

Role of School Head in the Academic Development of a Teacher



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Role of School Head in Academic Development of a Teacher

“The efficiency of a system of education rests on the quality of a teacher. Without a good teacher even the best of the system is bound to fail, with good teachers even defects of the system can be largely overcome” Humayun Kabir, Education in India P-199

Objective:

Among Educational policymakers, researchers, and practitioners there is an emerging concern that teachers' professional development is vitally important to educational reform. A school that focuses on the growth of a student can in no way overlook the development of the teachers of the school, as there continues to be a need to communicate the importance of continuous learning and development for educators and collectively to the people in and out of schools.

When this century has emerged and is continuing to emerge as an age of information, the teachers who are responsible to carve out the intellectual, emotional, and mental aspects of the future citizens of the nation are bound to keep themselves updated at every cost.

Thus, it becomes not only professional but also the moral duty of a school head to encourage the growth of his teachers both personally and professionally which directly and indirectly affects the outcome of the educational institution i.e., betterment of students and their school as a whole.

Keywords: Capacity building, updating with technology training, Digital education ensuring equitable use of technology

Introduction:

Teachers truly shape the future of our children and the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that teachers are looked up to by all aspects of the society. The quality of teacher's education is not where it should be, though it sounds harsh, and consequently the quality of the teachers, their motivation, and thereafter their consequentiality on the students.

The respect for the Teachers which had once been the identity of Indian Culture since ancient times can be restored only when the teachers are outstanding in their fields and when outstanding students from every field enter the teaching profession.

As per NEP-2020 (clause 5.8), The primary goal of overhauling the service environment and culture of schools will maximize the ability of teachers to do their jobs effectively and to ensure that they are part of a vibrant, caring, and inclusive community of teachers, students, parents, principals, and other support staff all of whom is there with the common goal to ensure that our children are learning.

Main Content:

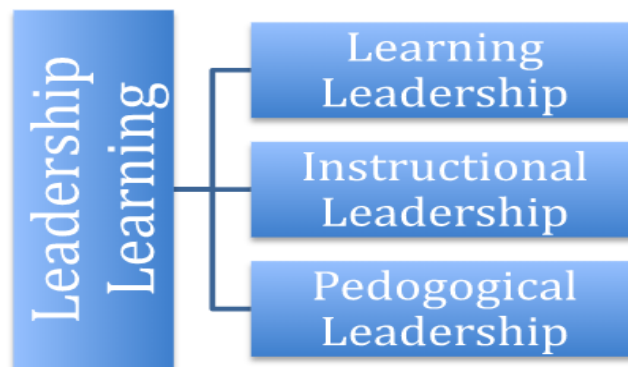
“The school administrator’s role may be roughly analyzed into two major parts, executive details and formation of policies. The first is mere school shopkeeping, the second is educational statesmanship. In his first capacity, the educational administrator is operating the school as it now is, in his second capacity as an educational statesman he is making the school into what it ought to become. In one function he is nearly running the school of today, in the other, he is running the world of tomorrow.” Ross L. Finney

The principal, though, is the administrator but he is a teacher first, so the principal or to be specific the head of the Educational Institute has to have certain qualities on which he can work for the betterment of the school's academic environment and thereafter all-around development of the students.

Within schools, the principal is in a unique position to influence the implementation of the guiding principle and to affect the overall quality of a teacher's professional development. One of the primary tasks of a school principal is to create and maintain a positive and healthy teaching and learning environment for everyone i.e., everyone in the school.

Here while we are discussing the role of a school head and responsibilities for the teacher's professional development and henceforth the impact on the school and its environment one has to have a clear concept of the role of the leader for learning.

Conceptualization of leading for learning



For Hallinger (2009,2011) and Hallinger and Wang, the term leadership for learning is constructed from the concept of instructional and transformational leadership, two styles of leadership with two distinct approaches.

Hallinger (2011) in a synthesis of conceptualization provided by leadership research on school leadership and student learning, highlights that leadership, firstly, is enacted within the organizational and environmental context and that leadership is both shaped by the response to constraints and opportunities inherent in the school organizations and its and its environmental context.

Secondly, the exercise of leadership is moderated by the personal characteristics of leaders which include their beliefs, personal values, knowledge, and experience.

According to Justice JS Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Honorable Supreme Court, *"the majority of stand-alone TEIs over 10000 in number are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price. Regulatory efforts so far have neither been able to curb the malpractice in the system nor enforce basic standards for quality and, have had the negative effect of curbing the growth of excellence and innovation in the sector, the sector and its regulatory system are therefore in urgent need of revitalization through radical action to raise standards and restore integrated credibility efficacy and high quality to the teacher education system."* (NEP 2020,15.2 P-42)

The above-mentioned quote points out the dire need for the teacher's academic development both professionally and personally. Thus, close observations and detailed studies show that teacher training can be organized in the following:

1. Individual Professional Development

2. Skill Training primarily the introduction of new technology and professional competencies

3. Information Updates

1. Individual Professional Development

“Teachers are literally the arbiter of nations' destiny; it may sound like a truism, but it needs to be stressed that the teacher is the key to any educational reconstruction. It is the quality of the person which is decisive” Humayun Kabir, Education In India, P-201

Individual professional development includes multi-dimensional aspects. It not only includes the development of skills and techniques which are to be utilized for the use in improving professional capabilities but also in developing the abilities to manage well with the fast-changing system, both institutional and individual. The school head has to ensure that not only the teacher as resource performs professionally well in the academic area but is also able to cope up with all the individuals he is surrounded with while he is in the school at individual level. Thus, he has to maintain and manage the school environment to stay healthy and creative at the same time.

The term professional development in current literature is often interchangeable with such terms as staff development, in-service skill training, and continuing education. We believe there are meaningful distinctions among these terms. To avoid confusion and clarity, what we mean by teacher professional development is the learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities to strengthen their practice. (Bredesen 1999, P-4)

Professional development hence has many aspects which can be considered under the following subheadings:

Capacity-building programs:

The most important factor in the contemplated education reconstruction is the teacher- his Personal qualities, his educational qualification, and his professional training and the place he occupies in the school as well as in the community. The reputation of the school and its influence on the life of communities invariably depends on the kind of teachers working on it."

(Report of Secondary Education committee, P-135)

Amongst many defined roles and duties of a school head, the supervision and finding out the hidden capabilities of the teachers and motivating them to upgrade themselves is none less.

Teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions. These will be offered in multiple modes including in the form of local, regional, state, national, and international workshops as well as teacher's development module platforms (especially online platforms) will be developed, so that teachers may share ideas and best practices. Each teacher will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their professional development driven by their interest. CPD opportunities will in particular systematically cover the latest pedagogies regarding foundation literacy and numeracy, primitive and adaptive learning outcomes, competency learning, and related pedagogies such as experiential learning, art-integrated, sports-integrated, and storytelling-based approaches.

(NEP, 2020, CPD 5.15, P-22)

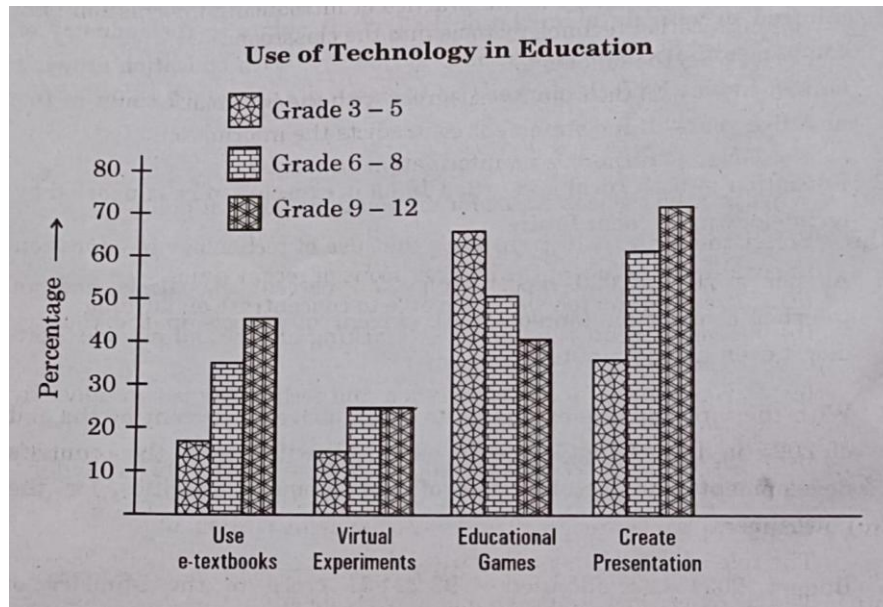
Thus, it will be the duty of the school head to promote and facilitate the learning interest of school teachers both academically and technologically resulting in their capabilities as better educators

2. Skill training

As this Millennium is fast emerging as the century of the information revolution, the first and the pre most requirement of the education system is to be updated and technologically well-versed educators who not only understand it but can very well use it in their daily teaching and learning media. This need not be said that the introduction of technology has helped teaching-learning to be more interesting, Informative, and imbibe-able.

The role of technology in education is more critical now than ever in addressing educational disparity. It was the medium that helped teaching learning get going during the worst possible scenario of COVID-19. The teachers with the help of various apps and software managed to keep the schools reaching the students. This was when the crestfallen situation was managed by non-trained (technologically) teachers.

According to the latest reports the internet rate is estimated to reach above 85% by the end of 2025 in India. Digitization of education will impact the country's development and become one of the top priorities for the government.



NISHTHA, DIKSHA, SWAYAM, and other capacity-building programs by NCERT, SCERTs etc. are working for the holistic advancement and improving quality of education through integrated teacher training aim to build competencies among all the teachers and their school heads through the school head at the elementary stage.

Sugghar Padhvaiya, Bultu ke Bol, and **CG Guruji** are some of many online platforms launched by the CG Government enabling teaching and learning methods. The initiative of techno-friendly School heads will give enhanced educational outcomes in the schools with ICT and smart classes which is no longer a new method currently.

3. Information Upgradation of teachers

The best leaders (and therefore the best school heads) know when they should delegate a certain task to someone (teacher). His evaluation and leadership skill are the ability to assess a teacher's potential abilities and encourage the person to evolve. This not only helps the school grow as an Institution but also its staff grow as a person. A principal will be able to manage and evaluate the school not only by his vision but by a strong team.

Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted and given salary raises to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Therefore a robust merit based structure of tenure, Promotion and salary based restructure of will be developed with multi levels within each teachers stage, which incentivizes and recognizes outstanding teachers.

Creating a supporting environment in which teachers can continue to grow and improve their professional practices is one of the many areas where the principals exert significant influence on teacher learning and development in schools.

Further, it will be ensured that career growth (in terms of tenure, promotions etc.) is available to teachers within a single School stage (i.e., Foundational, preparatory) And that there is no career progression related incentive to move from being teacher in early stage to later stages or vice versa (those such career moves across stages will be allowed, provided the teacher has the Desire and qualification for such a move). This is to support the fact that all the stages of school education will require the highest quality teacher, and no estate will be considered more important than the other.

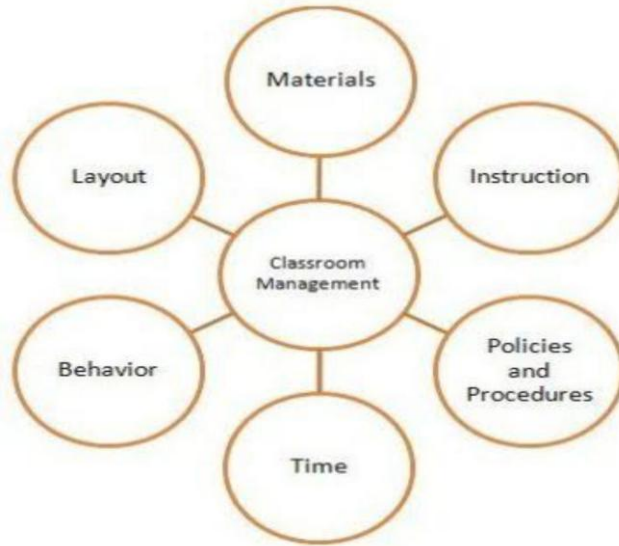
NEP 2020, Career Management and Progression,5.18, P-22

The principals' task is not only largely focused on the design of teaching and learning in the schools, but their instructional leadership also influences the teacher's professional development. In this capacity, principals use a variety of activities to encourage and celebrate learning. This message, in all possible forms, should be communicated that the learning is central to the energies and efforts of everyone in the school.

Learning initiates change in behavioral Attitude and methods. So, the core purpose of schooling is learning.

The professional development with introduction of new technologies in the form of skill development encourages early and effective achievement of learning objectives and school goals. Thus, the outcome in the teachers' training capabilities are displayed in following manners

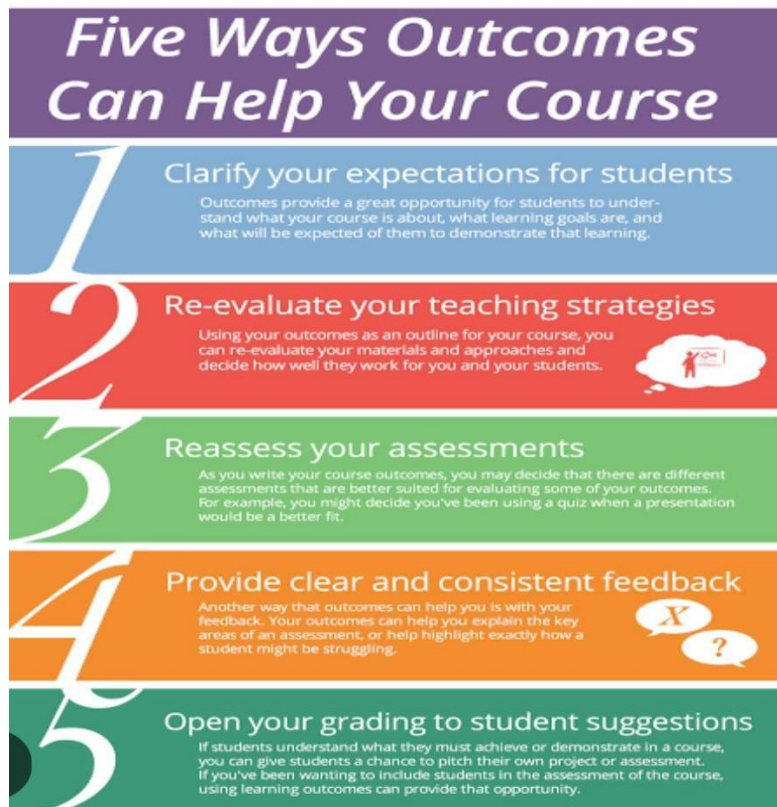
Evolved Classroom Management: The teachers, when better equipped with the skills are not only able to manage their subjects well but also tackle their classroom requirements better. As it's known that teaching isn't all about teaching only but it's communication skill and various individual's dealings at the same time. So, the classroom environment will be more result oriented and productive.



Improved time management: Skilled and confident teachers can excel in time management as they are more efficiently dealing with their teaching and learning better learning outcomes in the classroom in the set time goal.



Better learning outcomes: A professionally confident skilled teacher deals with teaching learning methods, nothing but better results from the students in the class and the school overall come up as the reward for the students, teachers and the school heads collectively.



All in all, it's the supportive attitude of the principals that actually brings out the potential of teachers which are ultimately the resources on which the principals run their educational institution. Helping teachers collectively or individually in a reform era in which the media, aggressive policy makers and the public often portray teachers as part of the problem in education rather than the promise for school improvement becomes one of the most important roles of the school heads. Principals are in unique organizational positions that provide multiple opportunities for teachers to articulate the message about purpose, structure and Impact of teacher professional development to parents, students, school board members, (collectively SMDC) and the general public.

Lastly but in no way less important is that the school heads are also described as 'stress generators' in their schools. Being the institutional heads, their responsibilities often come in package with the compulsion of the deadlines and targeted goals. So somewhere down the line they are considered more as dictators or directors than just superiors or professional colleagues. So, here arises an additional role for the school heads as supporters.

Providing support for teachers' learning and growth is also vital. These supports may vary from financial support to emotional support to moral support. It's very well said that

teaching is about growth, not perfection. So, if a teacher is allowed to take risks and experiment with his pedagogical skills, new ideas and the principal or the school head is there to support him professionally, psychologically and emotionally, the outcomes will definitely be indigenous

Talking about the academic growth of a teacher and the role of the principal for the same cannot be concluded if we do not include the role of the school head as motivators. The stressed-out teachers will never be productive for their institutions. So here the school heads need to come up with a modified role as an influencer and motivators to recharge their teacher resources.

The good learning outcomes are enough motivation for the teachers, but timely recognition of their efforts, rewarding them as and when required on individual and public level boosts up not only the morals of the teachers, but strengthens the principal teachers' bond. This finally benefits in the better school environment and superior teaching, learning outcomes.



Conclusion:

Based on above discussion, the role of a principal can be summarized into following four categories where he is directly or indirectly playing his role in academic development of a teacher:

1. **Instructional leader** where he uses varieties of activities to encourage and celebrate learning.
2. **Communicator** where he acts as connecting link between his institution, students, teachers and staff on one side and media, school management authorities, parents and the general public on the other.
3. **Supporters** were comes up as a reliable support system for his students in this school and his teachers at the same time in providing teaching, learning friendly environment, and
4. **Manager** where he on the one hand creates the required environment for his institution and on the other effectively manages and maintains a successful learning environment by hard work, decision making, visions and implementation making an impact on outstanding learning outcomes in the form of excellent students and marvelous professionally and personally developed teachers.

“Principals are. Important contributors to teacher professional development. However, they should not be viewed as gatekeepers of teachers learning any more than teachers are of students learning. There is always the danger that by exercising significant influence through expertise, power and resources, principles can make themselves indispensable agents of teacher’s professional development. Highly effective principal work to move teachers towards greater levels of independence and professional anatomy. They are coaches and models of learning, not the guardians or governors of learning.”

(Paul V Bredesen; The school principal's role in teachers’ professional development. Dec 2006. Page 398.)

Along with this, one need not forget that principals may provide environment, extend their support and motivate their teachers, but it is the whole and sole responsibility of the teachers to help themselves grow into professionally and skillfully developed individuals. Also, it depends on their ability and potential to grow up as skilled professionals to which the principals may act only as catalysts.

Thus, a major role of school heads in area of teacher professional development is to build leadership capacity. Among staff in their schools to create, nurture and maintain overtime, a vital self-renewing and authentic learning community.

Questionnaires:

1. What are the main responsibilities of the school head when it comes to the academic development of the teacher?

2. "A Principal is an integrated form of an administrator, coordinator, teacher, director and evaluator". How much do you agree with this statement?

3. Does an academically developed teacher also help the school to develop? How?

4. Do you think it's the sole responsibility of the principal for the academic development of a teacher?

5. What point should a principal pay attention to regarding academic development of the teacher?

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