

Message from the President

Development of teacher's competence



Developing teachers' competence is not a passive or automatic process, but one that, like student learning, depends on the learners' (i.e. teachers) uptake of the learning opportunities available. We understand that differences in the uptake of learning opportunities may be expressed in the choice of such opportunities but also in the intensity or quality of cognitive processing of the material presented. These differences in uptake are attributed primarily to differences in individual characteristics that may be cognitive, psychosocial or biographical. For example, general cognitive abilities may affect the ease with which teachers engage with professional development opportunities, and differences in personality characteristics may affect the choice of learning opportunities. It has been found that competence is developed and consolidated through the active utilisation of diverse learning opportunities, and

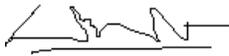
this may, in turn, be moderated by individual characteristics. These mechanisms are assumed to apply to all types of learning opportunities.

When developing competence in the teaching profession, emphasis is often placed on optimising preservice teacher education—that is, the university-based phase and, in some cases, the subsequent induction phase. Yet, it's important to remember that competence development is not a one-time event. Instead, it's a continuous journey that extends beyond graduation. It continues in classroom practice and through participation in in-service training and other forms of continuing professional development activities. This ongoing nature of competence development should motivate and engage us in our professional growth.

These forms of professional learning are seen as essential to ensuring the quality of school teaching and learning processes. The willingness to participate in professional development activities has been identified as a component of professional competence. Some of these activities are formal in-service training opportunities offered in the school context or a training facility. However, it's crucial to recognise that most teachers' professional training after

graduation occurs in informal training opportunities. These everyday experiences are valuable and contribute significantly to professional development.

Professionalism implies a particular set of attitudes. To be professional, a STEM educator has to be technically and morally competent. To succeed, we must move towards cross-disciplinary training in STEM education. We need to do a great deal of work in this direction. It is not a tall order. They do not have to walk alone. The scientific and technological community fraternity is not just willing, but eager to lend a hand. This support should reassure and instil confidence in them as they navigate their professional journey. COSTAM would need to play such a role in building up the qualities of the individual essential for being personally effective in the real world in this 21st. Century.



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