

**CHAPTER I**  
**ISSUES RELATED TO THE**  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS IN**  
**TANZANIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

Professional development refers to the ongoing process of learning and acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competences related to an individual's career, profession, or job responsibilities. It is the process of gaining new skills and practices through continuing education and career training. Professional development is all about constructing knowledge, skills, and mindsets that can help an individual progress effectively through his/her career. This system enables someone to improve through learning and training and advance in their career. It makes an individual stay up to date on the new trends within his/her field. Professional development is important because it has the potential to open opportunities for career advancement. It can assist individuals in improving existing skills and in learning new ones. The system improves skill set and knowledge that could lead to increased recognition and advancement at work. Professional development expands networking opportunities, increases job opportunities, develops skills, boosts confidence and credibility, and generally advances people's careers.

Teachers know better than anyone that learning is a lifelong pursuit. There's always something new to learn or skills to develop in order to be effective. From the basis explained here, teacher development is inevitable. It is an ongoing development of teachers that focuses on the subject matter knowledge, concrete skills to teach, observation, assessment, reflection, and career growth. It involves change over time. Teacher development focuses on improving teaching practices and promoting student learning outcomes. It contains support systems and opportunities for professional learning that facilitate the continuous improvement and growth of all teachers. It enables teachers to be effective in organizing and engaging students successfully. Generally, the teacher development facilitates teachers to improve knowledge, skills, competences, and thus achieve the delivery of quality education. To make the teacher development possible, there are some concepts teachers need to focus on and acquire.

This chapter discusses some topics such as: Historical background of teacher professional development, Understanding the teacher development, Teacher professional development, Organizing professional development programs, Professional development strategies, and Evaluation of the professional development programs. These topics are significant to teachers because they have been enabling to improve the educational provision. They have designed to motivate and guide teachers toward becoming more effective educators. They can provide practical solutions to the challenges and difficulties facing teachers. Topics can provide strategies for improving the implementation of competence based curriculum. The educator who is going to acquire knowledge and skills from these topics will demonstrate educational qualities such as professional commitment, professional excellence, strong classroom management, make learning environment engaging, collaboration, motivation. In order to improve the quality of education, educators and institutions should focus on improving all the components of teacher professional development practices.

# **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Education is a never-ending process. It doesn't stop after earning a degree and starting a career.

When someone is employed, he still need some sort of education to be successful in the employment. The education that will impart an individual understanding that facilitates activities successfully. Through continuing education, people can constantly improve knowledge, skills, abilities, and become more proficient in their employment. For the case of teachers, new teaching practices are evolving. Teachers are encouraged to pursue professional development. Teachers encompass a wide range of learning activities and experiences that enhance their teaching skills, deepen their subject knowledge, and support their professional growth, ultimately improving student learning outcomes (Munna and Kalam, 2021). A considerable body of knowledge shows that teacher professional development can enable to gain new knowledge, skills, and best practices. It will enhance the quality of the teacher's classroom practices and subsequently improve students' learning achievements and outcomes (Bolam, 2007).

Historically, schools have been engaged in major reform efforts to improve student learning. The approaches to reform have placed new demands on teachers. They are required to demonstrate the skills needed by the reform suggested by the system of education. Professional development has become a major focus of school reform initiatives. School reform strategies and efforts have evolved since the 1980s. Educators and researchers recognized that the kinds of reforms in education require changes in teachers knowledge and skills. Changes in teachers knowledge and teaching practices are needed to bring about substantial gains in student achievement. The system of education, launched efforts to improve the educational provision as well as the quality of teachers professional development activities. It emphasizes professional development as a primary vehicle in efforts to bring about needed change (Guskey, 1995). This is the most effective route to quality teaching, which is the key to improved student learning. Professional development help teachers strengthen and update their skills throughout their employment. It may change teacher learning, classroom practices, and academic performance of students. It is needed to help teachers learn and refine the pedagogies required to teach the contemporary skills (Wenglinsky, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The concept of professional development has changed over the last decade, as a result of increasing understanding of how the teaching and learning processes are created. Changes have affected the opportunities and the challenges of teaching, as well as the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to prepare for a teaching career. Professional development has recently come to be viewed as a long term process, covering different types of opportunities

and experiences that are systematically planned to stimulate the development and evolution of the teacher. The professional development of teachers includes any activity or process intent on improving dexterity, attitudes, understanding or involvement in current or future roles. It includes all the experiences of natural learning as well as the more planned and conscious ones which try, both directly and indirectly, to benefit individuals, groups or schools and which contribute to improving the quality of education. It is the process by which teachers review, renew and further their commitment as agents of change, with moral teaching aims (Marcelo, 2009, Sutton and Seifert, 2008).

The development of any effective education system depends on the quality of its teachers. Teacher quality is prioritized when discussing about the effective education systems. It includes teachers with appropriate knowledge, skills, competence in executing classroom practices. So to obtain qualified teachers might be through additional training. Research claims that the quality of serving teachers is essentially dependent on the type and quality of candidates admitted to teacher education programs, the process through which they are trained, and the in-service training they receive after their appointment into teaching profession. Investment in the professional development of teachers is a priority in many effective education systems (Mayer and Mills, 2021; Mgaiwa and Milinga, 2024; Tucker, 2019).

The development of teacher education in Africa has seen substantial changes from the colonial era to the present. During the colonial era in Africa, the development of teacher education was predominantly shaped by European educational models. Colonial powers operated training institutions to cultivate a pool of classroom teachers capable of imparting fundamental reading and numeracy skills, frequently in European languages (Fafunwa, 2022). The curriculum largely exhibited a Eurocentric orientation, prioritising disciplines that were considered significant by the colonial administration while disregarding indigenous knowledge and cultural practices. Although there was a transformation in teacher education all over Africa following the attainment of political independence, many African countries developed education systems that influenced by former colonial rulers. One prominent aspect of these systems was the adoption of the colonial language as the lingua franca (Mgaiwa and Milinga, 2024).

Governments and states in the continent placed a high importance on increasing access to education. Countries made some efforts like the establishment of an education system that facilitate nation-building and foster socio-economic progress. The Universal Primary Education policy aimed to boost enrolment rates and other countries made significant investments in teacher training to support their educational goals. Teacher education in Africa has continued to evolve in response to global educational trends and local challenges. There are initiatives on achieving educational goals and improving teacher training infrastructure, curricula, and professional development opportunities. Generally, there has been a growing

emphasis on improving the quality of teacher education to enhance learning outcomes. A potential future scenario for teacher education in Africa is the continued emphasis on quality and professional development as well as improving all other needs of teachers (Mgaiwa and Milinga, 2024; Mushi, 2009; Sifuna and Sawamura, 2010).

### **The current status on teacher professional development**

In Tanzania, teachers are trained in teacher education colleges and higher education institutions. Teacher education colleges train teachers at the levels of certificate and diploma. Higher education institutions (universities) train teachers at Bachelor's degree level and beyond.

The status of teacher professional development in Tanzania reveals two perspectives: First, the idea of teacher professional development seems to be understood mainly in terms of aligning teachers with changes in school curricula. Teachers are subjected to teacher professional development programmes only when changes have been made in the school curricula. The second perspective regarding the status of teacher professional development in Tanzania is that most of the teacher professional development programmes implemented in the country are donor funded. They are conducted by various international educational programs and projects agreed in Tanzania. In addition to the two perspectives on the status of teacher professional development in Tanzania, there is something worth mentioning. It is about the presence of many organizations (internally or externally) oriented which offer programmes intended for teacher professional development in Tanzania (Komba and Mwakabenga, 2019).

Anangisye (2009) outlines that teachers and teaching profession currently receive low status compared to the colonial era and a few years after independence. Literature confirms the presence of worsening teaching status. Scholars evidenced via documents the global decline of teachers status, particularly in Tanzania. This situation makes teachers feel bad about their profession. Society regards the teaching profession as the last choice for those who have no other choice and poor living and working conditions. Researchers worldwide have reported the deteriorating status of teachers as they identify associated factors. Low salaries, no teacher professional development, misconduct of teachers and lack of board are factors responsible for negative feelings in the teaching profession. Previously, society highly respected teachers; now, they no longer respected them. The revival of the lost status in the teaching profession remains in the hands of educational authorities and stakeholders (Anangisye, 2009; Kihwele and Kihwele, 2023; Mgaiwa and Milinga, 2024).

Professional development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is important to the growth and development of the current education system. Today's educational realm is full of multiple perspectives, technologies, and opportunities for students and educational leaders. For teachers, effective professional development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century comes from realizing the improvement in teaching and learning environment. The education system needs to ensure students are

learning effectively and teachers are providing engaging and rigorous instruction. Instructional practices of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should develop components and structures that can support the contemporary educational provision (Washington, 2021). In addition educators see that, due to the consequence of globalization and modernization, the world is rapidly changing, toward becoming more knowledge-based, geographically mobile, and collaborative in nature. This change imposes challenges to individuals, institutions and communities. Students need for new learning skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an undeniable challenge to them and therefore to teachers as well. Because of the changes in the demand for skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers themselves need to acquire new competences in order to effectively teach these skills to their students (AbdulRab, 2023).

To teach 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, educators should foster inquiry-based learning, integrate technology purposefully, provide authentic learning experiences through projects and challenges, encourage teamwork and help students develop metacognitive skills to learn independently. A shift in the teacher's role from information dispenser to facilitator, who guides students in using digital tools and understanding their own learning processes. Numerous studies have established that active participation in the learning process is more effective in a learning environment that emulates a real-world learning environment. The 21<sup>st</sup> century education depends on thinking skills, interpersonal skills, information media, technological skills as well as life skills. Especially, the education of the present time emphasizes life and career skills. There is no value for rote learning. In general, it needs to meet the industry's needs. To clarify, the teaching will be effective when a student can use the lesson outside of the classroom. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, teachers are facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments, in which students can develop the skills they might need at present or in future.

## TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE

Development is that process which is done on living and non-living things. It is the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced. Teachers can be advanced based on the demands or needs arising in society. These needs have been changing regularly and teachers need to update knowledge, skills and competences accordingly. Changes can be occurring in various sectors such as society, industry, health, technology, culture, economy etc. Research shows that a well-trained teacher will be able to influence student accomplishment as well as the quality of education. Even the participation in the further training will be more indispensable for the teacher.

Teacher development can be defined in various ways such as:

- i. The progression of teacher learning during a professional career.
- ii. Self-initiated or directed activities which enable the teacher to learn more about teaching.
- iii. The professional growth of teachers through experience and reflection over time.
- iv. Activities designed to enhance a teacher's knowledge, skills, and expertise leading to improved school outcomes.
- v. The growth of professional capacities and skills that teachers cultivate through the course of their career, formally and informally.

Teacher development is a learning process which is ongoing and endless. Ongoing development of teacher focus on the subject matter knowledge, concrete skills to teach, observation, assessment, reflection and career growth. Teacher development is a process along a continuum of learning. It involves change over time and is achieved in stages. It does not only depend on formal learning, but it can also be self-initiated by teachers in various ways. It is a continuous, collaborative, and reflective process focused on enhancing pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and student engagement through learner-centered, practice-based activities, often incorporating technology, and fostering a passion for lifelong learning. In schools, teachers are frequently meeting to discuss how the teaching is going on and develop educational methods for rectifying the mistakes occurring in the learning environment. Effective teachers have been improving knowledge and skills in an ongoing manner. Teacher development helps to improve standards of teaching and learning. It enhances teachers language skills, practical skills, digital skills and assessment literacy. Even if a teacher has achieved certain development, he still needs to learn along with his/her whole life and career. Updating, Innovating and Searching are the three pillars of teacher development (Cárdenas et al., 2010; Yangambi, 2021).

**The development of teachers beyond their initial training can serve a number of objectives**

- i. To update individuals knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area.

- ii. To update individuals skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives.
- iii. To enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice.
- iv. To learn something new, refresh knowledge and skills, or keep up to date with the latest developments within your profession.
- v. To enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice.
- vi. To exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, eg academics, industrialists.
- vii. To ensure your capabilities maintain the same standards compared to others in the same field.
- viii. To help teachers accomplish the career goals.
- ix. To help weaker teachers become more effective.

### **The high impact teaching strategies**

The high impact teaching strategies enable the teacher to use evidence-based, reliable instructional practices that demonstrably improve student engagement and achievement. Strategies focus on deep understanding, higher-order thinking, and effective skill development. They are explained as follows:

- i. Setting goals: Effective teachers set and communicate clear lesson goals to help students understand the success criteria, commit to learning, and provide appropriate mix of success and challenge.
- ii. Structuring lessons: Effective teachers plan and deliver structured lessons which incorporate a series of clear steps and transitions between them, and scaffold learning to build students knowledge and skills.
- iii. Explicit teaching: Effective teachers use explicit teaching to provide instruction, demonstrate concepts and build student knowledge and skills. Teachers show students what to do and how to do it, and create opportunities in lessons for students to demonstrate understanding and apply the learning.
- iv. Worked examples: Effective teachers use worked examples to reduce student cognitive load, enabling them to focus on understanding a process which leads to an answer, not the answer itself.
- v. Collaborative learning: Effective teachers provide opportunities for students to participate in flexible groups that collaborate on meaningful tasks, and respond to questions that support achievement of learning goals.



- vi. Questioning: Effective teachers regularly use questioning as an interactive means to engage and challenge students, and use it as a tool to check student understanding and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.
- vii. Feedback: Effective teachers use two-way feedback to gather information about a students understanding, to assist students to advance their own learning, and to verify the impact of their own practice.
- viii. Metacognitive strategies: Effective teachers use metacognitive strategies to help students develop awareness of their own learning, to self-regulate, and to drive and sustain their motivation to learn.
- ix. Differentiated teaching: Effective teachers use evidence of student learning readiness, learning progress, and knowledge of individual student learning profiles, to make adjustments for individuals so all students experience challenge, success and improved learning.
- x. Multiple exposures: It takes three or four experiences involving interaction with relevant information for a new knowledge construct to be created in working memory and then transferred to long-term memory. Students need repeated interaction with new concepts for those concepts to transfer from short-term to long-term memory (Nuthall, 2000).

### **Kyriacou (1997) offers ten characteristics of effective teaching**

1. Clarity of the teachers explanations and directions.
2. Establishing a task-orientated classroom environment.
3. Ensuring coverage of the learning objectives.
4. Making use of a variety of learning activities.
5. Establishing and maintaining momentum and pace for the lesson.
6. Encouraging pupils participation and getting all pupils involved.
7. Monitoring pupils progress and attending quickly to pupils needs.
8. Making good use of questioning techniques.
9. Delivering a well-structured and well-organized lesson.
10. Providing pupils with positive and constructive feedback.

### **Teacher knowledge and skills**

Teaching is not an easy job in such a way that some teachers leave the profession. There are a lot of challenges confronting teachers in the teaching profession (Mizzell, 2010). Teachers have many responsibilities in the learning environment. It could be the curriculum, teaching methods, learning materials, management, students behavior and students results. Therefore, school administrators need to conduct professional development activities to support teachers to improve their knowledge, skills, competences. Teachers stated the reason for professional

development was to gain new ideas to use in the classroom, improving students learning outcomes and improving knowledge and skills. The issue of teaching is based on the fact that to teach is first to understand (Schulman, 1986). As professionals, teachers are expected: To process and evaluate new knowledge relevant for their core professional practice. To regularly update their knowledge base to improve their practice and to meet new teaching demands. While teacher knowledge is certainly a component of teacher professionalism, professional competence involves more than just knowledge. It involves skills, attitudes, and motivational variables; which contribute to the mastery of teaching and learning (Blömeke and Delaney, 2012).

In addition to the same perspective, teachers need skills to perform their roles effectively. Skills are defined as a type of ability, proficiency, and knowledge that teachers acquire through professional development training. Skills are integral to personal and professional development, and learners often acquire and refine them throughout their professional lives. Developing skills is essential for any career someone is doing. It refers to the process of acquiring, enhancing, and honing specific abilities, proficiency, expertise, and knowledge necessary to perform specific tasks or functions effectively. It involves the improvement of different skills, such as technical and soft skills, enabling learners to, for example, meet job requirements and contribute meaningfully to personal and professional contexts. Skill development is a continuous process because the demands of the workplace, the evolution of industries, and the complexities of modern life require learners to acquire and adapt new skills throughout their careers (Nazarenko et al. 2024; Zamiri and Esmaeili, 2024).

#### **Four aspects of conceptualization of teacher knowledge**

##### **1. General pedagogical knowledge**

It refers to a teachers understanding of the processes and practices of teaching and learning. It involves teaching methods, student learning and classroom management. It's crucial for effective instruction.

##### **2. Content knowledge**

It refers to the specific facts, concepts, ideas, theories and principles that teachers need to know and that students are expected to learn within a particular subject or content area.

##### **3. Pedagogical content knowledge**

Is a unique type of knowledge that teachers develop, combining their subject matter expertise with their understanding of how to teach that content effectively to student. It encompasses what and how about teaching. Is the combining of subject content knowledge and pedagogy. The knowledge of ideas that are prerequisites for students understanding of target concepts. Knowledge of how to scaffold students reasoning processes and skills of various kinds related to scientific work.

#### 4. Disciplinary knowledge

This includes understanding the purposes of science inquiry. Learning how experts in a subject field think, question, and build knowledge. Learning how scientists use experiments to test hypotheses. Knowledge of domain-specific methods of investigation. Understanding the nature of relationships between scientific models and data (Shulman, 1986; Sewell and Main, 2023).

#### **Teachers motivation**

Teacher work motivation plays a crucial role in shaping educators effectiveness, satisfaction, and overall professional well-being. Motivated teachers are more likely to exhibit resilience, adopt innovative practices and engage deeply with their work, even in challenging circumstances. This enhances teachers professional and fosters a vibrant learning environment and a supportive school culture, ultimately contributing to improved quality of education. Principals can actively promote both motivation and engagement through the initiatives. Introducing virtual mentoring programs, facilitating collaborative online workshops using shared digital whiteboards or platforms, or establishing digital forums for peer-to-peer support can help teachers feel valued and connected, even when physically apart (Wang and Shakibaei, 2025). Teacher development and motivation are essentially linked. There are a number of theories that explain how teachers can be motivated. Teaching is a challenging and demanding profession that involves managing diverse student needs, handling high workloads, and dealing with stress and administrative demands. Consequently, teachers really need motivation in various ways. Maslow's theory suggested five needs humans must satisfy before acting unselfishly. It is a psychological model proposing that human behavior is driven by a five-hierarchy of needs, from basic survival to complex self-fulfilment.

Human actions are motivated by psychological needs that progress from basic to complex. The levels are known as physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The process is the lower-level needs needing to be met before one can be motivated by higher-level needs. Once a need is satisfied, it ceases to be a primary motivator. So for the teachers, there are satisfactions that lead to the feelings of being in the teaching profession. The foregoing needs can be explained as: Physiological needs that are basic needs for sustaining human life, such as food, water, warmth, shelter and sufficient rest. Fulfilling these basic physiological needs before moving to another level is necessary. Safety needs include protection from violence, theft, well-being, emotional stability, health security, financial security, fear, anxiety, chaos and natural disaster. Love/belonging needs become important after people satisfy their first two types of needs. People need to be loved, to belong and to be accepted by other people. Esteem needs occur once people begin to satisfy their need to belong, they want to be held in esteem both by themselves and by others. The primary element is self-respect, believing you are valuable and deserve that dignity. The esteem needs include self-respect, acknowledgement from others, confidence, and

competence. Maslow categorizes two levels of esteem needs, self-esteem and reputation. Self-actualization, is regarded as the highest in the hierarchy which fulfils full human potential. Self-actualization includes education and skills development like designing, music, cooking, caring for others, winning awards, and travelling to new places. Teachers need to have those needs just like other human beings (Kihwele and Kihwele, 2023; Maslow, 1943; Shikalepo, 2020).

# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING THEORIES

Professional development refers to the process of improving and enhancing one's knowledge, skills, expertise and abilities within their chosen profession or field of work. It refers to many types of educational experiences related to an individual's work. It is the continuous education a teacher receives after the teacher education program. This process has been improving and enhancing teachers' skills, knowledge and abilities in the profession. Professional development contributes to teacher growth, job satisfaction and overall professional success. It provides teachers with opportunities to learn about effective teaching and student engagement strategies. It helps teachers achieve short and long-term objectives in teaching, also promotes skill development, builds confidence, and leads to new qualifications. Professional development updates knowledge and skills of a teacher and as a result improves the performance of the students. It includes formal experiences such as attending workshops, professional meetings, consultation, coaching, mentoring and informal experiences like reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline (Ganser, 2000).

Teachers continuing professional development have been observed to be a key aspect of all the components that are required to advance the quality of teachers. Teachers do not enter the classroom as a finished product, but they need to attain new concepts, ideas and knowledge to improve their professional skills and proficiency which in turn advances general quality of educational service delivery. It is through continuing professional development that teachers can acquire knowledge and skills necessary in the classrooms. Teachers require access to serious and sustained learning opportunities at every stage in career to be able to teach in ways that meet new standards for learning (Macheng, 2016).

Doctors, lawyers, educators, accountants, engineers, and people in a wide variety of professions and businesses participate in professional development to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that will improve their performance on the job (Mizell, 2010). Teacher professional development is essential mechanism for enhancing teachers knowledge and instructional practices through carefully designed programs (Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). It is the continuous education a teacher receives after they have undergone teacher education and entered the teaching profession. Avalos (2011) views teacher professional development as a process through which teachers learn, learn how to learn, and transform their knowledge, skills and competences into practice, with a view of enhancing students achievement of learning outcomes.

Teacher professional development is more than just attending a workshop, completing a course or attending a conference. It's a continuous process of reflection, learning, and action. Teachers can be able to improve professional competence, keep learning new methodologies

and technologies and enhancing career growth. Teacher professional development can enhance the quality of the teacher's classroom practices and improve students learning achievements and outcomes (Bolam, 2007).

Professional development implementation should consist of concepts connecting to theories of learning. It should be able to instruct teachers about the learning theories. Teachers can create specific strategies and techniques to apply learning theories in their classrooms. Teachers can focus on different learning styles to reach different students, creating teaching that focuses directly on student needs and aptitudes. Understanding how people learn is a critical step in optimizing the learning process. Lefrançois (2019) writes that a learning theory aims to systematize and organize what is known about human learning. Learning theory seeks to explain behavior, to predict it and even to shape or change learner behaviors. Learning theories can improve teachers understanding of how people learn as well as improving the learning process. Learning theories can help educators to reflect on their practices, improve upon, reshape and refine their work (Harasim, 2017). Educator suggests that teachers need to ask the question 'How does learning occur?' The answer will inform lesson design, teaching practices and student activities. Learning theories help educators to design effective professional development courses that align with teachers (Schunk, 2020).

### **Why are learning theories important?**

- i. Theories of learning provide clarity and direction by offering set of principles to build teaching approach.
- ii. The more theories of learning you're familiar with, the more strategies you will have to connect with a diverse range of students.
- iii. Learning theories facilitate clear communication between teachers and students. Teachers can use various strategies to accomplish this matter.
- iv. Theories of learning explain how teaching and learning processes should be or should take place. This can help all kinds of students find success in learning.
- v. Learning theories help by providing frameworks to understand how people acquire, process, and retain knowledge.

### **The applications of learning theories in teaching**

Teachers can create specific strategies and techniques to apply learning theories in their classroom. Teachers need to understand learning theories and prepared to utilize in their classroom. They can create teaching styles that focuses directly on student needs and aptitudes. They can guide educators in designing effective instruction and learning environments. Learning theories describe the way people receive, process, and retain information. They help us understand how people make mental models out of information in the acquisition of new knowledge. They help teachers connect to all different kinds of

students. There are five learning theories that educators can utilize to help them enhance their classroom and make it a better learning environment for all students. The theories can be summarized underneath (Sutton and Seifert, 2008; Gandhi and Mukherji, 2023).

### **1. Behaviorism learning theory**

Behaviorism is a perspective on learning that focuses on changes in individuals observable behaviors. It focuses on how people learn through their interactions with the environment.

It is based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning, which is a process of reinforcement and punishment. Behavioral learning theories view learning as change in rate of occurrence or form of behavior which occurs primarily as a function of environmental factors. The mastery of the subject matter/content is given more emphasis. Learning is organized in a step-by-step process. The use of lecture, drills and repetition are common. Many educational psychologists viewed it mechanical and routine. Behaviorism theory puts the teacher at the center of the learning process ie Teacher Centered. For the details, read the classical conditioning by Pavlov, Operant conditioning by Skinner, Observational learning by Bandura.

### **2. Cognitive learning theory**

Cognitivism focuses on the idea that students process information they receive from a source.

Learning is viewed as a change in knowledge and is stored in the memory rather than just being viewed as a change in behavior. Learning occurs when the student reorganizes information, either by finding new explanations or adapting old ones. So cognitivists focus on how individuals process information, monitor and manage their thinking. It includes linking concepts together, linking concepts to real-world examples. Cognitivists suggest that learning takes place in the mind and is a result of mental processes on the information received. For the details, read the basic ideas of Piaget's cognitive theory.

### **3. Constructivism learning theory**

Constructivism is a perspective on learning focused on how student actively construct knowledge out of his own experiences. New knowledge is constructed on the basis of previous knowledge and life experiences. Learning involves constructing one's own knowledge from one's own experiences. Constructivism learning, therefore, is a very personal endeavor. Learners are actively involved in the learning process rather than being passive listeners. Education provision concentrates on thinking, development of knowledge in the learner, understanding, rather than on rote memorization. Concepts learned, skills developed in constructivist learning environment are transferable to other settings since isolated learning is not desirable. The students are urged to become actively engaged with their own learning process and create their own knowledge. Facts are not there to be memorized but they are rather there to be explored. What is really aimed in constructivism is

to guide and help students to learn how to learn via well-planned learning activities and opportunities. The founders of this approach are: Piaget, Vygotsky, Brunner and Dewey.

#### **4. Humanism learning theory**

Humanism is taken from the theories of Gestalt, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers'. This group of psychologists is concerned with the development of human potential. Curriculum views founded on humanism suggests that learners are human beings who are affected by their biology, culture, and environment. Human beings are neither machines nor animals. Humanist theory advocates a natural desire of individuals to learn. Teachers don't only educate the minds, but the hearts as well. People have a natural desire to learn in order to achieve self-actualization. The students themselves should be in control of their learning and it should be achieved through observing and exploring. The teacher should be an encouraging role model, motivating, guiding and supporting students on their own personal journey.

#### **5. Connectivism learning theory**

Connectivism is one of the newest educational learning theories. Connectivism focuses on the idea that people learn and grow when they form connections. Connections with each other, with their roles and obligations in their life. Teachers can utilize connectivism in their classrooms to help students make connections to things that excite them, helping them learn. Connectivism is built on the idea that digital technology brings people together and creates new learning opportunities. It accepts technology as a major factor in our learning process. Teachers can help create connections and relationships with their students and with their peer groups to help students feel motivated about learning. Connectivism was first introduced in 2005 by two theorists, George Siemens and Stephen Downes. Siemens tends to focus on the social aspects of connectivism. Downes focuses on non-human appliances and machine-based learning.



# **ORGANIZING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Organizing professional development programs involves creating opportunities for people to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. It's a process that includes planning, implementation and evaluation of the professional development programs. It is crucial because it enhances skills, boosts employee motivation and retention, and drives organizational growth, innovation, and competitiveness in a rapidly changing business environment. It creates a positive workplace culture, increases productivity, and prepares both employees and the organization for future challenges by fostering a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation. The programs help people learn new skills and contribute more to the workplace. Ongoing professional development program is useful for advancing career and earning a higher salary (Pharro, 2025).

Professional development programs have the potential to open opportunities for career advancement in various ways. Teachers will get opportunity to improve knowledge, skills and competences in teaching. Teachers will learn through participation in various courses, in school during reflection of their own teaching and reflection of other teachers in cooperation with colleagues. Professional development activities support teachers in improving their needs related to their work as teachers. It is important for teachers and students to improve the quality of teaching and learning. To teach effectively, teachers need extra knowledge, skills and understanding to control students and the teaching and learning environment. Professional development for a teacher is making the best equipped teacher, it should be an important part of teacher career development. It is essential in helping individuals stay competitive in their fields, adapt to new technologies and practices, and advance their careers. When organizing personal work priorities, having a clear understanding of professional development requirements ensures that individuals can continuously enhance their skills, knowledge, and abilities to effectively meet the demands of their roles and contribute to their organization's success (Pharro, 2025).

Many employers continue to report that their jobs are not filled because of the lack of qualified people. While most of these jobs offer to pay salaries far above average, there is still lack of the needed skilled workers to fill these positions, due to skills gap. The employers need to take effort of providing the skills to the employees. Through professional development, employers can groom potential employees to become more capable, competent, and confident in themselves and their work. More importantly, this is a win win situation as this in turn means performance improvement for the employee and increased productivity for the company. The skill gap of workforce should be minimized or eradicated completely through professional development course or program. More importantly, college graduates should be prepared with the skills and training required to be gainfully employed. The

minimization of skills and training gaps will be more effective if all stakeholders see (Ejiwale, 2019).

Richter et al. (2019) suggest motivation as one of the first reasons to attend professional development in a representative group of teachers. When educators have access to professional development programs that give them the opportunity to consider and hone a variety of teaching techniques, the results can be transformational for both the teacher and the education system more broadly. Professional development motivation refers to how much motivation a professional has to participate in professional development and reflects the selection, direction, intensity, and persistence of professional development behaviors. Human motivation theory indicates that motivation is based on recurring concern for a goal state that energizes, orients, and selects behaviour. Thus, highly motivated employees would learn by actively engaging in learning and development, while less motivated employees might be content merely to attend training seminars because they were instructed to do so (Wingreen et al, 2021).

### **Factors influencing professional development**

Professional development can be influenced by various reasons in a certain career. For example for the teaching profession there are some of the reasons that can be described as: Teachers commitment to change (personal goals, capacity beliefs, context beliefs, emotional arousal process). Creating high expectations (providing individualized support, offering intellectual stimulation, providing an appropriate model, strengthening school culture). In-school conditions (school culture, school structure, school size, collaboration feedback, regular professional development). Out-of-school conditions (policies and programs of authorities and local community resources funding control). Requirements of program (form, time, duration, setting, collective participation, support by management and teachers, type of training, core features, evaluation). Learning styles (environmental, emotional, socio-ecological, psychological, sharing learning concerns, contribution respected). Transformational leadership (identifying and sharing a vision, cultivating acceptance of cooperative goals). Transformational leadership influence teacher commitment and have an effect on professional development. Other factors that influence the provision of professional development programmes are teachers' need more competences, requirement due to the development of science and technology, challenges in teaching and learning, improving the academic performance of the students and employer needs (Said et al, 2024).

### **The new perspective of educators interpreted the professional development of teachers as having the following characteristics**

- i. Professional development is based on constructivism, whereby the teacher is regarded as someone who learns actively while being involved in specific teaching tasks, through evaluation, observation and reflection.

- ii. Professional development is viewed as a long term process which acknowledges that teachers learn over time. Experience is considered to be more effective if it allows teachers to link new experiences with former knowledge.
- iii. It is assumed as a process which takes place in specific contexts. The most effective experiences for professional teacher development are those based on the school and which are connected to the daily activities carried out by teachers.
- iv. Professional teacher development is related to school reform processes. The latter is viewed as a process that tends to reconstruct school culture in which teachers are involved as professionals.
- v. The teacher is viewed as a reflective practice; he continues to acquire more knowledge through reflection on his own experience. Professional development activities help teachers to construct new theories and pedagogical practices.
- vi. Professional development is conceived as a collaborative process.
- vii. Professional development can adopt different forms in different contexts. There is no single professional development model that is effective and applicable to all schools. Teachers should decide which professional development model seems more beneficial to them (Marcelo, 2009).

### **Modes of delivery**

Lyamtane and Mosha (2024) presented the modes of delivery for the professional development. These modes are expected to meet the diverse needs of educators, including accommodating those with limited vacation time. This is to say that the modes try to provide the possibility for as many educators as possible. The system of education should provide funds that will enable educational stakeholders to participate effectively. These modes encompass the following: Traditional delivery modes (Workshops and seminars, Case studies, Portfolio preparation, Digital and online learning platforms, Novel approaches-zoom, Micro-learning). Virtual conferencing tools (Virtual workshops and seminars. Interactive presentations, Breakout rooms, Chat and polling, Recording and playback, Collaboration and file sharing, Professional networking, Ongoing support and coaching). Collaborative and job-embedded professional development (Coaching and mentoring, Study groups and learning communities, On-the-job training, Action research, Professional events and networking, University to meet with students, teachers, and various educational stakeholders). The essential issue to know is for the participant to know which mode will be suitable for him in terms of what he and the system of education requires (knowledge, skills, competences, strategies, time, curriculum, status etc).

### **Features of a successful professional development program**

- i. Adopting multiple strategies: Like other teaching and learning processes, professional development cannot be handled by an isolated strategy. Each program uses a variety of

strategies in various combinations. Many program organizations have simultaneously adopted several strategies and successful cases have been reported.

ii. Organizational features: With regard to the professional development program structure, workshops, seminars, and conferences are considered the traditional form of activity types while reform types of a professional development program use study groups, networking, mentoring, coaching, and regular school day meetings that may occur during the process of classroom instruction or planning time.

iii. Longer duration: The duration of professional development is related to the depth of teacher change, which includes the span of time over which the activity takes place, as well as the number of contact hours that participants spend in the activity. Longer activities are more likely to provide in-depth discussions of issues dealt with in the professional development program, helping to understand new strategies, as well as to allow teachers to try out new practices in their own classrooms.

iv. Building a teacher community: The participants of professional development may be a collective group or individual teachers from many schools. However, it is reported that a professional development program designed for groups of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level has several advantages. The teachers have the opportunity to discuss concepts, skills, and problems encountered during the professional development. They can also integrate what they learn with other aspects of their instructional contexts such as common curriculum materials, course offerings, and assessment requirements.

v. Matching purpose and strategies: The content focus of a professional development program may vary: subject matter content, teaching practice, goals for student learning, ways students learn particular subject matter, and so on. Many educators claim that professional development should focus on both knowledge of subject matter as well as understanding how children learn specific content (Hea-Jin Lee, 2005).

### **High-quality professional development**

i. Focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school.

ii. Focuses on individual, collegial/shared, and organizational improvement.

iii. Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the community.

iv. Reflects the best available research and practice in teaching, learning and leadership.

v. Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.

vi. Enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements.

vii. Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development.

- viii. Requires substantial time and other resources.
- ix. Is driven by a coherent long-term plan.
- x. Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

According to Darling-Hammond et al (2017), effective professional development is intensive, creates learning opportunities, identifying own learning needs, evaluating yourself, observational and peer-review skills, accessing mentoring, engaging in reflection, professional dialogue and feedback, building strong working relationships among teachers.

### **Types of professional development**

- i. Courses/workshops (on subject matter or methods and other education-related topics).
- ii. Education conferences or seminars (teachers or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems).
- iii. Participation in a network of teachers formed for the professional development of teachers.
- iv. Team meetings to plan lessons, problem solve, improve performance, and/or learn a new strategy.
- v. Study groups among peers focused on a shared need/topic.
- vi. Observation visits to other schools.
- vii. Observation-teachers observing other teachers.
- viii. Coaching-an expert teacher coaching one or more colleagues.
- ix. Mentoring of new educators by more experienced colleagues.
- x. Individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest.
- xi. Qualification program (degree program, college-university courses) (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017).

### **15 Easy-to-Do types of professional development**

- 1. Journaling: Take some time each day or each week to write down how you felt your work is going. Think about what you did well and what you didn't.
- 2. Feedback: Ask your manager, your team, your subordinates. The feedback you get will astound you and be incredibly valuable in planning your professional development.
- 3. Networking: Networking is easy! Do it successfully, sufficiently and plan it properly.
- 4. Doing Your Job Better: Be honest-Do it better tomorrow. It's low cost, low stress and you'll feel awesome when you've cracked it.

5. Get Certified: Getting a professional certification can help your career. Certification is directly linked to earning more money and it certainly can't hurt your employment prospects.
6. Attend a Conference: One of favorite ways to take time out to work on professional skills is to go to a conference. Surrounded by many amazing speakers is a great opportunity and it always leaves participant feeling so happy about the line of work that have chosen. Participant will learn something new every time.
7. Join A Community: A community of interest can take many forms, from your professional community of project managers at work, perhaps organized by your manager. Join an online community.
8. Reflect: Take a walk at lunchtime and think about your stakeholders and why your team isn't getting their work done. Think about you, how you reacted to a situation, how you could have kept your cool better.
9. Read: Conference papers and informal chats with your community members can only take you so far. To get in depth about a subject you really need to read up on it.
10. Get a Mentor: This is probably the hardest thing to do on this list because it involves effort in selecting someone, paying for their time and then spending time working with them.
11. Mentor Someone Else: It's fantastic to be mentored but mentoring someone else will give you a totally different experience. It's a good way to build your leadership skills and to make new connections. Mentoring is simply supporting someone else through their career journey.
12. Take a Secondment: Ask your manager to give you time away from your day job to do something else. This could be a secondment to a big project, a period of time for study or a shift to another department. Try out something new and come back to your job feeling as if you have developed new skills.
13. Book an Appraisal: You don't have to wait until the end of the year to review your progress with your manager. If you want time with them to talk about your objectives and professional development, book it.
14. Do Some Training: There are plenty of courses that don't lead to qualifications but for professional development. Getting time away from the office to focus purely on learning something new or developing deeper expertise in an existing skill will help you return to work feeling refreshed.
15. Find a Buddy/Friend: I asked someone how she dealt with project issues in our project management software. She doesn't know she's my buddy but we've got the kind of relationship where we can bounce ideas off each other (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017; Harrin, 2023).

Participating in professional development programs is instrumental in developing a spectrum of skills that extend beyond the confines of traditional academic knowledge. Usually participants in the professional development programs acquire updated knowledge, new skills, and enhanced abilities in their field. The obvious benefit is career advancement, as it

opens doors to promotions and new opportunities. Individual will develop a reputation amongst peers and competitors. The foregoing is leading to improved job performance, increased career advancement opportunities, greater adaptability in a changing work environment, and higher personal and job satisfaction. Employers are more interested in employees who are self-motivated and have a drive for growth and development. With improved skills and capabilities, individual should be able to work in a more efficient and effective way which can be a major contributor to a better work/life balance. These programs provide practical tools and resources to stay relevant, competitive, and effective in the job market (Pharro, 2025).

### **Benefits of professional development**

- i. Learn new skills: Through professional development, individual may hone both hard and soft skills in your work. Hard skills pertain to job-specific knowledge you can obtain through formal training or education. Soft skills are personal competencies, such as effective communication or the skills that contribute to emotional intelligence.
- ii. Boost confidence and credibility: Adding additional skills or certification from a professional development program to your resume is one way to boost your confidence in your skills and show your credibility to employers. Professional development opportunities can expose both new and experienced professionals to new ideas and expertise. Seeking out these opportunities shows ambition and the space to practice those new competencies.
- iii. Develop leadership skills: A confident employee is also likely an enthusiastic employee. If you take the step to grow and develop your skills, the incentive to seek out additional opportunities can continue to expand along with it.
- iv. Build your network: Professional development can provide many opportunities for networking. Workshops, conferences, classes, and webinars are all spaces in which professionals can meet new people within their industry and make new connections. These connections can lead to new opportunities, mentorship, and support which may provide the next stepping stone in your career.
- v. Advance in your career: A well-qualified employee attracts employer attention. Employees who are invested in professional development display commitment to their work and an interest in continuing to improve. Professional development can also boost your earning potential by increasing your value through obtaining credentials, certifications, and designations (Parsons, 2025).

### **Benefits of teachers professional development**

- i. Improved subject-area knowledge, teaching methodologies, and understanding of learning theory.
- ii. Educators learn new and better ways to teach (improve learning among students in the classroom).



- iii. Increased opportunities for career advancement with associated benefits.
- iv. Opportunities for career transition to specialist teaching, educational leadership, and teacher education.
- v. Increased opportunities for further study domestically and internationally.
- vi. Improved status within their profession and community.
- vii. Updating knowledge, skills and help candidates to flaunt a new set of skills on their resumes.
- viii. Learning knowledge and skills to become better, more efficient workers/teachers.
- ix. Enhance teaching effectiveness by updating skills, knowledge, and subject matter expertise.
- x. Opportunities for appointment as outstanding, distinguished, and lead teachers or school directors/managers.
- xi. Improve the quality of teaching by sharing good practice within and between academic units.
- xii. Boost teacher confidence, job satisfaction and retention.
- xiii. Recognition awards for service and excellence in their profession.

### **Challenges facing teacher professional development in Tanzania**

#### **i. Limited knowledge on teacher professional development**

Tanzanian teachers lack knowledge of what professional development for teachers really entails. Teachers do not have a proper understanding regarding the concept, scope and features of teacher professional development. They do not have an understanding of how best they can participate in professional development as beneficiaries.

#### **ii. Predominance of traditional approach to teacher professional development**

The traditional approach to professional development has withstood the test of time, since it has served the purpose of training in-service teachers worldwide. Teacher professional development programmes are conducted in Tanzania. Overreliance on traditional approach has prevented many teachers from engaging in adequate professional development. To date, the ad hoc in-service teacher training with little focus on teacher professional learning needs has not offered enough support to teachers with their daily classroom practices.

#### **iii. Ineffective organization of teacher professional development activities**

Most of the teacher professional development challenges in Tanzania emanate from poor organization of learning activities at national and school levels. Tanzania does not yet have an overall framework for governing effective implementation of teacher professional development. Poor organization of teacher professional development activities is related to lack of robust teacher professional development policy and strategic plans; difficulties in teacher professional development timetabling; insufficient budget for teacher professional



development; and lack of harmonized scheme for teacher professional development provision.

iv. Lack of robust teacher professional development policy and strategic plans

Tanzania does not have a stand-alone national policy for teacher professional development as it is the case with information and communication technology in education. Instead, the teacher professional development policy statements are incorporated in the national education policy. The policy does not explicitly articulate ways for implementing successful teacher professional development.

v. Difficulties in teacher professional development timetabling

It is difficult to facilitate teacher professional development in the situation where policies and plans are silent on timetabling issues. Teachers and school leaders need guidance on how to integrate professional development programmes in their busy teaching schedules. Demanding teacher workloads have prevented teachers from attending training programmes within or outside school premises.

vi. Insufficient budget for teacher professional development

Tanzania cannot establish quality teacher professional development without well-designed means for accessing resources. Professional development programmes are essentially expensive as they require adequate funding. A plethora of literature has underscored the shortage of financial support due to limited budget for teacher professional development in Tanzania.

vii. Lack of harmonized scheme for teacher professional development provision

Tanzanian government, through its educational institutions and private organizations, is responsible for organizing teacher professional development. There is no harmonized scheme that would control stakeholders in the provision of teacher professional development programmes. Different providers have goals which do not align with national curriculum.

viii. Inadequate preparation of pre-service teachers for professional development

Ineffective teacher professional development in Tanzanian schools is partly attributed to failure of initial teacher education to adequately prepare student-teachers to take their professional development roles. Student-teachers are not trained how to practically plan their professional development in various ways (Komba and Mwakabenga, 2019; Mgaiwa and Milinga, 2024).

### **Factors affecting teachers implementation of professional development skills in the classroom**

Various studies have shown some effects that occur to teachers when they are implementing the curriculum by applying skills gained in the professional development programs. There is a problem of attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, learning environment, and other factors (Ghimire, 2022; Sakani and Otieno, 2024).

- i. Time constraints (time to plan, develop, adapt materials; grade and give feedback; train colleagues; and balance teaching with other activities).
- ii. Students (attitudes toward teaching methods and course evaluation feedback).
- iii. Implementation (classroom infrastructure, use of technology, interactions).
- iv. No chance is given to apply skills acquired in the professional development program. In general, learning environment is not favourable-learning environment is not constructive.
- v. Support (through the campus administration, teaching rewards, tenure, financial, staff). Lack of supportive school structure.
- vi. Lack of motivation to teachers who are attempting to new methods. Likewise, the new methods are time consuming.
- vii. Unwillingness of some of the teachers to change. They remain and believe traditional methods. No changes in practicing the old methods.
- viii. Engagement (the levels of engagement and enthusiasm teachers have about professional development had a positive influence on how they implemented professional development practice in the classrooms).
- ix. Content area belief and knowledge (researchers found that teachers belief about the subject matter had a direct impact on how they implement the professional development practice).
- x. Ideas that cannot be practicalized because of lack of materials and resources.
- xi. Cooperation (departmental and other faculty, teaching assistants, and staffs).
- xii. Assessment (assessment practices and policies also affected the way teachers implemented professional development practices).
- xiii. Teachers negative perceptions that do not support the educational program.
- xiv. Lack of time to perform the professional development practices which improves educational provision.
- xv. Systematic challenges (poor leadership, poor coordination and inadequate budget).

### **Education reforms and implementation of competence based curriculum in Tanzania**

Education reforms encompass a wide range of changes in how schools and educational systems function. It makes the education system be relevant to the changing national development priorities, goals and objectives. It clears performance standards to guide teaching, learning, assessment and grading of students. Reforms have been modifying and restructuring educational systems to better align with current societal ideals and values. It will work effectively if it is supported by educators/teachers. In Tanzania there are various reforms that attempted to respond to suggestions and improvement of the educational provision. The Ujamaa Philosophy of Julius Nyerere, the Arusha Declaration, and the Education for Self Reliance policy had a great impact on the Tanzania education system. The

programs have been using to improve the educational provision in Tanzania. The education for Self Reliance launched in 1967 in conformity with the Arusha Declaration. The philosophy and policy adopted to guide the provision of education in Tanzania. It brought about a big educational reform that made a great impact on the planning and implementation of education processes. Education for Self Reliance policy highlighted the meagerness of the inherited education system and suggested several necessary reforms. It proposed education that promoted students critical and independent thinking (Mushi, 2009).

Another improvement in education was the 1974 Musoma resolution which put forward strategy reforms that were intended to correct the prominent problems of Education for Self Reliance. Then the step to revamp the provision of education in Tanzania was done by the Presidential Commission on Education (Makweta Commission) in 1982. The commission intended to investigate the education system and come up with recommendations on curriculum, subject structures, assessment criteria, and curriculum reforms (URT, 1982). The recommendations together with the goals of the World Declaration on Education for All and other international conventions necessitated the government to take initiatives to improve policies and programs of education. One of them was the Education and Training Policy (ETP). The policy outlined a vision of education to enable students develop self-confidence, inquiring mind, and the skills necessary for improving the quality of life (URT, 1995). The ETP policy has later updated and elaborated in a new phase of a government policy called the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). It aimed among others to transform the education system into the outcome based education (URT, 1997).

To achieve the international goals of educational reforms, the government of Tanzania initiated the Development Vision 2025 (URT, 1999). The vision is intended to equip peoples with knowledge, attitudes, skills of improving productivity and competitiveness. It proposes to have people with higher and better levels of knowledge and expertise who can respond and adjust well to the challenges and opportunities of the world of work. The vision sees education as a tactical change agent so “education should be treated as a strategic agent for mindset transformation and the creation of a well-educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges which face the nation” (p.19). The vision insisted on the structuring of the education system and curriculum. It influenced the competence based curriculum. It emphasizes on students competence development than acquisition of content knowledge. Competence based learning is a system of instruction, assessment, grading and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating what they have been learning. The Competence Based Curriculum is desirable for equipping school graduates with knowledge and life skills to survive in the modern world. It insisted the application of learner centered teaching practices in the classrooms. Students should be engaged actively in their own learning. They should be given opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to perform what they have learned (Sumra & Katabaro, 2014; TIE, 2009).

Other reforms include the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) started in 2001. It has four major components such as enrolment expansion, quality improvement, capacity building and optimizing human and financial resources, and institutional arrangements. In the year 2003, the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) has established. It had five program areas such as improvement of access, equity improvement, quality improvement, management reforms, and management system improvement. SEDP has thus been drawn up to serve as the framework for supporting the development of secondary education. In the year 2005, Tanzania officially introduced a Competence Based Curriculum that guides the development of competences during the teaching and learning process. The curriculum attempted to improve the quality of education that enabling students to develop competences relevant to life (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015). The curriculum enabled students to demonstrate the skills acquired in the classrooms. To align with this aim, the education sector has been addressing issues such as teaching approaches and the emphasis was on the learner rather than the teacher (Salema, 2015).

Learner centered approach which follows a constructivist theory has been embraced by most educational policies implemented in Africa. In Tanzania, teachers have been implementing the curriculum that supported the learner centered approach. Scholars showed the various educational experiences regarding the implementation of curriculum. Some classroom methods have been executing, others are not performed due to lack of understanding, lack of materials and resources, poor learning environment, poor attitudes to teachers and students, poor infrastructures, poor financial support, shortage of competence based textbooks, rushed syllabus coverage. In fact, there are various experiences and challenges in the educational provision as researched and explained by the following scholars (HakiElimu, 2011; Hardman, 2009; Iddy and Chiwanga, 2017; Issa, et al., 2024; Kafyulilo et al., 2012; Kawishe, 2016; Lukindo, 2016; Meena, 2009; Mkimbili, 2018; MoEVT, 2014; Mtitu, 2014; Ngailo, 2019; Nombo, 2022; Paulo, 2014; Salema, 2015; Schweisfurth, 2013; Suleiman, 2016).

# **ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

The previous studies showed various strategies on professional development programs (Wetzel et al. 2019). Strategies show various approaches or plans that can be organized to ensure professional development practices have been taking place. Professional development strategies recognize the importance of professional expertise, collaboration, knowledge sharing and networking at various levels. All the strategies ensure that the professional development program is conducted effectively to achieve objectives of the program. These strategies provide opportunities for a coherent, coordinated and transparent approach to professional development. The strategies enhance the knowledge, skills and professional practice of teachers. Strategies enable teachers to gain the appropriate competences utilized in the teaching and learning process. Teachers need a professional development program to improve the learning outcomes of the students. Teachers will understand the subject matter, practice new instructional strategies, increasing the ability to teach, and managing the classroom (Becker et al. 2019).

## **Steps of professional development plan**

- i. Assess yourself: Self assessment is the foundation of your professional development plan and a critical step you should take seriously whenever you update your professional development plan in the future. Evaluate your personal and professional interests, any hopes, plans, and dreams you have for your career.
- ii. Set your goals: Now that you have evaluated your current position and skills, it's time to set goals. To break up your main goals, set long-term, mid-term, and short-term goals.
- iii. Develop strategies: To reach goals you need an action plan. To create one, ask yourself how you can advance your competences, learn new skills, or get that promotion you've been eyeing. Take a look at your current skill set or position, as well as your goals, and write down what you need to do to reach them.
- iv. Gather your resources: Once you've developed an action plan, think through the professional growth you need to succeed. These are examples of resources that can be relevant to your professional development: Seminars, webinars, workshops, Professional networks, mentors, Continuing education, Social media platforms. List all the resources you can think of and then narrow them down to the ones that align best with your strategies and goals.
- v. Create a timeline: Creating a timeline and deadlines for your goals can be extremely helpful in sticking to them. Depending on the type of goals you set for yourself, you may want to think in weekly, monthly, quarterly increments. Try to find a happy balance between giving yourself enough time to achieve your goals but also challenging yourself.

vi. Track your progress: With your timeline at hand and your SMART goals defined, it should be easy for you to track your progress and assess where you are. Remember to keep the professional development plan alive by updating and adjusting it as you go. It will help to continually improve and grow in your career (Team Asana, 2025).

### **Strategies to help individual grow professionally**

1. Set clear goals: Setting clear goals can help a professional development program to achieve those goals. The program will show how people can advance in their careers. There are various professional growths that can be observed such as obtaining an academic degree or improving knowledge and skills etc.
2. Search for new opportunities: Find opportunities that can challenge an individual and help grow professionally. Taking new responsibilities that can help you grow in your career.
3. Seek out a mentor: A mentor can help and advice an individual in a certain profession. He can guide an individual by offering professional or personal advice. A good mentor will be someone who has succeeded in the role you expect to achieve and has used that success to advance in their career.
4. Discuss your goals with a manager/colleague: The manager/colleague can be a great resource regarding available training courses. Ask a manager/colleague in your industry to get an opportunity that expands knowledge, skills or experiences. Make sure the manager know about your career aspirations and facilitate to foster the development that you need as well as the company.
5. Grow your professional network: Professional networks offer an environment to grow professionally. Networking involves staying connected with people you already know. They will continue to assist and facilitate what someone does in the industry. Think of network connections as your key professional support.
6. Track your progress: It is important to keep track of your accomplishments and regularly review your progress. Progress will show where you are in the accomplishment of the goals set. Performance reviews are a good way to see if you're meeting expectations and where you might improve.
7. Master your craft: By mastering your craft's processes, regulations and advancements, you will be able to demonstrate your expertise and capabilities. Take steps for professional development by researching your industry, staying current on publications, joining professional groups and attending seminars to learn more about your field.
8. Pursue leadership development: Developing your leadership skills is an excellent way to advance your professional growth. A leadership development program can help individual learn how to be an effective leader. Use this experience as a time to absorb as much information as possible. Adding this experience to your resume shows employers you're serious about becoming an effective leader.

9. Improve communication skills: Professional success may be influenced by how successfully you communicate with clients, coworkers and leaders. Look for development opportunities, such as training or courses, to strengthen communication skills as part of your professional growth. Communication skills can help understanding various things and also being aware of your own.

10. Further your education: Continuing your education can boost professional development leading to professional growth and showing that you value self-improvement. Earning a degree that aligns with your career goals may result in more job opportunities and higher pay throughout your career. The salary difference increases with each level of education (Herrity, 2025).

### **Professional development strategies**

1. Embrace your network: Building, nurturing, and maintaining your professional network can have a tremendous impact in your career. Networking tips: Stay connected, Attend industry events, Be a good contact.

2. Find a mentor : Mentoring has played a critical role in career development. Is a way for an individual to learn new skills, advance and grow in career. To find a mentor: Ask your employer, Get creative, Find someone who has been where you are, Look within your industry.

3. Ask for more responsibility: Instead of waiting for your boss to give you more responsibility, actively seek out opportunities to take on additional tasks. Find a project that will allow you to learn new knowledge and skills.

4. Take performance reviews seriously: Formal performance reviews can be an incredibly useful tool for both the employer and employee. Excellent way for employers to show employees where they are meeting expectations and where they may be falling short. This practice benefits both parties.

5. Master your industry/school: By mastering some information, you will be better able to communicate about the issues your industry, organization, school are facing. It will allow you to demonstrate your capability. Learn even more than you already know.

6. Further your education: Furthering your education is one strategy that can help you to advance in your career. This will give you a structured path to learn the skills you need for success.

### **Strategies for professional development**

i. Design the curriculum and content to meet the unique needs of the field of study.

To develop professionals in a specific field, their training, education and development should be customized to address particular needs of the sector.

ii. Sequence professional development supports carefully to maximize impact.



The sequence and timing of supports can be just as important as the supports themselves. Professional development should be designed to strategically develop experienced future teachers.

iii. Find opportunities for participants to apply program learnings in their day-to-day work. Professionals need practice to effectively absorb new knowledge and refine skills. Supervisors can help participants to try out and implement new learnings.

iv. Individualized supports go a long way.

Professional development should address individual participants needs in addition to those addressed in the formal program. Participants different learning styles allows for deeper focus and reflection.

v. Align learning platforms with program goal.

With the rise of online learning, there are now many opportunities and platforms to engage a geographically dispersed group.

vi. Strong professional networks take intentional planning, building and maintenance.

A network of professionals offers personal and professional support, a platform to share resources and a forum for idea exchange.

vii. Pilot new strategies and make program adjustments when needed.

Feedback clarified from the first cohort, the second cohort should be well on its way. Professional development programs could benefit from using a pilot period for testing.

viii. Weigh potential costs, risks, and benefits of new initiatives.

When considering the overall effectiveness of a professional development endeavour, it is important to consider what it takes to produce successful results.

ix. Meet professionals where are in their careers.

Participants had varying levels of professional experiences. It is advantageous to have a curriculum that can be adapted to best meet the needs and incoming skill levels of participants.

x. Know the target audience and candidate pool.

Professional development program provides a good reminder of the need to assess the pool of potential candidates.

xi. Larger professional development programs need to determine whether participants will be from one or many organizations. Program aimed to develop new and talented professionals who would go to support their sectors. Create potentially higher quality pool of potential applicants. (Aldridge, 2023).



## **7 Strategies to make professional learning effective and meaningful**

Every teacher wants to get better during the teaching and learning process. By following these strategies, the teacher can make that improvement happen.

1. Is content-focused: professional development that focuses on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content supports teacher learning within teachers classroom contexts.
2. Incorporates active learning: Active learning engages teachers directly in designing and trying out teaching strategies, providing them an opportunity to engage in the same style of learning they are designing for their students.
3. Supports collaboration: High-quality professional development creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts. By working collaboratively, teachers can create communities that positively change the culture.
4. Uses models of effective practice: Curricular models and modeling of instruction provide teachers with a clear vision of what best practices look like.
5. Provides coaching and expert support: Coaching and expert support involve the sharing of expertise about content and evidence-based practices, focused directly on teachers individual needs.
6. Offers feedback and reflection: High-quality professional learning frequently provides built-in time for teachers to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice by facilitating reflection and soliciting feedback.
7. Is of sustained duration: Effective professional development provides teachers with adequate time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice.

### **Teachers professional learning community**

The concept of professional learning community has become a prevailing framework for teachers professional learning and development. It is a group of people who take an active reflective, collaborative, learning-oriented and growth-promoting approach towards the mysteries, problems and perplexities of teaching and learning (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000). It is a collaborative group of educators who meet regularly to share expertise, analyze data, and improve teaching practices to enhance student achievement. It could be a small group of teachers who come together as a team to help one another improve student learning. Develop educational facilities that act as support groups for educators who want to come together and discuss ideas. The team members share and reflect on their practice and personal experiences, observe each other's practices, and study and apply research and best practices together (Sather and Barton, 2006). Evidence suggests that teachers working within a successful professional learning community improves instruction, which may lead to improved student achievement and contribute to the effectiveness of schools. Educators hear multiple different perspectives and approaches to problems that individual face on daily responsibilities.

Members are hearing about the strategies that can be used to overcome challenges. Community provides teachers with an educational resource for improving teaching students in the classroom (Indeed editorial team, 2025).

### **The main features of learning communities**

- i. **Shared Goals and Interests:** Learning communities emerge from a collective pursuit of shared academic, professional, or personal goals. Learners are united by common interests, creating a cohesive foundation for collaborative exploration and knowledge sharing.
- ii. **Collaborative Learning:** Central to learning communities is the emphasis on collaborative learning. Learners actively engage with each other, sharing insights, experiences, and expertise. The community serves as a platform for collective knowledge construction, knowledge sharing, and knowledge development.
- iii. **Active Participation:** Active participation is a hallmark of learning communities. Members are encouraged to contribute actively to discussions, projects, and activities. This active involvement fosters a sense of ownership and commitment.
- iv. **Diverse Membership:** Learning communities thrive on diversity. Members come from varied backgrounds, disciplines, and levels of expertise. This diversity enriches discussions, offering a mosaic of perspectives and insights.
- v. **Supportive Environment:** Learning communities provide a nurturing and inclusive environment. Learners feel comfortable expressing their ideas, seeking help, and engaging in constructive dialogue. Support mechanisms, such as mentorship, enhance the overall learning experience.
- vi. **Facilitated by Educators or Facilitators:** Educators or facilitators play a pivotal role in guiding the learning process. They provide structure, resources, and mentorship, ensuring that the community's objectives align with educational goals.
- vii. **Integration of Technology:** Technology is seamlessly integrated to facilitate communication and collaboration. Online platforms, forums, and collaborative tools enhance connectivity, making learning accessible beyond physical boundaries.
- viii. **Application to Real-World Contexts:** Learning experiences within communities are designed to apply to real-world contexts. The goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing learners for practical challenges in their fields.
- ix. **Flexibility in Learning Formats:** Recognizing diverse learning preferences, learning communities adopt flexible formats. Whether through in-person meetings or virtual discussions, this flexibility accommodates the needs and schedules of members.
- x. **Reflection and Feedback:** Learning communities value reflection as a means of individual and collective growth. Constructive feedback is encouraged, creating a culture of continuous improvement and shared learning (Dingyloudi and Strijbos 2020).

**Researchers characterize teacher professional learning community as follows:**

- i. Explicitly or implicitly being about shared values and vision.
- ii. Sharing experiences and expertise.
- iii. Making a focus on student learning.
- iv. Making teaching more public.
- v. Discussing useful strategies for engaging students.
- vi. Taking an inquiry stance.
- vii. Engaging in reflective dialogue.
- viii. Willingness to experiment with alternative strategies.
- ix. Collaboration where educators work together to improve educational provision.
- x. Having collective responsibility for pupil learning.
- xi. Attending to school teaching-learning challenges.
- xii. Having inclusive membership and mutual respect and support for teachers (DuFour's, 2004; Indeed editorial team, 2025).

# **EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It is a process of assessing the quality, value, or significance of something. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results, by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, using appropriate criteria such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Using evaluation the management will know the quality of the practices conducted by the organization. So for any practices conducted in an organization it is important to do evaluation. An evaluation should provide credible, useful, evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision making processes of organizations and stakeholders (UNDP, 2021).

Evaluation is a process that determines the effectiveness of teaching and learning, assessing student progress, and guiding curriculum development. It involves collecting and analyzing information about a program activities, characteristics, and outcomes. The primary purpose of evaluation is to determine the effectiveness, efficiency, and overall worth of a program, project, or policy. In professional development, evaluation involves assessing the effectiveness of a program at various levels. Evaluation considers the impact of professional development on teachers that leading to improved student learning. Teacher evaluation is a vital element in improving student learning outcomes. It is concerned with gathering evidence from a range of sources that inform on teacher performance and using this to support improvements in practice. This is sometimes referred to as performance review or teacher assessment. Teachers who are implementing a curriculum will go through a process of change and improvement in their profession. A good teacher evaluation system is a powerful tool to help schools improve teaching; identify opportunities for teachers of all levels to develop further, deliver accountability for learner progress. It is reported by scholars that performance review and feedback increases teachers job satisfaction and significantly increases their development. When evaluation is executed, teachers will know areas that need improvement. Therefore, professional development is most relevant when it focuses on teachers existing needs, teachers personal needs and other needs connecting to their profession. This is based on the fact that, if teachers have been improved professionally they will be able to implement educational practices effectively and thus the quality of education will be attained (Komba and Mwakabenga, 2019; Stobie, 2025).

Program evaluation is a process that explicates program purposes, activities, outcomes and generates knowledge about their merit and worth. The process shows how the program has been ongoing, identifying the weaknesses and suggest the enhancement on various components. The judgments on the program are evaluative, based on specified criteria and

must be assessed for usefulness. Usually evaluators choose methods to collect and analyze data according to the questions being asked about the program. Given the program goals, objectives, and context, and given available resources, evaluators ask what are the best methods to help understand the program merit, to make the most useful comparisons that reveal merit or to predict worthy outcomes? Program evaluations are typically conducted to inform decision makers what need to be adjusted to make the successful accomplishment of program goals and objectives (Rallis and Bolland, 2004).

Five questions must be considered when using evaluation as a mechanism to promote continuous program improvement:

- What would we like to see happen?
- How can we make that happen?
- How is it going?
- What are the results?
- What should be done with the results?

### **Evaluation guidelines**

Evaluation guidelines provide the standards and criteria used to judge the merit or worth of a program, policy, project, or practices with the widely used criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability serving as a common framework. Effective guidelines require clear, SMART objectives, appropriate data collection methods, stakeholder engagement, rigorous analysis, and a commitment to using findings for learning and improvement. To prepare for an evaluation, clarify its purpose and questions, gather all relevant documentation and data, create a detailed plan, and then collect and analyze the information. UNDP (2021) suggested the evaluation preparation to follow these steps: Agree evaluation management, Develop the terms of reference, Prepare supporting documents & data and Select evaluators. Following is a list of guidelines designed to help improve the quality of professional development evaluations:

- i. Clarify the intended goals: Make sure professional development goals are clear in terms of the results you hope to attain.
- ii. Assess value of the goals: Take steps to ensure the goals are sufficiently challenging, worthwhile, and important.
- iii. Analyze the context: Identify the critical elements/features of the context where change is to be implemented and assess how these might influence implementation.
- iv. Estimate the programs potential to meet the goals: Explore the research base and the validity of the evidence supporting its implementation in contexts similar to yours.

- v. Determine how the goals can be assessed: Decide what evidence you would trust in determining if the goals are attained. Ensure evidence is appropriate and relevant to the various stakeholders.
- vi. Outline strategies for gathering evidence: Determine how that evidence will be gathered, who will gather it and when it should be collected (UNDP, 2021).

Guskey (2002) developed a five-level model for evaluating professional development. The levels are hierarchically arranged from simple to complex, with each higher level building on the ones before it. Given this dependency of higher levels on those coming before, the focus should be on Guskey's first level, ie Participants Reactions. Things to consider at first level are basic human needs such as the quality of food, comfort of the room, whether participants liked the experience, whether the materials and presentation make sense and whether presenters seem knowledgeable and helpful. Participants' evaluative reactions are described as a measure of satisfaction. Human beings need to be satisfied by considering the environment in which the practices are taking place. Teacher satisfaction refers to the extent to which a teacher feels happy, fulfilled, and positive about their job, work conditions, and the profession of teaching. It is influenced by various factors, including relationships with colleagues; salary, working conditions and the positive impact on student outcomes. The success of any educational institution depends on the effectiveness of its teachers, who are tasked with transferring knowledge, supervising students, and enhancing the standard of instruction. Teachers' job satisfaction has a significant impact on the lessons they teach since they are directly involved in transferring knowledge to students. Satisfied teachers are often more motivated, engaged, and committed to their work, leading to improved teaching quality and student outcomes. Good evaluation provides information that is sound, meaningful, sufficiently reliable to use in making thoughtful and responsible decisions about professional development processes and effects (Guskey and Sparks, 1991; Maslow, 1943; Hoque et al., 2023).

## Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation

Evaluation Level	What Questions Are Addressed?	How Information Will Be Gathered?	What Is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
<b>1. Participants Reactions</b>	<p>Did they like it?</p> <p>Was their time well spent?</p> <p>Did the material make sense?</p> <p>Will it be useful?</p> <p>Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful?</p> <p>Were the refreshments fresh and tasty?</p> <p>Was the room the right temperature?</p> <p>Were the chairs comfortable?</p>	Questionnaires administered at the end of the session.	Initial satisfaction with the experience.	To improve Program design and delivery.
<b>2. Participants Learning</b>	Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?	Paper and pencil Instruments, Simulations, Demonstrations, Participant Portfolios, Participant Reflections (oral and/or written).	New knowledge and skills of participants.	To improve program content, format, and organization.
<b>3. Organization Support and Change</b>	<p>Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported?</p> <p>Was the support public and overt?</p> <p>Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently?</p> <p>Were sufficient resources made available?</p> <p>Were successes recognized and shared?</p> <p>What was the impact on the organization?</p> <p>Did it affect the organizations climate and procedures?</p>	District and school records, Minutes from follow-up meetings, Questionnaires, Participant portfolios, Structured interviews with participants and district or school administrators.	The organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition.	To document and improve organization support, To inform future change efforts.

<b>4. Participants Use of New Knowledge and Skills</b>	Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills?	Questionnaires, Structured interviews with participants and their supervisors, Participant portfolios, Direct observations, Video or audio tapes, Participant reflections (oral and/or written).	Degree and quality of implementation.	To document and improve the implementation of program content.
<b>5. Student Learning Outcomes</b>	What was the impact on students? Did it affect student performance or achievement? Did it influence students physical or emotional well-being? Are students more confident as learners? Is student attendance improving? Are dropouts decreasing?	Student records, School records, Questionnaires, Participant portfolios, Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and/or administrators.	Student learning outcomes: -Cognitive (Performance & Achievement) -Affective (Attitudes & Dispositions) -Psychomotor (Skills & Behaviors)	To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up, To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development.

### **Additional information relating to Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation:**

#### **Level 1: Participants Reactions**

The first level of evaluation looks at participants reactions to the professional development experience. This is the most common form of professional development evaluations and the easiest type of information to gather and analyze. You address some questions as on the table above. Some examples of questions for professional development workshops and seminars are: Was the coffee hot and ready on time? Was the meeting room at the right temperature? Were the chairs in the room comfortable? Some educators refer to these measures of participants reactions as "happiness quotients," insisting that they reveal only the entertainment value of an activity. Measuring participants initial satisfaction with the experience can help to improve the design and delivery of programs or activities in valid ways.

#### **Level 2: Participants Learning**

This level focuses on measuring the knowledge and skills that participants acquired. Can participants describe the crucial attributes of mastery learning and give examples of how these might be applied in typical classroom situations? You can also use oral personal reflections or portfolios that participants assemble to document their learning. Measures must show attainment of specific learning goals. This means that indicators of successful learning



need to be outlined before activities begin. You can use this information as a basis for improving the content, format, and organization of the program or activities.

### **Level 3: Organization Support and Change**

This level focuses on the organization support and change. Lack of this level can sabotage any professional development effort, even when all the individual aspects of professional development are done right. Organization policies and practices make learning highly competitive and will thwart the most valiant efforts to have students cooperate and help one another learn (Guskey, 2000). The lack of positive results in this case doesn't reflect poor training or inadequate learning, but rather organization policies that undermine implementation efforts. Use information collected to document and improve organization support but also to inform future change initiatives.

### **Level 4: Participants Use of New Knowledge and Skills**

At this level we ask, did the new knowledge and skills that participants learned make a difference in their professional practice? The key to gathering relevant information at this level rests in specifying clear indicators of both the degree and the quality of implementation. The most accurate information typically comes from direct observations, either with trained observers or by reviewing video or audiotapes. You can analyze this information to help restructure future programs and activities to facilitate better and more consistent implementation.

### **Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes**

This level addresses the bottom line. Did the professional development activity benefit students in any way? The particular student learning outcomes of interest depend, of course, on the goals of that specific professional development effort. In gathering level 5 information, they find that their students scores on measures of writing ability over the school year increased significantly compared with those of comparable students whose teachers did not use these strategies. Information about a program's overall impact can guide improvements in all aspects of professional development program. Information on student learning outcomes is used to estimate the cost effectiveness of professional development, sometimes referred to as return on investment or ROI evaluation (Parry, 1996).

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