

Organizational and Methodological Mechanisms of Post-Course Support in The Continuous Professional Development of Teaching Staff

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Abstract: This article analyzes the organizational and methodological mechanisms that support the activity of teaching staff after in-service (professional development) courses within the system of their continuous professional development. Drawing on a systemic, structural–functional approach, the study substantiates the need to transform short-term courses from one-off events into an integrated system, to institutionalize post-course methodological support, and to ensure effectiveness through a feedback mechanism. The article describes a multi-level structure that links the republican, regional, district (city) and institutional levels, and details the functions of its base institutions - the modern educational institution, the school of methodologist teachers, the institution of methodologist mentors, and the innovative experimental institution. It is shown that continuous monitoring and feedback constitute the central mechanism of the system, and that the proposed model is consistent with contemporary international approaches to effective professional development.

Keywords: Continuous professional development; professional development courses; post-course support; organizational–methodological mechanism; professional competence; methodologist teacher; modern educational institution; innovative experimental institution; feedback; monitoring; mentoring (ustoz–shogird) system.

Introduction: Improving the quality of education and strengthening the potential of teaching staff has become one of the priority directions of state education policy. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026, approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-60 of 28 January 2022, defines the development of human capital and the raising of education quality to the level of international standards as a strategic goal [1]. In implementing these tasks, the consistent development of the professional and pedagogical competence of teaching staff, the provision of practical and methodological assistance to them, and the systematic support of their activity after professional development courses acquire particular importance.

The legal foundations for organizing the continuous professional development of teaching staff have been steadily strengthened in recent years. In particular, the

introduction of new procedures for professional development as of 1 January 2025 under Resolution No. PQ-231 [2], as well as the definition of mechanisms for organizing continuous professional development processes under Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. VMQ-867 [3], have expanded the regulatory basis of this need. In practice, however, professional development is often perceived as a short-term, one-off event; the mechanisms for methodologically monitoring, supporting and assessing the effectiveness of a teacher's activity in the post-course period are insufficiently systematized. It is precisely this gap that determines the relevance of the present study.

With regard to the degree to which the problem has been studied, issues of effective professional development have been widely addressed by both international and national researchers. L. Darling-Hammond and co-authors substantiated seven features of effective professional development

programs – a content focus, active learning, collaboration, the use of models and modeling, coaching and expert support, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration [6]. R. DuFour advanced the concept of Professional Learning Communities, proposing the idea of transforming the school into an organization in which teachers learn together [7]. A. Hargreaves and M. Fullan put forward the concept of “professional capital,” identifying the combination of a teacher’s individual capability, collaboration with colleagues, and the capacity for professional decision-making as a decisive factor in the quality of education [8].

At the national level, E. M. Alkarov investigated ways of improving the effectiveness of managing the continuous professional development of teaching staff on the basis of information and communication technologies and developed a mechanism for advancing the system of continuous professional development of managerial staff to a new stage [4]. G’. Otamurodov [9] and A. Suyarova and A. Erjanova [10] studied the content and structure of the professional competence of managerial and teaching staff. At the same time, the task of modeling post-course support as a unified organizational–methodological system has not been sufficiently elaborated.

The aim of the study is to provide a scholarly substantiation of the organizational and methodological mechanisms for supporting post-course activity in the continuous professional development of teaching staff – including the structural composition and functional tasks of this system – and to analyze it comparatively against international experience.

METHODS

The study is based on a systemic approach and on the principles of structural–functional analysis. This approach makes it possible to interpret post-course support not as a sum of separate activities, but as an integral system composed of interrelated structural components.

The following methods were used in the course of the study:

- theoretical analysis and synthesis of normative-legal documents and sources on education policy;
- structural–functional analysis of the organizational structure of the continuous professional development system, through identifying the aim and functional tasks of each component;
- comparative analysis of international and national experience;

- theoretical modeling and generalization of the obtained results.

The empirical basis of the study comprises the normative-legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of education [1; 2; 9], national practice in the continuous professional development of teaching staff [4], and international scholarly sources on effective professional development [6; 7; 8].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The essence and aim of continuous professional development

Continuous professional development presupposes the systematic development of teaching staff’s professional and pedagogical skills, as well as of their knowledge, abilities and competencies in using advanced pedagogical technologies and innovative teaching methods, by regularly acquainting them with the achievements and innovations of science and technology in their field. This process encompasses short-term training courses, mobile (off-site) professional development, training seminars, seminar-trainings, open lessons, mutual lesson observation, subject events, scientific-practical conferences, and distance forms of professional development.

The aim of organizing these processes is to disseminate the experience of creative, proactive and dedicated managers and teachers who possess advanced pedagogical experience, to ensure the effectiveness of scientific research in the field of pedagogy, and – on the basis of systematically organizing self-education and mobile professional development – to develop the professional competence of managerial and teaching staff and to expand the ranks of modern educational institutions. Here, professional competence is interpreted as the professional-pedagogical capability that reflects the level of an educational institution head’s or teacher’s moral worldview, psychological-pedagogical and organizational-technological potential, in-depth knowledge of their field, and their knowledge, abilities and skills in organizing, managing and ensuring the quality of pedagogical processes [9; 10].

This interpretation is consistent with international scholarly approaches: effective professional development is regarded not as a one-off event, but as a continuous process grounded in sustained duration, active learning and reflection [6]. Thus, a teacher’s professional development does not cease upon completion of a professional development course; on the contrary, it is precisely the post-course period that constitutes the decisive stage from the standpoint of applying the acquired knowledge in practice, monitoring and support [4; 5].

The organizational structure of the post-course support system

The results of the study show that ensuring the effectiveness of post-course methodological support requires a multi-level, interconnected organizational structure. The structural components of this system can be defined as follows:

- the Republican Council for the Development of the Professional Competence of Teaching Staff;
- the Commission for Improving the Activity of Educational Institutions;
- the Commission for Improving Subject-Based Methodological Work;
- the Commission for Improving Innovative Processes;
- the coordinating councils of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the city of Tashkent and the regions;
- the district (city) pedagogical coordinating councils;
- the methodological councils of educational institutions and the subject-based methodological associations.

This structure encompasses components ranging from the republican level down to the level of the individual educational institution, and ensures both vertical and horizontal coordination among them. Such a hierarchical yet interconnected structure makes it possible to organize professional development courses, to apply their outcomes in practice, and to establish consistent monitoring.

Functions of the Republican Council and the specialized commissions

The principal task of the Republican Council – the highest component of the system – is to define the priority directions for developing the professional competence of educational institution heads, deputy heads, practical psychologists, youth leaders, subject teachers and preschool educators; to continuously raise their qualifications; and to ensure and coordinate the quality and effectiveness of continuous professional development processes. The Council, among other things, coordinates the activity of the specialized commissions and regional councils, approves their work plans, endorses the curricula and programs of short-term and mobile professional development courses, and disseminates the pedagogical experience of the most active specialists at the national level.

Four specialized commissions operate under the Council. The Commission for Improving the Activity of Educational Institutions develops strategic plans for the

competence development of managerial staff, practical psychologists and youth leaders, creates mechanisms to ensure feedback between their professional development period and their subsequent activity, and establishes the procedures for competitions such as “Best School Head of the Year.” The Commission for Improving Subject-Based Methodological Work coordinates the continuous professional development processes of teaching staff in preschool, school and out-of-school educational institutions and disseminates the experience of methodologist teachers and methodologist mentors.

The Commission for Improving Innovative Processes organizes pedagogical experimental and pilot processes in order to bring the achievements of science and technology in the field of education to all educational institutions and to determine the effectiveness of applying research results in practice. The Commission for Improving the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Educational Institutions, in turn, is responsible for creating a unified information-pedagogical environment in the education system, introducing an electronic monitoring system for the activity of educational institutions and teachers, and organizing activities related to media literacy and information security. The activity of this commission fully corresponds to the contemporary requirements of managing professional development on the basis of digital technologies [4].

Regional and district (city) coordinating councils

The coordinating councils of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the city of Tashkent and the regions act as the link between the republican and local levels. Their aim is to continuously develop the professional competence of the managerial staff and teaching personnel of educational institutions, to direct them toward scientific-methodological activity, and to widely introduce innovative lesson designs and electronic educational-methodological complexes into the educational process. The regional councils organize and coordinate the activity of the district (city) councils, the modern educational institutions, the schools of methodologist teachers, the institutions of methodologist mentors and the innovative experimental institutions, and form a database of the most advanced teachers on the basis of continuous monitoring.

The district (city) pedagogical coordinating councils constitute the component of the system that is closest to practice. They organize the continuous professional development processes of managerial and teaching staff, ensure feedback between the professional development period and subsequent activity, conduct

the lower stages of subject olympiads and competitions, and ensure that advanced pedagogical experience is applied in the practice of all educational institutions. It is precisely at this level that the knowledge gained in a professional development course is translated into real pedagogical practice; therefore, the effective functioning of the district (city) component determines the effectiveness of the entire system.

Base institutions and their functional tasks

A special place in the post-course support system is occupied by the base institutions that provide direct practical and methodological assistance. The modern educational institution is a new-quality educational institution that, as a result of systematic reorganization, develops consistently and carries out educational and upbringing processes on the basis of strategic goals. It is selected from among institutions that have high-potential managerial and teaching staff, occupy leading positions in education-quality rankings, and serve as a model for other educational institutions. Its task is to form a reserve of managerial staff, to develop managerial and organizational abilities in young teachers, and to conduct the mobile sessions of leadership courses in an off-site format.

The school of methodologist teachers relies on the potential of teachers who are recognized at the district (city) level in a particular subject and who possess advanced pedagogical experience and high professional skill. A methodologist teacher is one who has in-depth knowledge of their field, whose advanced experience has been disseminated, who is capable of providing methodological assistance to teachers within the mentoring (ustoz–shogird) system, and who is an author of methodological recommendations and lesson designs. Such a school organizes training seminars and conferences for all teachers of the relevant subject, consistently raises the qualifications of young teachers on the basis of the mentor–mentee (ustoz–shogird) system, and helps to introduce subject innovations and teaching methods into all schools. This approach is directly consistent with the concept of professional learning communities and realizes in practice the idea of transforming the school into an organization in which teachers learn together [7].

The institution of methodologist mentors performs a similar function in the area of preschool education: relying on the potential of advanced educators, it develops methodological recommendations, organizes training seminars, and continuously raises the qualifications of young educators on the basis of the mentoring system. The innovative experimental institution, in turn, is an institution capable of

organizing pedagogical experimental and pilot processes in the areas of widely applying the achievements of science and technology and contemporary innovations to the educational process and of determining the effectiveness of research results. Taken together, this complex of institutions serves to form the “professional capital” that combines a teacher’s individual capability, collaboration with colleagues, and the capacity for professional decision-making [6].

Directions of short-term courses and the feedback principle

The directions of the short-term courses organized for the purpose of post-course methodological support can be classified, in a generalized manner and on the basis of teachers’ qualification categories, as follows: improving the activity of educational institutions; improving subject-based methodological work; and improving innovative processes and the use of information and communication technologies. This classification makes it possible to differentiate courses according to a teacher’s real needs.

The principle of feedback emerges as the central mechanism of the system. Ensuring – on the basis of systematic monitoring – the connection between a teacher’s professional development period and their subsequent activity, analyzing its effectiveness, and developing measures to eliminate the identified problems are the principal conditions for achieving the expected result. This approach also occupies a central place in international models of effective professional development: feedback and reflection, sustained duration and expert support are identified as decisive features of effectiveness [6]. From this standpoint, it is advisable to organize a professional development course as an integral process that concludes not with the issuance of a certificate, but with the monitoring and support of the teacher’s subsequent practical activity.

Post-course support based on digital technologies

The effectiveness of the post-course support system is largely connected with the rational use of information and communication technologies. In managing the continuous professional development of teaching staff, digital tools make it possible not only to organize distance professional development, but also to collect, analyze and monitor data across the entire system. The studies of E. M. Alkarov have scientifically substantiated mechanisms for improving the effectiveness of managing the continuous professional development of teaching staff precisely on the basis of information and communication technologies [4]. Such an approach systematizes the monitoring of a teacher

in the post-course period and the provision of specific, individualized methodological assistance.

In practice, this mechanism is realized through the introduction of an electronic monitoring system for the activity of educational institutions and teachers, the formation of a database of the most advanced heads, methodologist teachers and methodologist mentors, and its regular updating. In addition, the issuance of managerial certificates in electronic form and the use of situational classrooms and electronic information-educational resources are becoming an integral part of managing professional development in a digital environment. In this process, particular attention must be paid to issues of media literacy and information security, since effective work in a digital environment is one of the important professional competencies of the contemporary teacher.

Comparative analysis with international experience

The proposed organizational-methodological system is consistent with advanced international practice at a number of points. First, interpreting professional development as a continuous, practice-oriented and collaboration-based process corresponds to the features of effective professional development substantiated by Darling-Hammond and co-authors [6]. Second, the activity of the school of methodologist teachers and of the methodological associations emerges as a national form of the professional learning communities model advanced by DuFour [7]. Third, the underlying idea of the entire system – combining a teacher's individual capability with collaborative interaction and the capacity for professional decision-making – is consonant with the “professional capital” concept of Hargreaves and Fullan [8].

At the same time, adapting and introducing advanced international experience to national conditions is of particular importance. The experience of the Republic of Korea's system for raising teacher qualifications and for continuous professional development shows that the comparative study of priority practices in the areas of digital education, educational leadership and future skills serves to raise the national system to the level of international standards [5]. Thus, these organizational-methodological mechanisms rely not only on national regulatory requirements, but also on contemporary international scientific-pedagogical approaches.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the organizational and methodological mechanisms of post-course support in the continuous professional development of teaching staff makes it possible to formulate the following conclusions.

First, the completion of a professional development

course is not the final but an intermediate stage in a teacher's professional development. Applying the acquired knowledge in practice, methodologically monitoring and supporting the teacher, and assessing the effectiveness of their activity in the post-course period constitute the decisive component of the continuous professional development system.

Second, the effectiveness of post-course support is ensured through a multi-level, interconnected organizational structure. Vertical and horizontal coordination among the Republican Council, the specialized commissions, the regional and district (city) coordinating councils, and the base institutions is the principal condition for the system's effectiveness.

Third, the base institutions – the modern educational institution, the school of methodologist teachers, the institution of methodologist mentors, and the innovative experimental institution – ensure the direct implementation of post-course methodological assistance and serve as a means of disseminating advanced pedagogical experience and realizing the mentoring (ustoz–shogird) system.

Fourth, feedback and continuous monitoring emerge as the central mechanism of the system. Ensuring the connection between the professional development period and subsequent activity, together with the use of a digital (electronic) monitoring system, makes it possible to organize post-course support objectively and consistently.

Fifth, the proposed organizational-methodological mechanisms are consistent with contemporary international scholarly approaches to effective professional development – the features of effective professional development, professional learning communities, and the “professional capital” concept – and adapting and introducing them to national conditions acquires priority importance.

Overall, when the methodological support of post-course activity is organized systematically, the potential for consistently establishing short-term courses, disseminating advanced pedagogical experience, developing the professional competence of teaching staff, and expanding the ranks of modern educational institutions increases significantly.

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