

## EXPLORING LEARNING STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyse the learning status of the teachers at college level. Teachers have enough opportunities to learn through own experiences, learning through collaboratively, through workshops, training, seminars and Learn from their formal Professional Work. This is a qualitative study. Data was collected from the participants of private colleges. Data was collected through interviews from the lecturers. Interviews were collected from 30 participants. The participants provide their perceptions of teachers as learners, discuss the learning opportunities they have access to, and highlight any difficulties they face in the ongoing learning process.

The study's findings show that lecturers have predominantly positive opinions toward teachers as learners. The participants acknowledge the existence of several learning paths such as experiential learning, collaborative learning, workshops, training sessions, seminars, and learning from their formal professional employment.

However, despite the availability of learning opportunities, the research sheds light on the challenges that instructors encounter during their learning journey. These challenges are explored to understand the potential difficulties faced by teachers because of the ongoing learning process. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the learning status of teachers and the range of opportunities they must enhance their professional development. It also highlights the potential obstacles faced by educators, which can inform educational institutions and policymakers in designing effective support systems for continuous teacher learning.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a key to nation building (Yadeta, 2017) Educational opportunities provide a substantial contribution to the successful learning and success of people, and teachers have a vital role to play in the process of imparting education to learners. Teachers have a critical role in education, and particularly in the life of students who are committed to their care in the classroom (Yadeta, 2017; Ahmed et al.,

2024) .The professional competency of teachers significantly impact on the overall quality of education in institutions (Radhika, 2018).

Learning is transformed throughout the teaching and learning process. The process of identifying and establishing the learning goals and developing teaching materials in the learning process, and then implementing the teaching strategy as a result, a

combination of numerous factors. Furthermore, they concluded that educating aspirants is a crucial task that requires careful consideration of the learners' ability to learn (Lashari & Umrani, 2023). For the purpose of evaluating the performance of higher education teachers, they looked at a wide range of academic publications, pedagogy, and inclusive practices (Abdul Kalam, 2019).

Teachers are the most important role of any educational system. It is critical that significant attention be paid to the proper and effective development of these teachers (Amy Beavers, 2009) A teacher's responsibilities include more than just being an expert in their subject matter; they are also expected to be well-versed in student psychology, skilled in communication, capable of executing brilliant classroom management strategies, and adept at navigating the unrelenting maze of educational politics. They must also be knowledgeable with, and respond to, the constantly changing legal requirements governing educational rules and guidelines (Lanier, 1997; Jillani et al., 2023)

The challenge facing teachers are how to manage their dual roles as teachers-as learners in an on-going process and while dealing with heavy workloads, expectations to teach across all curricular areas and conflicting demands from policy makers, parents, administrators and students. (Kirsten, 2012; Buriro et al., 2023).

**1.1: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

The main objectives of this study were.

- To understand teachers' perceptions and approaches to their own learning processes.
- To explore how teachers learn as individual and collaborative.
- To investigate the learning practices and strategies employed by teachers.
- To highlight the challenges of teacher as ongoing process or continue learning.

**1.2: RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

The following research questions guided the qualitative study:

- 1) What are the perceptions about teachers as learners?
- 2) What opportunities to teachers for learning?

3): What challenges teachers face as a teacher during this on-going or continuing process?

**1.3: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

This study demonstrates how teachers learn and the problems they face as learners. The role of a teacher is to enthruse receptive learners to learn. Teachers play their roles as actors. Every day, they put up a show for a captive audience from a different period. Every moment of the teacher's life is spent learning something new. Learn from your students by paying attention and observing them. I've learned a lot through teaching over the years, but I'm still a student (Doe, 2023).

Throughout one's whole life, one's ability to learn is being refined and improved. The world of digital learning and curriculum is always changing, and it is our obligation as a teacher to keep up with the most recent developments in the field. Certainly, a good and effective teacher, regardless of their position or classification, is one who is always willing to go above and beyond to learn. (Cox, 2019)

**2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review will focus on major aspects of this research topic: The role of teachers as learners in continuing process. Learning is a multi-faceted and innovative process. Teachers have a significant influence on the development of circumstances that are beneficial to learning. Teachers serve as mentors to learners. Senior teachers may also serve as mentors for teachers, passing on their knowledge and experience from years of teaching. When it comes to teaching in the digital era, teachers must be adaptable and flexible (Rehman, Lashari & Abbas, 2023). Additionally, administrators are always upgrading and revising their standards of learning and teaching. New instructional software, teaching techniques, and technological gadgets are all on the table for the contemporary educator. To be innovative, one must be willing to take risks, engage with the actual world, and have a creative attitude.

Learning is a process that continues throughout one's whole life. Enhancing classroom practices is the goal of professional development for teachers with the aim to improve student achievement (Ajani, 2019), "All teachers should experience an awareness of development and the thrill of new opportunities

(Smith, & Gillespie, 2023) Digital learning and curricula are always evolving, thus it is your responsibility as a teacher to stay on top of the latest trends in learning. A teacher who is always ready to go beyond in order to learn will always be a successful and effective teacher, regardless of their position or designation (Cox, 2019; Suhag et al., 2017). What is the process through which instructors learn to be teachers? Initial training and education for teachers is the first phase in the importance of professional progress for teachers. The first professional preparation of a person in any subject is the first stage in any process of growing a professional in that area (Moller, 2000). Professional learning is a method of providing collaborative support and assistance in order to overcome these challenges as a whole institution. Almost everyone recognizes the need of ongoing professional growth. Teaching becomes a milestone in teachers' continuum of life-long learning and career advancement when it comes to growth and improvement of any educational institution. Knowledge sharing, interaction, and accessibility amongst a team of people who desired to achieve a collaborative objective as colleagues and put them into action, cooperation became feasible.

Teachers who get adequate training and receive continuous learning have a better chance of being successful in their institutions. There are a wide range of services available to support teachers' skill learning, including an orientation program and mentorship. They are the activities that take place inside the professional learning community (Fayaz et al., 2023). The practice of professional learning communities is a very productive component in the development of the professionals of teachers.

**3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, a qualitative method is used to determine the teacher's thoughts about learning. The

researchers have conducted face-to-face and online interviews with thirty teachers. Interview questions were based on study guiding research questions. Interviews were conducted by ten private lecturers. Two teachers were selected from one college. The interviews were primarily centered on the essential role of teachers as learners. A semi-structured approach was employed for the formulation of questions. This approach allowed novice teachers to articulate their individual ideas and perspectives without undue limitations. Furthermore, it ensured a degree of uniformity across interviews while granting each interviewee the necessary freedom of expression. The utilization of a semi-structured format facilitated a formal and organized manner of gathering information while accommodating the unique perspectives and insights of each participant.

**4: DATA FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:**

Data from interviews was gathered and analyzed. The interview data was analyzed in light of the research's main objectives. Integration of data occurred at the discussion level.

**4.1: Interview Data Findings and analysis:**

The interview data was categorized and analyzed according to the study questions. The following are the findings and analysis of this data.

**4.2: Demographic Details**

To get an idea about the interviewees, the following table contains their information. It is important to note that teachers' subject, gender and designation should be mentioned. Participants were asked to tell the subjects which they teach at private college.

**Table 4.1: Demographic detail (Gender)**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male Lecturer	10	33%
Female Lecturer	20	67%
Total	30	100%

**4.3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

In the discussion section, we can interpret the findings from the thematic analysis and provide a

deeper analysis of the implications and significance of the identified themes. The results investigate how the teachers at a higher level can learn and the

opportunities make them more effective and beneficial for students.

**4.3.1 Teachers Perception about Teachers as Learner:**

The first relevant question posed to the teachers regarding college teachers' perception as learner. The question was what is the perception of teachers as learners? The teachers replied as learners. T1 replied, Learning and teaching are two different yet interdependent processes, but they are inextricably connected. Educators are lifelong students in their profession. A student's interest in learning can be stoked to a high level by a good teacher. The most effective teachers are those who can motivate their students to learn a certain area or subject. Nobody can be taught anything by anyone else. A person can teach another by pointing out opportunities for them to acquire knowledge. If they are well planned, these experiences will lead to learning that will result in the end that is wanted. The formation of the educational experience is contingent on a variety of elements being present. Most of the time, educators really must trust their own vision to create these kinds of learning experiences. T 1 said that "Teachers are also learners for there are always new ideas to infer while teaching or preparing for class lecture. For a teacher learning never ends and it makes them fresh and enthusiastic".

T2 replied about the perception of teacher as learner is that, if the teacher adopts an alive learner attitude towards his progress, he/she learns different things from their own practices and experiences in their ongoing process.

By adopting this alive learner attitude, teachers are better positioned to reflect on their teaching methods and adapt them based on the unique needs of their students and the dynamics of the classroom. This ongoing process of learning does not stem solely from external training or professional development programs but also emerges organically from everyday teaching experiences. For instance, teachers learn to refine their communication skills by observing how their students respond to different teaching strategies. Similarly, they gain valuable insights by experimenting with new approaches and reflecting on their effectiveness.

Moreover, this perception encourages teachers to remain curious and receptive to feedback, both from students and colleagues. It fosters a culture of lifelong learning, where teachers are not just dispensers of knowledge but also active participants in the learning journey. In this way, their progress as educators becomes an evolving process, shaped by their commitment to self-improvement and their willingness to learn from every experience.

This approach highlights the dynamic and reciprocal nature of teaching and learning, demonstrating that teachers, too, are students in their ongoing journey of professional and personal growth.

The others teacher said that "Teachers and learner" are two interconnected and interdependent activities in which teachers keep up to date with current information and conduct critical thinking analyses, debate, and share their views. This contributes to and assists them in achieving their professional goals. In their view, teachers actively engage in lifelong learning by acquiring new knowledge, refining their skills, and staying informed about educational advancements and societal changes. For instance, a teacher might explore new pedagogical strategies, integrate innovative technologies, or study the latest research findings to enhance their teaching effectiveness. This constant updating ensures that their instruction remains relevant, engaging, and aligned with current standards.

Moreover, these teachers highlighted the importance of critical thinking in their dual roles as educators and learners. Critical thinking allows teachers to analyse new information, evaluate its validity, and apply it effectively in their practice. Engaging in debates and discussions with colleagues

The interviewer asked the lecturer how teachers learn at college level so they replied, at college level students are competitive and poses questions for which teacher has to do extra work because at college level students are grown up students and this the age of technology and students have also information due to internet so the teachers more prepare before going to class and that preparation for lecturers benefited.

The students at college level are usually more mature than the school and as they come from diverse backgrounds it's also an enjoyable learning process. As you also get to know human behavior. Teachers at

advanced levels of college do not have a typical role in teaching; instead, they have many different roles at the same time. For instance, at times they must perform the role of observer, facilitator, mentor, and instructor etc. At these roles help them sharing different ideas and perspectives of the students as well, they are already grown up at times having more information than teachers.

#### 4.4: DISCUSSION

##### 4.4.1: Opportunities for Learning:

Learning opportunity refers to a wide range of different educational experiences, such as those that are taken in a classroom, virtual, blended, self-guided, mixed delivery setting, as well as those that involve counseling, mentoring, or experiential course work. It may be presented either internally or externally, but it must have a direct connection to the circumstances of the work environment. It is envisaged that learning opportunities that have been approved would increase participants' awareness of a particular subject, aid in the development of constructive attitudes and behaviors, and place an emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills.

##### 4.4.2: Types of Professional Learning

Professional learning can be categorized into two types: surface learning and deep learning. Surface learning involves the rapid implementation of changes, making it a time-efficient strategy. In contrast, deep learning aims to develop meaningful and long-term understandings that transform both practice and beliefs. Deep learning is achieved through active learning methods, such as teaching and modeling specific processes like information collection and reflection. Teachers who regularly employ these techniques often have additional training at higher education levels or have been mentored by more experienced educators Gates.

##### 4.4.3: Role of the Teacher in Learning

According to Gates (1946), learning is the process of altering behavior through experience. The role of the teacher is to effectively engage and inspire their audience to learn. The capacity of teachers to adapt and improve their practices hinges on three fundamental factors: acquiring new knowledge,

enhancing existing skills, and adopting new perspectives on their teaching methods.

##### 4.4.4: Learning Modalities

Learning opportunities can be delivered through various modalities, each offering unique benefits and challenges. Classroom-based learning provides direct interaction and immediate feedback. Virtual learning offers flexibility and accessibility, allowing learners to engage with content at their own pace. Blended learning combines the best of both worlds, integrating in-person and online elements to create a comprehensive learning experience. Self-directed learning encourages autonomy and personal responsibility, while mixed delivery methods cater to diverse learning preferences and needs.

##### 4.4.5: Impact of Learning Opportunities on Professional Growth

Effective learning opportunities significantly impact professional growth by equipping educators with the necessary tools and knowledge to enhance their teaching practices. By engaging in continuous learning, teachers can stay abreast of the latest educational trends, methodologies, and technologies, thereby improving their instructional strategies and student outcomes

##### 4.4.6: Teacher as Learner:

A teacher's job is to enthuse receptive learners to gain. Teachers are performers. Every day, they put up a show for a captive audience from a different period. Teachers are always in the process of becoming better at what they do because they never stop learning. Learn from your students by listening and observing them. Despite having been a teacher for almost a decade, I've discovered that I'm continuously learning

The primary role of a teacher is to inspire and engage receptive learners. Teachers are performers who present lessons to their audience daily. The teaching profession demands continuous improvement, as teachers are lifelong learners. Effective teachers learn from their students by listening and observing. Despite many years of experience, teachers constantly acquire new knowledge.

The multifaceted role of the teacher as a learner includes being a facilitator, information provider, resource creator, and learner. As a teacher, facilitator, information provider, resource creator, and learner, the role of the teacher as learner details are given below:

**1) Learning through Own Experiences**

Research indicates that teaching and learning are interrelated and interdependent activities. Teachers must stay updated with contemporary knowledge, critically analyze, discuss, and share ideas. Learner's gain understanding from their own experiences, which guides them towards their professional goals (AbdulRab, 2023). Teachers, through reflective practices and engagement in ongoing education, develop a deeper comprehension of their subject matter and teaching methods.

**a) Self-Reflection and Critical Analysis**

Through self-reflection, teachers can critically analyze their teaching practices, identify areas for improvement, and implement changes to enhance their effectiveness. This reflective process helps teachers develop a deeper understanding of their instructional strategies and how they impact student learning.

**4.4.7: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Engagement in ongoing education, such as advanced degrees or certification programs, allows teachers to stay current with the latest developments in their field. This continuous learning process ensures that teachers maintain their professional competence and remain effective educators.

**a) Advanced Degrees**

Engagement in ongoing education, such as pursuing advanced degrees, allows teachers to stay current with the latest developments in their field. This continuous learning process ensures that teachers maintain their professional competence and remain effective educators.

**b) Certification Programs**

Participation in certification programs also plays a critical role in the professional development of teachers. These programs provide opportunities for

teachers to gain specialized knowledge and skills, further enhancing their teaching effectiveness.

**c) Staying Current with Developments**

Ongoing education helps teachers stay updated with the latest educational trends, research, and technologies. This knowledge enables them to incorporate new teaching methods and tools into their classrooms, improving student learning outcomes.

**d) Maintaining Professional Competence**

Continuous learning ensures that teachers maintain their professional competence. It allows them to refresh and expand their knowledge base, keeping their teaching practices relevant and effective.

**e) Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness**

By engaging in ongoing education and professional development, teachers can enhance their teaching effectiveness. This commitment to continuous improvement helps them to better meet the diverse needs of their students and to foster a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

**4.4.8: Learning through collaborative:**

Collaborative learning can occur in peer-to-peer or large-group settings. Teachers work together in pairs or groups to share ideas and solve problems, gaining knowledge and skills through mutual learning. This process can be formal or informal, like workplace education. Collaborative learning involves teachers working together to solve problems and complete tasks, sharing expertise and knowledge as an ongoing process. Collaborative environments enable teachers to learn from one another, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth.

**a) Peer-to-Peer Learning**

In peer-to-peer learning, teachers collaborate with their colleagues to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and develop solutions. This collaborative approach encourages the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative teaching strategies.

**b) Large-Group Collaborative Learning**

Large-group collaborative learning involves teachers working together in larger teams or professional

learning communities. These groups provide a platform for teachers to engage in collective inquiry, share resources, and support each other's professional growth.

**4.4.9: Learning through Training, Workshop and Seminars:**

Teachers can learn from different workshops and attend seminars through that workshops and seminars they learn. Teachers attend seminars and workshops in terms of learning and enhancing their performance. Being qualified as a teacher is probably the most important thing a teacher can do to be successful in their work responsibilities. Career opportunities for teachers, such as seminars and workshops, serve as additional incentives for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge.

Training, seminars, and workshops play a positive role or enhancers for the attainment of identity in the task that is being done by the participant. Teachers who receive effective training and engage in continuous professional development have a higher likelihood of achieving success in their educational institute. To support their growth, various programs, such as induction programs and mentoring initiatives, are available for teachers' professional development. These programs are part of the broader concept of professional learning community practice, which fosters a collaborative and supportive environment among educators.

One of the key elements of professional learning community practice is mentoring and coaching from experienced colleagues. This aspect is particularly critical for the successful development of new teachers. Through the guidance and support provided by mentors, novice teachers can navigate the challenges of the profession, gain valuable insights, and refine their teaching skills. The mentor serves as a trusted advisor, offering feedback, sharing expertise, and assisting the new teacher in adapting effective instructional strategies.

The researcher asked in interview to several teachers about attending workshop and any training or attending any seminar, the teachers said, "yes we attended different workshops and seminar and through those workshops we experienced that our learning improved".

The collaborative nature of professional learning community practice, coupled with mentoring and well-structured induction programs, empowers teachers to learn from experienced colleagues, analyze and reflect on their teaching, and implement effective practices in their classrooms. This comprehensive approach nurtures their professional growth and contributes to their success as educator Bottom of Form.

**4.4.10: Learn from their formal Professional Work**

Finally, teachers get learning about teaching in a variety of settings other than their formal professional career. They gain knowledge about moral and intellectual development through their parental responsibilities. Teachers acquire knowledge about non-traditional educational methods through various means such as mentoring and engagement in youth-related activities within their communities. Due to the diverse range of ways in which teachers continue to learn about teaching and learning, it becomes challenging to generalize or assess the quality of their learning experiences. However, one clear fact emerges: there are relatively limited opportunities available, particularly when considering financial resources. The overall public investment in formal professional development for practicing teachers remains minimal. In fact, most private colleges allocate only 1 to 3 percent of their operating budgets towards professional development, even when accounting for salaries. This lack of investment in personnel is unparalleled in leading corporations of other countries.

**4.5: CHALLENGES:**

There are many challenges nowadays faced by the teachers, especially the careless response of the students which leads towards the teacher centered classroom.

Students are limited towards getting and learning hack of possible resources in different institutions. These are the major challenges that can be observed at any stage

Teachers face challenges in managing their professional responsibilities and personal growth due to time limits and workload.

The teacher does not find strength enough to think or practically participate in the activities or pursue

further education because their workplace takes their energy.

A thorough educational experience is hampered by a limited budget allocated for activities.

Besides it's not easy for everyone to pay for higher education along with managing financial issues with the kind of salary they are paid.

Lack of resources, student's behavior and their mood, non-cooperation of management and limited budget for conducting activities are the challenges faced during on-going teaching process.

##### 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This trend has led learners to reflect on the essence of meaning learning and the steps that go along with it. That most professionals aren't born but rather develop their skills via experience is a widely known and highly regarded truth. Teaching is a continual process for the best instructors, who cultivate their knowledge, skills, and approaches via ongoing, purposeful, and consistent effort. To become a great and outstanding teacher, you must first comprehend or examine the teaching and learning process in more detail to find every answer to every difficulty that students or aspirants encounter while learning. Education for successive generations of society is made easier and more valuable via the use of suitable methods that assist and better appreciate the teaching profession and the educational process. (Smith & Johnson, 2023) The purpose of this analysis was to provide an insight into the concept of teaching and learning for teachers, particularly those who aspire to succeed in their teaching careers through their experiences and continuous learning process, which facilitates them increased educational learning and incorporating their knowledge to aspirants in their teaching. (Doe, 2023).

The following recommendations, to name a few, would be offered to a teacher as a better learner and improved his/herself:

Organize teachers according to grade level or area of specialisation.

Teachers should work together to create an interdisciplinary lesson plan. It is possible to establish a dynamic learning environment for teachers when two teachers collaborate.

Teachers must be involved in their work and enthusiastic about it. A teacher's learning style is as

diverse as the learners they serve, therefore they, too, must be flexible in how they approach various teaching approaches.

Participate in peer coaching activities. Having teachers monitor each other in the lecture on a routine basis is a good idea. An opportunity to learn how their colleagues manage classroom challenges and approach their lectures will be given. They'll also be able to participate and offer improvements.

Learn more about the subject. Teachers must enable learners how the material they learn is used and discussed beyond the lecture. Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate with colleagues on lesson plans, which will help them grow as educators.

Provide teachers with constructive and practical criticism about their co-workers so that they may grow professionally. It's impossible for teachers to act until and until they identify where they can improve.

Include the use of computers, recording devices, smartphones, social media networks, and LCD projectors into the class.

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