



Impact of Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities on the Professional Development of Teachers: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The professional development of teachers is a continuous process that extends beyond formal training to include experiential and practice-based learning opportunities. Discipline-related co-curricular activities have emerged as significant platforms that support teachers' growth by enhancing subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and reflective practice. This qualitative study investigates the impact of discipline-related co-curricular activities on the professional development of teachers, recognizing that teacher learning extends beyond formal training to include active engagement in subject-specific activities such as workshops, seminars, and academic forums. Grounded in the experiential learning perspective of John Dewey (1933) and the concept of reflective practice proposed by Donald Schön (1983), the study is guided by three objectives: to examine the role of discipline-related co-curricular activities in professional development, to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions of participation, and to identify the professional skills and competencies developed through such involvement. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected from in-service teachers through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, and analysed thematically. The findings indicate that participation in these activities enhances subject knowledge, strengthens pedagogical practices, and promotes reflective thinking, while also fostering collaboration, confidence, and motivation among teachers. Additionally, key competencies such as communication, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving were found to be significantly developed. However, challenges including time constraints, limited institutional support, and resource limitations were also identified. The study concludes that discipline-related co-curricular activities play a vital role in continuous professional development and recommends their integration into teacher education and institutional frameworks to

improve teaching effectiveness and educational quality.

Keywords: Co-curricular activities, Professional development, Teachers, Reflective practice, Qualitative study

I. Introduction

Professional development is a continuous and dynamic process that enables teachers to enhance their knowledge, refine pedagogical skills, and adapt to evolving educational demands (Guskey, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). In contemporary education systems, the role of teachers has expanded beyond classroom instruction to include active participation in various academic and institutional activities, which contribute significantly to their professional growth and effectiveness (Day, 1999; Fullan, 2007). According to John Dewey (1938), learning is deeply rooted in experience, and reflective engagement with such experiences is essential for meaningful professional development.

Discipline-related co-curricular activities such as subject clubs, academic competitions, workshops, seminars, and conferences serve as important platforms for teachers to extend their subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise beyond formal teaching (Shulman, 1986; Valli, 1997). These activities provide opportunities for experiential learning, collaboration, and innovation, allowing teachers to engage more deeply with their respective disciplines (Kolb, 1984; Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). As highlighted by Donald Schön (1983), professionals develop expertise through reflective practice, where they critically examine their actions and experiences to improve future performance. Participation in such co-curricular engagements thus becomes a crucial avenue for reflective teaching and continuous improvement (Brookfield, 1995).



Engagement in discipline-related co-curricular activities enables teachers to collaborate with colleagues, exchange best practices, and establish professional networks (Valli, 1997; Fullan, 2007). Such collaborative environments promote the sharing of ideas and the creation of innovative instructional strategies, enhancing overall teaching effectiveness (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). Brookfield (1995) highlights that critical reflection and professional dialogue are essential for developing self-awareness and instructional expertise. Through these interactions, teachers strengthen their pedagogical skills, build confidence, and cultivate a professional identity grounded in continuous learning and reflective practice (Day, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Participation in discipline-related co-curricular activities also fosters the development of key professional skills, including communication, leadership, creativity, and problem-solving (Day, 1999; Fullan, 2007). Teachers engaged in these activities often exhibit greater adaptability and innovation in their instructional practices, applying new strategies to meet diverse classroom needs. Zeichner and Liston (1996) emphasize that reflective and participatory experiences are fundamental to teacher learning, as they connect theoretical knowledge with practical classroom application, enhancing both competence and professional growth.

The significance of co-curricular activities for student learning is well established, yet their influence on teachers' professional development has received comparatively limited attention, particularly through qualitative research (Day, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Understanding how teachers perceive and experience these activities is essential to uncover how participation contributes to the enhancement of pedagogical skills, reflective practice, and professional competencies (Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1983). This study aims to examine the role of discipline-related co-curricular activities in teachers' professional growth, explore their experiences and perceptions, and identify the specific skills and competencies developed through such engagement. By employing a qualitative approach, the research provides rich, in-depth insights into how these activities influence teachers' learning, instructional practices, and effectiveness in the classroom (Guskey, 2002; Valli, 1997).

II. Objectives of the Study

- To study the role of discipline-related co-curricular activities in the professional development of teachers.
- To explore teacher's experiences and perceptions regarding their participation in discipline-related co-curricular activities.
- To identify the specific professional skills and competencies developed through involvement in these activities.

III. Methodology

This research follows a qualitative approach, utilizing document analysis and experiential accounts to examine the impact of discipline-related co-curricular activities on the professional development of teachers. The study reviews various sources such as workshop reports, seminar proceedings, institutional documents, reflective journals, and relevant academic literature to understand how engagement in subject-specific co-curricular activities contributes to teachers' professional growth. The data collected from these sources were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to pedagogical improvement, skill development, reflective practices, and collaborative learning.

IV. Role of Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities in Professional Development of Teachers

Discipline-related co-curricular activities are essential components of the educational process that extend learning beyond the formal classroom and serve as a vital bridge between theoretical knowledge and real-world application (Dewey, 1938). These activities provide teachers with meaningful opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts and engage with students in diverse and dynamic learning environments (Kolb, 1984). They also contribute to the continuous enhancement of teachers' professional competencies by supporting experiential learning and active engagement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). By promoting reflective practice and skill development, these activities play a crucial role in shaping teachers' professional growth (Schön, 1983). Furthermore, they create interactive teaching-learning environments where teachers actively participate in planning, organizing, and guiding students, thereby strengthening both their academic understanding and professional capabilities (Vygotsky, 1978).



Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities in Professional Development



Remedial Classes and Teachers Professional Development

Remedial classes play an important role in teachers' professional development by helping them identify students' learning gaps, misconceptions, and individual differences (Tomlinson, 2001). This process enhances their diagnostic and evaluative skills and enables them to use differentiated teaching strategies effectively (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Through remedial teaching, teachers improve their instructional planning, become more innovative in their methods, and provide individualized support to learners (Shulman, 1987). These classes also help develop essential qualities such as patience, empathy, and adaptability, which are important for effective teaching (Goleman, 1995). Additionally, remedial teaching promotes reflective practice, as teachers continuously assess and improve their teaching approaches (Schön, 1983). Remedial classes strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence and support their continuous professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Career Counselling and Teachers Professional Development

Career counselling activities enhance teachers' professional development by enabling them to guide students in making informed academic and career choices (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Through counselling, teachers gain a deeper understanding of students' interests, abilities, and socio-emotional needs, allowing them to provide personalized support (Super, 1990). These activities strengthen teachers' interpersonal and communication skills, build their confidence in mentoring, and improve their ability to handle student concerns effectively (Goleman, 1995). They also help teachers stay updated with emerging career trends and educational opportunities, thereby broadening their professional knowledge (Patton & McMahon, 2006). Additionally, career counselling promotes reflective practice and develops organizational skills, ultimately strengthening teachers' roles as mentors and supporting their continuous professional growth (Schön, 1983).

Student Seminar and Teachers Professional Development

Student seminars enhance teachers' professional development by providing opportunities for academic interaction and knowledge sharing (Vygotsky, 1978). Through organizing and guiding seminars, teachers improve their subject knowledge,



presentation, and facilitation skills (Shulman, 1986). These activities strengthen communication, encourage active participation, and help teachers adopt student-centred and innovative teaching methods (Brookfield, 1995). They also promote critical thinking and collaborative learning, while developing teachers' organizational and leadership abilities (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Additionally, seminars support reflective practice, enabling teachers to continuously improve their teaching effectiveness (Schön, 1983).

Field visits and Teachers Professional Development

Field visits contribute to teachers' professional development by connecting classroom learning with real-life experiences (Dewey, 1938). They provide exposure to practical situations, helping teachers enrich their teaching with relevant examples and make learning more meaningful (Kolb, 1984). These activities develop teachers' skills in planning and organizing experiential learning, while encouraging observation, inquiry, and student engagement (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). Field visits also enhance adaptability, problem-solving, and classroom management in diverse settings (Orion & Hofstein, 1994). Additionally, they promote reflective practice, enabling teachers to improve their teaching methods and strengthen their overall pedagogical effectiveness (Schön, 1983).

Workshop Mode Classroom and Teachers Professional Development

A workshop mode classroom is an interactive and participatory learning environment where students engage in hands-on activities, collaborative tasks, and practical problem-solving under the guidance of the teacher (Dewey, 1938). In this mode, teachers act as facilitators rather than traditional instructors, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning through active exploration and experimentation (Vygotsky, 1978). Workshop mode classrooms promote experiential learning, critical thinking, and practical application of theoretical knowledge, enabling students to develop both cognitive and professional skills (Schön, 1983). Teachers also benefit professionally by enhancing their facilitation, organizational, and adaptive teaching skills (Dewey, 1938).

Discipline-related co-curricular engagements collectively promote reflective thinking, collaborative learning, and continuous professional development among teachers (Dewey, 1938; Schön, 1983). Through active participation, teachers become more confident, creative, and adaptable in

their instructional practices, enabling them to respond effectively to diverse classroom situations (Fullan, 2007; Robinson, 2011). These activities also cultivate the habit of self-evaluation, encouraging teachers to critically reflect on their teaching methods and make ongoing improvements (Brookfield, 1995). They play a vital role in enhancing pedagogical skills, deepening subject knowledge, and fostering positive professional attitudes, thereby improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

5. Teacher's Experiences and Perceptions Regarding Their Participation in Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities

Teachers' participation in discipline-related co-curricular activities plays a significant role in shaping their professional experiences and perceptions (Day, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2006). These activities, including remedial classes, career counselling, student seminars, workshops, and field visits, provide opportunities for teachers to engage beyond traditional classroom teaching (Kolb, 1984; Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). Exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions helps in understanding how they interpret the value of such activities, the challenges they face, and the benefits they derive in terms of professional growth (Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1983). It also offers insights into how these engagements influence their teaching practices, relationships with students, and overall effectiveness as educators (Fullan, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teachers generally perceive these activities as valuable platforms for improving their pedagogical practices and strengthening their connection with students (Day, 1999; Brookfield, 1995). For instance, while conducting remedial classes, teachers often experience a sense of satisfaction in addressing individual learning needs, although they may also face challenges such as limited time and diverse learner abilities (Tomlinson, 2001; Black & Wiliam, 1998). In career counselling, teachers gain insights into students' aspirations and develop a deeper understanding of their roles as mentors, though they may feel the need for additional training or updated knowledge about career options (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Super, 1990).

Participation in student seminars and workshops is often perceived positively, as it allows teachers to engage in academic discussions, update their subject



knowledge, and enhance their communication and facilitation skills (Shulman, 1986; Brookfield, 1995). Teachers also report increased confidence and professional motivation through such interactions (Fullan, 2007). Similarly, field visits are commonly viewed as enriching experiences that provide practical exposure and make teaching more relevant and engaging (Dewey, 1938; Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). However, teachers may also encounter logistical challenges, such as planning, coordination, and safety concerns (Orion & Hofstein, 1994).

Teachers' perceptions indicate that discipline-related co-curricular activities are highly beneficial for their professional development, as they promote reflective thinking, collaboration, and continuous learning (Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1983). Despite certain challenges, most teachers recognize these activities as essential for improving teaching effectiveness, enhancing student engagement, and fostering a more holistic educational experience (Day, 1999; Fullan, 2007).

6. Professional Skills and Competencies Developed Through Involvement in Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities

Involvement in discipline-related co-curricular activities plays a crucial role in developing a wide range of professional skills and competencies among teachers. Activities such as remedial classes, career counselling, student seminars, workshops, and field visits provide practical and experiential learning opportunities that extend beyond formal classroom teaching. These engagements enable teachers to enhance their pedagogical abilities, communication skills, organizational capacity, and reflective practices. Exploring the skills and competencies developed through such participation helps in understanding how these activities contribute to teachers' continuous professional growth and effectiveness in the teaching-learning process (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Highlighting points are:

Professional Skills and Competencies Developed

Through Involvement in Discipline-Related Co-Curricular Activities



1. Pedagogical Skill

One of the key competencies developed is pedagogical skill, as teachers learn to design and implement effective and flexible teaching strategies that cater to diverse learning needs. This enables

them to adopt more learner-centred approaches and improve their instructional planning. At the same time, their diagnostic and evaluative skills are strengthened, particularly through activities such as remedial teaching, where they identify students' learning gaps, analyse misconceptions, and continuously assess progress to provide targeted and



meaningful support (Shulman, 1987; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Tomlinson, 2001).

2.Communication And Interpersonal Skills

Participation in discipline-related co-curricular activities enhances teachers' communication and interpersonal skills as they interact closely with students, particularly during counselling sessions and seminars. These interactions help teachers develop active listening, empathy, and the ability to build positive and supportive relationships. Additionally, their organizational and management skills are strengthened as they plan, coordinate, and execute various academic and co-curricular activities, which further develops their leadership and time management abilities (Hargreaves, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Fullan, 2007).

3.Subject Knowledge and Academic Competence

Another key area of development is subject knowledge and academic competence. Through seminars, workshops, and academic discussions, teachers remain updated with recent developments in their respective disciplines, which enriches their teaching content and effectiveness. These activities also promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling teachers to analyse classroom situations, make informed decisions, and respond effectively to teaching challenges (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Brookfield, 1995).

4.Creativity And Innovation

In addition, teachers develop creativity and innovation by adopting new teaching methods and designing engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Their adaptability and flexibility are also enhanced, as they learn to modify their approaches according to different learning environments and diverse student needs. Furthermore, participation in such activities encourages collaboration and teamwork, as teachers work with peers, students, and experts, promoting shared learning and professional interaction (Robinson, 2011; Fullan, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).

5.Reflective Practice

Finally, reflective practice becomes an integral part of teachers' professional development, as teachers continuously evaluate their teaching methods,

identify areas for improvement, and strive for better outcomes. Engagement in discipline-related co-curricular activities further strengthens this reflective approach, helping teachers become more competent, confident, and effective in their professional roles, thereby enhancing the quality of education and the teaching-learning process (Schön, 1983; Dewey, 1933; Farrell, 2015).

6.Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Teachers develop higher-order thinking skills by tackling challenges during workshops, field visits, and seminars. They learn to evaluate situations, make informed decisions, and respond effectively to classroom or institutional problems, enhancing their decision-making and problem-solving capabilities (Dewey, 1933; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

7.Collaboration and Teamwork

Co-curricular activities promote collaboration among teachers, students, and experts. Working in teams to organize events or conduct activities strengthens interpersonal collaboration, negotiation skills, and the ability to work collectively towards shared goals (Valli, 1997; Fullan, 2007).

8.Organizational and Leadership Skills

Participation in activities such as student seminars, workshops, and field visits enhances teachers' abilities to plan, coordinate, and manage tasks effectively. These experiences strengthen time management, decision-making, and leadership skills, enabling teachers to oversee both classroom activities and broader institutional responsibilities efficiently (Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). Developing these competencies supports teachers in organizing learning experiences, leading collaborative projects, and fostering a structured and productive educational environment.

7.Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of discipline-related co-curricular activities in promoting teachers' professional development. Teachers' participation in activities such as remedial classes, career counselling, student seminars, workshops, and field visits provided meaningful opportunities to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom and engage in practical,



experiential teaching experiences. Consistent with Kolb's experiential learning theory, teachers demonstrated that active involvement in these activities strengthened their pedagogical skills, enhanced their reflective practices, and fostered the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Remedial classes, for example, allowed teachers to identify students' learning gaps and individual differences, thereby enhancing their diagnostic, evaluative, and instructional planning skills. Similarly, participation in career counselling sessions helped teachers improve interpersonal communication, guidance skills, and professional awareness of emerging academic and career trends.

The study also revealed that teachers perceive discipline-related co-curricular activities as valuable platforms for professional growth. Engagement in student seminars and workshops increased teachers' subject knowledge, presentation skills, and confidence in facilitating academic discussions. Field visits further enriched teaching practices by providing real-world experiences that connected theoretical concepts with practical applications, encouraging inquiry-based learning and observational skills. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of reflective practice and collaborative engagement in teacher professional development.

Participation in these activities was found to support the development of specific professional skills and competencies. Pedagogical skills improved as teachers adopted learner-centred approaches and flexible instructional strategies. Communication, interpersonal, and leadership abilities were enhanced through collaborative planning, supervision, and facilitation of student-focused activities. Additionally, teachers developed creativity, problem-solving skills, and adaptability by experimenting with innovative teaching methods and addressing diverse classroom situations. Reflective practice emerged as a key outcome, with teachers continuously evaluating and improving their instructional approaches based on experiences gained from co-curricular engagements.

Despite the clear benefits, teachers also reported challenges such as time constraints, workload management, and limited institutional support, which occasionally hindered full participation. Nevertheless, the overall perception was that engagement in discipline-related co-curricular activities significantly contributes to professional growth, strengthening both pedagogical competence and personal confidence in teaching. These findings underscore the potential of co-curricular participation to not only enhance teacher

effectiveness but also promote a holistic and student-centred educational environment.

The study confirms that discipline-related co-curricular activities serve as vital mechanisms for continuous teacher development. They foster experiential learning, reflective practice, and the acquisition of diverse professional skills, thereby improving teaching quality, enhancing teacher-student interactions, and supporting overall educational excellence (Guskey, 2002; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

8. Conclusion

An Alternative model of Inservice Teacher Education:

Discipline-related co-curricular activities play a crucial role in the professional development of teachers as prescribed by UGC providing experiential and reflective learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom exercising in service teacher education. Engagement in activities such as remedial classes, career counselling, student seminars, Classroom based workshops, and field visits enables teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, enhance pedagogical skills, and adopt learner-centred approaches. These activities foster the development of communication, leadership, collaborative, and problem-solving skills while promoting creativity, adaptability, and reflective practice.

Experiential mode of Inservice Teacher Education:

Teachers' experiences indicate that such participation strengthens subject knowledge, instructional planning, and professional confidence, despite challenges like time constraints and resource limitations with respect to Field Studies, Practical Activities and other such type of activities as per guidelines of Concerned Discipline.

Enhancement of Skill as a parameter of Inservice Teacher Education:

Overall, discipline-related co-curricular engagements contribute significantly to continuous professional growth, improved teaching effectiveness, and the cultivation of competent, reflective, and adaptable educators capable of meeting the evolving demands of contemporary education targeting Skill Development of Teachers.

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