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## UNIT 2 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SOME ISSUES

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit (unit 1) you have learned various issues related to online learning/training in general. In this unit we shall take up various issues related to professional development with special reference to online continuing professional development. We shall start with definitions of professionalism, then discuss some important aspects of professional development, suggest how you can manage your own professional development, highlight some issues related to continuing professional development and present a framework for online continuing professional development.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- define professionalism;
- develop a plan for professional development;
- discuss various types of continuing professional development activities;
- explain important issues related to continuing professional development; and
- prepare a framework for online continuous professional development.

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## 2.2 PROFESSIONALISM IN EDUCATION

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How do you define professionalism? Think for a minute and define it in your own words. Then read the following definitions:

Professionalism is a term used to describe enhancement of the quality of service (Hoyle, 2001).

Professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possesses towards one's profession. It is an attitudinal and behavioural orientation (Boyt, Lusch, & Naylor, 2001).

Professionalism means the behaviour, skills, qualities, special conventions, forms of politeness etc. associated with a certain profession or shown by a professional (Sahu, 2009).

Does your definition match with any one?

Professional development is a continuous process that adds value throughout a teacher's career. Professional development is most effective when the teacher conducts himself/herself through reflective practice and judges the value of training and development activity in terms of its impact on teaching and supporting learning. The teacher must make professional development plans which must clearly articulate his/her needs, set measurable and achievable objectives that reflects teaching context, fulfilling the needs of the employer (Sahu, 2009).

You may agree that professionalism can not be achieved all on a sudden. It grows into a teacher and others slowly. It is continuous process. Professionalism is not one-time affair in one's career. It is widely accepted that a teacher's development spans an entire career (McIntyre & Byrd, 1998).

While clarifying the concepts of professional development Guskey (1999) stated that professional development includes those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students.

Good professional development encourages the use of a variety of features related to knowledge, skills and practice and should focus on deepening one's content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge i.e. how individual learns particular content (Vrasidas & Glass, 2004). Professional development programmes in education institutions should promote active learning, and allow the teachers to develop reflective skills.

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## **2.3 SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Let us discuss three different aspects of professional development: (i) developing a plan for professional development, (ii) identifying resources and (iii) receiving feedback (Susan, 1990).

### **Developing a plan for professional development**

It is important to develop a plan for professional development as it will encourage us to address our professional self-improvement activities in a positive manner. The plan will provide a framework for the discipline and commitment needed to achieve planned changes inherent in any professional development programme (Jones & Lowe, 1985, cited in Susan, 1990).

Here we may highlight the popular professional development model developed by Jones and Lowe (1982, 1985).

The professional development model has four phases: Initiating phase (Reflective), Planning phase (Reflective), Managing phase (Active) and Evaluative phase (Reflective after the fulfillment of plan). Each phase is accomplished by addressing a series of steps as detailed by Jones and Lowe (1985, p.82). These are:

*Initiating phase*

What do I hope to accomplish?  
What are my learning objectives?  
What is my potential pay off?

*Planning phase*

What resources are available to me?  
What will be my learning activities?  
How will I judge the success of this point?

*Managing phase*

Complete each activity in the planning phase.  
Organize and interpret data.  
Record progress and/or report findings.

*Evaluative phase*

To what extent did I achieve my objectives?  
To what extent did I select and pursue appropriate learning activities?  
What are my learning needs now?

**Identifying resources**

If you want to implement a professional development plan effectively, you will need to identify resources. These resources may include printed study materials, audio/video materials, web-based materials, books, journals, news letters and also human resources as available through orientation programmes, workshops, face-to-face contact programmes etc.

**Receiving feedback**

Feedback is another important aspect of professional development. You should know your progress toward achieving your aim and objectives. You may do it through self-assessment and taking help from others in assessing your progress.

**Activity 1**

Judge your own situation on the basis of the first two phases of Jones and Lowe model for professional development.

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## **2.4 SELF MANAGEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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You can manage your professional development activities. Probably you are doing it consciously. Here, we shall give some suggestions. You need to prepare yourself for professional development activities. You should make plan in advance. You should identify the main objectives of your professional development i.e. what you want to learn, or what skill you want to develop. Objectives should be achievable, measurable, specific, action oriented and time bound. Then decide how to proceed. Identify the methods or strategies

you should follow. As you know resources are very important aspects, decide what kind of resources you need to accomplish the activities.

You should think about the possible barriers you may face and how to remove those barriers. You should study your environment and point out the barriers and the solution to overcome the same.

You should be aware of your natural learning style and use learning methods which are comfortable for you.

You can not complete the professional development activities without taking help from others. You should work in a team. As you know feedback is very important, you should select 2-3 individuals (colleagues/supervisors/mentors) who can provide feedback on the nature of development you want to make.

You should make a habit of visiting online materials and documents. A large number of materials are available online. These will enhance your understanding in relevant areas you want to develop. For example, if you want to develop your knowledge and skills in open distance learning, you may browse the websites that provide information on concept of open distance education, its components, support services, skill needed for distance teaching, tutoring, counseling, online evaluation, use of technology, and so on. You may attend online seminar and conferences and learn new techniques and also receive feedback.

You may become member of professional associations who organize workshops and conferences (face-to-face and online) in regular intervals.

You should keep records of all professional development activities.

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## **2.5 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)**

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### **2.5.1 Meaning of CPD**

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a method of ensuring that you achieve the right abilities to do your job and maintain or enhance your expertise. It embraces everything that you do to improve, your job performance and 'lifelong employability' (Morrison, 2008).

According to Guskey (1999), continuing professional development, as a process, should be intentional, ongoing and systematic (cited in Panda, 2004). Professional development activities are based on purposes which are linked to broader vision of the profession. Professional development involves ongoing processes and activities based on horizontal and vertical integration within a dynamic professional field. Professional development activities need to be integrated and related to the system where professional practice takes place.

Morrison (1997) rightly has pointed out that attending a course or getting a certificate is not in itself continuing professional development evidence. You should show learning and transfer. How you will use or have used the learning is more important.

Morrison (1997) argued to consider the analogy of walking up a downward escalator. As time goes by, your knowledge and skills with respect to current

thinking and requirements diminishes. Therefore, you need to maintain a certain amount of learning (continuing professional development) to stay still or more to move up, Morrison stated.

Some skills are situation and area specific. If you have acquired skills few years ago, that may be questioned in the present scenario.

## 2.5.2 Types of CPD Activities

The activities that may enhance your professional growth may include face-to-face lectures, attending workshops, orientation programmes, round-tables, seminars, conferences, independent study of print and non-print materials, conducting research, consultation with peers and experts, and so on.

### Face-to-face Lecture

You all know that lecture is the traditional and most common type of CPD activity. It offers full-time educational experience. Lecture method requires relatively common technical support. The participants are to be physically present during face-to-face lecture. However, as the time for interaction between the teacher/trainer and the participants is less, it is called a passive form of learning.

### Formal on the job training

Formal on-the-job training is an important method of CPD.

### Workshops

Workshop is an important method of CPD activity. Workshop may be organized for short period (3-5 days) in 2-3 months interval. Sometimes 10-15 days workshops are also arranged.



### Open Distance education

The methodologies used in Open Distance education must be considered where the participants are widely dispersed and attendance at face-to-face training may be difficult.



Online learning environments are designed to enable teachers/trainers to reflect on their teaching/training practice. Online programmes may consist of reading book chapters/articles, viewing lectures/power point presentations or educational videos, answering questions, chatting, group discussion, and so on. These programmes may be continuous.

**Informal learning activities**

These include reading books, manuals, articles etc. and familiarization with the operation of computer programmes, equipments, and so on. These activities take place because of institution requirements.

**Conferences**

Regional, national and international conferences are held throughout the year. In conferences papers are presented according to the theme and sub-themes of the conferences for discussion. You may prepare papers for presentations which may be considered as an important CPD activity. In the conferences you may meet people and experts with similar interests and may find new resources. You may keep in touch with people you meet and also can collect resources and use the same in future.

**Institution activities**

Institutional activities include coordinating workshops, seminars and conferences, refereeing of articles for publication, acting as resource person in workshops, orientation programmes, membership of different institutional committees, editing journals and news letters, reviewing books and articles for institution journal, research, and so on.

**Activity 2**

Add some more activities that you may think may be useful for CPD.

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## **2.6 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TEACHERS: SOME ISSUES**

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In this section we shall discuss some important issues related to continuing professional development.

### **2.6.1 Realizing Life-long Learning and New Roles of the Teachers**

You will agree that to meet the goals of educational reform the teachers not only to update their knowledge and skills but also to transform their role as a teacher. The teachers need to remain aware about the current issues in education. They should refine their practices in various types of education (conventional and open distance education) and implement innovations. The teachers have to play new roles (as a mentor, facilitator, manager, coach, technologist, assessor, researcher) and develop new instructional strategies for diverse groups of learners. The major roles of a competent online teacher have been outlined (see Goodyear, Salman, Spector, Steeples & Tickner, 2001). Continuing professional develop provides opportunities for teachers to explore all these new roles for the new learners in new environments.

Effective professional development accomplishes many goals. Some of them as identified by Cook, Fine & Sparks (1996) are as follows:

- Professional development enriches teaching and improves learning for all students. It is essential link to higher student achievement.
- It supports teacher development, both as individual and as educator.
- It is considered an ongoing process and is conducted in a long-term sustained manner.
- It supports current beliefs about teaching and learning.
- It is based on a growth model rather than a deficit model.
- It is modeled after learning experiences considered valuable for adults.
- It supports systemic change.

There is a need to build the learning communities to support individual and institutional development. Teachers, students, administrators, policy makers, parents, and others have role to play to improve the quality of professional development. However, the role of the teacher is most important. All teachers may not be interested in continuing professional development due to various reasons. McLaughlin (1991) noted that if prior professional development has been a dissatisfying experience, teachers may show little interest. Fine (1994, cited in Cook, Fine & Sparks, 1996 ) stated that some teachers, especially as they approach retirement, may loose interest in professional development.

### 2.6.2 Effective Use of Technologies

Professional development for teachers is an important issue for using technology effectively for the benefit of the students. Many teachers in any level of education know how to operate a computer, but do not know how to take advantage of the computer in teaching learning process. There are many teachers who want to learn how to integrate the computer effectively in his/her teaching, but due to lack of support and/or accessibility can not do it. The educational institute must have a well-designed professional development programme to prepare each teacher for effective use of technology.



Researchers have identified some components which are essential for professional development for technology use. These include: a connection to student learning, hands-on technology use, variety of learning experiences, new roles for teachers, curriculum-specific applications, active participation of teachers, ongoing process, sufficient time, technical support, administrative support, adequate resources, continuous funding, built-in evaluation (Rodriguez & Knuth, 2000).

Briefly we will highlight the importance of these components.

Speck (1996) stated that the ultimate goal of professional development is to improve student learning. The use of new technology enables teachers to implement new teaching techniques, interact with the students individually and in a group, teach and help students work collaboratively, develop higher-order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and so on.

Hands-on technology use at the institute and at home allows teachers to feel comfortable with it and develop new skills. This should be a continuous process as professional development takes time. This kind of training is different from one-time teacher workshop which the teachers attend at the beginning of their career. However, adequate technical and administrative support, and feedback are essential for this type of professional development.

Professional development for technology use may help the teachers to integrate new technology into the specific subject area and enhance not only teaching skills, but assessment and evaluation and managerial skills also. The teacher becomes adapted to his/her new role as a facilitator, mentor, manager or coach. He may also be involved in teaching at a distance effectively.

The teacher must be motivated to take part in this type of continuing professional development activities. If we have to provide similar opportunities to all the students (either in face-to-face situation or residing in remote corners of the country) then all the teachers need to be trained following similar procedures. However, providing technical and administrative support is also an important component of effective professional development. When the teacher faces any difficulty, he/she should be provided immediate help and support. If there is delay in support or the support is not adequate, then the teachers may feel frustrated.

### **2.6.3 Evaluating Professional Development Programme**

Evaluation of the professional development programme is very important. It has two main goals: to improve the quality of the professional development programme, and to find out its overall effectiveness.

Evaluation should be built in the professional development programme during the planning stage. It may consist of three types: pre-formative evaluation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation (Rodriguez & Knuth, 2000).

Pre-formative evaluation assesses teacher's needs during the planning stage.

Evaluation that is done to improve the quality of the professional development programme is called formative evaluation. This evaluation takes place during the professional development activity or at intervals during a programme. Participants are asked to provide feedback, comments or suggestions on the methods/strategies and for further improvement of the programme. These help the trainers to make necessary corrections and adjustments to improve the quality of the ongoing programme.

Evaluation to find out the overall effectiveness of a professional development programme is called summative evaluation. It takes place at the end of the programme. Good summative evaluation uses various techniques to gauge five levels of professional development evaluation:

participants' reactions, participants' learning, organizational support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes (Guskey, 1998).

#### 2.6.4 Open Distance Education and Continuing Professional Development

Open distance education is being accepted by many higher education institutions across the world as an economical way of expanding various academic activities including continuing professional development. The number of institutions accepting distance education is increasing every year as well as the number of students. Experts are of the opinion that development of distance and online continuing professional development programmes could contribute toward more efficient and manageable way to maintain professional development for teachers in various levels. By embracing the flexibility of distance learning, students can explore particular areas relevant to their profession or practice and encourage a deep approach to learning (Biggs, 2003). Distance education provides a less threatening environment for the students. There is greater access to support through the use of e-mail, which is less threatening. Distance education also provides timely feedback for the students, supports meaningful learning through informative and rapid interaction (Kitsantas & Chow, 2007).

Professional development in e-learning for the teachers and academics is the priority for open distance learning institutions. The teachers experience increasing demand to deliver online courses. The demand is driven by four main factors: (i) the increasing availability of multimedia capable computers, fast modems and internet access; (ii) the emergence of online technologies that provide a cross-platform, non-proprietary multimedia delivery system; (iii) the promise of enhancement to the quality of the teaching and learning experience; and (iv) being part of the global education market (Ellis, Reilly, & Debreceny, 1998).

The teachers in open distance education need to develop knowledge of pedagogy as it applies to online environment and knowledge of effective and appropriate software, hardware, and networking. Most of the teachers shift from traditional system or work part-time in open distance learning system and do not have required knowledge and skills. So, the staff development plays a significant role in the success of online teaching and learning.

The chapter on "constructivist e-learning for staff engaged in continuous professional development" by Donnelly and Farrell in the edited book "Technology supported learning and teaching- a staff perspective" by John O'Donoghue (2006) reports on the design and implementation of a blended module in e-learning for the continuing professional development of the teachers and also reflects the challenges the authors encountered when designing and developing a blended module on e-learning. The aims of the module were two fold: to introduce to the participants the concept and possibilities of e-learning for their own professional context in higher education, and to enable participants be cognizant of the importance of designing materials and activities to engage their students in learning.

If you go through the chapter you will find that the authors had carefully taken into consideration all the important factors as reported in literature previously while designing the module e.g. reluctance to adopt web-based

supported teaching by academics (Dearn, Fraser & Ryan, 2002), factors that influence levels of adoption e.g. inadequate access to staff development and training (Guthrie, 2003), high workload (Scribbens, 2002), lack of time, and lack of adequate recognition and rewards (Alexander & McKenzie, 1998), and so on. According to the authors the module was designed to help participants learn from experience, to begin to integrate knowledge, and to think reflectively about using e-learning in their teaching practice. The concluding remarks by the authors are very important: effective professional development requires more than skills training; it involves changes in attitude, values, and beliefs that develop confidence for ongoing learning. Constructing knowledge and developing necessary skills to use technology in order to impact learning and teaching does not happen overnight; rather, it becomes the product of common vision and a set of experiences that prepare educators to embark together on a journey of learning (p. 156).

### Activity 3

- 1) List three important goals of effective professional development.
- 2) How CPD programme can help the distance teacher? Write your answer within 100 words.

**Note:** No answer has been provided for these questions. You may answer these questions on the basis of the contents discussed in section 2.6.

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## 2.7 ONLINE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD): A FRAMEWORK

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It is essential that framework for online continuing professional development are developed within which design of learning resources can be located (Panda & Mishra, 2008). Earlier an online constructivist CPD framework was developed and evaluated. The outcome of the study suggested that there should be inter-disciplinary approach to design, development, and application of curricula. The online activities may be combined with reflective practice in the offline community of practice. There should be provision for networking and exchange in the community of practice (COP) (Panda, 2004).

### Framework for online reflective resources

The online CPD framework (see Unit 2, Block 5 of this course) articulated interplay of self reflection, online collaborative interaction and reflection, and collaborative projects in the community of practice towards continuing professional development. Based on the design of and the inter-related variables associated with online professional development, Panda and Mishra (2008) presented a review of design of reflective online learning resources and discussed the same in detail. They have reported a classification of online resources into five elements/tools viz., orientation and organization tools, learning activity tools, interaction and collaborative tools, support tools, and analytic tools can form the basis to further develop online professional development programmes in any professional area.

In this section, we shall highlight the importance and functions of these tools. For an elaborate discussion see Unit 2 in Block 5 of this course.

## Orientation and organization tools

It is assumed that these are a set of online tools that helps the reflective practitioners to get oriented to the community of practice and develop confidence by organizing their learning space. The tools are as follows:

**Welcome and calendar:** Here, the course facilitators/instructors provide an overview of the CPD programme including the objectives and significant activities to be performed by the participants. This web page also provides the calendar of activities in detail.

**Instructor and learning community:** This page is kept for the introduction of the facilitator/instructor and the participants. They get to know each other and develop a sense of belonging and commitment.

**Concept map:** A concept map is graphical representation of a concept that shows directional links amongst sub-concepts and establishes hierarchical relationships of terms/contents to facilitate clear understanding of each term/content. It can be used as an advance organizer, and as a tool to check whether the participants have understood the concept.

**Syllabus:** The design of syllabus/curriculum is a very important aspect. Many factors like culture, learning styles of the participants etc.. to be kept in mind while designing the curriculum.

## Learning Activity Tools

The main function of these tools is to enhance learning/training. These tools help in development of new knowledge and skills. These tools are as follows:

**Course module:** Course modules are important components of online learning and reflective practices. The module design must have variety of choices like language, format, activity, methods, knowledge construction, and so on. Along with the contents, the module may list the objectives, study guide, assignments, reflective activities, and their linkage to online tasks relating to self study and community of practice. The modules may be available as Acrobat PDF files, HTML web pages, MP3 files and multimedia formats as well.

**Activities:** The participants may be engaged in various activities like self-assessment, assignments, collaborative projects, action research, reflective writing, and so on.

## Interaction and Collaboration Tools

It is well known that Internet and World Wide Web provide ample opportunities for interaction and collaboration. Interaction can be synchronous (occurs in real time) and asynchronous (time lag between sending, receiving, and replying). The tools in this category are as follows:

**Email:** Email along with attachments (various files) is very useful tool.

**Discussion forum:** Discussion forums are generally meant to motivate for self study, have a group feeling, and an opportunity to express one's ideas, views and feelings in a group.

**Online chat:** Online chatting can be used in one-to-one basis and in a group. It helps to understand each other's problem and instant clarification of the same.

**Participants' corner:** The participant can place his/her views, ideas, articles etc. in the corner. The informal environment provided by the participants' corner creates conversation and enjoyment for the participants.

**Wiki:** It is a combination of a website and a word document. The participant can add, delete and edit content on a wiki site. Wiki is very helpful for collaborative learning.

**Web-based video conference:** Web-based video conference has become popular in many countries. Web-based video conference promotes reflection through synchronous communication. This tool may be used for CPD effectively.

**White board:** This is used as an added tool to the synchronous videoconference to create virtual classrooms. The visual medium can promote reflection through collaborative interaction and other activities.

### Support Tools

The following support tools are important for online resources framework.

**Mentor support:** Mentor can provide support to enable participants to further reflect on their learning.

**Technical support:** The technical support is very important as many participants may not feel comfortable with the new technology. There should be arrangement for non-stop support for the participants.

**Web resources:** Web resources (additional links) provide opportunity for self-study, analysis and reflection.

**Search engines:** The participants should be guided to know the strategy to effectively negotiate the available information on the net.

### Analytic Tools

There must be a provision for review the progress and improve practice further. Various tools like model evaluation, module evaluation, teaching evaluation, satisfaction, process reflection and learning assessment have been suggested.

In their concluding remarks Panda and Mishra (2008) stated that online learning and online resources encompasses content, pedagogy, and technology and also the teachers and learners as human beings. These resources designed reflectively could lead to enhancing professional practice. However, further research is needed to establish the effectiveness of the reflective online resources designed using the five tools discussed by them.

#### Activity 4

If you have come across any online CPD programme identify the tools used in that programme. Note the new tools.

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## 2.8 LET US SUM UP

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- In this unit we have discussed various issues related to professional development. Professional development is a continuous process that adds value throughout a teacher's career. Professional development is

most effective when the teacher conducts himself/herself through reflective practice and judges the value of training and development activity in terms of its impact on teaching and supporting learning.

- It is important to develop a plan for professional development as it will encourage us to address our professional self-improvement activities in a positive manner.
- The professional development model designed by Jones and Lowe has four phases: Initiating phase (Reflective), Planning phase (Reflective), Managing phase (Active) and Evaluative phase (Reflective after the fulfillment of plan). Each phase is accomplished by addressing a series of steps.
- You can manage your professional development activities. You should make plan in advance.
- Continuing professional development is a method of ensuring that you achieve the right abilities to do your job and maintain or enhance your expertise. It embraces everything that you do to improve, your job performance and 'lifelong employability'.
- The activities that may enhance your professional growth may include lectures, attending orientation programmes, round-tables, workshops, seminars, conferences, independent study of print and non-print materials, conducting research, consultation with peers and experts, and so on.
- Effective professional development accomplishes many goals.
- Professional development for teachers is an important issue for using technology effectively for the benefit of the students. Professional development for technology use may help the teachers to integrate new technology into the specific subject area and enhance not only teaching skills, but assessment and evaluation and managerial skills also.
- Evaluation should be built in the professional development programme during the planning stage. It may consist of three types: pre-formative evaluation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation
- Professional development in e-learning for the teachers and academics is the priority for open distance learning institutions.
- The teachers in open distance learning need to develop knowledge of pedagogy as it applies to online environment and knowledge of effective and appropriate software, hardware, and networking.
- Online resources may be classified into five elements/tools viz., orientation and organization tools, learning activity tools, interaction and collaborative tools, support tools, and analytic tools that can form the basis to further develop online professional development programmes in any professional area.

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