

Tutor Professional Development

Ensuring College of Education (CoE) tutors are well equipped to educate the next generation of teachers is essential to delivering quality education in Ghana's schools. Historically, tutors have not received the coaching and support they need to sufficiently prepare students to excel when they start work as teachers. The accessibility of teaching and learning materials is often limited, meaning tutors cannot always share recognised successful practices in teacher education.

Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL), a four-year Government of Ghana programme supported by UKAid, is placing tutor professional development at the heart of its efforts to support excellence in teacher education. Using a state-of-the-art professional development model, with intense and focused capacity building approaches, T-TEL is supporting tutors in all of Ghana's 38 Colleges of Education (CoEs) to give student teachers the skills and technical opportunity to deliver results in the classroom.

This policy brief outlines the professional development model, teaching materials, approaches and technology used to deliver the programme. It also raises challenges of implementation, which can be tackled through collaboration with T-TEL partners.

Tutor Professional Development

T-TEL is supporting CoEs to make tutor professional development (PD) a central part of college life.

Professional development enables tutors to improve the practice of teaching. In turn, tutors thus provide student teachers with the learning opportunities they need to develop their own skills and practice as future teachers.

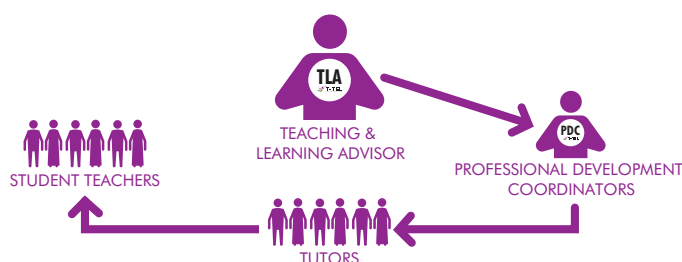
The T-TEL tutor professional development model is primarily a peer-facilitated programme, supported by extensive materials and induction workshops. These workshops are run by **Teaching and Learning Advisers** (TLAs - employed by T-TEL) for college-based **Professional Development Coordinators** (PDCs - appointed by college principals from within college tutors), to equip them to deliver professional development sessions for all tutors in their colleges.

Throughout each semester, PDCs run weekly professional development sessions, attended by all tutors. Each session focuses on specific teaching strategies, explored in highly interactive and participatory ways. The sessions devote significant time to planning interactive activities for student teachers, as well as reflecting on the previous week's activities.

"Tutors participated fully in the activities. Some commented that they found the sessions especially helpful when brainstorming about their roles and understanding the difference between in-service training and professional development."

Tutor, FOSO College of Education Central/Western

T-TEL's approach means that tutors take ownership of their professional development and increase their own motivation in the process, as they feel part of a peer group working towards the same goals. Online communication platforms, like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Google Hangouts, are enabling PDCs to share pictures and information of their development sessions, building a strong community of practice between tutors across the country's CoEs, and helping T-TEL monitor their progress.



Student-centred Pedagogical Approaches

The T-TEL PD programme covers several themes, with each comprising typically five study weeks. Each theme focuses on effective approaches to teaching and learning, supported by comprehensive education research.

These include:

- Creative Approaches
- Questioning
- Talk for Learning
- Group Work
- Leadership for Learning
- Gender and Inclusion
- Teaching and Learning Materials
- Assessment for Learning
- Project Work and Investigation.

For each theme, T-TEL develops a Professional Development Guide that supports tutors in their weekly professional development sessions. A PDC Handbook is also available, which supports PDCs to run weekly sessions in colleges.

Each theme is divided into different teaching strategies. For example, 'Creative Approaches' introduces student teachers to games and roleplay, while 'Talk for Learning' covers different ways of initiating and managing classroom discussion.

It was very interesting how storytelling could be used to educate students about Cholera in science. Tutors were amazed that it could be applied to teach across a variety of subjects.

Tutor, KIBI PRESBYTERIAN College Of Education (Eastern/Greater Accra)

Embedding practices into the system

These teaching strategies don't only apply to college learning, but also to school classrooms. To ensure they are implemented in both environments, T-TEL has also created materials for student teachers, helping them make sense of the new approaches, and in turn encouraging them to test them during teaching practice in schools, before they qualify as teachers.

While the materials focus on pedagogical approaches, they are designed to work with the existing DBE curriculum, and draw on current syllabuses for examples. However, they are also flexible, and could easily be adapted to an updated syllabus. T-TEL is currently engaging with decision-makers at the policy level to move this forward.

Using technology to support professional development

Technology supports T-TEL's overall tutor professional development mission to ensure that tutors, student teachers and the teacher education sector as a whole can access quality teaching resources.

T-TEL is providing colleges with technological devices that enable access to the Internet and resources for professional development, and high quality teaching and learning. To find out how we are doing this, see our policy brief on how we are providing innovative education solutions through Information and Communications Technologies **available here**.

Tutors realised that some questions asked during their lessons were unhelpful. They took practical steps to avoid their mistakes and found the session hugely educational.

Tutor, FOSO College Of Education (Central/Western 28)

SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS SECTOR SUPPORT

Implementing this extensive tutor professional development programme is not without its challenges. Existing working requirements often discourage tutors from fully engaging in the programme, who often say they don't have time to attend. The performance of tutors in professional development sessions should thus be seen as mandatory and closely linked to their career progression.

Staff could also have the option to gain formal qualifications that are closely linked to their work in colleges. The work of PDCs for example involves attending face-to-face meetings each semester, preparing professional development sessions, facilitating them for other tutors and completing a self-evaluation process. This work could form the basis of a part-time Masters programme in "Leadership for Professional Development", which, according to our research, could provide significant motivation to PDCs.

