

Continuous professional development for staff at Colleges of Education-Ghana: Analysis of a proposed conceptual framework by a college principal

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Abstract

Knowledge is dynamic just as society is dynamic. The professional dynamism of any sector depends largely on the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and value for effective and efficient professional practice. If professionals are updated in their professional knowledge and skills to meet the demand and need of clientele, organisational Management can be sure of driving a right and dynamic knowledge society. The field of education is no exception when it comes to the subject matter of keeping the workforce knowledge and skill updated. The case of the workforce of colleges of education in Ghana in relation to producing the right manpower need for the delivery of education in the country cannot be overemphasised. That system produces teachers for foundation building of knowledge of the young generation of the country. Specifically, the colleges of education train teachers that deliver education at the grassroots- basic education. That behooves that these workforce, especially, tutors undergo relevant continuous professional development in updating their specialised knowledge and skills in the teaching industry to help them teach up-to-date content, pedagogic and pedagogic-content knowledge to their educands – student teachers. For any continuous professional development programme to have a good beginning or sound footing, effective implementation and review for future improvement, it must be situated on a robust conceptual framework. Such a conceptual framework must take cognizance of the legal instrument, Act 847 that established the colleges of education in Ghana in addition to any other related Acts of the country, in order to examine the extent to which those legal instruments empower and mandate the colleges in engaging the workforce in continuous professional development. Thus, this analytical write up probed the legal instruments and pointed out some implications in the system of the colleges. The proposed conceptual framework also had its parts dilated on and finally conclusion was drawn on the relevance of the experience of the writer in connection with the topic ‘continuous professional development’ as an anecdote of a college of education principal.

Key Words: Conceptual Framework, Continuous Professional Development, College of Education, Workers, College Administrators.

Introduction

Continuous professional development (CPD) is as important as initial professional education (IPE). Teacher education therefore embraces all professional activities that enhance

the professional engagement of the teacher in order to improve and ensure quality of professional practice of every practitioner. Colleges of education as teacher training institutions have the accreditation mandate to engage the faculty in continuous professional development as they are

practically-based, occupationally-specific in preparing students to enter the job market (Newman, 2013). It is the prime interest of the Government of Ghana to ensure high standard of practice among the colleges that brought about affiliation of the colleges of education to a teacher education university, University of Cape Coast right from the inception of the then teacher training colleges in Ghana (National Accreditation Board, 2007). The sure way of ensuring that high standard, is the organisation of CPD programmes for the college workers especially the academic staff as they serve as the main brain of delivery of the curriculum. After initial professional training certificates the individual to operate as an autonomous professional with the basic or minimum qualification, CPD updates the professional in helping him / her maintain and improve the professional knowledge and skill (Fielden, 1998). Teachers must be able to apply, extend and synthesize various forms of knowledge, develop attitudes, values and dispositions that create a conducive environment for quality teaching and learning and motivate learners to fully realize their potential as enshrined in the education paper of the Government of Ghana (2002). Of course, CPD aside site-based seminars and workshop involves enrollment on further studies in higher educational institutions for acquisition of more competent knowledge and skill (Bubb & Earley, 2007). CPD prepares and supports the teacher to manage future responsibility effectively and as a means of constant rebirth of knowledge (Ashebir, 2011). In fulfilment of dynamism of the knowledge society, Fielden (2011) maintained that the total of human knowledge is doubling every five or ten years, hence the teacher must invest in scholarship and self-tuition to keep in touch with the knowledge society. A huge sum of the budget of the Government of Ghana is expended on the sector of education and between 85 and 90 per cent of the total school budget is used to pay employee salaries, thus, if a successful school engagement that helps learners to achieve maximum learning at every time is to be achieved, teacher CPD is the sensible thing to engage in (GNAT, 2016). The colleges of education as the main institution for training basic school teachers of the Ghana Government need to put itself together in implementing every educational change and new curricular. The Education Act of 2008 which gave birth to National Teaching Council (NTC) mandates through same registration and licensing of teachers of which Pre-tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) an emanating policy requires compulsory CPD of practicing teachers before re-licensing is carried out. The colleges therefore have the mandate to build the consciousness of CPD in both their pre and in-service teachers. This behooves on the colleges to also embrace the concept of CPD and promote it to even make their tutors abreast with the policy demand. The Colleges of Education Act, 2012, therefore is very explicit on the topical issue of CPD when it states that

“training students to acquire the necessary professional and academic competencies for teaching in pre-tertiary institutions and

non-formal education institutions; building the professional and academic capacities of serving teachers through regular continuing education; providing programmes that will promote the effective teaching of Science, Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology and other related subjects to meet the needs of contemporary society; and to foster links with relevant institutions and the community in order to ensure the holistic training of teachers (Act 847, p.4).

The sure way of carrying out this concept of CPD is to hinge it on a robust conceptual framework which would help every practitioner including administrators and policy makers have a clear way of engaging the staff. This has necessitated this analytic piece of write up within a research. This analytical write up encompasses four definite yet intertwined themes. The first part addresses the status of colleges of education, the second part presents implications of the status of the colleges in the light of organisation of their own departmentalised continuous professional development, whilst the third part presents a model of conceptual framework for organisation of college-based departmentalised continuous professional development for the staff of colleges of education. The fourth and concluding part unveiled the status of the writer in the college of education system with a conclusion to the write up.

Part 1: Overview of the status, and mandates of colleges of education in Ghana

The colleges of education emanated from the then teacher training colleges. These teacher training colleges existed as post-secondary non tertiary teacher training institutions under the governance of the Ministry of Education and direct supervision of Ghana Education Service-Teacher Education Division (TED) that saw to their funding, appointment and promotion of staff, disciplinary engagements, and all other related exigencies (Effah and Newman, 2009; Atiku 2017).

The Ghanaian 2007 Educational Reform Policy on the Teacher Training Colleges brought about the reformation to the new status and name, ‘tertiary’ and ‘colleges of education’. The government’s White Paper on the Report of the Educational Reform Review Committee of 2004 indicated the policy of staffing all levels of education with professionally trained teachers by the year 2015. This, the committee considered as a must in order to respond appropriately to and fulfill the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on education which stated that by the year 2015 all children should have access to quality education and health care.

Among the recommendations made by the reform committee on teacher education in the country to help achieve this policy, include upgrading teacher training colleges into diploma-awarding institutions, which would be affiliated to the education-oriented universities to be

groomed. These recommendations had been implemented leading to the production of the first batch of diploma holding certificate graduates in 2007 by the then teacher training colleges and through many distant programmes organized by the main teacher training universities - University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba.

Diploma certificates are produced by tertiary institutions and this behooves on the government of Ghana to transit the teacher training colleges into tertiary institutions. Moreover, Ministry of Education (2003) in its Educational Strategic Plan for 2003-2015 and the Educational Reform Committee Report (2004) indicated that the teacher training colleges were to be accredited the status of tertiary institutions. Thus, National Accreditation Board embarked on inspection throughout the then 38 government teacher training colleges in the country for their accreditation and certification into the tertiary status.

Certificates were issued out to the colleges in 2007 after inspections were carried out on their academic facilities and programmes. GOG (2012) in the colleges of education bill revealed that the Fourth Parliament of the Government of Ghana passed the bill on the conversion of the teacher training colleges as post-secondary institutions into tertiary status in 2012. The bill was assented to by the President giving it an executive approval and support on 27th June, 2012, with the enactment of Act 847, Colleges of Education Act, to legalize the operations of the colleges as tertiary institutions to be known and called Colleges of Education.

Consequently, the status of the colleges as dictated by the Act are that: *they are a public tertiary institution; shall be affiliated to an institution of higher learning established by law or charter for teacher education in the country; they are bodies corporate with perpetual succession to be known as colleges of education...* (Act 847, p. 3).

Clearly, the aims and functions of the colleges, as spelt out by the Act indicate their broad mandates among which are training of students to acquire professional and academic competencies for teaching in pre-tertiary institutions and non-formal education institutions and building the professional and academic capacities of serving teachers through regular continuing education including promotion of Science, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology education. The functions of colleges of education buttressed the practical steps to be taken to actualize the mandates of the aim. Among these are provision of teacher education to citizens in the teaching profession by authorities making decision on the subjects to be taught based on their special relevance to the needs of the educational system of the country and for national development and creation of exposure to students modern and innovative techniques of teaching and learning in order to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the classroom. The colleges too as part of their functions are to ensure basic and action researches to form an integral part of teacher education to promote quality teaching and learning. Setting up well-equipped resource centres where staff, students and serving teachers will be assisted to acquire skills of preparation of teaching and learning

materials for effective teaching and development of close relationship with professional teacher organisations was part of the functions.

In accordance with article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic, the government set up Councils to carry out governance of the institutions (GOG, 1992). These Councils were inaugurated as interim Governing Councils in 2013 and later inaugurated as substantive Councils in 2016. After change in government in 2017, the existing Councils were dissolved and new ones reconstituted from May, 2019. Again, in accordance with the Presidential Transition Act 845, the 3rd Councils of Colleges of Education were dissolved on 26th May, 2021. The general powers and functions of the Councils adequately substantiate their adjudicative roles in the colleges. These functions include but not limited to the following:

1. *The Council shall determine the policies of the college and shall have control over the general programmes by ensuring the attainment of the aims of the college; approving the educational programmes developed by the academic board having regard to the mandate of the college; overseeing the internal organisation of the college including the establishment, variation and supervision of academic divisions, departments and faculties of the college; prescribing the terms and conditions for the admission of persons selected for a course of study organized by the college; institute awards, fellowships and scholarship schemes in furtherance of the aims of the college; appoint the principal, the vice principal, tutors and other persons to academic and administrative positions in the college; manage the finances and fixed assets of the college; consider and approve annual estimates of income and expenditure of the college; be responsible for policy on the discipline of staff and students of the college; promote income-generating activities; and perform any other functions that are ancillary to the aims of the college*
2. *The Council may establish committees that it considers necessary and shall assign to a committee functions that it considers appropriate.*
3. *The Council may seek the advice of the Academic Board on any matter coming before the Council which the Council considers to have academic implications* (Act 847, pg. 6).

The Council is a highly powered representative of the President consisting of four government nominees of which one becomes the chairman; the college principal; one representative each of the affiliate institution; Ghana Education Service, National Council for Tertiary Education, National Teaching Council, Alumni, Students Representative Council, Teachers and Educational Workers Union, Academic Staff, with three members as ex-officio to attend the meetings. The ex-officio membership includes the vice principal, the finance officer of the college, and the

secretary. The total membership is therefore 16 (p. 5). The Councils, to make work more effective, and efficient, set up various committees. The standing committees of Council include Finance, Development, Tender, Audit Report Implementation (now replaced with Internal Audit Committee), and Appointment and Promotion Committees (NCTE, 2015).

The Academic Board, which is a statutory organ of the colleges, has eight main statutory committees namely: Executive Committee, Staff Development and Research Committee, Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee, Works and Physical Development Committee, Residence and Housing Committee, Library Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and Professional Development Committee (NCTE, 2015). Through this committee system, college-based departmentalised continuous professional development could be instituted to help retrain and improve on the competencies of the personnel. The six functional departments of academic programmes include: Education Studies; Mathematics and Computer Studies; Languages; Vocational and Technical Education; Science; and Art and Social Sciences. All these departments have heads and belong to the Academic Board in making vital decisions in the college's academic and related issues (NCTE 2015).

Part 2. Implications of status of colleges of education in the provision of continuous professional development for their staff

Having examined the status and mandate of the colleges of education in Ghana, it is very obvious that they have the power and professional mandate to organise CPD for their members. The potentials of the colleges in organizing CPD for their staff are articulated below for consideration of college administrators and their academic boards.

1. It is ideal and mandatory. As could be deduced from the functions of colleges aforementioned 'building the professional and academic capacities of serving teachers through regular continuing education', a college that does not plan and engage its academic staff in continuous professional development would soon outlive its usefulness since knowledge is dynamic so are needs of society, therefore the education sector cannot be static.
2. The colleges are well situated in planning to deliver such programmes. The colleges have the presidential attorney, Council, with all the necessary committees that must commission such programmes and see to success of such in the colleges.
3. The colleges are to develop local, national and international relationship to help them better their lots. This relationship coupled with the support of the mentoring universities could help provide the technical support in programming continuous professional development of the staff.

4. The colleges are to engage in basic and action research as a function. Such researches could be commissioned towards needs assessment of the staff / department and some professional development programmed as intervention for achievement in those aspects of the college.

It could be concluded that without continuous effort of colleges of education to abreast the knowledge and skills of their staff towards delivery, their aims and functions as providers of professional technocrats would be challenged in the global, dynamic, and competitive knowledge economy. This calls for a practical conceptual framework to be adopted in organising continuing education for the staff. A clear, innovative and adoptable framework has therefore been designed by the *author*, for analysis of CPD issues for the academic and other staff of the colleges to adopt.

Part 3. Conceptual framework for Colleges of Education College-Based Departmentalised CPD

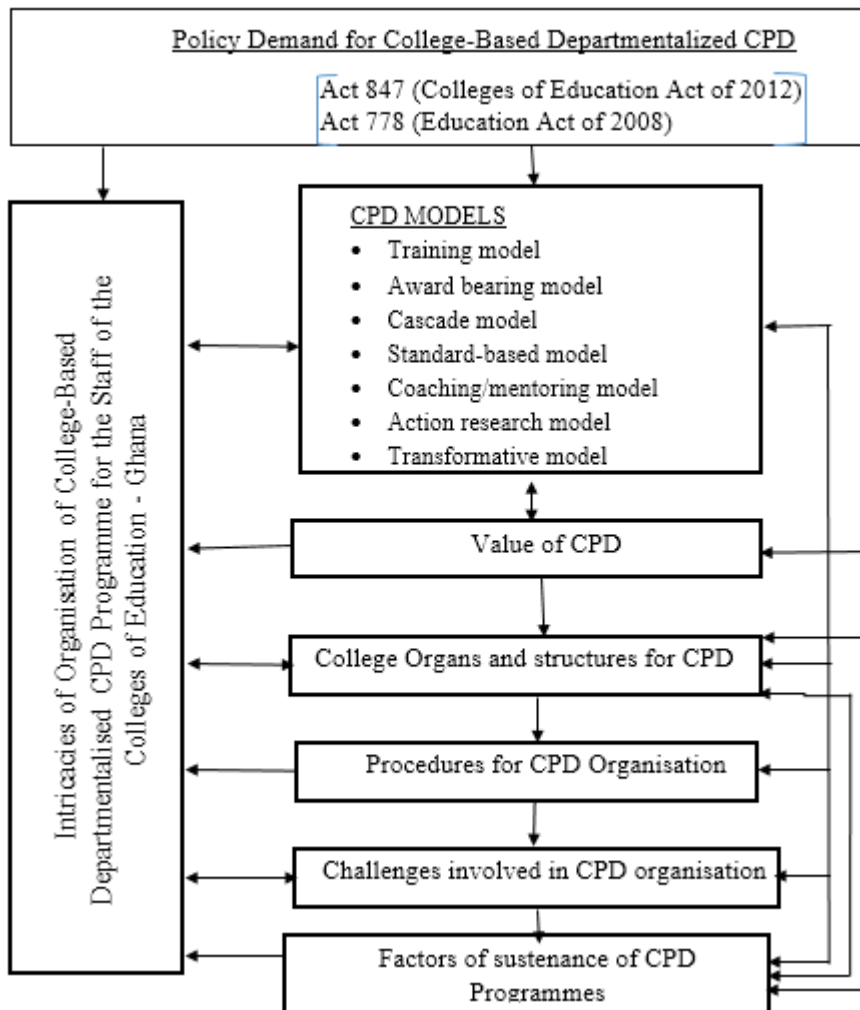


Figure 1: Atiku conceptual framework for CPD for Staff of Colleges of Education-Ghana

The conceptual framework above presents the necessity of college-based departmentalised CPD programme stemming from two Acts – Colleges of Education Act of 2012, Act 847 and Education Act of 2008, Act 778. Act 847 spelt out the mandate of organizing CPD for the staff in Section 3(b), among other things, that the colleges shall provide continuing education to its members and other beneficiaries. Among the recent reforms that have happened in the area of education was the enactment of Education Act of 2008, Act 778 which enveloped among other topical educational issues establishment of National Teaching Council (NTC), National Inspectorate Board, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and Schools Library and Information Directorate (GOG, 2007).

The NTC has specific mandates just as the rest of the Councils have. It is to see to the professionalization of the teacher through licensing to standardize educational practices with other international education bodies (Mol, 2018). By this, the NTC will ensure quality control of education, especially at the pre-tertiary level. In its pursuit to achieving the goal, the NTC in collaboration with JICA - Ghana Chapter, mandated the Pre-Tertiary Teacher

Promotion Development and Management (PTPDM) policy to design a career progression path for teachers, and to consider other topical themes including School Leadership and Management, Continuous Professional Development and Teacher Assessment Framework (Mol, 2018). By this, the Ghanaian pre-tertiary teacher would have to undergo a required number of CPD programmes and also prove their professional worth in their professional practice.

The CoE and teacher education universities in the country are to be the primary custodians of such issues, in order that they could imbibe the practice of CPD in their products. It is very clear that a teacher who is not in the practice of engaging in CPD cannot give off his or her best in the teaching industry, and hence, the Acts have the link to institution of CPD at the colleges. In the discourse of CPD, various designs / models are very vital for consideration in light of the demand of practice of the teacher. Thus, 'CPD Models' has been featured in the framework. Considering the importance of any programme(s) is a strong factor of motivation for participation by targeted beneficiaries. In the case of CPD targeted at teachers is no exception and therefore the value of CoE CPD must be established to help

staff to get committed. This validates the inclusion of 'CPD Values' in the framework to help various stakeholders identify specific importance of CPD to various clientele in the CoE spectrum. Procedural approaches matter in implementation of every professional activity. A well-designed CPD programme would have its implementation better put and achieved if appropriate procedures are pre-viewed. In a similar manner, all implementations hinge on structures / organs that are dependable for achievement of the needed impact and results (Atiku, 2020). In considering these undebatable conditions, 'College Organs and Structures for CPD' and 'Procedures for CPD Organisation' have respectively be included in the framework. Challenges are endemic in every venture and CPD of tutors that have many key players would not be undertaken without encounter of its own related issues such as availability of resources and related topical themes. In the face of challenges, once there is goodwill, there abound ways of managing such endemic challenges that resonate from the processes. It is therefore worth considering challenges and sustainability in CPD organization, hence the essence of the captions 'Challenges involved in CPD organisation' and 'Factors of sustenance of CPD Programmes' in the framework.

The spontaneous linkages established among the themes in the framework demonstrates the interdependent relationship that exists among clustered topical areas of the subject matter CPD and that also clearly put the narrative to the discourse that in any attempt of organizing CPD for any group of professionals, especially in the teaching industry, if sight is loss of any of these vital topical theme during the planning, the programme would face serious setbacks and might not achieve the needed impact. Dispassionate consideration of the issue put practical dimensions to it. For instance, various models of CPD have their values for the staff (e.g the staff would improve its professional credentials on completion of an award bearing programme) and these models would all depend on the college available organs and structures and, procedures. All the models also have their peculiar challenges that can come up within the programmes. For instance, the procedures and the organs, if not available in the college, the programme of CPD would suffer. Similarly, if the staff does not co-operate with college to ensure the success of the programme, that could pose a challenge to success. So it is that the programmes also have the potential in posing challenges to the staff as commitment and other resources must be sacrificed by the staff in benefiting from the CPD programme.

The college organs and structures immerge from the departments whilst such organs and structures have bearings on the CPD programmes of the departments. All these interconnectivities prove how dependent the success of CPD programme is and any attempt(s) at ignoring the deficiency in an aspect, would lead to deficiency in other aspect(s), rendering the programme valueless, and hence waste of resources.

The merits of this paper include but not limited to its concise, well-laid, comprehensive, technical and robust

nature whilst its demerit may be derived from the fact that it may have to be altered to suit situations of individual colleges in providing solution to staff CPD needs from time to time.

Part 4. Conclusion

Educational leadership is about provision of direction and focus for effective and efficient use of educational resources- human and material, to improve educational practices that finally culminate into quality educational delivery. Thus, if such effectiveness and efficiency in educational delivery are to happen, institutional leaders must continuously provide motivational environment that harnesses the opportunity of staff to engage in CPD for further development of their potentials. The overall effect is that value for money and other resources will be achieved as such educational institutions reap the fruits of their labour of CPD in the form of improved learning outcome of learners and an overall institutional satisfaction achieved in membership. Therefore, colleges of education leaders and their entire membership stand to benefit tremendously by adoption and usage of the conceptual framework of this write up as they interpret their situations and apply the framework in tackling what their institutional needs are in light of CPD of the staff'.

Background of the author

The writer of this educative piece is a college of education principal who has gained 21 years of experience in the college of education system. A total of 11 years of her experience has been in senior management positions and with that she has enriched her educational delivery life with much participation in decision making in educational management and administration. She has led in proposal writings and implementation of projects won out of those proposals. In the continuous professional development of college staff, she has been at the fore front in getting both government directed version (MoE through T-TEL project initiative as implemented through NCTE Now GTEC) and her college-based versions well organised and attended. She is a regular participant in those sessions. It is with no surprise that her college is experiencing exponential transformation and growth even amidst COVID-19 global pandemic challenges. She is a scholar in educational administration and leadership as that is her major study area up to doctoral level with a good number of publication in the area.

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