CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE NEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

• In the request for inputs to this Summit, the topic we were given read as follows: “Progress, challenges and recommendations on teacher recruitment, preparation, continuous professional development and needs for the future.”

• This topic has three distinct focus areas, namely (a) teacher recruitment, (b) teacher preparation and (c) continuous professional teacher development.
Introduction (Continued)

• Each of these focus areas is a major thesis, on its own – and when one considers that each, in turn, has four tributaries: progress, challenges, recommendations and future needs, then the task becomes monumental.

• Quite clearly, I do not think that it was the intention of the Summit organisers that each presenter would attempt to tackle all these three areas in one 8-minute presentation.
Introduction (Continued)

• Accordingly, I have taken the liberty to focus on only one of the three focus areas, namely ‘continuous professional teacher development (CPTD),’ otherwise the presentation would have been too unwieldly and amorphous to serve any focused purpose.

• In doing so, I shall first look at the notion of continuous professional development, in general, and then focus more specifically on ‘continuous professional teacher development’.
Introduction (Continued)

• Subsequently, I shall proceed to summarise the progress made so far in South Africa, the challenges that have emerged, make some recommendations and then point to some future needs, as they relate to teachers falling within the domain of our membership, namely serving teachers.
The antecedents of the formalised notion of ‘continuous professional development’ go back to the 1960s when a professional development programme for school staff was introduced for the American education system (Havea & Mohanty, 2020: 2).
Contextualising Continuous Professional Development (Continued)

• Since then, professional development has emerged as a worldwide tool for both personal and professional growth and development, not only in the education sector but in other disciplines as well.

• The main goal of professional development is to enhance one’s knowledge, skills and job-specific competences.
Contextualising Continuous Professional Development (Continued)

• For employers, one important and immediate benefit of offering employees sufficient and appropriate opportunities for continuous professional development is that this is often associated with improved job performance, which typically mitigates turnover costs associated with outsourcing – thereby increasing efficiency by saving the employer some money.
APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• There is no single best approach to professional development.

• A combination of approaches for different situations may lead to a successful professional development experience:
  
  • Informal dialogue, reading professional literature, observations, short courses and workshops, conferences and seminars, professional development networking, individual and collaborative research and peer education, and qualification programmes (OECD, 2009);
  
  • Case studies, consultation, coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision, and technical assistance (NPDCI, 2008).
As Stein et al. (1999: 263) said “The new paradigm for professional development represents clear departure from the use of workshops to teach techniques, toward the use of multiple professional development strategies to build teacher capacity to understand subject matter, pedagogy, and student thinking.”
Approaches to Professional Development (Continued)

• Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is defined as “teachers learning: how they learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupils’ learning” (Postholm, 2012, in Havea & Mohanty, 2020: 6).
• During the apartheid era schooling, in South Africa, was organised into racially and ethnically divided sub-systems, making it very hard to characterise its underlying philosophy – save to say it had most of the hallmarks of authoritarian education, resembling the nature and character of the political system it served.
In essence, before 1994, South Africa never had a truly national system of education and training, given the multiplicity of school curricula followed.

Since the dawn of democracy, schooling has been rationalised into one, single education system whose priorities, values and principles needed to be made known to all the teachers, as spelt out in official documents.
• The first national curriculum introduced after 1994 was Curriculum 2005, which shifted assessment strategies from emphasising summative to being more formative in nature, while the pedagogical stance of the teacher became one of facilitator (to promote the creation of meaning in the classroom), as opposed to being an authoritative dispenser of information.

• In essence, this was the birth of a dire need for continuous professional teacher development (CPTD) in the country.
I have used a **Scorecard** to assess the progress made so far concerning the support for, and development of, a functional CPTD System in the country
PROGRESS - Continued

• The assessment is based on:
  • the Department of Basic Education’s own self-assessment of the progress that it envisages to have been made so far pertaining to CPTD, against the recommendations contained in Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan (NDP) on the improvement of teacher quality in the schooling system (ETDP SETA, 2021), and
  • Empirical research findings.
### Progress (Continued)

Scorecard on Progress Made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NDP RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Short-term teacher development based on workbooks</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Longer-term teacher development</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. System support and self-development</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Use of technology</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Investigate introducing professional certification</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Support professional associations.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Teacher Unions.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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</table>
CHALLENGES

• In a recent study (Bernadine, 2019) reported seven challenges faced by educators in the implementation of CPTD in the Gauteng Province – and these are typical of challenges faced by educators elsewhere in the country. One more has been added from a survey of literature:
Challenges (Continued)

1. Poor or non-participation of teachers in CPTD activities
   - General non-participation of educators in the system due to inaccessibility of IT and resources (devices / gadgets), particularly for those schools where network is poor.

2. Lack of interest by some educators
   - Reluctant to participate in the scheme by, especially the near-retirement educators.
Challenges (Continued)

3. Poor planning by SACE
   - The CPTD Portal’s capacity was reported to disadvantage educators’ reporting processes, while SACE’s electronic submission system was also reported to have some challenges and requiring upgrading.

4. Lack of support by school management
   - There is lack of systematic and regular monitoring of teachers’ reporting progress by SMTs, as well as a lack of good planning for CPTD activities and programmes at school level.
Challenges (Continued)

5. Selective reporting

- Reporting by teachers is mostly concentrated around Type 1 (self-initiated) activities, while Types 2 (school-initiated) and 3 (outside-school initiated) activities were neglected.

- This pointed to a gap between CPTD activities and IQMS activities in schools, leading to a devaluing of the CPTD programmes.
Challenges (Continued)

6. Lack of explicit relationship between CPTD and other existing developmental programmes
   • Many educators consider the CPTD system more as a compliance tool than a professional development activity.

7. Lack of, or poor, ICT skills
   • Some teachers are technophobic and would not be encouraged by any system that is technologically driven, particularly those who are old in the system and had little exposure to technology.
RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the above challenges, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. To have a well-trained and motivated workforce, the employer needs to have a well-defined and sustained incentive framework associated with the CPTD programme to enhance, not only professional progression, but wages, pay rise, promotions, etc. This is currently lacking.
Recommendations (Continued)

2. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a very important enabler for deeper and lifelong learning. As such, to contribute to a more resilient and sustainable education system, CPTD programmes must capacitate teachers with the necessary technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) to enable them effectively integrate technology in their teaching. To achieve this, ICT literacy programmes must be made available for teachers.
Recommendations (Continued)

3. A link should be established with teacher development centres for teachers to access technological resources with ease.

4. ICT support officers be appointed at the teacher development centres to help in the capacitation of teachers with ICT skills.

5. In order to emphasise the value of CPTD from the initial process of training and throughout one’s teaching career, there is a need for a module that focuses on CPTD during teacher preparation.

6. Formalising the exclusion of CPTD requirements in respect of near-retirement teachers (those less than three years before retirement).
Recommendations (Continued)

7. Advocacy activities should be continuous, focusing on the developmental role of CPTD and how it is linked to other developmental programmes, such as IQMS / QMS.

8. A special effort must be made to ensure that CPTD programmes for Special Education are not left behind.
FUTURE NEEDS

1. Learning from the future, which has already hurriedly arrived, teachers and administrators are forthwith obliged to possess, teach and assess 21st century knowledge and skills. The question is, “what is this 21st knowledge, and what are the skills?” If we can reasonably wrap our minds around this knowledge and the attendant skills, CPTD programmes must address them. DBE must take the lead in establishing the domain of this knowledge and skills so that all CPTD practitioners can sing from the same hymn book.

2. Strengthen the quality of CPTD programmes conducted at district and school levels, ensuring reach to priority areas (under-performing schools etc.).
Future Needs (Continued)

3. There should be greater cooperation and collaboration between Education officials, on one hand, and teachers and teacher unions, on another, to:
   • change perceptions about self-reflection and teacher assessments
   • deal with the multiple challenges and contexts for training.

4. SACE to be supported and strengthened to implement the points system as well as play a stronger role as a professional body.
Future Needs (Continued)

5. SACE’s proposals regarding Teacher Professionalism must be kept simple, even as processes are being strengthened.

6. CPTD programmes to focus more on micro-learning activities, to achieve shorter and more focused competencies.

7. A strengthened focus on rollout of ICT infrastructural installations to cover all schools and teacher centres.

8. DBE to ensure *affordability of connectivity* to ICT services and facilities.

9. Universities to be requested to review the appropriateness, relevance and alignment of teacher preparation programmes.
10. Promote and encourage the establishment and development of associations in all subjects and at all school levels and grades.

11. PEDs must use part of the levies paid back to them to support union CPTD initiatives.

12. Currently, PEDs conduct their training parallel to the training conducted by unions. There should be a move to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between PEDs and unions.
13. DBE to continue to allocate funds directly to unions to support CPTD activities of their Teacher Development Institutions, bearing in mind that they were established as part of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Integrated Strategic Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED)

14. ETDP SETA should develop a Special Projects Framework to fund SACE-endorsed programmes, even if they do not lead to any qualifications

15. ETDP SETA should develop a funding mechanism to fund the development of teacher union officials, and teacher development; CPD programmes, and subject content and subject knowledge sessions twice a year, run through the subject associations.
CONCLUSION

• Quality education is a fundamental ingredient in sustaining the development of any country, and CPTD is one of the critical vehicles through which quality education can be achieved.

• CPTD must be prioritised by all who are involved with, and in, it, given its potential to enhance quality teaching and learning by helping teachers to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills – as well as keep abreast with global trends.

• It is my hope that from this presentation, the audience has picked something that will help all of us to move forward together as we endeavour to “empower teachers for building resilient, quality and equitable education systems for the next decade.”
I thank you