

# Professional Development For Faculty: Integrating Training, Learning Circles, And Reflective Practices

Nasser Saud Alrayes<sup>1</sup>, Ali Alwardany Ali Omar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Associate Professor of Educational Administration, Department of Self-Development, Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
P.O. Box 3468, AD Dammam 34211, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
nsalrayes@iau.edu.sa*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5733-4162>

<sup>2</sup>*Assistant Professor of Methods of Teaching, Department of Self-Development, Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
aaomar@iau.edu.sa*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7653-0193>

## Abstract:

The study aimed to implement a professional development program, based on integrating: training, learning circles, and reflective practices. Its effectiveness was measured, as were the faculty members' attitudes towards it. The study used the quasi-experimental method, due to its relevance to its nature. The study sample consisted of 61 faculty members (20 men - 41 women), who are teaching in the first year of university, including 13 members of the Computer Department, 23 members of the Department of Basic Sciences, and 25 members from the self-development department, the results showed the following: The effectiveness of the program from the point of view of the participating faculty members; Attitudes of faculty members towards professional development programs, which are based on integrating: training, learning circles, and reflective practices, were positive by (78%); There are no statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the responses of the study sample according to the variable of the scientific department belonging to the faculty member participating in the program (basic science, computer, self-development); and there are no statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the responses of the study sample according to the gender variable. In light of the results of the current study; The researchers presented a set of recommendations, including working on implementing the program in the rest of the university's faculties.

**Keywords:** Training; Professional Development; Learning Circles; Peer Review and Reflective Practices.

## Introduction

The professional development of faculty members has become a prerequisite for improving university performance, an important factor in the transfer of distinguished and creative experiences in the field of teaching and learning, and a modern necessity to confront many of the challenges that face education. Moreover, it is a human investment that helps in diversifying knowledge and improving performance, and providing the

faculty members with high university values , accordingly, some universities have tended to establish specialized centers that compete in the field of professional development, and it has become clear that many universities are keen to develop these centers, to go beyond the stage of developing teaching and learning, to achieve excellence and creativity in university education.

Many previous studies stress the importance of faculty members in higher education institutions

because of what they perform in preparing the human competencies of society in various disciplines, and in scientific research that contributes to the development of society, thus attention must be paid in proportion to the important roles assigned to them. (Hamouda, 2015). (Alrayes & Alwardany, 2020)

Also, the requirements of the third millennium impose on contemporary universities many challenges, many of which center around the professional growth of the faculty member, and during the last decade of the twentieth century, the extent of increasing interest in the academic development of the faculty member was noted as the first pillars of the development of university education, one of the most important signs of this growing interest has been the spread of effective education centers and many studies about the academic development of the faculty members since 1947.

Harvard University began in 1947 to offer university teaching to its faculty members. Then, interest in training for faculty members in British and European universities appeared in the mid-sixties, which ended with the establishment of the European Centre for Higher Education in 1972 (Owais, 2013). UNESCO has been interested in supporting the academic development of university teachers through its support for programs to establish networks between universities at the global level, such as the European Network for the Professional Development of Faculty Members in European Universities, and the Arab Network for the Professional Development of Faculty Members in Arab Universities. It also believes that academic development means working to strengthen the capabilities of faculty members in the field of knowledge through programs that help them, enabling them to employ their knowledge of the new requirements in the labor market for which students are being prepared, and strengthening teaching capabilities to apply innovative and renewable methods that contribute to improving the performance of the educational function in the University (Haddad, 2004, p. 46).

This is consistent with the concept of professional development, which is represented by efforts that take an institutionalized nature and are presented

by the bodies in which faculty members work or other professional institutions, intending to provide them with new knowledge, skills, and experiences, enabling them to perform their job duties and roles efficiently. (Radwan, 2009).

UNESCO emphasizes that professional development is concerned with the professional development of the person, which includes official experiences such as (Attending workshops, professional meetings, and academic follow-up;...) (Al-Shukhibi, 2012, p. 366).

### **Academic Development Goals**

The academic development of a faculty member aims to:

1. Raising the skill level of the faculty member in the field of teaching, scientific research, administration, and community service.
2. Acquiring the necessary information and skills to deal with the innovations of teaching and learning technology, assessment, and its techniques, and benefiting from them in developing exams.
3. Providing the appropriate atmosphere for faculty members to learn about each other's capabilities and experiences through the exchange of opinions and discussions.
4. Supporting the exchange of experiences between faculty members and other scientific institutions.

### **Reasons For Interest In The Academic Development Of University Faculty Members**

The existence of professional development programs for on-the-job teaching staff is an urgent necessity for the following reasons:

1. The need for faculty members to work continuously in reviewing courses to develop them.
2. Considering teaching as a profession; Where the features of professions are available.
3. The need to develop the skills of the faculty member in psychological and counseling interaction with the student.
4. The increase in the number of students in universities with a decrease in the number of faculty members in some specializations.

5. The speed of global change and preparation for the challenges of the twenty-first century.
6. The need to restore confidence in university education institutions, which have experienced some deterioration as a result of the imbalance between spending on education and its qualitative output from the workforce.

### Academic Development Methods

Academic development methods for faculty members vary as follows (Johannes, Batyi & Others, 2019; Kawatchi, 2010).

1. **Conferences:** It is a good opportunity to converge experiences, ideas, and opinions in a collective form.
2. **Workshops:** It has a great deal of success and deployment because it builds on the presence of qualified trainers and experts with training skills.
3. **Distance Training:** It is one of the modern training methods that invest in modern technology in providing training sessions via the Internet, or in the form of scientific discussions "webinars".
4. **Learning Circles:** Learning circles provide powerful opportunities for professional renewal for both teachers and learners (Le Cornu, 2004). It is one of the best methods of academic development, as it depends mainly on the exchange of field experiences and the sharing of best practices among teachers, as it is an opportunity for the convergence of ideas, experiences, and opinions in a collective manner, without any financial cost, as it is in the workshops.
5. **Vocational Rehabilitation:** It is through long-term training programs such as educational preparation for a university faculty member in some Arab universities.
6. **Academic Counseling:** Through a system of consultations with experts in the field of teaching, whether inside or outside the university, to provide guidance and advice to faculty members.
7. **Practical Training:** Through the micro-teaching method, training in a specific skill to identify the strengths or shortcomings in their performance and improve it.
8. **Reflective practice:** It is based on the idea of a faculty member reflecting on specific teaching practices to develop them, and it is also one of the methods of professional development based on the Kolb model based on experience (planning -

experimentation - reflection - conceptualization). (Alrayes & Alwardany, 2020).

Many studies have dealt with academic development, professional development, how it is designed, and the needs of faculty members for it:

**Ward and Miller (2021)** conducted a study to pilot a program to develop the comments of scientific research supervisors in graduate programs, as it is the main tool for teaching scientific research writing and educational activity for the development of academic writing. A flexible, built-in program was designed and piloted to teach graduate students and supervisors how to make the most of feedback on student writing in the research papers, teach supervisors how to provide effective feedback, and train students on how to understand and use feedback. The program was delivered online. Evidence-based educational design principles were taken into account when designing this program, the results of the program's effectiveness showed a significant improvement in the knowledge of scientific research writing among students and supervisors. Effective feedback-giving skills have also been improved, along with an understanding of how to use feedback to achieve proper scientific writing standards.

The study by **Johannes, Batyi, et al (2019)** examined the results of evaluating academic development programs at the University of Hancefort in South Africa, intending to build a conceptual framework and design how to prepare academic development programs. The study evaluated the characteristics of nine academic development programs at the university. The goal was to determine whether they included promoting conceptual change, and thinking differently about teaching and learning in higher education. and questions about why we have Academic Development Programs, whether they are needed at all, and whether Academic Development Programs take more scientific, evaluative research methodologies, as well as critical thinking. The research findings include a conceptual framework and specifications for the design of academic development programs and a blueprint for designing a general academic development program.

The aim of the study of **Hitch, Mahoney, & Macfarlane (2018)** is to provide an integrated review of the evidence published in the past decade on the professional development of non-permanent contract faculty in higher education. Using the method of integrating theory, evidence, and work methodology, the study finds that there is evidence pointing to long-standing structural issues that have not yet been effectively addressed. However, many examples of effective strategies have been identified, notably around peer observation and mentorship.

The study of **Sterm (2017)** aimed to reveal the academic development programs for faculty members in community colleges in England and came out with the necessity of lifelong education through determining the purposes of academic development such as improving teaching and acquiring professional experiences, as well as the need to diversify the forms of academic development programs such as: Attending conferences, professional meetings, and institutes throughout the year, as well as summer programs. The results of this study also indicated the need to study the relationship between academic development and faculty members' evaluation.

**Usera's study (2016)** aimed to identify the outlines of individual academic development plans at the Community Colleges in America and came out with five stages for designing and implementing academic development programs, which are:

- The member should consult the supervisor to determine some specific professional tasks or responsibilities that require strengthening and evaluation.
- The member must complete the academic development form specifying both the long- and short-term goals of the training, the expected start date for the programs, and the cost.
- Submission of the form after that to the consultant (head of the department) for further advice and approval.
- The Academic Development Committee then reviews the plan and approves the proper funding.
- After completing the program, the success of the academic development plan is evaluated by meeting the member and the advisor, then the

member prepares a report for this meeting and puts it in the faculty member's file.

The study of **Pellet (2016)** also aimed to identify the academic development programs for faculty members at the University of Vienna in terms of the offered programs and methods of evaluation, it concluded that the workshops and seminars presented had contributed to improving the university's internal and external communication network and improving student satisfaction. about the performance of their teachers.

**Al-Ghamdi's study (2012)** aimed to identify the level of the academic development of a faculty member in the faculties of education in Saudi universities and to present a proposed scenario for it in light of the standards of the American National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The researcher used the descriptive-analytical method, using the "Delphi" method, and a sample of twenty individuals from experts in education, administration, educational planning, and quality and academic accreditation in the colleges of education in Saudi universities was selected, the study tool was applied to them. The results of the study showed the low academic development efforts of a faculty member in the faculties of education in Saudi universities, especially regarding academic accreditation. The researcher reached several recommendations, the most important of which were: the need to establish centers specialized in the academic development of faculty members in Saudi universities, the implementation of academic development plans in accordance with announced scientific plans, and the development of Saudi higher education systems to serve the academic development of the faculty member.

### Study Problem

In light of the Corona pandemic and the emergency teaching conditions that the world has passed through, with the complexities of teaching and learning processes, the density of available information, and the various pressures faced by higher education during the transition towards emergency teaching, the provision of highly qualified training programs for faculty members is of great importance, and maybe one of the aspects

of Professional and psychological support to overcome this stage, enhance their abilities to maintain the level of performance quality, feel the university's interest in them and enhance their professional satisfaction.

Moreover, universities have had to support and motivate faculty members to deal with the procedures for forced distance education, and various other pressures resulting from the pandemic (Kulikowski, Przytuła, & Sułkowski, 2021). Also, starting from the concept of dedicating lifelong learning to faculty members, through their active participation and exchange of their rich experiences in the field of teaching and learning related to their specialties (Sterm, 2017). In this regard, teaching and reflective learning are important in professional development and in improving teaching practices. The use of critical friends can also aid in the thought processes of teaching and learning from teaching (Chisholm, 2012).

Hence the idea of implementing a new training program at the university level for faculty members is based on integrating three methods of professional development in one program: training, learning circles, reflective practices, and measuring its effectiveness and faculty members' attitudes towards it.

It is evidence-based, with the evidence provided by the participant, and connects them with the competencies of the twenty-first century, to enhance their participation in the development of students' competencies necessary for future jobs, as well as enhance their abilities to search for accurate sources of knowledge in their field of specialization, which help them use new practices and tools in the teaching and learning processes which they apply in the classroom, and based on applied scientific experiments and considered and reliable academic practices.

### Study Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of a professional development program for faculty members based

on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices?

2. What are the faculty members' attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices?

3. Are there statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the responses of the study sample about their attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the variable of the scientific department (basic science, computer, self-development)?

4. Are there statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the responses of the study sample about their attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the gender variable?

### Methodology

*First: Formulating the idea of a continuous professional development program based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning cycles:*

The researchers agreed to prepare a professional development program for faculty members used in this research, by integrating more than one method of professional development so that the program is integrated to take the advantages of each method separately and change the form of the traditional concept of professional development for a faculty member.

Then a focus group was held consisting of researchers and three experts in teaching and learning who obtained an Academic Fellowship in Higher Education (HEA) from the British AdvanceHE Foundation, all of whom have experience in academic development processes, work at the same university, with the same study population, also have experience in the context of academic development prevalent at the university.

The focus group concluded by emphasizing the possibility of implementing the proposed program for continuous professional development based on integrating reflective practices, training, and

learning cycles, and its suitability for the target group, with the agreement that the program consists of the following:

- **Training:** By holding workshops on enhancing students' twenty-first-century skills, developing some research and technological skills for faculty members, competency-based learning, and project-based learning, with the aim of exciting and attracting the attention of the faculty member to the importance of developing performance by adding new teaching practices.
- **Learning Circles:** Implemented through learning circles (communities of learning/practice) formed by a group of faculty members from the same department and scientific specialization, it depends on that each faculty member who participated in the program introduces a new teaching practice to his learning

circle, in his department, in the presence of the rest of the members of the learning circle, to give him feedback later on his performance in applying this practice, in which he uses peer review models, and then reflection sessions to explore best practices. Then the participant fills out two forms:

1. Peer-Review Form.
  2. Post-Visit Reflection Form.
- **Reflective Thinking:** where each faculty member who participated in the program writes a report based on the idea of reflection on the new practice that he presented, in which he explains his impressions and ideas about this new practice. The participant fills out the prepared form for reflective thinking:
3. Reflection on Innovative Practice.

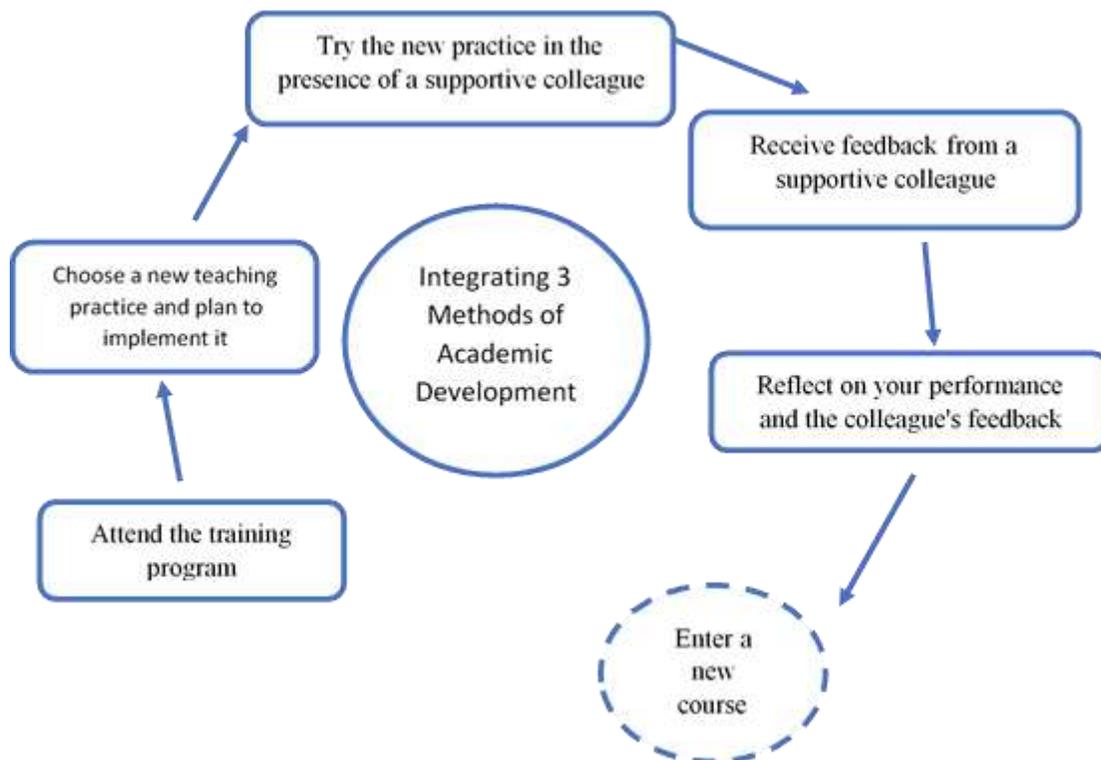


Figure (1): The steps of a professional development program based on the integration of three methods of professional development.

- **Mentorship:** It was agreed with four of the holders of an academic fellowship in higher education (HEA) from the British AdvanceHE

Foundation to provide the practice of mentorship to program participants from the three

departments: (Basic Sciences, Computer, and Self-Development).

Figure (1) shows the steps for implementing the program. Figure (2) shows the processes that a

faculty member follows during his participation in the program, which reinforces their tendency to practice professional development continuously even after implementing the program.

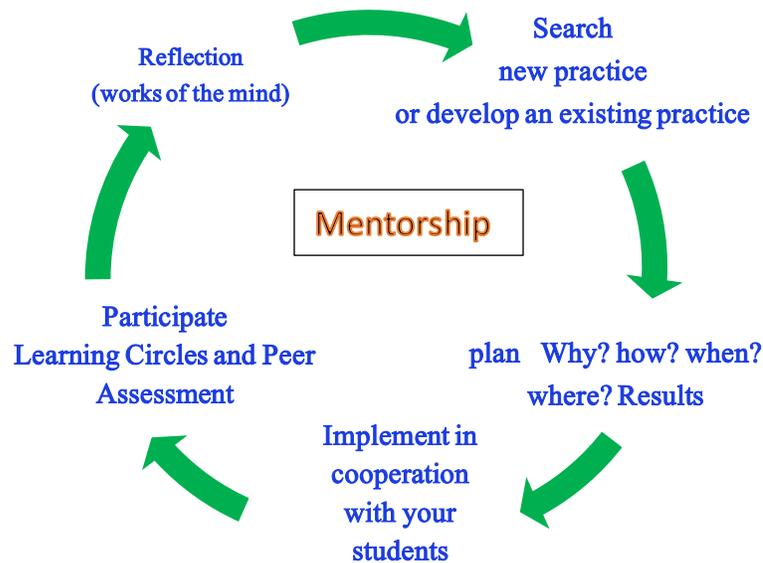


Figure (2): The processes included in the proposed professional development model.

### ***Second: The Scale Of Attitude Towards The Professional Development Program***

This scale was concerned with identifying the attitudes of faculty members teaching the first-year university courses, towards continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning circles. To prepare the scale, several scales of attitudes were reviewed in the educational literature and previous studies.

The self-report method was used, in which a specific stimulus is presented that is associated with seven situations, each of which corresponds to a degree, namely: the positive attitude (seven degrees for strongly agree, six degrees for agree, five degrees for agreeing somewhat), the neutral attitude (four degrees) and the negative attitude (disagree with three degrees, and somewhat disagree with two degrees, and strongly disagree with one degree), which allows a wide range of accuracy in expressing the degree of approval, so that the faculty member responds to what suits

him, and taken into account in formulating the items of the scale that they include cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects that represent attitude components.

### **The Validity Of The Scale Of Attitude Towards The Professional Development Program**

After preparing the scale in its initial form, it was presented to a group of specialists in measurement, evaluation, educational psychology, curricula, and teaching methods. Regarding the qualitative results of the open questions to ensure their support and compatibility with the quantitative results, as well as the accuracy of the faculty members in filling out the attitude scale.

### **The Study Sample**

One hundred and five faculty members from the university, who are teaching the first-year courses, participated in the program, the number of those

who completed the requirements of the program reached (61) faculty members (20 men - 41 women), from three scientific departments: Computer Department (13) member, the Basic Sciences Department (23) members, and the Self-Development Department (25) members.

### Study Variables

The study design included the following variables:

- **The independent variable:** It is a professional development program that integrates training, learning circles, and reflective practices.
- **The two dependent variables are:**
  1. Effectiveness of the professional development program.
  2. Attitudes of faculty members towards the professional development program.

### Implementation Procedures

The Implementation Procedures were as follows:

1. Preparing for the training program and inviting faculty members to participate in it.
2. On the last day of the program, each participant was asked to choose a new practice in teaching and learning and planning to implement it in the classroom in the presence and observation of a supportive colleague, and the period for planning and implementation was determined, which is about a full semester (15) weeks.
3. At the end of the twelfth week, each participant was asked to submit a Peer-Review Form and a Post-Visit Reflection Form presented by his colleagues in the learning circle to which he belongs.
4. Each participant was asked to fill Reflection on Innovative Practice form to reflect on the new teaching practice that was implemented in the classroom.
5. Forms were collected from all of the 61 faculty members who completed the program.

### Statistical Analysis

To perform the statistical analysis of the data, the researchers transformed the qualitative response

into a quantitative response, and the results were determined using arithmetic means and standard deviations, a t-test and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the scientific department variable.

### Results

#### Results related to the first question:

*The question states: "What is the effectiveness of a professional development program based on integrating: training, learning circles, and reflective practices?"*

The results of the qualitative analysis of the participant's responses to the survey that was distributed after the end of the program in the items that measure the effectiveness of the program indicate that all responses except for three were very effective for developing the ideas and skills of faculty members, three-quarters of the participants indicated that the program provided them with much of the expertise of colleagues in the specialty in a short time and that the program was effective in acquiring some new ideas and practices in teaching, the program also helped in developing a sense of desire to develop teaching skills and the desire to experiment and not to be in the comfort zone and to repeat the same teaching practices constantly. Some of the responses and comments were as follows:

- "Through this program, I have learned different methods of teaching from colleagues and different examples of higher-level questions in some of the subjects of the course".
- "I learned about different ways of presenting the contents of the course through my participation in the best practices of colleagues in the course".
- "I have learned many practices of a distinctive nature, which will have a lot of positive impact on my teaching skills".
- "I liked the exchange of experiences as well as the completion of the program in a social atmosphere of smiles and fun among colleagues".
- "I loved watching the same content that I teach in different ways than I do".
- "I liked the colleagues' use of new ideas to urge the students to participate".

Different models appeared in three responses that expressed their fear of the idea of being observed during teaching and that this might be used in the annual evaluation, except for these three, all responses of faculty members about the effectiveness of the program were positive, and they consider that the program is very effective and many demanded to repeat the experience in the coming years, looking at these three, we find that they are experienced and saw that there is not much to learn from this program, where the obligation to attend this program made these three have a negative attitude in advance towards the program.

### Results related to the second question:

*The question states: "What are the faculty members' attitudes toward professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices?"*

To answer this question, the arithmetic means, standard deviations, and the percentage of the degree of agreement expressed by the participants in the training program were calculated, where the participant gets to know some new teaching strategies during the training program, then each faculty member who attended the program was asked to try: a new teaching method, or a new assessment method, and then he presents a lesson using the new method in the presence of some members of the learning circle to which he belongs during the second semester, then he submits the forms for the application of learning circles (peer assessment or class observation), such as Peer review form, post-visit reflection form, in addition to a brief report in which he evaluates this experience through Reflective thinking to try each of teaching method, or the new assessment method. In the end, the reports were collected and a combined report was made on the most important new teaching practices implemented by the faculty members of the Deanship, the following table illustrates this.

Table (1): Arithmetic means and standard deviations of faculty members' attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices.

	Question	N#	Mean	Ratio	SD
1.	The training program is effective in my continuous professional development	61	5.574	82%	1.396
2.	This type of program provides a variety of appropriate training methods during the Corona pandemic	61	5.377	81%	1.462
3.	I would like to continue attending such quality programs	61	5.279	80%	1.485
4.	These programs contribute to learning from colleagues' experiences and sharing best practices in teaching and learning	61	5.656	83%	1.515
5.	The benefit of these programs was reflected in improving teaching and assessment processes during the Corona pandemic	61	5.131	71%	1.443
6.	These programs contributed to increasing my knowledge of my teaching skills	61	5.279	73%	1.603
7.	These programs strengthened my professional relationship with my colleagues from faculty members	61	5.623	85%	1.380

8.	These programs have raised my confidence in my colleagues' teaching skills and abilities	61	5.590	83%	1.476
9.	Such programs meet my training needs	61	5.033	69%	1.673
10.	These programs have contributed to improving the level of my students' satisfaction with learning skills (SSLS).	61	5.115	70%	1.644
Average			5.366	78%	1.5077

It is clear from the previous table that the arithmetic average of the faculty members' attitudes towards a professional development program based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices reached 5.366 out of the maximum degree (7 degrees), the percentage of approval of the items of the attitude scale ranged between 69% as a minimum and 85% as a maximum, the average agreement percentage reached (78%), which is a high percentage that reflects the high level of agreement among faculty members, which indicates that faculty members have a high positive attitude towards participation in this type of professional development program based on integrating workshops and learning circles (observing peers in the classroom) and reflective thinking in teaching practices.

### Results related to the third question:

*The question stated: "Are there statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the responses of the study sample in their attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the variable of the scientific department (Basic Sciences, Computer, Self-Development)?"*

In order to answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the attitudes of faculty members were calculated according to the variable of the scientific department, and table 2 illustrates this:

Table (2): Arithmetic means and standard deviations of faculty members' attitudes towards professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the scientific department variable.

Attitudes	Categories	Number	Arithmetic means	Standard deviation
Attitudes of faculty members towards continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, and various training methods according to the scientific department	basic sciences	23	5.617	1.440
	computer	13	5.369	0.854
	Self-development	25	5.132	1.790
	Total			

It is clear in Table 2 that there is an apparent discrepancy in the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the faculty members' attitudes towards continuous professional development

programs based on integrating training, reflective practices, and learning circles, according to the different scientific departments, to calculate the significance of the statistical differences between

the arithmetic means. One-way analysis of variance was used according to Table (3).

Table (3): One-way variance analysis of the impact of the scientific department on faculty members' attitudes towards professional development programs.

Attitudes	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F- value	Significance
Attitudes of faculty members by scientific department (Basic Sciences - Computer - Self-development)	Between-groups	4.358	4	1.090	2.133	.056
	Within groups	135.059	289	.467		
	Total	139.417	293			

It is clear from the previous table that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.05 attributable to the scientific department (basic science - computer - self-development), in the attitudes of faculty members towards continuous professional development programs based on the combination of reflective practices and various training methods.

*The question stated: "Are there statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the responses of the study sample in their attitudes toward professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the gender variable?"*

In order to answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the attitudes of faculty members were calculated according to the gender variable, table 4 illustrates this:

#### Results related to the fourth question:

Table (4) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of faculty members' attitudes towards continuous professional development programs based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the gender variable.

Attitudes	Number	Degree	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T value	Level of significance
Males	20	7	5.135	1.715	0.0079	Not significant at a level of 0.05
Females	41	7	5.478	1.405		

It is clear from the previous table that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.05 attributable to gender in the attitudes of faculty members towards continuous professional development programs

based on integrating training, learning circles, and reflective practices, according to the gender variable.

## Discussion

First: Discussing the results related to the second question: *"What are the faculty members' attitudes toward continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning circles?"*

The results of the study showed that the faculty members have a high positive attitude toward the use of continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning circles, and this can be attributed to the deanship's faculty members' awareness of the importance of this type of program and its positive effects on the teaching process. Whether this realization came through satisfaction with the level of the workshops, a feeling of satisfaction with learning new teaching practices, or satisfaction with the idea of reflecting on teaching experiences and coming up with lessons from them, especially since most of the faculty members participating in the experiment are not specialized in education or curricula and teaching methods that can be applied in the classroom, especially if we integrate training as a means of professional development with learning circles (peer assessment) and as a method also of professional development based on learning from colleagues through classroom observation, and reflective thinking in teaching practices, which is another method for professional development that depends on reflecting on past experiences and extracting the lessons learned from them. There is no doubt that the combination of these three methods of professional development necessarily leads to the development of performance and skills development of the faculty member, which increases his positive attitudes towards the professional development process in general and this type of program in particular.

This result is consistent with what was confirmed by the literature, which showed several positive effects achieved by each of the professional development methods that were addressed in this research, and the results of the current study agree with the study of Maureen Bell (2001), which showed that members of the teaching staff showed a high positive attitude towards professional development programs that combine peer

observation and reflective thinking, and Chalmers, D., & Gardiner, D. (2015) study, which indicated a positive attitude among a sample of teachers towards training programs that they got after service.

Second: Discussing the results related to the third and fourth questions:

- *Do the attitude of first university year faculty members differ towards continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning circles according to the scientific department (basic science, computer, self-development)?*
- *Do the attitude of first university year faculty members differ towards continuous professional development programs based on integrating reflective practices, training, and learning circles according to gender (men and women)?*

The results of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) attributable to gender or scientific department in the attitudes of faculty members, this could be attributed to the nature of the professional development program, which included training courses that presented some teaching strategies in general. Each faculty member applied a modern teaching or evaluation strategy in the classroom in the presence of colleagues, then each faculty member made a reflection on his teaching practices and the feasibility of the new method he applied through a model specially prepared for this purpose, the element of integration and comprehensiveness that helped the professional development program that was applied in forming positive attitudes among all faculty members participating in this program regardless of gender or scientific department, and this, in turn, led to the absence of statistically significant differences attributable to gender or scientific department.

The results of the current study agree with the study of Smith, L. C., Case, J. M., & Van Walbeek, C. (2014) which found that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of faculty members towards a training program at the level of the significance of 0.01 due to the scientific specialization.

## Conclusions

Given the effectiveness of the professional development program based on integrating training, learning circles, reflective practices, and the positive attitudes of faculty members towards it, the researchers recommend working on implementing the program in the rest of the university's faculties, with the participation of faculty members in building academic development programs, and that the program can result in outputs that can be judged, enhance its impact, and its value.

## limitations of the study

The study was limited to identifying the effectiveness of a professional development program for faculty members, based on integrating three methods of professional development, including training, learning circles, and reflective practices. on the application to faculty members of the university. This was done during the academic year 2020-2021.

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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