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## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM IN COMPARATIVE PEDAGOGICS

### ABSTRACT

*Cogent argument for better understanding of the take-up of teacher professional development through understanding the definition itself has been presented. The main constituents of the definition with reference to different sources of information in psychology, philosophy and pedagogics have been analyzed. To make the research more logical, the definitions “personality development”, “professional development” and “teacher professional development” have been studied in consecutive order. The literature review, which is based on Ukrainian and foreign documents observation, shows different approaches to defining the notion studied: a process-based approach and a system-based approach, as well as their conditional character and appropriateness. In authors’ view, teacher education is a key issue in basic development sectors of any country of the world. Teachers’ professional activities must not focus on individual content only but bear in mind students’ intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social and cultural wellbeing. Teacher professional development is a powerful and effective premise for sustained improvement of student outcomes. On the whole, teacher professional development can be defined as a long-term complex process of qualitative changes in teaching aimed at teacher performance improvement in the classroom and ensuring students’ success. According to the study, this process can be compulsory or so called optional. The effectiveness of professional development is structured: leadership, knowledge, available recourses, high level of collaboration, appropriate evaluation and sustainability.*

**Key words:** *personality, personality development, professional development, teacher professional development.*

### INTRODUCTION

The main goal of any civilized society that provides holistic, innovative and tolerant activities is adaptation to changes in politics, economics, social sectors, etc. These changes actualize the importance of teachers’ professional development as one of the main factors of educational and social transformations. The area of teacher professional development is high on the agenda globally. It became obvious that professional development has changed greatly over the last years. The increasing range of literature is focused on different aspects and models of teacher professional development. The article presents the views of various educators and researchers on this issue in comparative manner.

### THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to make an analysis of the main definitions constituting the notion “teacher professional development” in the context of philosophy, psychology and



pedagogy, to study the problem of teacher professional development in terms of Ukrainian and foreign literature review.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The literature analysis procedure was inspired by considerable theory and established theoretical concepts and other research. In order to access data, the required information was derived from the Ukrainian and international literature. Different data sources were studied (statistics, surveys, research articles and reports). Theoretical base for analyzing the definition is in works of many renowned researchers of Ukraine and the CIS: N. Avshenyuk, S. Honcharenko, V. Kremen, L. Mitina, N. Mukhan, N. Nychkalo, V. Yanushevsky, etc. Scientific works of foreign researchers show actuality, intense study and multiple-aspect nature of the definition: J. Biesanz, L. Darling-Hammond, S. Fifield, A. Harris, A. Glethorn, M. Kedzior, B. Roberts, M. Solomon, H. Timperley, E. Villegas-Reimers, etc.

### RESULTS

Analysis of research literature proves that the issue of teacher professional development has become of great interest all over the globe. We think it is important to make an appropriate analysis of the notions “development” and “professional development” on the basis of Ukrainian and foreign researchers’ studies. Development is a rather complex issue having a lot of different and contentious definitions in different fields. In this context, it is directly correlated with personality development. Personality is a phenomenon that makes a person unique, and it is recognizable soon after birth. Personality development is the development of the organized pattern of behaviors and attitudes that makes a person distinctive. Personality development or personal development occurs by the ongoing interaction of temperament, character, and environment (Biesanz, 2003).

Personal development has kept moving forward in the last few decades. Some time ago we placed our gaze on science for the answers concerning personality development. However, in the last few decades the mankind has started to look within for the answers and personality development appeared to be the best starting point. It seems to us that personality development became a necessity for each person who is eager to be an assertive, well-educated, dedicated, competitive and promising expert. The term “personality development” has historically been the one used to describe the development of a person in some area or field of expertise. However, nowadays, it refers to creating the type of self-improvement at a mental, emotional and spiritual level leading to positive changes in character and life experience.

In 1956, psychiatrist Erik Erikson defined eight stages in an individual’s life that significantly affect personality development, with five of them occurring during infancy, childhood and adolescence. Furthermore, each person is constantly influenced by positive and negative life factors at each stage. Communication, teamwork, family environment, culture are among them. Researchers have found that Northern European countries and the United States have individualistic cultures that put more emphasis on individual needs and accomplishments and, in contrast, Asian, African, Central American, and South American countries are characterized more by community-centered cultures that focus on belonging to a larger group, such as a family, or nation (Roberts, 2001). Thus, cooperation in these countries is more important and eventually influences personality development.

Ukrainian researchers suggest that personal development is the process of personality formation considered as an individual’s social quality formed under socialization and upbringing (Енциклопедія освіти, 2008). Personality development is directly connected with an individual’s active cooperation with the environment to learn all the achievements of



humanity. Thus, needs are interpreted as preconditions and results of an individual's development. Psychologists state that contradictions between objective reality and the desired one, an individual's needs and actual opportunities to satisfy them present an effective stimulus for personality development (Енциклопедія освіти, 2008). The fact that the process of personality development involves the continuing changes should be stressed.

Philosophical and psychological ideas on development and its characteristic features are clearly represented in works of numerous renowned researchers. Some of them give strong evidence for personality development to be progressive changes of something that is connected with its enhancement and mastering new positive qualities and features (Немов, 2003). Those individuals who demonstrate higher self-adaptiveness and leadership make gradual adoption of a higher personality development level. Another view on the definition deals with quantitative and qualitative changes including attitude to reality, character, abilities, psychological processes and accumulation of experience (Дьяченко & Кандыбович, 2004). It is stated that those changes in personality development are based on two essential factors: biology and sociology. Development of a person takes place in the context of cooperative activity being the stimulus for improvement and development through various activities, learning, communication and self-education.

Development in philosophy is defined as natural, purposeful and irreversible changes in matter and an individual's consciousness. Besides, this process has a certain orientation. An individual's transition from one state to another cannot be described as reiteration of previous experience or circling. The key idea is in evolution of inner qualities of an individual that causes the new components occurrence with no evident quantitative growth. In this case personality development takes place at the expense of old components functional alteration, changes in nature of their correlations.

The term "professional development" reflects significant changes in objective reality of a teacher. The combination of two words in this compound itself creates specific cognitive value. This fact enables us to talk on great positive impact that professional development makes on teachers' work and students' learning.

According to the Ukrainian researcher S. Synenko, for teachers to obtain qualities, knowledge and skills necessary for effective activity in new environment, each state has to develop its own strategy based on three main directions: providing teachers' appropriate social status and material security; improvement of basic teacher education; maintaining continuing teacher education up to the end of professional career. Having conducted serious research on professional development in Great Britain, Canada and the USA another Ukrainian researcher N. Mukhan states that the paradigm of teacher professional development in those countries is expected to use its qualitative and quantitative analysis. Some educators argue that teacher professional development theories can be rather abstract or too specific. Thus, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon of teacher professional development as an integral system (Муқан, 2011).

Russian researcher V. Yanushevsky defines professional development of a prospective specialist as a process of formation, establishment, integration and realization of specific skills and competences in teaching, as well as mastering of specific knowledge, skills, competences and teaching methods (Янушевский, 2009). The same idea is given by L. Mitina: teacher professional development is a term applied in the context of a synthesis of specific skills and competences and the dynamic transformation of personal inner world, consciously or subconsciously (Митина, 2004). It makes us confident that such holistic approach leads a teacher to a new way of living and thinking. Therefore, teacher professional



development is understood as a dynamic and long-life process of personal self-development and self-improvement.

On the contrary, some of researchers try to define the notion as a system of inner mechanisms of personal development that describe professional dynamics. In some cases they correlate the notion of professional development with *professiogenesis* pointing out the same content of these two notions: individual formation of professionalism, entering the professional community and development of motivation, reflection, self-determination (Волкова, 2002).

Those who study professional development make attempts to reveal key factors of its effectiveness. For instance, the American researcher A. Glatthorn thinks that teacher development is a professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Thus, teacher professional development is considered as a long-term process with new opportunities and experiences systematically planned to guarantee growth and development in profession. E. Villegas-Reimers stresses that teacher professional development is no longer a simple process but a system whose components are role and culture development. The first component focuses on the choice of characteristics, responsibility, specific features of professional role, etc. The second component reflects the process of teachers' culture understanding and development (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

The nature of professional development entails a different view of teaching as a professional activity. It creates opportunities for teachers to take charge of their professional learning and practice, but it also places new demands on them, on school administrators, and on education policy-makers (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). Specific continuous professional development linked to the introduction of new educational reforms and organized by the relevant authorities is in general a professional duty for teachers in all countries as well as in many European countries and regions (Eurydice, 2008). A research team from the University of Twente, the Netherlands, presented an analysis and an enlarged interpretation of the results on teacher professional development from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The survey has been carried out in 24 countries on three main aspects of teacher professional development: form, content and conditions (psychological or organizational). They argue the fact that professional development occurs in schools and make this definition more structured and complicated. Teacher professional development is regarded as the body of systematic activities to prepare teachers for their job, including initial training, induction courses, in-service training, and continuous professional development within school settings (European Commission, 2010). It is interesting to learn that there is a significant difference between the need for professional development and teachers' subjects. Teachers in reading, writing and literature have shown higher index than teachers in mathematics and science in Australia, Estonia, Poland, Ireland, Lithuania and some other countries. Furthermore, the researchers noticed that younger and less experienced teachers have more unmet professional development needs than older and more experienced colleagues. It can be explained in different ways, however, the most appropriate idea that they are open to new insights and knowledge concerning their jobs.

Some authors argue the compulsory nature of teacher professional development. We think it may depend on teachers' aims and expectations in pedagogical activities. They can be skills, competences and knowledge needed; teacher certification requirement or need for participating in some development activities, etc. However, there is a negative aspect as to professional development participating – lack of a suitable system of teachers' professional



development. According to Eurydice review, this problem is the most acute in Austria as two-thirds of teachers interviewed have no proper opportunities to develop in their job professionally.

The literature review shows that teacher professional development is regarded as a long-term process connected with teacher performance improvement in the classroom and ensuring students' success. The effectiveness of professional development is structured: leadership, knowledge, resources available, high level of collaboration, appropriate evaluation and sustainability. There are a lot of fundamental characteristics most researchers attribute to teachers and their status (subject knowledge, professional autonomy, authority, ethical principles, etc.). In general, they should interact and interpenetrate each other in order to make a teacher professional. There are researchers who make a great emphasis on values education in the context of teacher professional development. They consider it to be one of the critical parts in both a teacher's personality formation and his/her teaching methods development. Teacher professional development presupposes an ability to cope with complicated moral situations in schools. The lack of a common ethical language and knowledge of relevant theories and research in educational and behavioural sciences is an obstacle to teachers' professional development (Thornberg, 2008). Therefore, the conclusion is that knowledge of ethics and related issues of values education (conflict management, bullying prevention, social influence, citizenship, etc.) alongside with teacher competences should be vital parts in teacher professional development.

The level and intensity of participation in professional development differs considerably among countries. The findings above prove this fact. In general, the attitude to this phenomenon was historically formed with individual interpretation of all its components. It was a craft-based profession and, therefore, has been focused primarily on the beliefs, understanding, relationships and identities of teachers to practise their craft as much as they were individually able to do it (Timperley, 2011). It means that teachers' professional activities must not focus on individual content only but bear in mind students' intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social and cultural wellbeing. Thereupon, in Australian national professional development framework for teachers and school leaders, effectiveness and strong need for professionals in teaching have become a primary goal.

Responding to this information, we would like to review the Australian way of teacher professional development understanding more thoroughly. In the light of Australian government's recent reforms in education, the critical role is given to the new National Professional Standards for Teachers. In some degree, these standards will be means of teaching workforce alteration to improve the quality of teachers and student outcomes nowadays and hereafter. Australian educators state that the core of teacher professional development strategy is in developing a teacher's ability to provide innovative teaching practice to improve student knowledge and educational opportunities; supporting safe learning environments; providing assessment data and feedback of parents; engaging in professional learning; proving to be professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school (AITSL, 2011). Also, they underline the critical role of aspiration to gain and develop the qualities of a leader.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research literature demonstrates that teacher professional development is of high interest nowadays among researchers and educators throughout the world. It has been found that professional development is linked to a qualification level. Teachers with lower level of qualification demonstrate relatively higher level of non-participation in educational activities than teachers with higher qualification level. It proves that teachers matter only in terms of quality education. Also professional development is highly specific to various aspects (educational context, situations, personality, etc.). According to some researchers,





this process can be compulsory or so called optional. Thereby, professional development has great impact on teachers' behavior, expectations and educational activities. It can be defined as a long-term complex process of qualitative changes in teaching aimed at teacher performance improvement in the classroom and ensuring students' success. The effectiveness of professional development is structured: leadership, knowledge, recourses available, high level of collaboration, appropriate evaluation and sustainability. In addition, professional development is directly connected with regular analysis of a teacher's educational activities.

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