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Evaluation of Continuous Professional Development of English Language Teachers

Muneeba Ali

MPhil Scholar, Department of Education Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: muneebaali763@awkum.edu.pk

Dr. Samreen Mehmood

Assistant professor Department Of Education Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: samreen@awkum.edu.pk

Dr. Saqib Shahzad

Associate Professor Department of Education Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: saqib@awkum.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

This research critically evaluates the effectiveness of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program for English language teachers in public primary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of CPD, assess how the program enhances their teaching capabilities, and investigate the practical implementation of learned strategies in classrooms. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research includes semi-structured interviews with ten English teachers and classroom observations of six respondents. Thematic analysis was applied using Braun and Clarke's six-step framework, and triangulation was conducted to ensure reliability and consistency between reported practices and observed behavior. Findings reveal that while most teachers hold a positive view of CPD and report improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement, several barriers hinder full implementation. These include limited teaching resources, large class sizes, and time constraints. Classroom observations confirmed partial application of CPD strategies. The study concludes that CPD has a promising impact on professional growth, but further support in the form of infrastructure, follow-up training, and administrative facilitation is essential for its success.

This research provides valuable insights for policymakers, education departments, and CPD designers to enhance training effectiveness and implementation.

Keywords: CPD, English Language Teachers, Professional Development, Classroom Observation, Pakistan, Primary Education, Teacher Training, Qualitative Study

INTRODUCTION

Education, an important part of the modern day era, where its importance can't be neglected and overshadowed because of the fact that it is now the spine of the world. Education is the element which is deciding the trajectory of a nation and its prosperity. This term have been defined and explained by many authors, as per Plato,

"It is the ability and capacity to feel pleasure, joy and pain at the exact and right moment when it develops in the body of a person and in the soul of the student all the beauty and all the perfection which he capable of"

Teachers are the integral part of this domain, where they shape the futures of students and ultimately of their nation. A teacher is an aura that embodies a near to perfect human, their character is what shapes a perfect balance between vision and prosperity of a student. It is the knowledge that they impart which makes a good student who is not only capable of excelling in his career but also socially. A modern day teacher should be knowledgeable in every skill set in order to not only benefit their student's life but to excel in their careers. Previous norms were based on a fact that a standard pre requisites were set for the employability of educators where if they met the set criteria were employed. The negating factor of this policy was it was centered on a certain skill set which was not developed time to time thus making it difficult the employed to equip them with new skill set as per demands of the new world, thus the concept of "Professional Development" was born. Professional development are the trainings and skills that are developed and imparted in the teachers to improve not only the quality of the education but to make them abled to excel in their careers. Educators through this aspect are now more equipped with practical skills and have deep understating of the work. According to the encyclopedia of education, teacher's education and trainings are the things that is making them Professional teachers. The key function is to train a teacher and make them able to face any problems they may face in the future and in their careers (Arends, R. (1994)).

In any educational system, anywhere in the world, professional development is crucial and of the highest importance, just like in other organizations. This is because professional development is seen as the foundation of a nation's prosperity, and meeting the needs of this system will guarantee that it advances in a timely manner in line with the recently established international standards. Teacher trainings and preparation is crucial to the educational system because it may guarantee high-quality instruction, establish instructors as role models for students, increase students' self-esteem, and improve their morale. Teacher training and professional development can provide a better working and learning environment for students.

Teachers' professional development (PD) is the most significant aspect of the teaching process. Since this component of teacher effectiveness has always coincided with institutional advancements, education has ultimately changed as a result. People's interest in this idea is growing daily as a result of the quick changes in general education, particularly in higher education. Professional growth is unquestionably necessary given the constantly shifting dynamics in education-related areas, such as the type of information and technology offered and the growing complexity of society. As the situation is shaping, the need to enhance abilities is developing(Guskey, 2002)

The focus of the governments has also shifted into this aspect of education where the need of in service trainings is recognized for the betterment of teachers. Continuous Professional Development Programme was started in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2017 for the primary school teachers initially. Trainings were given to the teachers on experimental basis for eight days in an academic year where it was termed as Professional Days. This programme has many advantages for teachers, it has changed the conventional trajectory of education to a broad aspect where not only the skill set are developed but a focus on the development of career and other social aspects are also taken into consideration. CPD not only increases the skill set and performance but it also increases the satisfaction related to the job (Anderson, 2000).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Although the CPD programme for English language teachers has been acknowledged, limited research explores teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness. This study examines how teachers understand the programme, its role in enhancing their teaching abilities, and its influence on classroom practices. It also investigates the extent to which training translates into practical pedagogical changes.

OBJECTIVES

How do English language teachers perceive and understand the CPD programme? In what ways does the CPD programme influence teachers' pedagogical skills and classroom practices across different contexts?

What challenges hinder the implementation of CPD learnings, and how can the programme be made more effective?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plays a central role in enhancing English language teachers' competence, pedagogical skills, and classroom effectiveness in a rapidly changing educational landscape. Research highlights CPD as a vital mechanism for bridging teachers' skill gaps, improving student outcomes, and fostering professional growth (Avalos, 2011). English language teaching is particularly dynamic, influenced by evolving methodologies, the integration of technology, and the presence of diverse learners in classrooms (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Professional development

provides teachers with the necessary tools to adapt to these changes, enhance their instructional practices, and sustain their career progression (Dreyfus, 1989; Ainscow, 1994).

Evaluation of CPD has been recognized as essential for determining its effectiveness and long-term impact. Guskey (2002) identifies five levels of evaluation, ranging from participant reactions and organizational support to the application of knowledge and student achievement. Research emphasizes the need for both qualitative and quantitative methods—such as classroom observations, surveys, and longitudinal studies—to comprehensively capture CPD's influence (Kennedy, 2016; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). However, many evaluations are short-term and fail to account for how teachers apply new knowledge over time, thus overlooking lasting effects (Desimone, 2009).

Empirical studies confirm that CPD fosters active learning, collaboration, and reflective practice, all of which contribute to improved teaching quality (Kennedy, 2016). For English language teachers, CPD often emphasizes communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and the use of digital tools. Collaborative approaches, including peer observation and professional learning communities, have been shown to enhance confidence, professional identity, and classroom practice (Avalos, 2011). Technology-driven CPD has further expanded access to resources and support networks, especially in underserved regions (Richards & Farrell, 2005). However, research also indicates that effectiveness depends heavily on contextual fit; generic CPD programs often fail to address the specific needs of English teachers, limiting their impact (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Despite the documented benefits, the implementation and evaluation of CPD face persistent challenges. In low-resource contexts, teachers often have limited access to quality training, materials, and technological tools (Avalos, 2011). Time constraints further reduce participation, as teachers juggle multiple responsibilities. Many educators perceive CPD as an additional burden, particularly when programs are poorly designed or irrelevant to their needs (Kennedy, 2016). Resistance to change, often stemming from lack of confidence, fear of failure, or inadequate institutional support, also hinders the integration of new teaching practices. Evaluation is equally complex, as measuring long-term changes in teaching behavior and student outcomes requires resource-intensive methodologies that go beyond initial feedback (Guskey, 2002).

Reflective practice emerges in the literature as a cornerstone of sustainable professional growth. Schön's (1983) model of the reflective practitioner highlights the importance of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as mechanisms for teachers to refine strategies based on their experiences and feedback. Structured reflection, such as journaling, peer discussions, and video analysis, is associated with greater adaptability, improved teaching strategies, and deeper professional awareness (Farrell, 2014; Desimone, 2009). By embedding reflection into CPD, teachers are better positioned to critically evaluate their methods and experiment with innovative practices.

Several gaps remain in the literature on CPD. Stapleton and Hancock (2008) observe a lack of longitudinal studies examining the lasting effects of CPD on both teaching practices and student outcomes. Most existing research relies on short-term assessments that fail to capture long-term impact. Another gap concerns the neglect of CPD in low-resource settings, where infrastructural and financial challenges create additional barriers. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to teacher agency and autonomy in shaping CPD outcomes, despite evidence that professional development is more effective when teachers actively engage and align CPD with their own goals and contexts.

In Pakistan, CPD has emerged as a national priority due to its direct link to student achievement and overall educational standards. Government-led initiatives, such as the Punjab Directorate of Staff Development programme launched in 2017, aimed to provide compulsory training days for primary teachers. However, these efforts faced challenges, including de-contextualized content, inadequate support mechanisms, and logistical barriers such as commuting difficulties. The mixed success of such programs demonstrates the need for contextually relevant and sustainable CPD models that address the realities of teachers' working environments. Future research should focus on designing and evaluating such models, with particular attention to leveraging technology for accessibility, embedding reflective and collaborative practices, and ensuring continuous support through mentoring and professional learning communities. The theoretical foundation for evaluating CPD in this study is provided by Stufflebeam's CIPP Model (1971), which emphasizes the assessment of context, input, process, and product in program evaluation. This framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of CPD effectiveness, from program design and implementation to outcomes for teachers and students. Conceptually, CPD can be understood through the interaction of independent variables such as activities, institutional support, and individual teacher factors, mediated by engagement, collaboration, and reflection, which together influence teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Overall, the literature highlights the central role of CPD in supporting teacher growth and student achievement, while also pointing to significant barriers and gaps in research. In particular, the challenges of implementation in low-resource settings, the neglect of longitudinal analysis, and the underexplored role of teacher agency demand further investigation. Addressing these issues through contextually grounded, reflective, and collaborative CPD models will be essential to ensuring that professional development fulfills its potential as a driver of educational quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative exploratory design to gain in-depth insights into how CPD programs affect English language teaching practices. This design allows the researcher to explore the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of teachers in a naturalistic context. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations.

Research Paradigm

This study is situated within the positivist research paradigm, yet employs a qualitative research methodology to explore and evaluate the lived experiences and perceptions of English language teachers regarding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs. Although positivism is traditionally aligned with quantitative methods, its application here focuses on identifying observable and repeatable patterns through systematic qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2014).

Research Setting and Participants

The target population for the study will be teachers of English at the primary education level, teaching in both urban and rural school settings.

Sampling Method: Purposeful sampling will be used to select participants based on

teaching experience.

Sample Size: A total of 10 to 15 English teachers from different schools will be selected to ensure diverse perspectives.

Data Collection Methods

The study will use multiple qualitative data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic:

Semi-Structured Interviews

Purpose: To establish the level of engagement, perceived CPD attitudes, and perceived CPD barriers among teachers.

Structure: All interviews will be conducted using unstructured questions, which afford the respondents the chance to elicit as much detail as possible.

Duration: Each interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes.

Recording: Key points will be recorded verbally, with participants' permission for audio recording. The recordings will then be transcribed for analysis.

Classroom Observation Checklist

A qualitative classroom observation checklist will be used to observe and document how teachers implement CPD strategies in their teaching. Observation indicators include:

Student engagement and interaction

Use of CPD-informed instructional strategies

Feedback and assessment practices

Classroom management and learning environment

Field notes will be recorded during observations.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by Creswell's (2014) six-step framework for qualitative data analysis:

Organizing and preparing data: Interview recordings will be transcribed verbatim, and observation notes compiled systematically.

Reading through the data: All transcripts and notes will be read thoroughly to gain a holistic understanding and identify potential patterns.

Coding the data: Meaningful segments of text will be labeled with codes using manual and software-based tools such as NVivo.

Generating themes: Related codes will be grouped to form broader themes that reflect underlying patterns in teachers' experiences with CPD.

Representing themes: Themes will be described and supported with direct quotes from participants and field observations.

Interpreting the data: Findings will be interpreted in light of the research questions, theoretical framework, and previous literature.

This reviewing technique is deep, consistent, and rigorous regarding the analysis of qualitative evidence (Creswell, 2014).

Trustworthiness of the Study

The following strategies will be employed to ensure that the research findings are credible and reliable:

Triangulation: Comparing data from interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Member checking: Participants will review their interview transcripts to confirm accuracy.

Thick description: Providing detailed explanations and direct participant quotes.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent: Recruited participants will be informed about the procedures and objectives of the study, as well as their rights. Consent will be obtained in writing.

Confidentiality: All reports and publications will protect the identity of the participants. Voluntary Participation: Participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without being required to provide reasons.

Pseudonyms: All participants and schools will be assigned pseudonyms at the transcription and analysis stages to ensure confidentiality. Information will be stored securely and used exclusively for research purposes.

This methodological approach makes it possible to perform deep and ethical scrutiny of the CPD experience of English language teachers and provides valuable contributions to the theory and practice of teacher training.

Data Analysis and Findings

Thematic Analysis of CPD Program for Primary English Language Teachers

Participants: Nine teachers (Respondents 1–9) participated, ensuring anonymity.

Data Source: Semi-structured interviews complemented by classroom observations.

Step 1: Familiarization with the Data

The transcripts were read repeatedly to identify recurring patterns. Prominent themes included professional growth, pedagogical improvement, student-centered strategies, peer collaboration, technological adaptation, reflective practice, and barriers to CPD implementation.

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

Code	Sample Extract	Respondent
Ongoing learning	"CPD means teachers continuous learning"	1
Confidence building	"Now I have more confidence"	3
Lesson planning improvement	g"CPD helped me plan lessons more effectively"	6
Student engagemen strategies	t "Use of group work and flashcards"	3
Technology integration	"I use mobile apps for pronunciation"	3
Time constraints	"Too much academic load"	4
Peer collaboration	"We share practices with each other"	7
Classroom management	"Positive behavior stimulation"	5
Reflective practice	"I reflect after every lesson"	8
Pedagogical change	"Now use critical thinking strategies"	8
Lack of resources	"Limited materials in class"	6

Step 3: Searching for Themes

Broader themes were constructed from coded data:

Professional Growth & Teaching Confidence

Enhanced Pedagogical Practices

Student-Centered Learning Approaches Collaborative Learning & Peer Engagement Barriers to CPD Implementation Technological Adaptation Reflective and Evaluative Teaching

Step 4: Reviewing Themes

Theme	Codes Included			
Professional Growth & Teaching	Ongoing learning, Confidence building,			
Confidence	Motivation to improve			
Enhanced Pedagogical Practices	Lesson planning improvement, Classroom management, New strategies			
Student-Centered Learning	Student engagement strategies, Play-based			
Approaches	learning, Group work			
Collaborative Learning & Peer	Collaborative Learning & Peer Peer collaboration, Idea sharing, Observing			
Engagement	colleagues			
Barriers to CPD Implementation	Time constraints, Lack of resources, Syllabus pressure			
Technological Adaptation	Mobile app use, Digital tools, Gamification			
	Reflective practice, Use of feedback, Assessment			
Teaching	during class			

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

Theme	Definition		
Professional Growth & Teaching Confidence	CPD enhances teachers' competence, identity, and motivation.		
Enhanced Pedagogical Practices	Teachers adopt effective instructional methods tailored to primary learners.		
Student-Centered Learning Approaches	Focus on engaging students through interaction, games, and real-world tasks.		
Collaborative Learning & Peer Engagement	CPD fosters knowledge exchange, observation, and shared resources.		
Barriers to CPD Implementation	Practical limitations hinder full CPD application in classrooms.		
Technological Adaptation	Teachers incorporate digital tools to enhance learning outcomes.		
Reflective and Evaluative Teaching	Teachers reflect on experiences to refine strategies and monitor progress.		

Step 6: Producing the Report (Summary with Quotations)

Theme Sub-Themes		Key Quotations
Professional Growth	& Motivation;	"CPD gives me confidence to
Teaching Confidence	Confidence	teach better" (R4)

Enhanced Pedagogical Practices	Lesson Planning; Classroom Management	"Now I plan lessons with more focus on student activities" (R6)
Student-Centered Learning Approaches	Group Work; Engagement	"I use group work students speak and express themselves more" (R3)
Collaborative Learning & Peer Engagement	Idea Exchange; Observation	"We sometimes observe each other's lessons" (R4)
Barriers to CPD Implementation	Time; Infrastructure	"Syllabus pressure doesn't allow much creativity" (R5)
Technological Adaptation	Digital Tools; Visual Aids	"I use mobile apps and videos to explain meaning" (R3)
Reflective and Evaluative Teaching	Post-Lesson Reflection; Feedback	"I reflect on good and bad points after class" (R8)

Step 7: Detailed Theme Analysis

Understanding of CPD

Teachers perceive CPD as a continuous learning process enhancing professional practice, career growth, and student outcomes.

Relevance and Practicality

Teachers find CPD content aligned with curriculum and daily classroom needs, improving applicability.

Skills and Pedagogical Improvement

Lesson planning, classroom management, activity-based learning, and critical thinking techniques were strengthened.

Impact on Student Learning

Teachers reported improved engagement, confidence, and performance through interactive teaching strategies.

Reflective Practice and Professional Growth

Teachers routinely reflect post-lesson, using feedback to refine strategies, developing a growth mindset.

Collaboration and Peer Learning

CPD encouraged discussions, lesson observations, and resource sharing, fostering professional communities.

Integration of Technology

Teachers applied mobile apps, videos, and digital dictionaries, though resource limitations constrained widespread use.

Challenges in Implementation

Time, resources, large class sizes, and administrative pressures limited CPD adoption.

Classroom Observation Analysis

Understanding of CPD: Moderate to strong awareness (avg. 4.17).

Application of CPD Strategies: Partial uptake, lesson planning weaker (avg. 3.0).

Use of Technology: Minimal integration (avg. 1.83).

Student Engagement: Moderate effort (avg. 3.0), group work limited (~2.67).

Reflection and Adaptation: Rarely applied in real-time (avg. 2.0). **Assessment & Feedback:** Lowest scores (~1.83), formative assessment underutilized.

Teacher Confidence & Motivation: Moderate (avg. 3.0), peer collaboration stronger (~3.17).

Triangulation: Interviews vs Observations

Theme	Interview Insight	Observation Insight	Result
CPD	Teachers report good understanding	High ratings (~4.17)	Agreement
Application of CPD Skills	Strategies applied	Inconsistent (~3.67)	
Lesson Planning	Structured plans	Few structured lessons (~3.0)	Partial
Teaching Aids & Technology	Frequent mention	Minimal use (~2.5)	Disagreement
Student Engagement	Students more involved	Moderate (~3.0)	Partial
Strategies	Highlighted group work	(~2.7)	Disagreement
Assessment & Feedback	Mentioned formative techniques	Low (~1.83)	Disagreement
	Increased confidence	Mixed (~2.83)	Partial
Collaboration & Peer Learning	Sharing practices	Evident (~3.17)	Agreement

Insight: CPD positively influences teacher knowledge, confidence, and collaboration. However, systemic and resource constraints hinder full implementation.

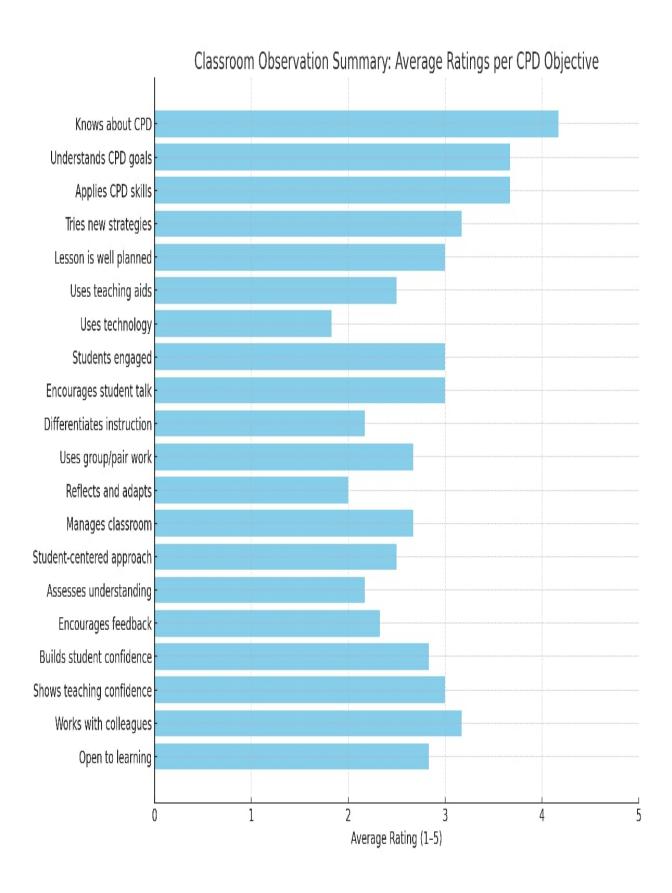


Table: Article-Ready Presentation of Findings

Research Objective	Theme	Sub-Theme / Focus	Representative Quotes Observation Alignment / Notes
1. Knowledge and Perception of CPD	Continuous	Lifelong learning, professional identity	"CPD is a Most teachers teaching strategy scored 4–5 on improvement lesson planning process." – and clarity Respondent 3 objectives; some "It helps me stay discrepancies ahead in noted education." – (conceptual-Respondent 5 practical gap)
	Personal Motivation & Professional Identity	Morale, professional recognition	"I feel more valued and respected as a professional when I attend CPD." – Respondent 6 Observation aligns for teachers who scored high in planning and engagement; partial gaps observed
2. CPD and Teaching Capabilities	Planning &	Use of interactive methods (storytelling, gamification, visual aids)	"CPD helped me use more fun and f interactive strategies." – Respondent 2 "Now I know how to design lessons that students enjoy." – Teachers who reported strong implementation generally scored 4–5; others lower, indicating partial adoption Respondent 4
	Enhanced Classroom Management	management	"Now I use hand Observed gestures and improvements, group rewards to but inconsistent control the class due to class size without yelling." – and resource Respondent 6 constraints
	Increased Confidence & Motivation	Professional competence	"I used to feel unsure about using English some teachers openly, but now I'm confident explaining concepts." — implement new methods Observation partially matches; some teachers confident but hesitant to implement new methods
	Challenges in Applying	Constraints	Overcrowded Observation classrooms, lack checklist scores

	CPD Knowledge		_	for differentiated instruction and formative feedback were low
3. Practices Employed Post-CPD	Student- Centered & Interactive Strategies	storytelling,	activities now, which help students speak and think together." – Respondent 6	few classrooms demonstrated structured interactive learning
	Formative Assessment & Feedback	Exit tickets, quizzes, verbal checks	•	
	Technology Integration	Use of digital tools (videos, apps)	them engaged." – Respondent 7 "I downloaded a dictionary app to	Minimal observed use; barriers include lack of projectors, electricity issues, and tablets
	Classroom Management & Student Behavior		"I give star stickers and use praise to manage behavior." — Respondent 6	showed better
	Limitations and Challenges in Practice	Contextual and structural barriers	school has no	Systemic and environmental constraints limited

Discussion and Implications of CPD for English Language Teachers

This study explored the impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on English language teaching practices in public primary schools in Pakistan. It focused on teachers' perceptions, improvements in teaching capabilities, and classroom practices post-training, using qualitative interviews and structured classroom observations.

Teacher Understanding and Perception of CPD

Findings indicate that teachers possess a clear understanding of CPD, recognizing it as an ongoing professional growth process. They highlighted its role in staying updated with pedagogical trends, increasing confidence, and enhancing professional identity. Classroom observations supported these perceptions, showing many teachers implementing well-structured lessons and clear learning objectives. However, some respondents struggled to consistently translate CPD knowledge into practice, indicating the need for practical reinforcement and ongoing support.

Enhancements in Teaching Capabilities

CPD participation improved teaching strategies, including storytelling, group work, visual aids, and interactive methods, which enhanced engagement and student participation. Teachers also reported increased motivation and confidence. Observations revealed variability in implementation depth due to structural challenges such as large class sizes, limited ICT resources, and time constraints. These findings align with international studies emphasizing supportive school cultures and mentoring as essential for effective CPD (Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Classroom Practices Post-Training

Teachers expressed willingness to apply CPD strategies, using collaborative learning, role-plays, and digital resources. However, classroom observations showed partial or superficial application, particularly in technology integration and formative assessments. This gap underscores the limitations of short-term CPD programs and highlights the necessity of follow-up support, feedback mechanisms, and resource provision.

Cross-Cutting Insights

CPD is valued but under-supported: Teachers often lack the tools, time, and institutional support to fully implement CPD strategies.

Initial gains are evident: Improvements in lesson planning, structure, and engagement were observable.

Implementation is constrained: Overcrowded classrooms, limited materials, and rigid curricula hinder full application.

Professional identity is evolving: CPD fosters a shift from passive instructors to active learning facilitators.

Recommendations

Policy Makers: Institutionalize CPD as continuous and mandatory, allocate sufficient funding, develop monitoring mechanisms, and introduce incentive systems to promote participation.

School Administrators: Encourage collaborative professional cultures, provide time for reflective practice, reduce non-teaching duties, ensure resource availability, and support teachers through mentorship and constructive classroom observation.

Teachers: Engage in self-reflection, implement CPD strategies in manageable stages, collaborate with peers, adopt student-centered approaches, and demonstrate lifelong learning through continued training and engagement with current literature.

CPD Designers and Trainers: Develop hands-on, practical training modules; integrate technology literacy; contextualize content for local realities; provide inclusive, accessible training; and offer follow-up support to reinforce application in classrooms.

Future Research: Examine long-term impacts of CPD on teaching quality, student outcomes, and school culture. Conduct comparative studies across urban and rural settings, include student feedback, analyze gender-specific experiences, and explore leadership's role in supporting CPD.

Conclusion

CPD positively impacts English language teaching in primary schools, enhancing teacher knowledge, skills, and engagement. Teachers value CPD and attempt to implement new methods, yet systemic barriers—such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support—limit full application. Sustainable improvements require ongoing mentorship, supportive policies, school-level resources, and policy-driven institutionalization of CPD. When implemented effectively, CPD can drive meaningful, lasting improvements in teaching practice and student outcomes.

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