

KD Module 5: Teacher Professional Development

Unit 1: Life Long Learning I



Objectives:

In-service teachers should be able to use ICT to access and share resources to support professional development (KD.6.a).



Duration:

Total of 2 notional hours – 2 hour computer practical session.



A] Computer Practical (2 hours)

Notes to Facilitator

This unit builds upon the work covered in the Technology Literacy Course: Module 5: Unit 2: *Use of ICT to Support Life Long Learning*. In the Technology Literacy unit, participants were made aware of formal and informal learning approaches to further professional growth and developed an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. In this unit, participants will access and share learning opportunities that support their own personal learning goals. Participants will require access to Internet-connected computers. The facilitator will need to allocate each student with the names of three other participants that they may invite to provide commentary on their presentations uploaded to CrocoDoc. The participants will be familiar with Crocodoc, having worked with the tool in the previous module.

Introduction

"Professional development goes beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping teachers not only to learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources. [This] definition of professional development includes support for teachers as they encounter the challenges that come with putting into practice their evolving understandings about the use of technology to support inquiry-based learning. Current technologies offer resources to meet these challenges and provide teachers with a cluster of supports that help them continue to grow in their professional skills, understandings, and interests."¹

In Technology Literacy: Module 5: Unit 2: *Use of ICT to Support Life Long Learning*, you were made aware of formal and informal learning approaches to further professional growth and developed an

¹ <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd2prof.htm>

understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. You also learned the importance of verifying the quality of the resource as a vital step in embarking on one's professional development learning path.

A summary of Technology Literacy: Module 5: Unit 2: *Use of ICT to Support Life Long Learning* is provided below:

Professional Learning Goals:

You may wish to enhance or improve your current skills or knowledge set for a number of reasons, for instance to:

- Gain knowledge about a particular subject or topic;
- Gain knowledge about pedagogy;
- Improve your employment opportunities;
- Find out information about changes to the curriculum structure;
- Improve your technology skills;
- Network with like-minded individuals.

Formal and Informal Learning Opportunities

- Formal learning opportunities may include courses offered physically at an institution or even online and distance learning opportunities. These range from short courses to higher degree programmes and may be in different areas, including subject knowledge, teaching skills, or wider educational issues like management. Usually, these courses are well structured and offer facilitator support. Courses offered by universities or other educational organisations may provide accreditation, which could enhance your career prospects. Unfortunately, formal learning opportunities are often expensive.
- Informal learning opportunities often allow you the opportunity to tailor the resources to your own needs and learn at your own pace, as there is no set curriculum or time frame. And there is usually no associated cost. You could access a variety of teacher networks, websites, associations or forums online to find out more about the latest teaching ideas or you could start your own blog with several of your colleagues and invite them to collaborate with you on a number of topics.

Points to Consider when Choosing a Professional Development Path

- Identify your personal professional development goals and create a plan to assist you in achieving those goals.
- The Internet is the best starting point in terms of researching which option will be most suitable for you. It will assist you in learning about the various ICT resources available that can be used to increase your knowledge of subjects taught as well as pedagogy.
- Make sure you verify the quality and credibility of the course/resource/programme you have identified. Ask these questions as a starting point:
 - Whose website/course/resource/programme is this?
 - Why have they made it available?
 - Is the information actual, relevant and appropriate to me?
 - Is this the best option or my only option?
- Make sure you are aware of the cost factors involved in the approach you have chosen and are confident you have the required ICT skills to complete it. If not, draw on your peers and support staff who can assist you in the process.
- Be realistic about what you can achieve. Start with simple tasks and work up from there.
- Stick to the plan you have created.
- Make sure you set aside sufficient time to complete the planned professional development. Never underestimate the time it requires as more often than not it will take longer than you anticipated.
- Remember to persevere, even if you don't have success in achieving your goals initially!

In this unit, you will access and share learning opportunities that support your own personal learning goals.

Activity:

Use the computers at your disposal to conduct any research you might need to further your understanding and aid you in completing this activity. Note this is a recommended **Portfolio Task** and should be prepared for submission.



Portfolio Task

1. Reflect on your own professional development learning goals and consider what your ultimate goal in education is to be, be it a headmaster, district official, government education advisor or minister. Create a PowerPoint presentation and capture this information on your first slide.
2. Next, conduct an Internet web search and identify three different learning opportunities that you wish to explore in helping you reach your goals. These may be formal or informal learning opportunities. In your PowerPoint presentation, create a slide that lists the basic details of each option (i.e. name of learning opportunity, website address and brief description of each).
3. Next, create a matrix which outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each option you have identified. Remember, these are based in accordance with your own goals and situation (i.e. access to finances, time, etc.).
4. From the three options you have explored, select one as your final choice. Identify in detail what is covered by this option in terms of costs, accreditation (if any), required knowledge level and access to ICT, and capture this in your PowerPoint presentation.
5. Create a slide that provides justification as to why you selected this as your final option.
6. Next, create a slide that outlines your plans for implementing the path you have identified.
7. Upload your presentation to Crocodoc (<http://crocodoc.com/>) and invite three of your peers to provide input and comment on your document, with particular emphasis on the credibility and quality of the learning opportunity you have selected as your final choice. You will be required to do the same when invited to provide commentary on three of your peers' presentations. (Note: your facilitator will allocate each student three names to invite to view your presentation and provide commentary.)



Resources Used in this Lesson Unit

Technology Literacy: Module 5: Unit 2: *Use of ICT to Support Life Long Learning*

NCRL. (ND). *Definition of Professional Development*. Available online at Professional Development for Teachers website, <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd2prof.htm>. Accessed 31/08/11 (© All rights reserved)