

REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

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Introduction

Professional accountability culture brings about awareness for the need to be answerable to oneself and to the society. Quality of the teachers can be enhanced leading to professional development of the teachers.

Profession and job are often used interchangeably in a conversation, but the difference between them is exemplary. Profession is not just a job or activity where a person works for few hours and the motive is only monetary gain. It is synonymous to discipline, responsibility and service to others. Moreover, in a profession there is need for knowledge base, skill and ever increasing expertise.

A profession is defined as a specialized service based upon advanced specialized knowledge and skill, and dealing with its problems primarily on an intellectual plane rather than on a physical or a manual labour plane. Knowledge is the basis for permission to practice in any profession. Thus, there underlies a moral obligation of a professional to have grounded knowledge and to increase the knowledge through further learning and practice.

The accountability and ethics become an inherent part of any professional as it is not finishing a job for personal economic well being but for the larger good of the society. It assumes a collective responsibility and is charged with a certain degree of answerability towards others.

All professions are required to be accountable in various ways for the quality of service they render to their stakeholders, to their fellow professionals. Whenever we say professionals, we are obligated to whatever is best for the stakeholders, not what is convenient, easier or what the professional wants.

Accountability is an ethical concept – it concerns proper behaviour, and it deals with the responsibilities of individuals and organisations for their actions towards other people and agencies.

According to Bovens, accountability can be defined as the methods by which the actor may render an account (i.e. justify their actions and decisions) to the stakeholders and by which the stakeholders may hold the actor to account (i.e. impose sanctions or grant permissions).

Professional Accountability

Each member of the organisation is expected to answer to someone: for doing specific things according to specific plans and against certain timetables to accomplish tangible performance results.

Teachers standing in the profession are determined by their seniority rather than by their teaching or the research work done or by the results of their students. The system gives freedom to the teachers to teach or work as much or as little they like. (Dr. Anil Kumar. Professor,

Measurement and Evaluation, NITTTTR, Bhopal). But, professional achievement connotation is no longer limited to just number of years of performing the same task. It is not about repetition of tried and tested way of teaching, or level of complacency in thinking that they are not accountable to the stakeholders as they have completed so many years of service. Professional accountability is to be constantly evolving and updating oneself, being responsible for one's performance in that year and putting oneself up for assessment and evaluation on certain parameters.

Our educational commissions and policies right from early seventies have stressed upon the need for professional ethics and accountability. Teachers' performance has to be assessed and checked through criterion and standards set as a part of professional accountability. Teachers should be able to provide self-appraisal for their responsibilities carried out in the year towards curriculum transaction, engaging the students, keeping abreast with innovations and development in the field of education, their own apprising knowledge and participation in associations and various platform of professional growth.

The following table shows the evolution of the understanding and significance of professional accountability through the eyes of the national committees:

| Landmark Years | National Committees | Professional Accountability |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| In 1971 | S R Sen Committee | the need for code of (Professional Ethics) |
| In 1986 | National Policy of Education and also its Programme of Action | "Annual Performance Appraisal" of the teachers of educational institutions. |
| In 1987 | Mehrotra Committee | teachers' performance should be evaluated by students and there should be compulsory annual submission of 'performance appraisal' |
| In 1988 | UGC | Self Appraisal Performance of the teachers is to be made mandatory as a requirement of Career Advancement Scheme(CAS) |
| In 1997 | Rastogi Committee | "self-appraisal by teachers, assessment by students in an appropriate manner, periodic performance appraisal having regard to the number of teaching days, work-load and code of professional ethics." |
| In 2008 | UGC, Review Committee, | "Multiple parameters like regularity in class room teaching, holding tutorials, availability to students for consultations, participating in faculty meetings, guiding and carrying out research and participating in other academic activities like seminars etc |
| In 2006-09 | National Knowledge Commission | To enable the teacher to know his/her strengths and deficiencies and use feedback information to improve his teaching-Self , students etc |

NCFTE 2010 aims of continuing profession aims at continuing professional development programmes- explore, reflect on, and develop one's own practices. It stresses on research and reflection on learners and their educational practices.

Thus, teaching is not just a job of fulfilling 6 to 7 hours in a school or college, but a conscientious and responsible effort to grow and help others to grow, it is being able to make oneself equipped with newer knowledge and skills. The professional accountability thus can be seen by per

Three Types of Accountability

Product Accountability Model stresses on outcome, ie the amount learned by the student. To assess whether specified learning outcomes have been achieved. This kind becomes too simplistic and the focus is not the teacher's performance but only the outcome or the product, which could be the result of various other extraneous factors and even the students' capacity and motivation.

Process Accountability Model:

Teachers are held accountable for the knowledge and skill that they demonstrate. It is about knowing their subject matter, knowing their students, knowing the factors that influence learning and using professionally sound instructional procedures. This model is more acceptable, as the teachers are the proactive actors who are taking efforts to update and polish their knowledge. The professionals are concerned with the learners, learning situations and also the factors that can affect learning, here the context of the institution is kept while planning. The process is more important than the product.

Experimental Accountability Model:

Teachers are expected to try out different approaches to improve learning and instructions. It promotes participation in planning, implementation, evaluating experimental programs. This model moves a step further and doesn't just limit itself to whatever has been done, but attempts to try new ventures, experimenting with new technologies.

Thus the different models of professional accountability bring out that accountability in its simplest form can be the students' results or what the teacher can give as the outcome of the students, but nowadays accountability is not a matter of just final exam related outcomes but how has the teacher added more to the process of teaching and engaging the students. Is there a emphasis on making learning interesting and participative for the learners. Is the focus more on learning environment rather than just completion of syllabus and assessing the information is repeated well by the students? Process model has nowadays been seen as a sign for the professional responsibility and endeavour of the teacher. A step further is where the teacher is not just using the learning techniques and strategies developed by others , but is now more pro- active in experimenting for new methodologies and creating new programs to make teaching –learning more customise to the particular set of learners and learning situations.

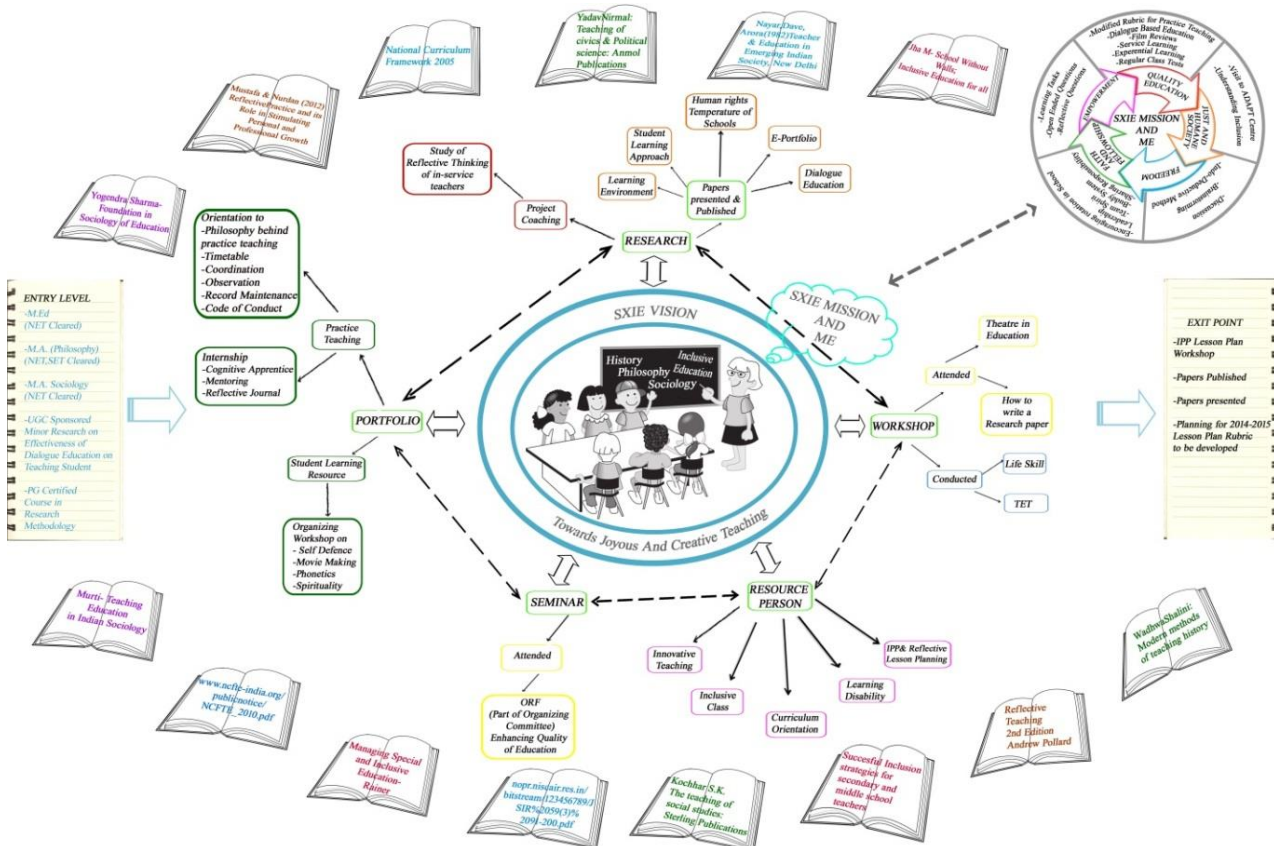
A professional accountability is a process of reflection on the paths for getting tasks accomplished in stipulated time but still keeping in mind the vision and mission of the Institute. In this process there is critical viewing and reviewing which makes the process not just a follow instructions or carry on a routine schedule but , expands on the available resources and multiplies it for the one's own growth and development of the stakeholders too. The teacher enters with certain qualifications and achievements and has a definite point exit point but what is significant is

in between the entry and exit time steps taken to augment what was, by adding to existing qualifications, upgrading knowledge and skills and research and making this profession for the improvement of existing knowledge and process. Thus, accountability of a professional is that of a critical, reflective thinker who will take steps towards fulfilling the vision of the Institute as well as the objectives of the society.

Reflective Professional Accountability Model

The Professional Accountability Model considers the teachers skills, attitude and knowledge at the start of the year. The objectives for the portfolios, subjects taught, approaches used, exhibition of different methods, technology while teaching and the self- feedback is important for this model. Besides that, student feedback can be supplemented to it. But here most important is

Even at St. Xavier's Institute of Education to appraise the teachers' performance, teachers used various models of professional accountability. A graphic representation of the professional accountability model is shown below:



Reflective Professional Accountability Model

The professional accountability model image shows how as a professional there is entry level of the author's achievements and qualifications. At the entry level, the vision and mission of the Institute also is in the centre with personal goals set by the author, to be completed for the year. With these factors in mind, the author then planned the portfolios and duties along with the expected outcomes. The different portfolios were streamlined with plan of action and achievement but syncing in with the culture of college of joyous and creative experience. Research was carried

out, seminars attended and workshops were conducted as a part of professional development. This made the author more equipped and prepared to teach students in a more engaging manner. Research topics selected were on study approaches, Dialogue based education, Reflective Thinking, e-portfolio, human rights, such that it made the author more sensitive towards the topical needs of the students and the society. Relevant reading and reference material was made use of, which made the author's entry point enriched. The interaction with student was liberal and democratic, as the aim of the author was to empower the student to reflect and critically examine the content, relate it the outside world and also plan certain action that can contribute to the society. This type of experimental and process accountability helped the author to be socially responsible and dynamic. The professional accountability model doesn't stop with just planning the actions, but also executing them to bring about positive change. This model helped the stake holders also to get clear picture of the contribution of the author to various aspects of curriculum transaction, research, being a resource person and also carrying out one's portfolios.

Thus, at the exit point the author had clear idea as to what was envisioned for the year and how much was achieved, what was the capacity at the start of the year and how much more was built and developed in the process. The exit point showed the development of the author by the end of the year at the same time gave an idea to what could have been done more and differently which can be a reflecting window before planning for the next year. Thus, the model of accountability makes a professional self –reflecting and self –policing, reflecting writing journaling and teaching styles is emphasized. Deliberate and conscious efforts are taken to critically assess ones' own methods of teaching, adequacy of research and reading.

The author also realised the weakness and lacunae through this exercise of writing down how the year was entered and exited and in between the entry and exit points what happened any new addition to the previous educational qualifications, seminars, workshops attended and conducted, the portfolios handled.

Such accountability model makes the professional more conscientious, responsible and answerable to his/her stakeholder. Moreover, there can also be performance indicators in form of Teacher Assessment Questionnaire, Student achievement gains and overall institute achievement gains.

It is essential that the professionals have to be critical thinkers. The reflections- for action, in action and on action makes the professionals take ownership and are accountable. The development of this model benefitted the researcher to reflect on the ties between the means and the ends. The development was focussed and meaningful and not just trial and error. There was planning and implementation of plans in a direction keeping in mind the goals to be achieved and destination to reach. At the same time the process, the journey becomes more reflective and transformative. Reflecting on professional development is no longer limited to narrow lens of "third person perspective that yield generalised findings with clearly formulated, publicly agreed procedures" to practical reasoning, personal judgments and interpretations (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003; p.195). It is more introspective and reflective, it is a journey that every teacher can take within and understand the process and reflect on what was needed to reach the goal, what was the gap and what can be done to avoid the wastage and stagnation. As in the words of Maliere, "It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable."

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