

Teachers Becoming Lifelong Learners

Aminboyeva Zarafshon Zeripbay qizi

Bachelor degree student of Uzbekistan State World Languages University,
zarafshonaminboyeva6@gmail.com

Abstract: Every type of learning from birth to death is referred to as lifelong learning. The goal of lifelong learning is for everyone to become better. People are expected to become lifelong learners because the knowledge taught at school is not sufficient. From this point of view, educational approaches around the world focus on lifelong learning, and there is a growing need for lifelong learners and teachers. Teachers have seen lifelong learning as an activity that took place outside of the classroom. Additionally, they had connected it to a variety of educational pursuits and personal development. Teachers who are lifelong learners also have the requisite confidence and learning skills, are highly motivated to participate in the process, and are acutely aware of the connection between education and real-world experiences. Control of educational goals and decisions needs to be shared between teacher and students. With the advent of information technology, there is an urgent need to revisit not only the pedagogical methods, but also to update ourselves as teachers with the recent developments. The Lifelong Learning aims to bridge the gaps in the learning teaching process using various modern methods of dissemination of knowledge, across the age group of individual learners. Teachers and students have worked collaboratively to set learning goals and make decisions. Today, with new technology, it's important for teachers to not only change how they teach but also keep learning new things themselves. Lifelong Learning helps improve the teaching and learning process by using modern ways to share knowledge with people of all ages.

Keywords: Lifelong learning, Teachers' Perceptions, Maintenance Learning, Growth Learning, Shock Learning



This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license

Introduction

A teacher is someone who strives to share with their students what they have learned through their own knowledge and exploration. True teachers are those who continuously seek out new and deeper knowledge that they can apply both in their teaching and in their lives. They also ensure that the lesson is effective and engaging. To teach effectively, a teacher must be dedicated to continuous learning and discovery. As the famous physicist Albert Einstein once said, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." That's why every good

teacher must be a lifelong learner. However, it's fortunate that the quality of opportunities available for teachers today is often quite concerning. Today's educators are required to learn, unlearn, and then relearn many teaching methods and approaches. Without discrediting traditional teaching methods, it's clear that in today's world - where information is easily accessible—teaching and learning methods are undergoing major transformations (Carolyn et al., 2001). Above all, good teaching starts with understanding. In order to teach well, a teacher needs to know their students — who they are, how they learn, and what they need and what they need to succeed. Lifelong education is not just a different kind of schooling, it's an important idea that supports the whole system of learning throughout life. This principle helps guide the growth of every part of that system.

The main idea behind lifelong learning is that learning is far too important to be limited to just schools and universities. Instead, it is each person's responsibility to keep learning throughout their life and through life experiences. Lifelong learning is considered sustainable because it depends on people taking initiative to learn on their own, rather than waiting for experts or authorities to teach them (Knapper, 2006). A teacher is someone who helps prepare others for the future by building their ability to think and act. This doesn't mean a teacher must know everything - sometimes, their students may even know more in certain areas. What truly sets a good teacher apart is their ability to fairly consider different backgrounds from their students. The best leaders take action based on what they currently know but are also humble enough to change when they learn something new. Teachers are passionate about their work. They enjoy learning, meeting people, and sharing knowledge. Because of this, they play a big role in creating new value in society. They generously share what they know and help build a better life not just for themselves, but also for everyone they interact with.

Lifelong learning skills affect not only the teacher's knowledge and methods but also the overall quality of the educational process. It is considered one of the most important competencies for improving the education system. A teacher helps students become aware of their thoughts, draw a strategic path, and develop their inner motivation. A teacher should serve as a guide to help students achieve their goals.

Teachers' Perceptions of Lifelong Learning

The sample consisted of 30 teachers (ten women and 20 men) from various branches in the 2023-2024 academic year. Participants were recruited using maximum variation sampling based on gender, branch, work experience, and socioeconomic background. The purpose of maximum variation sampling is to ensure a comprehensive and representative sample that encompasses the diversity inherent in the larger group (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Attendees stated that "lifelong learning" meant "learning not limited to school." The following are some quotations:

"To me, lifelong learning means people learning all the time, no matter where – not just in school, but everywhere".

"Learning isn't confined to schools; it happens at home, at work, in all aspects of life. It's a lifelong journey that goes on regardless of age, social or economic status, or educational level, without any barriers".

"To me, lifelong learning means education that goes beyond the walls of schools; it can happen wherever people are, without being bound by time or space" (Sevgi Koç, June 2024).

Participants emphasized the importance of lifelong learning — the idea that one must be ready to learn anytime and anywhere. Today, the education is undergoing significant changes, which require teachers to take proactive actions. Traditional teaching methods, once considered the foundation of education, are now increasingly being supplemented — and in some cases, replaced

— by modern approaches and methodologies, including Task- Based Learning (TBL), Flipped Classroom, Collaborative. Learning In addition, the composition of students in classrooms is also changing, with increasing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. Therefore, teachers must be prepared to embrace new technologies, promote personalized and student-centered learning, ensure inclusivity, and equip students with the skills needed to meet the demands of the 21st century. By adopting such approaches, teachers can ensure that the educational process remains modern, engaging, and meaningful. Below are some ways teachers can continue developing themselves and adapting — not only to enhance their professional growth but also to help students fully realize their potential.

Staying informed with new information

Mainly, teachers need to be lifelong learners in order to stay current with new knowledge and changes in their subject areas. In fact, a study from the journal Teaching and Teacher Education found that teachers must regularly update their knowledge and not be satisfied with only what they gained at the time they graduated. This is because as new research and discoveries are made, the information that educators possess becomes outdated. Professional growth is very important for teaching professionals, as it improves knowledge and skills in order to support individual, school-wide, and district-wide improvements for the purpose of increasing academic success and/or improving student participation. Being involved in career development activities, such as participating in lesson studies, participating conferences, or seeking advanced studies, ensures teachers that they are including the most up-to-date information into their lessons. This not only advantages their students by providing them with accurate and relevant information but also improves their understanding of their own field.

Skills Development

In today's rapidly changing world, it is essential and highly valued for teachers to continuously improve their skills. By consistently working on enhancing their capabilities, teachers can stay informed about the latest practices and methods in their field, increase the effectiveness of their teaching, better address the diverse needs of their students, and promote innovation and creativity. Enrolling in courses that teach high-demand practical technological skills such as coding (programming) and user experience (UX) design can help even general subject teachers improve their teaching techniques. Learning and integrating modern technologies like gamification (game-based learning), simulators, interactive whiteboards, virtual and augmented reality into the classroom allows teachers to understand today's world more deeply and easily, adapt to it, and continue learning. Through this, they can also better prepare their students to face modern challenges and difficulties.

Adapting to the Developing Needs of Students

Striving to be lifelong learners also helps teachers adapt to the changing lifestyles of students. As the field of education itself evolves, so does the composition of the student body. Factors such as nationality, race, gender, socioeconomic background, and special needs are all elements that differentiate students from one another. *In terms of gender, in a classroom, there may be both male and female students who may have different learning preferences or face different societal expectations. For instance, some girls might feel shy to speak up in class, while some boys might be more active in group discussions — understanding such gender-related differences helps teachers support each student more effectively.* Moreover, today's students are not just seeking a diploma — they want educational experiences that prepare them for real life and the future. These factors together show that the traditional “one-size-fits-all” approach to education is no longer effective one important way for teachers to adapt is by adjusting their teaching methods to meet different learning styles. To do this, they should apply various instructional techniques such as visual aids, group activities, and technological resources. Nowadays, in a time when technological

learning programs have greatly advanced, teachers use applications like Kahoot and similar platforms to assign tasks to students. These programs are used to check students' interests and how easily they understand and absorb the material. Dedicating time to professional development programs and training sessions is also highly beneficial for teachers, as these events offer valuable guidance on multicultural education, cultural sensitivity, and strategies for teaching students from diverse social backgrounds. Since all of these aspects are constantly evolving, teachers must not be content with their current knowledge — they should continuously strive for growth (*Amber Thompson, 2024*).

Lifelong learning is seen as a holistic view of education and recognizes learning from different environments. The emphasis is on learning to learn and the ability to keep learning for a lifetime (Skolverket, 2000). Lifelong learning is the continued educational experience that uses non-credit academic courses, educational travel, and community service and volunteerism to fully engage the brain, heighten physical activity, and maintain healthy social relationships. As they enter into the 21st century, the information age, their ability to expand their mind and strive for continuous education is critical to their success. There are three different kinds of education that they can acquire, maintenance learning, growth learning and shock learning.

Maintenance Learning

Maintenance learning refers to keeping current with their field. But this merely keeps learners even or stops them from falling behind at a rapid rate. Lifelong learning is being recognized by traditional colleges and universities as valid in addition to degree attainment. The economic impact of educational institutions at all levels will continue to be significant into the future as formal courses of study continue and interest-based subjects are pursued. The lifelong learners, including individuals with academic or professional credentials, tend to find higher-paying occupations, leaving monetary, cultural, and entrepreneurial impressions on communities, according to educator Cassandra B. Whyte.

Growth Learning

The second type of learning is growth learning. This is the kind of learning that adds knowledge and skills to learners' repertoire that they did not have before. Growth learning helps to expand learners' mind and they are acquiring information that they did not have before that enables them to do things that they could not do before.

Shock Learning

The third type of learning is called shock learning. This is where something happens that contradicts or reverses a piece of knowledge or understanding that they already have. Shock learning can be extremely valuable if they act upon it. Peter Drucker, in his book *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, says that the primary sources of innovation in a company are the unexpected success or the unexpected failure.

The concept of lifelong learning emphasizes that learning and education are not only related to work, but to all aspects of life. Moreover, both teachers and learners are lifelong learners (Maninder Kaur Dhaliwal, 2015).

Lifelong learning is a process that continues "from cradle to grave." This kind of learning does not always have to be connected to obtaining formal diplomas or certificates.

Additionally, Lifelong learning makes considerable demands on teachers because they have to update both their subject-specific skills and their teaching and learning methods. As Norman Longworth says:

For teachers, lifelong learning enforces a double whammy. It changes not only the content, but also the methodology of their profession. They become transformed into organisers of all the

considerable educational and human resources at their disposal in the interests of actively stimulating learning (Longworth 2003: 29).

There's an old adage which goes something like this, 'If you really want to learn about something, write a book about it'. Having worked in post- compulsory education for more than 25 years, I thought I knew pretty well everything about teaching and learning in the sector. However, I've learned a great deal more by writing book; in fact it's been an excellent piece of continuing professional development. The point I wish to make is that all good teachers are good learners indeed, lifelong learners. If you're not learning, you're not teaching very well. Not only will you lack up to date skills and knowledge, you will have little to enthuse or excite you and, consequently, your learners (Peter Scales, New York 2008).

Conclusion

A teacher should see lifelong learning and researching as a constant part of their career. They must always learn new things and use them in their teaching. If not, teachers will fall behind. Time will pass them. In some ways, the progress of society depends on how much teachers keep learning. A teacher is someone who teaches the future. If they don't keep learning, others will also miss out on modern developments. In the end, it is important to remember what early writers once dreamed of when talking about lifelong learning: "If learning includes all of one's life — in both time and variety — and all of society — including its social, economic, and educational parts — then they need to go beyond just changing the education system. We must move towards creating a learning society." And the best way to do this is by making teachers a part of this lifelong learning process.

References

1. Koç, S. (2024). Teachers' views on lifelong learning. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 11(2), 250-261.
2. Knapper, C. (2006). Lifelong learning means effective and sustainable learning - Reasons, ideas, concrete measures. 25th International Course on vocational Training and Education in Agriculture.
3. Peter Scales, 2024/08, New York, TEACHING-IN-THE-LIFELONG-LEARNING
4. Skolverket (2000) Lifelong Learning and Lifewide Learning, Stockholm, The National Agency for Education.
5. Teachers becoming lifelong learners, Maninder Kaur Dhaliwal, 2015. Birla College for Arts, Commerce and Science, Kalyan, India.
6. The Future of Teaching: Why Teachers Need to Be Lifelong Learners Too, Article written by Amber Thompson, 2024. Exclusively for Educators of America
<https://www.educatorsusa.org/the-future-of-teaching-why-teachers-need-to-be-lifelong-learners-too/>
7. Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2006). Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri. Ankara: Seçkin.