

‘Off-Site Insights’ – A Qualitative Study Of Teacher Professional Development Through The Pandemic And Beyond.

Sateja Joshi, Suravi Banerjee and Preetha S Kumar

Background

The Professional Development Centre (PDC) was envisaged as a body that would seamlessly segue teacher training into a zone ‘beyond the benchmarks’.

However, Covid-19 made the last few school years, 2019 – 2021, as schooling we would never forget. With no notice or preparation, teachers were forced to pivot to online teaching. And so did PDC.

In April 2022, PDC went into some degree of soul-searching and reflection regarding the Covid years and felt that the learning therein was valuable enough to be systematised into a paper and shared more widely. We entitled the paper ‘Offsite Insights’.

In early May 2022, we sent in an abstract for consideration to the **Barcelona Conference on Education**. This submission was then blind peer reviewed and was the basis on which the paper was selected for presentation at the conference in September 2022.

Abstract

The *Professional Development Centre (PDC) at Mallya Aditi International School, Bengaluru, India*, began teacher training when Covid-19 hit, and all interaction moved online. The aim was to create a democratic and organic training process with equal understanding of one’s colleagues as well as the goal ahead.

PDC also reflected on generic training practices that never inquired about, or acknowledged, teachers’ classroom strategies.

This paper will present how we accentuated teachers’ voices. The projects involved the principal and all 120 teachers, irrespective of the department or section a teacher belonged to. The projects continued over two years while we, as trainers, catered to awareness, sensitivity, and successful utilization of technology.

The three major endeavours are incorporated in this paper are:

- **The Aditi Learner Traits** were gathered from the floor and brought forth the attributes that teachers wanted to cultivate in students.
- **The Aditi Teacher Talks** included a series of sessions by teachers, sharing ideas throughout school and honing workshop presentation skills.
- **The Reading PoDs**, in groups of three, focused on discussing eclectic articles, individual teacher philosophies and creating teacher portfolios. We stitched these conversations together to weave the *Aditi Teacher Philosophy*.

Professional development is most effective when the whole diet of innovative implementation has the teacher as the main stakeholder, who has joyfully engaged with the shifting contexts in a dynamic educational model.

Such off-site insights led to the *Education Reimagined Project* which lays out a clear vision for the future of teaching and learning.

Education Reimagined Team: Nandita Mohan, Shukti Dutt, Ritika Paul, Priya Rao and Rajeshwari G.

Comments from Reviewers

Reviewer #1

This appears to be an important project and one that has created a number of valuable developments for teacher education. There is so much in the abstract that it is difficult to appreciate all aspects of the work. However, an oral presentation could support a fuller understanding of the projects undertaken. It would be of interest to both teachers and teacher educators.

Reviewer #2

It is an enriching experience that has also lasted over time. It has been able to integrate the development of teachers' skills in the online environment with the reinforcement of abilities to motivate students, as well as reflection on personal and philosophical texts.