

Shaping the future of CPD: Time to focus on the important, not the urgent.

'Form a knowledge-creating school through peer reflection groups, lesson study and research processes combined with activities to inform these with specialist expertise.'

'Embed professional learning as an on-going process within the school timetable.'

'Enable sharing of practice in a non-judgemental culture, which also acknowledges the importance of informed risk taking.'

'We must prioritise CPD even though it may never be the most urgent thing on the list.'

'We develop practice knowledge effectively when we feel safe to take risks and when we do work collaboratively with people we trust enough to expose our professional vulnerabilities.'

'Effective teacher learning...takes place over time. It involves quite a bit of that learning happening in the classroom and preferably more than one teacher engaged in an enquiry...we have a system that's set up for one teacher, one classroom and a grinding timetable.'

'There is nothing more important in schools than helping induct, support and develop teachers. However, there is always plenty that is more urgent: collecting evidence, accountability, dealing with day-to-day behaviour, producing reports, responding to change, meetings and so on. We have to stop saying 'teacher development will happen when we have time.' There will always be something else, we must simply make development our top priority and make time for it.'

'The thing that helps professional learning mean something to teachers is when it starts from aspirations about young people's learning.

If clarity about how we want our pupils' learning to look if our own learning is successful, is woven all the way through like a golden thread, and if the learning process involves revisiting evidence about how their own learning connects with young people's learning then the learning will be richer and more inspiring AND we'll be much better at evaluating the impact.'

Developing Great Teaching

'Teacher development is not always adequately focussed on the specific needs of pupils, not it is always sustained and practice-based.'

'Prolonged or extended CPDL interventions were found, more or less universally, to be more effective than shorter ones. Most reported programmes lasted at least 2 terms, more commonly a year, and in some instances even multiple years.'

'Overall, the clear indication is that to be most effective CPDL programmes which aim to bring about significant organisational and cultural change need to last at least 2 terms. Sustaining CPDL over a period of time and ensuring that it features multiple, iterative activities following the initial input, were identified as extremely important across all reviews.'

'An essential element of successful CPDL is overt relevance of content to its participants and their day-to-day experiences and aspirations for pupils.'

'All the reviews noted that recognition of differences between individual teachers and their starting points, providing opportunities for them to surface their beliefs, and providing opportunities for them to engage in peer learning and support, were also crucial to bringing about improved outcomes.'

'A positive professional learning environment, the provision of sufficient time, and consistency between the professional learning experience and the wider social and educational context were all more significant than whether or not teachers volunteered to participate.'

'The strongest review found that achieving a shared sense of purpose during CPDL is an important factor for success.'

'All the reviews found that pedagogy and subject knowledge were equally important; the strongest single review went further to state that CPDL focussed on generic pedagogic strategies is insufficient, particularly in maths...Therefore, programmes focussed on just questioning skills or assessment for learning that are not also rooted in developing content knowledge to underpin such strategies and exploring how they work for different groups of pupils are not likely to achieve their potential.'

'The strongest review also highlighted the importance of CPDL content and activities dedicated to helping teachers understand how pupils learn in general.'

'The second is the importance of CPDL providers creating room for professional discretion no repeated opportunities to encounter, understand, respond to and reflect on new approaches and related practices.'

'In the reviews, teachers in successful CPDL engaged in analysis of and reflection on underpinning rationale, evidence and assessment data, and this reflection and analysis was important for bringing about and embedding change in practice.'

'No particular configurations were crucial to success, but aligning goals, activities, experiments in classrooms, engagement with evidence and underpinning rationale does matter alongside multiple perspectives and angles.'

'The review concludes that, 'effective leaders did not leave the learning to their teachers- they became involved themselves.'

School Leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why

'Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (ES 0.84)

Of all the activities identified in the re-analysis, head teachers' leading of and active participation in professional learning and development had the largest impact on student outcomes. Their involvement could be in:

- formal contexts such as staff meetings and professional development sessions, and
- informal contexts such as discussions about specific teacher problems.

The author suggests several explanations for the power of leadership of CPD, emphasising the fact that leaders who promote and participate in teachers' professional learning:

- have a focus on teaching & learning
- learn more about what teachers are up against, and then give more support in making changes required to embed their learning in their daily practice. This could mean providing necessary teaching resources, rearranging timetables and freeing up time from teaching, and
- have a deeper appreciation of the stages and duration of the change process.'

The Impact of CPD and its role in leading staff and effective teams

'If teacher learning is to feed through into effective pupil learning, teachers need access to effective combinations of opportunities to:

- draw down targeted, usually external, specialist expertise
- give and receive structured peer support
- engage in professional dialogue rooted directly in evidence from trying out new things
- focus on why things do and don't work as well as how they work ie approaching professional reflection as building theory and practice together
- sustained enquiry-oriented learning over (usually) two terms or more
- learn to learn from observing the practice of others
- work towards ambitious goals set in the context of their aspirations for their pupils
- observe the learning of leaders

Improving Education: A Triumph of Hope Over Experience

Coe writes about things we should be doing and things we should stop doing in order to identify what's really working in classrooms.

1. Think hard about learning

We should be engaging with evidence based research more. Yes, the evidence may go against our intuition of what works and the history of science is full of such situations. What we must do is recognise that in the majority of these situations- evidence won against intuition.

We must have more discussion and engagement with evidence.

Poor Proxies for learning- easily observed, but not really about learning:

- 1- Students are busy: lots of work is done (especially written work)
- 2- Students are engaged, interested, motivated
- 3- Students are getting attention: feedback, explanations
- 4- Classroom is ordered, calm, under control
- 5- Curriculum has been 'covered' (ie. presented to students in some form)
- 6- (At least some) students have been supplied correct answers (whether they really understood them or could reproduce them independently)

Be honest, when you go into a learning walk or an observation, are you lead by any of these things?

Learning happens when people have to think hard. It will be helpful for teachers (and observers of learning) to ask questions like, 'Where in this lesson will students have to think hard?'

Nuthall (2005) reports a study in which most students 'were thinking about how to get finished quickly or how to get the answer with the least possible effort.' If given the choice between copying out a set of correct answers, with no effort, but no understanding of how to get them, and having to think hard to derive their own answers, check them, correct them and try to develop their own understanding of the underlying logic behind them, how many students would freely choose the latter?

2- Get teaching really focussed on learning- invest in effective professional development

William (2007)

'Knowing that is different from knowing how. But in the model of learning that dominates teacher professional development (as well as most formal education), we assume that if we teach the knowing that, then the knowing how will follow. We assemble teachers in rooms

and bring in experts to explain what needs to change- and then we're disappointed when such events have little or no effect on teachers' practice. This professional development model assumes that what teachers lack is knowledge. For the most part, this is simply not the case. The last 30 years have shown conclusively that you can change teachers' thinking about something without changing what those teachers do in classrooms.'

- 1- Intense: at least 15 contact hours, preferably 50
- 2- Sustained: over at least two terms
- 3- Content focused: on teachers' knowledge of subject content and how students learn it
- 4- Active: opportunities to try it out and discuss
- 5- Supported: external feedback and networks to improve and sustain
- 6- Evidence based: promotes strategies supported by robust evaluation evidence

For learners working on hard things:

- Explain what they have to do
- Demonstrating it
- Getting them to do it (structure to begin with that is then reduced)
- Providing feedback to correct and reinforce
- Practise, practise, practise until secure
- Assessing performance, reviewing and intervening as necessary throughout

For teachers working on hard things:

- We often don't get past telling them what they have to do

'For a profession that is so dedicated to learning for others, teachers seem to take little care over their own learning.'

3- Evaluate Teaching Quality

'If we are to capitalise on the benefits of professional development, then we need both to be able to target that development at areas of need and to be able to evaluate its impact. Unless we have sophisticated systems in place for evaluating teaching quality, both are hard to do.'

'Hanushek (2011) uses estimates of the impact that an effective teacher has on the lifetime earnings as a measure of their value.'

Average and slightly above teacher- \$160K class of 30

Really effective teacher- \$800K class of 30

'Test score gains, student ratings and classroom observation are shown, if done well, to contribute to a single construct of effectiveness, but also to complement each other with each providing a unique contribution.'

'We have never claimed that data alone can tell you who is a good teacher or a good school; those are the judgements that may properly be supported by appropriate data, but not replaced by it.'

'Use multiple sources of validated evidence to support diagnostic and constructive evaluation of teacher quality.'

4- Evaluate impact of changes

'Many educators are lovers of novelty; it is a great strength and a weakness. We invest huge effort and cost in implementing new ideas, and it is likely that some of them bring genuine improvement. However, it is also likely that some- perhaps just as many- lead to deterioration. Many, of course, make no real difference at all. And in most cases we will not know which are which.'

'Whenever we make a change we must try to evaluate its impact as robustly as we can.'

This fourth suggestion is the non-negotiable.

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