



UNIT-10

Personal Professional Development

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Define and discuss Personal Professional Development
- ✓ Understand the characteristics of a good personal development plan
- ✓ Explain the importance of ongoing/continuous professional development

Unit 10

Personal Professional Development

Personal Professional development is the process through which the organization and individual engage in the process of learning to meet the challenges and desire goal. It is associated with the development needs of the individual as well as group”

Personal professional development is a formal means by which an individual (normally working with a teacher, mentor or supervisor) sets out the goals, strategies and outcomes of learning and training. Again this is in alignment with the professional programme of study and is often written to meet requirements from regulatory or statutory bodies around continuing professional development (CPD) and revalidation to retain a licence to practise, stay on a professional register and demonstrate professional standing.

The plan should clearly define time frames, activities and outcomes to meet the defined goals, and specify dates for review and meetings with teachers, supervisors or line managers. Plans will vary between individuals. Learning activities may include formal and informal training, reading, attending meetings, observing colleagues, refreshing or learning new study skills, or developing new skills to meet a career goal

Personal professional development is about working out where you want to be and setting goals. Career planning is a must for everybody working in the education sector and goal-setting is important for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision into reality. Your goals should be clear, realistic, desirable and achievable. A first step is to look at yourself – your strengths, your preferences, your values, your preferred learning styles.

What do professional growth and personal development mean?

Professional growth is all about gaining new skills and experience. That means your development is either related to your current role or the role you want to do next.

Personal development fits alongside professional growth — so if you want to progress in your career, you’ll need to develop personally first. That’s the only way you’ll be able to handle your fears, take on more responsibility, and succeed with greater challenges. Here we are going to distinguish between personal development and professional development so you can get the picture clearly

What is a personal development plan (PDP)?

A PDP is:

- An individual plan to suit you
- A systematic way of identifying and addressing your educational and professional development needs

- A tool that can identify areas for further development and encourage lifelong learning, a PDP can identify goals for the forthcoming year and methods for achieving these goals

What makes a good PDP?

- Time and thought
- One that identifies your learning needs - what you want to develop for either your current role or for a future one
- One that is achievable
- Is a product of reflection

For each learning need, ask yourself:

- ✓ What do I want/need to learn?
- ✓ What will I do to achieve it?
- ✓ What resources and/or support will I need
- ✓ How will I know I have been successful? What are my learning outcomes
- ✓ What are my target dates for completion and review?

Tips for a useful PDP

Your PDP must be:

- Personal to you
- A working document, something you continuously update
- Flexible (used as a guide only)
- Supported by evidence
- Reviewed regularly

Good personal development planning will help you achieve your potential as it will help you to identify your skills gaps and improvement areas/learning needs.

Moving on

Educational organisations are committed to offering learning and development opportunities for all full-time and part-time staff. No matter where you start within the education sector, you'll have access to extra training and be given every opportunity to progress within your organisation. You are likely to have an annual personal development review and development plan to support your career development and may be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge to take on new responsibilities.

Personal development is a lifelong process. It is a way for people to assess their skills and qualities, consider their aims in life and set goals in order to realise and maximise their potential.

This information helps you to identify the skills you need to set life goals which can enhance your employability prospects, raise your confidence, and lead to a more fulfilling, higher quality life. Plan to make relevant, positive and effective life choices and decisions for your future to enable personal empowerment.

Although early life development and early formative experiences within the family, at school, etc. can help to shape us as adults, personal development should not stop later in life.

Why is Personal Development Important?

There are many ideas surrounding personal development, one of which is Abraham Maslow's process of self-actualisation.

Self-Actualisation

Maslow (1970) suggests that all individuals have an in-built need for personal development which occurs through a process called self-actualisation.

The extent to which people are able to develop depends on certain needs being met and these needs form a hierarchy. Only when one level of need is satisfied can a higher one be developed. As change occurs throughout life, however, the level of need motivating someone's behaviour at any one time will also change.

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the basic physiological needs for food, drink, sex and sleep, i.e., The basics for survival.

- **Second** are the needs for safety and security in both the physical and economic sense.
- **Thirdly**, progression can be made to satisfying the need for love and belonging.
- **The fourth level** refers to meeting the need for self-esteem and self-worth. This is the level most closely related to 'self-empowerment'.
- **The fifth level** relates to the need to understand. This level includes more abstract ideas such as curiosity and the search for meaning or purpose and a deeper understanding.
- **The sixth** relates to aesthetic needs of beauty, symmetry and order.

Finally, at the top of Maslow's hierarchy is the need for **Self-actualisation**.

Maslow (1970, p.383) says that all individuals have the need to see themselves as competent and autonomous, also that every person has limitless room for growth.

Self-actualisation refers to the desire that everybody has 'to become everything that they are capable of becoming'. In other words, it refers to self-fulfilment and the need to reach full potential as a unique human being.

For Maslow, the path to self-actualisation involves being in touch with your feelings, experiencing life fully and with total concentration.

Professional Development Examples

The supervisor and employee negotiate the employee's level of involvement in professional development. Each employee should have at least one activity listed in his/her performance program. Professional development may be geared toward improving an area "in need of improvement" from a previous evaluation or related to an employee's new responsibilities or future career goals.

Examples of activities that contribute to professional growth and development:

- Continuing Education
- Enrolment in formal degree programs, courses, or workshops
- Pursuing certificates, accreditations or other credentials through educational programs
- Participation in professional organizations
- Attending local, regional, national, and international meetings, conferences and workshops sponsored by professional organizations
- Presenting papers at conferences and workshops
- Serving as an officer, board member, or committee member
- Coordinating events sponsored by the organization
- Research
- Conducting research
- Presenting findings of research to others
- Improve job performance
- Keeping up with technology, systems, processes
- Learning about new developments in your field
- Improving existing skills
- Increased duties and responsibilities
- Taking on new challenges in current position, projects, long or short-term assignments

Approaches to professional development:

- **Skill Based Training**

Effective skill-based training allows participants to learn conceptual information or necessary behaviours, practice learning the new information or behaviours, and receive feedback on their performance.

Making the most of a training program: Have a discussion with supervisor regarding reasons for attending, and what you hope to get out of it Post-conference – debrief the experience. Discuss what you have learned at the training session and how you might immediately apply it to your work.

Practice skills that you learned.

- Job Assignments
- Learning by doing – by working on real problems and dilemmas

May be an entirely new job, a responsibility added to an existing job such as a short-term project. The key element in a developmental assignment is challenge, something that stretches people, pushes them out of their comfort zones, and requires them to think and act differently.

Developmental Relationships

Learning through interaction with others - Three major roles that a person can play include:

1. Assessment (feedback provider, sounding board, point of comparison, feedback interpreter)
2. Challenge (dialogue partner, assignment broker, role model)
3. support (counsellor, cheerleader, reinforcer, and cohort).

Critical Components of an Effective Professional Development Plan:

Assessment

There is an established standard of success to describe what an individual who is successful looks like. There is a means of assessing where the individual is against this standard and continual assessment of progress that has been made. What are the standards against which you assess performance and what measures will you use to assess the individual against these standards?

Challenge

It must be something that stretches people, pushes them out of their comfort zones, and requires them to think and act differently.

Support. We tend to think only of monetary support, but what are the environmental support mechanisms. Who will provide guidance, feedback, and assistance as the individual tries out new skills, or takes on responsibilities that are beyond the scope of their current skill level? Is there a tolerance for risk taking and some failure?

Why is professional development important?

Professional development isn't only about climbing the greasy pole or earning more money. It's also about avoiding stagnation in your career and future-proofing you.

When you expand your skills beyond your current role you're preparing yourself for more and that makes you more valuable to employers. What are some examples of professional development opportunities?

An opportunity either enhances your profession or takes your career where you want to go.
Opportunities include:

- ✓ Attending professional training or gaining sought-after qualifications
- ✓ Volunteering as a buddy or taking on corporate charity work
- ✓ Taking on a role to gain specific experience, knowledge or skills
- ✓ Raising your profile by public speaking or leading a sales presentation

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Chris Sangster, (2000), Planning and Organizing Personal and Professional Development.*