



Role of continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) on teachers' and learners' achievement in South Africa: A literature review



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ABSTRACT

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) refers to the ongoing learning and development of teachers throughout their careers. It involves a range of activities, programs, and initiatives designed to help teachers improve their knowledge, skills, and effectiveness in the classroom. CPTD programs can take many different forms, such as workshops, seminars, mentoring programs, online courses, and peer networks. This desktop review paper examines the role of CPTD on teachers' and learners' achievement. The paper reviews among others the following; the nature and concept of CPTD, the importance of CPTD, South African teacher education policy framework and CPTD, the educational achievement and CPTD, school effectiveness and CPTD, learner and teacher learning and CPTD. The paper uses social learning theory as a theory that underpins the paper and makes some plausible recommendations.

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Introduction

Continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is an important aspect of improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of teachers. In South Africa, CPTD is a mandatory requirement for teachers to maintain their teaching licenses. Numerous studies have shown that CPTD has a positive impact on teacher productivity, which can ultimately lead to improved student outcomes (Adu, 2019). CPTD provides teachers with new knowledge and skills, which they can apply in the classroom. This can include training in new teaching methods, the use of technology in teaching, and strategies for managing classroom behaviour. When teachers have access to such training, they can improve their teaching practices and become more effective in their roles.

CPTD can help to keep teachers motivated and engaged in their work. When teachers have opportunities to learn and grow professionally, they are more likely to feel valued and appreciated in their roles. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and a greater sense of commitment to their work. CPTD can help teachers to stay up-to-date with changes in the education system and to adapt to new policies and curriculum changes. This can help to ensure that teachers are delivering the most relevant and effective education to their students.

Several studies have investigated the effect of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) on learners' achievement in South Africa. A literature review of these studies reveals the following findings:

- i. Positive impact on learner achievement: Many studies suggest that CPTD has a positive impact on learners' academic achievement. For example, a study by Nieuwenhuis (2018) found that teachers who participated in CPTD programs reported improvements in their teaching practices, which in turn led to improved learner achievement.

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- ii. The impact varies depending on program design: The impact of CPTD on learner achievement can vary depending on the design and implementation of the program. A study by Nsibandé and Mbokazi (2023), found that the effectiveness of CPTD programs depended on factors such as the relevance of the content, the quality of facilitation, and the level of support provided to teachers.
- iii. Need for sustained and ongoing CPTD: Many studies suggest that the impact of CPTD on learner achievement is greatest when the program is sustained and ongoing. For example, a study by Pagnucci (2023) found that sustained and ongoing teacher professional development programs had a positive impact on learner achievement in mathematics and literacy.
- iv. Impact on non-cognitive outcomes: CPTD can also have a positive impact on non-cognitive outcomes such as learner motivation, engagement, and attitudes towards learning. A study by Lehtinen (2023), found that a CPTD program focusing on learner-centred teaching practices had a positive impact on learner motivation and engagement in a South African primary school.

CPTD can have a positive impact on teacher and learner achievement in South Africa. However, the effectiveness of CPTD programs depends on factors such as program design, sustainability, and ongoing support. Further research is needed to identify the most effective approaches to CPTD in the South African context and to better understand the relationship between teacher professional development and learner achievement.

However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of CPD depends on the quality of the training provided. In South Africa, there have been concerns about the quality and relevance of CPD programs, as well as issues around access to training opportunities. Therefore, policymakers and educators need to ensure that CPD programs are of high quality and accessible to all teachers, to maximize the positive impact on teacher productivity and student outcomes (Adu, 2019).

Literature Review

The following are reviewed in line with the topic.

The Nature and Concept of Continuous Professional Teacher Development

Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) refers to the ongoing process of improving the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of teachers throughout their careers. It involves a range of activities that are designed to enhance the professional development of teachers and improve the quality of education for students.

The nature and concept of CPTD can vary depending on the specific context and needs of individual teachers and schools. However, some common features characterize effective CPTD programs, including:

- i. Alignment with professional standards: CPTD programs should be aligned with professional standards for teaching and learning. This means that the content and activities of the program should be based on the knowledge and skills that teachers need to be effective in the classroom.
- ii. Focus on student learning: CPTD programs should be designed to improve student learning outcomes. This means that teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices and to identify areas for improvement that will benefit their students.
- iii. Ongoing and sustained: CPTD is a continuous process that takes place throughout a teacher's career. It should be designed to provide teachers with ongoing opportunities to learn and grow, rather than a one-time event or activity.
- iv. Evidence-based: CPTD programs should be grounded in research and best practices in education. This means that teachers should have access to the latest research and be encouraged to use evidence-based strategies in their teaching.
- v. Collaborative and supportive: CPTD programs should be collaborative and supportive, providing teachers with opportunities to work with colleagues and receive feedback and support. This can include peer coaching, mentoring, and professional learning communities.

Effective CPTD programs can have a positive impact on teacher quality and student learning outcomes. By providing teachers with ongoing opportunities for professional development and growth, CPTD programs can help to improve the quality of education for all students (Adu & Olowu, 2022).

Importance of CPTD: South African Context

In the South African context, Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is important for several reasons. Here are some of the key reasons why CPTD is important in South Africa:

- i. Improving the quality of education: CPTD programs are designed to improve the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of teachers. By providing teachers with ongoing opportunities for professional development, CPTD programs can improve the quality of education for students.

- ii. Addressing skills gaps: Many teachers in South Africa face skills gaps that can impact their ability to provide high-quality instruction. CPTD programs can help to address these skills gaps by providing teachers with training and support in areas where they need it most.
- iii. Promoting social justice: Education is a key tool for promoting social justice and addressing inequality in South Africa. CPTD programs can help to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status.
- iv. Meeting professional standards: In South Africa, teachers are required to meet professional standards to maintain their teaching licenses. CPTD programs can help teachers to meet these standards and stay up-to-date with the latest teaching practices and research.
- v. Supporting teacher retention: Teacher retention is a major challenge in South Africa, with many teachers leaving the profession due to low salaries, poor working conditions, and lack of support. CPTD programs can help to support teacher retention by providing teachers with opportunities for professional growth and development.

CPTD is essential for improving the quality of education in South Africa and promoting social justice. By providing teachers with ongoing opportunities for professional development, CPTD programs can help to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education and that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in the classroom (Adu, 2019).

Theoretical Framework: Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is a psychological theory that emphasizes the role of observation and social interaction in the process of learning. Developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, the theory posits that individuals learn through the observation of others' behaviour and the consequences of those behaviours. In other words, people learn by observing the actions of others and the outcomes of those actions, and by modelling their behaviour on what they have seen.

Social learning theory suggests that learning occurs through four main processes:

- i. Attention: Learners must pay attention to the behaviour they are observing to learn from it.
- ii. Retention: Learners must be able to remember the behaviour they have observed to reproduce it later.
- iii. Reproduction: Learners must be able to reproduce the behaviour they have observed, which requires them to have the necessary physical and cognitive abilities.
- iv. Motivation: Learners must have the motivation to engage in the behaviour they have observed. This motivation can come from a variety of sources, including external rewards and punishments, as well as internal factors like personal beliefs and values.

Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn not only from their own experiences but also from the experiences of others. This means that learning can occur through observation, imitation, and modelling, as well as through direct instruction and practice. The theory has been applied to a wide range of contexts, including education, parenting, and organizational behaviour, and has been used to explain a variety of behaviours, from aggression and criminal behaviour to pro-social behaviour and altruism.

Social learning theory and continuing professional teacher development (CPD) are closely related in the context of education. One way in which social learning theory is relevant to CPD is that it emphasizes the importance of observation and modelling in the learning process. In the context of teacher development, this means that teachers can learn from observing the practices of other teachers, both in formal CPD settings and in their day-to-day work. This can include observing other teachers' classroom management strategies, teaching methods, and approaches to assessment and evaluation (Duggins, 2023).

Social learning theory also highlights the importance of feedback in the learning process. In the context of CPD, this means that teachers need to receive feedback on their performance to learn and improve. This feedback can come from a variety of sources, including mentors, colleagues, and students.

Furthermore, according to Duggins (2023), social learning theory suggests that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others. In the context of CPD, this means that teachers can benefit from collaborative learning experiences, such as peer coaching or co-teaching. By working together with other teachers, teachers can share ideas, receive feedback, and develop new skills and strategies. Overall, social learning theory provides a useful framework for understanding how teachers learn and develop, and for designing effective CPD programs.

Research and Methodology

This is a desktop review Role of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) on Teachers' and Learners' Achievement in South Africa, so, there is no methodology.

South African Teacher Education Policy Framework and Continuing Professional Development for Teachers (CPTD)

The South African Teacher Education Policy Framework (TEPF) is a policy document that provides guidelines for teacher education and development in South Africa. The TEPF recognizes the importance of continuing professional development for teachers (CPDT) in improving the quality of education in the country.

The TEPF identifies several key principles for CPDT in South Africa, including:

- i. The need for ongoing CPDT to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the country.
- ii. The importance of CPDT is that is relevant, responsive, and responsive to the needs of teachers and learners.
- iii. The need for CPDT that is evidence-based and grounded in best practices.
- iv. The importance of CPDT is that is inclusive and recognizes the diversity of learners and teachers in South Africa.

The TEPF also outlines several strategies for implementing effective CPDT programs, including:

- i. The development of a comprehensive CPDT system that includes both pre-service and in-service training.
- ii. The establishment of CPDT centres that provide professional development opportunities for teachers.
- iii. The provision of resources and support for teachers to engage in self-directed CPDT, such as online courses and professional learning communities.
- iv. The development of partnerships between schools, universities, and other organizations to facilitate CPDT.

TEPF recognizes the importance of CPDT in improving the quality of education in South Africa and provides guidelines for implementing effective CPDT programs that are relevant, evidence-based, and inclusive. By promoting ongoing professional development for teachers, the TEPF aims to improve teaching and learning outcomes for all learners in the country (Adu, 2019).

An Overview of professional development teacher programmes

Professional development teacher programs are designed to provide teachers with opportunities to improve their skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in the classroom. These programs can take many forms, including workshops, conferences, coaching, mentoring, online courses, and graduate programs. Here are some common types of professional development teacher programs:

- i. **In-service training:** In-service training refers to professional development programs that are provided to teachers while they are working in schools. These programs can take the form of workshops, seminars, and other short-term training opportunities.
- ii. **Mentoring and coaching:** Mentoring and coaching programs pair teachers with experienced educators who can provide guidance and support as they navigate the challenges of teaching. These programs can be formal or informal and can take place within a school or district.
- iii. **Online courses:** Online courses provide teachers with the flexibility to learn at their own pace and on their schedule. These courses can cover a wide range of topics, from classroom management to the use of technology in the classroom.
- iv. **Graduate programs:** Graduate programs in education provide teachers with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills in a particular area of education. These programs can lead to a master's degree, specialist degree, or doctoral degree.
- v. **Conferences and workshops:** Conferences and workshops bring together educators from across a region or country to share best practices, learn about new teaching strategies, and network with colleagues.
- vi. **Collaborative learning communities:** Collaborative learning communities bring together groups of teachers to share ideas, collaborate on lesson plans, and provide support to one another. These communities can be formed within a school or district, or online.

Professional development teacher programs are an important part of ongoing teacher learning and growth. They provide teachers with the opportunity to improve their teaching practices and to stay up-to-date with the latest research and best practices in education (Adu & Okeke, 2014).

Educational Achievement and CPTD

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) has been linked to improved educational achievement for students. Research studies have shown that when teachers participate in ongoing professional development programs, they can enhance their teaching skills and knowledge, which in turn leads to improved student performance. CPTD programs can help teachers stay up to date with the latest teaching methodologies, curriculum changes, and technological advancements. This knowledge and skill development can enable teachers to better meet the diverse needs of their students, adapt their instruction to different learning styles, and improve classroom management techniques.

In addition, CPTD programs can also help teachers develop a growth mindset, a positive attitude towards learning, and a desire to continuously improve their practice. This mindset can be modelled on students, leading to a positive impact on their attitude towards learning and academic achievement. CPTD can also lead to improved student outcomes by fostering a positive school culture and collaboration among teachers. When teachers participate in professional development together, they can share best practices, reflect on their teaching practice, and work collaboratively to improve student outcomes. CPTD can have a significant positive impact on educational achievement for students. It enables teachers to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge, develop a growth mindset, and foster a positive school culture. As a result, students benefit from improved instruction, increased motivation, and enhanced learning outcomes (Adu & Olowu, 2022).

School Effectiveness and Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) can have a significant impact on school effectiveness. When teachers participate in professional development programs, they can enhance their teaching skills and knowledge, which can lead to improved student outcomes and a more effective school environment. CPTD can impact school effectiveness through the development of teacher leadership. As teachers become more skilled in their practice, they may be better equipped to take on leadership roles within the school, such as serving as mentors to other teachers, participating in school improvement initiatives, or leading professional development workshops. This can help build a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement within the school, ultimately leading to greater school effectiveness.

CPTD can also impact school effectiveness by improving teacher retention rates. When teachers feel supported and valued through ongoing professional development, they may be more likely to stay in their positions and remain committed to the school's mission and vision. This can lead to greater continuity in the school's programs and initiatives, as well as a more stable and positive school environment (Pagnucci et al., 2023).

In addition, CPTD can impact school effectiveness by fostering a positive school culture. When teachers participate in professional development programs together, they have opportunities to collaborate, share best practices, and reflect on their teaching practice. This can lead to a greater sense of community among teachers, which can translate to a more positive and supportive school culture for students and staff alike. CPTD can play a crucial role in promoting school effectiveness by developing teacher leadership, improving teacher retention rates, and fostering a positive school culture. By investing in ongoing professional development for teachers, schools can create a more effective and supportive learning environment for all stakeholders.

Learner and Teacher Learning and Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) can impact both teacher and learner learning positively. When teachers participate in ongoing professional development programs, they can enhance their teaching skills and knowledge, which can lead to improved student outcomes and a more effective school environment.

For teachers, CPTD can help them stay up to date with the latest teaching methodologies, curriculum changes, and technological advancements. This knowledge and skill development can enable teachers to better meet the diverse needs of their students, adapt their instruction to different learning styles, and improve classroom management techniques. As a result, teachers can be more effective in their practice and help their students achieve greater learning outcomes. CPTD can also impact learner learning by enhancing the quality of instruction in the classroom. When teachers participate in professional development programs, they can learn new teaching strategies and techniques that can help them engage students in the learning process, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners (Nsibande & Mbokazi, 2023).

Moreover, CPTD can also impact learner learning by promoting a positive school culture. When teachers participate in professional development programs together, they have opportunities to collaborate, share best practices, and reflect on their teaching practice. This can lead to a greater sense of community among teachers, which can translate to a more positive and supportive school culture for students. CPTD can play a crucial role in enhancing both teacher and learner learning. By investing in ongoing professional development for teachers, schools can create a more effective and supportive learning environment for all stakeholders.

Conclusions

The literature suggests that Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) has a positive impact on both teacher and learner achievement in South Africa. Teachers who engage in ongoing professional development are better equipped to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge, which can lead to improved student outcomes and a more effective school environment. This is particularly important in the South African context, where the education system faces numerous challenges and inequities.

Research also suggests that CPTD can impact learner achievement by enhancing the quality of instruction in the classroom, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Furthermore, CPTD can promote a positive school culture, which can lead to improved teacher retention rates and a more stable and positive school environment. The evidence suggests that investing in CPTD for teachers can have significant benefits for both teachers and learners in South Africa. Schools and policymakers need to prioritize ongoing professional development for teachers to improve the quality of education and promote greater equity in the South African education system.

Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed, here are some recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) programs and their impact on teacher and learner achievement in South Africa:

- i. Develop CPTD programs that are tailored to the needs of teachers and learners in South Africa. Programs should take into account the unique challenges faced by South African schools, such as language barriers, teacher shortages, and resource constraints.
- ii. Provide ongoing support and resources for teachers who participate in CPTD programs. This could include access to mentoring, coaching, and peer support networks.
- iii. Foster a culture of collaboration and reflection among teachers to encourage ongoing professional growth and development. This could involve creating opportunities for teachers to work together on projects or share best practices.
- iv. Use evidence-based teaching strategies and methodologies that have been proven to improve student outcomes. This could involve training teachers on specific teaching strategies such as differentiated instruction, active learning, and formative assessment.
- v. Encourage teachers to use technology in the classroom to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. This could involve providing training on how to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practice.
- vi. Ensure that CPTD programs are accessible to all teachers, regardless of their location or socio-economic status. This could involve using online learning platforms or providing funding for travel and accommodation for teachers in remote or disadvantaged areas.
- vii. Finally, evaluate the impact of CPTD programs on teacher and learner achievement to ensure that they are effective and meet the needs of South African schools. This could involve conducting regular assessments of teacher and student learning outcomes and using feedback to improve program design and delivery.

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