel, 2010).

Modern technological gadgets actually trigger "a primitive impulse to respond to immediate opportunities and threats" (Richtel, 2010).  Such stimulation triggers "a dopamine squirt," which becomes addictive and can have several negative health consequences.

Researchers compare the lure of digital stimulation less to that of drugs and alcohol than to food and sex, which are essential, but counterproductive in excess. "We are exposing our brains to an environment and asking them to do things we weren't necessarily evolved to do," says University of California neuroscientist Gazzaley "We know already there are consequences" (Richtel, 2010).

Technology multitaskers have trouble focusing and "shutting out irrelevant information" (Richtel, 2010). Technology distractions caused by cell phones, smart phones, and personal digital assistants have triggered car accidents and train derailments. With so many stimuli flooding our senses, many individuals have difficulty paying attention to any single thing at any one time. A recent study by the University of California concludes that e-mail interruptions significantly increase stress and anxiety, which actually reduces short-term memory.

In today's global and technological society, the world revolves around the importance of adult learners who are better educated and multi-task oriented. Having a plan will help an individual remain focused on professional development goals, which can be particularly hard for anyone who has never been taught how to do the additional duties that are piling on, or if he is so overloaded that he wonders if he has time to do everything needed in the business day. Employees must learn how to stay positive, remain focused on their goals, and be effective while navigating the uncertainties of change.

Having a plan, setting specific and high goals, will put the professional employee in a better position for handling difficult situations. Having specific goals enables the employee to plan effectively, making him more likely to succeed and attain personal and organizational goals, allowing greater opportunity for improved productivity and goal achievement.

# Development of Objectives

According to Houghton and Maddocks (2005), the primary objectives of PDP are to improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning, and to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning. To achieve these objectives, the employee must articulate their personal goals and evaluate their progress toward their achievement. Employees draft individual development plans, both individually and in consultation with their Training Manager.

This process should occur annually, much like a performance review (Morgan 2002). The individual development planning process is focused on personal development and career growth, and is kept separate from other HR management functions such as reviews for salary, promotion, and retention purposes. Although the Training Manager is consulted, it is important that a person not depend on someone else to drive his or her career (Bates 2002).

Individual development plans can, and often should, include formal training programs, but the focus is on the learning and the individual, not on the organization's curriculum and courses. If used correctly, a compilation of the learning needs from these individual learning plans (coupled with studies of organizational needs) can lead to more efficient planning of training efforts by the organization.

Career development depends on an effective PDP. Individuals need to include in their individual career planning a self assessment where they identify current skills, knowledge, abilities, and interests. Mondy & Noe (2005) suggest using a self-evaluation procedure developed originally by Ben Franklin: the strength/weakness balance sheet. A likes and dislikes survey is also recommended by many professionals. The individual must identify his goals and

identify the new skills, knowledge, and experiences he would like to acquire and have. Do these goals match personal and career interests? Are the individual's goals in agreement with the organization's goals, mission and vision?

The individual also must identify the gap between the current situation and the desired outcome. This will produce a statement of purpose that should clarify why he wants to learn something, and what specific skills, knowledge and abilities he wishes to develop. A PDP is a plan, not a rigid promise; a plan can and should be revised as goals change and as learning occurs. Plans should also include target dates identifying projected completion.

Resources for professional development planning include: literature, mentors, co-workers, other professionals for networking, vendors or suppliers, classes, technical conferences, professional association involvement, teachers and instructors, field experience, supervisors, and a variety of learning technologies including computers and the Internet.

Once the plan is developed and before starting to carry out the PDP, the individual should confer with the supervisor or the HRD-manager, if available, for feedback, and for another view of the learning needs and strategies. This will help insure that the learning will not only be based on personal needs but will also be relevant to the organization's goals, results, and profitability.

## Significance of Professional Development in Andragogical Learning

Andragogy is a theory or set of assumptions about adult learning that was pioneered by Malcolm Knowles in the 1980s and 1990s (Brookfield, 2006). Andragogy differs from pedagogical learning in that it is learner-centered as opposed to pedagogy which is teacher-centered. Primarily, andragogical learning is based on the understanding that adult education

requires special skills, special teachers and a special philosophy. For this reason, adult-learning education systems institute unique, professional development programs for adult educators. These unique programs take into consideration the special needs of adult educators and adult learners. In order to understand the importance of the professional development in andragogical learning, it is essential to review the six assumptions of adult learning as initially postulated by Knowles, and how these assumptions can be designed to align with the professional development plans for andragogical learning.

a) Learner's Need to Know

Adult learners need to know and understand why they should learn. Under the standard pedagogical model, it is largely assumed that learners will simply learn what they are told to learn. In contrast, adults are used to knowing what they do in life. They, therefore, want to know the reason for learning something and how it will benefit them. As part of the professional development programs, adult educators are encouraged to help students acknowledge the learning process by reflecting on how it will help them meet their goals in life. Brookfield (2006) suggests that personal goals and expectations about life can be used by adult educators to reinforce the importance of adult learning. Therefore, the design of adult development programs can be made to incorporate the learner's original reflections on life and solicit feedback about the relevance or importance of the ongoing learning process. Brookfield (2006) explains that the success of adult education is incumbent upon the instructor to suggest appropriate lesson structures, which meet the students' educational needs effectively.

b) The Learner's Self-concept

Pohland and Bova (2000) emphasize that adult learners resent situations in which they feel that other people are imposing their will on them. This forms an overriding consideration in the design and development of professional development programs for adult educators. It is the duty of the teachers to move the learners away from their old habits into new realms of learning in which they become self-directed, take more responsibility for their own learning and the direction it takes. A needs-sensitive professional development program is a perfect path for the development of self-direction in adult learners. Knowles (1980) discusses that the ultimate ability of such initiatives, as allowing adult learners freedom of choice for the course of their learning process, enables learners to choose the path that appropriately reflects their learning needs. It is, therefore, important for those designing professional development plans for adult learners to include different strategies such as skipping sections that the learner already knows and multiple forms of presentation. All these strategies can be used to permit students to follow particular paths of learning that best suit them.

There is, however, one crucial factor that should be taken into consideration when designing the professional development requirements for adult educators, that there should be some way of helping learners who are still moving into the self-directed mode. These learners are usually new to adult education programs and, as such, they may not have experienced the ability to be self-directed learners. Professional development plans for adult educators, therefore, need to include structures which will help the learners develop a moral appreciation of the new learning experience. Particular attention should be given to the adult learners who may not want

to spend time in the classroom situation or those who may prefer to be spoon-fed during learning sessions (Taylor & Kroth, 2009).

In some cases, the adult learner's attitudes, perceptions, exposure and self-concept may compel them to exhibit a negative opinion towards certain learning strategies as a means of learning. The instructor should explore ways of moving learners into self-direction by assigning those tasks that make them see the relevance of learning. It is vital that the concept of self-directedness not be confused with self-motivation. Although adult learners may be motivated to enroll in education programs, they may not be self-reflected enough to choose appropriate instructional programs or structure their own learning environments.

c) The Role of the Learner's Prior Experience

An important consideration in the development of andragogical learning strategies is that adult learners have had a lifetime of experiences. This makes adult learners a heterogeneous group, compared to young learners, and provides an additional knowledge base that can be used in the classroom. Effective strategies for the professional development of adult educators take into consideration the fact that adults want to utilize what they know besides seeking recognition for having that knowledge. The design of experience-sensitive professional development plans is an indispensable andragogical learning strategy that gives educators an opportunity to utilize the student's knowledge and experience to facilitate the learning process. As Pohland and Bova (2000) state, reflective leaning activities, case studies and group projects call upon the learner's expertise and special skill. In a way, the possession of prior experience places andragogical learning at a higher level in the learning process than pedagogical learning because most of the learning facilitators make use of the learner's acquired experience.

An obvious corollary to the useful experience that adult learners bring with them to the learning process is the association of their personality with their experiences. The learner's self-identity, including biases, values and habits, is influenced by their experience. It is for this reason that professional development programs for adult learners include opportunities for reflective learning. As Taylor and Kroth (2009) explain, reflective learning involves the assessment of assumptions and facts and this becomes transformative when those assumptions or facts are found to be invalid, inauthentic or distorting. Experience can enhance the learner's reflective learning which can, in turn, assist the student in examining their habits and biases and enable them to understand and appreciate the learning process.

d) Student's Readiness to Learn

According to Knowles, adults become ready to learn something new when they experience the desire to learn so as to cope satisfactorily with real life situations. It is important that professionally developed plans for enhancing andragogical learning strategies be concrete and relate to the students' immediate needs and future goals. The consideration of the student's readiness to learn can be derived from the goals of the course or education program, but can also be extended to the learner's expectations. In addition, adult education's professional development programs can encourage the instructor and adult learner readiness by designing experiences which simulate situations in which the students encounter need for knowledge (Taylor & Kroth, 2009).

e) The Student's Orientation to Learning

Adult learners are problem-centered in their orientation to the learning process, not subject-centered.  In most cases, adult learners want to know how what they learn will impact or apply to their life. Learning experiences should be based around experiences.  Adults learn in order to be able to better perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way.  Adult learning professional plans can be effective if they utilize real-life examples or situations which the learners may personally encounter in real-life situations.  Allowing absolute flexibility in the design of lessons will allow the students' input on relevant issues that need to be addressed in class.  If the learner can bring real life examples to classroom sessions, the learners will be anxious to participate and gain necessary, practical experience, which will ultimately enable them do better in their jobs.

f) Students' Motivation to Learn

Although adult learners may easily respond to external motivation, internal priorities are often more influential.  Important incentives, such as increased self-esteem, job satisfaction and quality of life, are powerful motivational indicators that give adult learners a reason to appreciate the learning process.  Therefore, one important strategy in the design of andragogical learning strategies and corresponding professional development plans is to include a provision for these motivational factors.  If the factors can be associated as part of the learning process, the learners will respond positively to the learning process.  Activities or programs that build the learner's self-esteem and sense of accomplishment can help motivate the completion of the learning activity.  Moreover, the students' actual input into the development of lessons and prioritization of topics to be covered can help them to take control of the entire learning process.

Incorporating Professional Development Plans with Adult Education Strategies

Various research studies have confirmed Knowles' theory of andragogical learning and its effectiveness in the implementation of professional development plans. One area that has been profoundly emphasized in literature is the role of institutional leaders or educational leaders in creating environments that are conducive for adult learning. This environment has been described by Pohland and Bova (2000) as a positive interpersonal climate, comfortable physical atmosphere and a well-prepared organizational setting that defines the process of professional development. The creation of such an enabling environment is a crucial aspect of andragogical learning strategies. Knowles (1980) stated that an enabling physical environment is essential to maximize the supportiveness, encouragement, and safety, all of which enhance the learner's appreciation of the learning process.

Another area that has been identified to increase the adult learner's level of intrinsic motivation is the mutual planning of professional development between institutions and their staff. By allowing educators to have input into the kind of problems that can be solved through the process of professional development, the educators will, more likely, be engaged in the development of the presentation material (Chetcuti, 2007). Therefore, adult learning institutions should be mindful of their staffs' interest and needs when creating programs for their professional development so as to provide for the psychological comfort of their learners. In order for the professional development programs to be effective in an andragogical setting, it is imperative for policy planners to communicate the objectives and goals of the learning process and to have a measurement for determining the level and quality of learning that has taken place.

As a basis as to how effectiveness can be measured in professional learning, Harris, Lowery-Moore and Farrow (2008) calls for the evaluation and reflection of the learning experience as a transformative process. In order for transformative learning to take place, the learner must reflect on changes in assumptions, behaviors and perspectives. Essentially, the nature of professional development in adult learning is to move beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and focus on connecting theory to practice.

Arguments for the incorporation of professional development plans as part of andragogical learning strategies may include statements regarding its flexibility and the capability of the students to move through lessons at their own pace (Pohland & Bova, 2000). The arguments also include logical explanations as to how the learners can adapt to the learning process to address what they need to learn and eliminate lessons that are not relevant or which they have already covered. To adapt the professional needs of adult educators, the above assumptions are considerably utilized in the design of andragogical learning strategies to make the learning process interactive, learner-centered, and to facilitate a sense of self-direction in the learners. Institutions which rely on adult learning concepts to develop their professional development programs quite often become facilitators of the adult learning process. In countries like the United States, the usual practice is to structure the students' input into the design of professional development programs and create technology-based programs which can be utilized to make presentations relevant to the learners (Knowles, 1980). As a result, adult learning programs, in most states across the United States, are not only technologically workable but also efficient and effective from the learner's point of view.

Although andragogical learning is designed to encompass the adult learner, there are some situations where the pedagogical model works well for the adult learner. This is especially the case when learning an unfamiliar subject matter. In some cases, some aspects of andragogical learning are integrated with pedagogical learning strategies to develop alternative programs for learners who may be having specific learning needs, are culturally diverse, gifted or incarcerated. When educating such learners, it is vital to incorporate various learning strategies and methods. Just as the andragogical model works well for learners who require flexibility, safety, comfort and informality, it can equally work well for students with special needs that may require alternative methods of education (Knowles, 1980).

## Factors to Consider When Planning, Implementing and Assessing the Effectiveness of Professional Development Plans for Andragogical Learning

There are several factors that should be considered when planning for, implementing, and assessing or evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs. These factors are discussed below:

a)  Role of Schools and Educational Leaders: Supportive Culture

In order for the professional development programs, models and systems to be successful, a culture of support must be established. Brookfield (2006) discusses six important aspects that are necessary in order to build such a culture in education systems and schools. They are:

i. Developing norms of collegiality, transparency and trust

ii. Creating opportunities for disciplined inquiry

iii. Providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching methods

iv. Redefining the roles of leadership styles in schools

v. Creating and supporting collaborations, networks and coalitions

vi. Preparing teachers to take initiatives in designing their own professional development plans.

Knowing how to plan, implement and assess professional development opportunities is a learned process. Adult educators need time and opportunities to learn necessary skills and knowledge so as to become promoters of their own professional development. The process of building an effective and collaborative culture requires the joint involvement of teachers, administrators and other stakeholders working in the education system. Since adult learning is mostly problem-centered, the support of educational leaders is necessary to ensure that the learners' needs are taken into account (Terehoff, 2002).

b) The Role of Education Context: Multiple Settings and Multiple Professional Communities

The social and professional contexts, under which adult educators teach, are usually varied, and this has a serious impact on the teachers, their work and their professional development. In the context of adult learning, multiple professional communities exist in the instructor's professional map. Therefore, there should be an implementation of multiple strategic sites for professional development and growth within particular educational policy systems.

Knowles (1980) cautions that when designing education systems for adult learning programs, it

is not possible to choose one form of professional development that is better than other forms.

This is because one of the variables that may render one format more effective than the other is

its compatibility with the society, culture and the context in which the learners, educators and

school coexist.  The socio-economic context of the school is an auxiliary element that has an

impact on the kind of professional development opportunities available to teachers.  Taylor and

Kroth (2009) argue that in the United States, the school's socio-economic status is a decisive

factor that influences the practice more substantially than either organization's supportiveness or

available resources.

c)  Stage of Development of the Education System

This is another important aspect that should be taken into consideration when designing

professional development programs.  Harris et al. (2008) argue that the state of the development

of a school's education system, or even a national system, must be taken into account when

designing professional development strategies and opportunities for adult educators.  Based on

research by Pohland and Bova (2000), there are four phases of development of the education

systems.  The first one is the unskilled fashion where schools are staffed with unqualified or

poorly prepared teachers.  For this stage, the professional development programs should focus on

structuring the teachers' guides, training in content and teaching strategies, and strengthening

school supervision.

The second stage is the mechanical stage, which is characterized by schools having

teachers with limited training and education.  As a result of limited education and training,

teachers complete their work in a mechanical manner following the national curriculum and

textbooks without inputting any personal considerations. For this stage, the most appropriate system of professional development is one that offers educators a diversity of guides, information and models for new teaching techniques. Continuous support is necessary to enhance the educator's content knowledge and this can be achieved through regular courses and workshops in schools.

The third stage is one in which teaching is effected in a routine way while the fourth stage is one in which schools have professionally trained teachers. In both the third and fourth stages of the education system's development, teachers are perceived to be reflective and transformative practitioners. This aspect should be taken into account when designing activities for supporting the teacher's professional development programs. The main activities in these stages may include a set of activities and experiences that allow teachers to improve their training, skills and knowledge in a variety of ways. Harris et al. (2008) reckon that professional development activities that may be appropriate at one stage may not be appropriate in another stage. The aspect of the stage of development is important when designing learner-centered education programs in andragogical learning.

d) Time

Schools and teachers need sufficient time to make professional development an ongoing part of their daily programs and to evaluate the results of their efforts. According to Pohland and Bova (2000), adequate time for collaborative work and staff learning should be more than 20% of the educator's weekly dedication. Policy makers, researchers and teachers consistently indicate that one of the greatest challenges to the effective implementation of professional development is the lack of time. Apparently, this is the case in both andragogical and

pedagogical settings.  The problem with the lack of adequate time is acute in developing

countries where a majority of schools do not dedicate sufficient time for professional

development.

# Chapter Three

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing literature on the topic leads to the following conclusions:

- A Professional Development Plan is essential for Continuing Professional Development.

- A PDP is an effective tool for making personal progress and measuring that progress by specifying one's career objectives and working toward them.

Professional development planning is an integral component of modern organizations in the global economy. Current trends dictate that an individual employee must take responsibility for his own career development and produce a plan that satisfies both his needs and those of the organization. Educators are one of many different occupations which can benefit from the use of professional development planning.

The professional development of teachers is an important process that begins with the teacher's initial development and ends only when the teacher leaves the profession. The process has long-term benefits for both pedagogical and andragogical learning settings. Essentially, professional development is a new approach in the attempt to improve education standards. It requires the transformation of processes and policies, which support teachers, their education requirements, and growth in the profession. Professional development programs have a significant impact on the success of student learning and education reforms. The more opportunities that educators have in being the subject and the object of education reforms, the more effective their work is. For this reason, professional development programs should be

systematically planned, structured and supported to guarantee the effectiveness of the learning process.

Besides fostering an atmosphere of positive values and the appreciation of the learning process, professional development encourages educators to participate in programs designed for their development. It is, therefore, important that educators are given the necessary time and financial support to be active designers and participants in professional development opportunities. An important consideration in the design and implementation of professional development programs is that educators must be consistently encouraged to design and implement opportunities and experiences which foster their growth as educators and professionals.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that personal development should never be stifled or stopped. Lifelong learning and development are essential for personal gain, career advancement, and economic progress. Develop a plan and stick with it.

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