

A world-class teaching profession

Response to the DfE Consultation

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It is vital that low expectations of CPD, like low expectations of pupils, are challenged. Focussing on both CPD and CPDL and the connections between the two will be helpful in doing this. Crucial here is developing an understanding of the importance of structure and evidence within the professional learning process

Introduction

CUREE is pleased to present its response to this very important and timely consultation. Our responses draw on evidence from the numerous systematic reviews of the international evidence that we have been involved in including:

- a forthcoming, systematic umbrella review updating the CPD evidence commissioned by the Teacher Development Trust and carried out by CUREE with Durham university and the UCL Institute of Education, London
- Our systematic review of the evidence about practitioner use of research <http://bit.ly/1Eq6kXb>
- Evidence from the New Zealand Best Evidence Syntheses on CPD and on leadership <http://bit.ly/1pHbtBL>, <http://bit.ly/1ECtF8m>
- Evidence from our national evaluations of the quality of CPD provision and the former Post Graduate Development Programme
- Evidence from our extensive work with schools in evaluating how effectively they are connecting teacher and pupil learning
- Evidence from our study of Exceptional and Strong Schools for Teach First <http://bit.ly/1hi4OLS>

Q1: What are the greatest impediments teachers and schools face in regularly undertaking high quality professional development?

A vicious circle of low expectations Teachers and schools instinctively sense that there is much rich learning through day to day tasks and, given time pressures, resent time spent away from those tasks on formal CPD programmes and activities because they lack understanding or tools for connecting the two. The growth of internal CPD has been accompanied by a significant increase in whole school CPD sessions where managing differentiation is very challenging. So teachers often feel CPD has little to do with their particular concerns and experiences. Most CPD providers find connecting programme/ course activities and in-school follow up challenging and so limit their responsibilities to what they can control. High quality CPD depends on aligning both. Without structures to provide challenge and engage teachers with evidence as part of the learning process “on the job” professional learning rarely feeds through into benefits for pupils. This leads to low expectations about what CPD and structured continuing professional learning (CPDL) can contribute amongst teachers, leaders and providers. It is vital that low expectations of CPD, like low expectations of pupils, are challenged. Focussing on both CPD and CPDL and the connections between the two will be helpful in doing this. Crucial here is developing an understanding of the importance of structure and evidence within the professional learning process. Informal professional learning conversations without this do not work. Focussing on both is also likely to be helpful in expanding CPDL opportunities by wrapping work-based professional learning around ongoing school development tasks such as responding to the new national curriculum and assessment changes

Panic purchasing Fears that are, rightly or wrongly arising from the high stakes accountability system and the marketing efforts of CPD providers risk creating a cycle of “panic purchasing” of CPD support and activities. Too much push of CPD programmes with OFSTED in the name, that reinforce fears about OFSTED readiness, plus a lack of informed “pull through” from CPD leaders, leaves the system awash with quick fix programmes that do not work. Fears about the accountability system

are also increasing pressures to pursue too many approaches in superficial ways through CPD. Effective CPD means focussing on doing a few things well and in-depth and applying these in multiple contexts.

Leadership We know from Viviane Robinson's seminal review of the evidence about school leaders' contributions to pupil success that *investing in and modelling CPDL is the most* important of the five key leadership activities which correlate positively with student achievement. This approach has twice the effect size of the next most important leadership activity, namely, leading teaching, learning and the curriculum. Effective CPD and CPDL depend on effective leadership of CPDL at every level and on leaders connecting CPD and CPDL with other strategic developments. Curriculum development, for example, provides an important opportunity for CPD as well as an activity that depends upon it.

We know from our extensive work with Teaching Schools that even those who are leading support for CPD effectively are still mainly focussing on the external contributions through, for example NCTL or Challenge Partnership programmes. Real progress depends on Teaching Schools and others leading CPD and CPDL also focussing on how schools organise and systematise the in-school professional learning environment so teachers are well placed to embed what they gain from such programmes. Such environments ensure also that performance review and CPD are both appropriately articulated with each other and accompanied by a buffer zone between the two so that, for example, videos used for CPDL are not also used for review without the agreement of the teachers involved.

The quality of mentoring and coaching The internalisation of CPD and initial teacher education has been accompanied by a significant increase in schools reporting the use of mentoring and coaching which is a helpful starting point. But OFSTED's thematic reviews of CPD and our own evidence suggest that much of this is informal and unstructured and that too few teachers have had the opportunity to be trained as coaches and mentors in any depth. Where training is in place it is often rooted in models, like the GROW model that advocate that there is no need for specialist content knowledge on the part of coaches; rather, they assert, all that is required is knowledge and skills in coaching processes. We know from the international, experimental evidence that specialist content knowledge is an essential component of CPD and CPDL that is linked with benefits for pupils. We also know from our work with Exceptional Schools for Teach First that those schools make extensive and very successful use of coaching and mentoring but always on the basis of providing in-depth training for the specialists involved and always with effective arrangements for monitoring the quality of the process and outcomes.

School governors are too rarely seen as having a role in or responsibility for CPD and CPDL. They need to be effectively briefed about its strategic role and access to the evidence about what makes it effective so they can ask appropriate questions and contribute to appropriately strategic decisions about harnessing effective CPD and CPDL as a core improvement driver.

Linking CPD to develop subject and pedagogic knowledge and skills A particular impediment to quality is the prevalence of generic, pedagogic CPD. The evidence is clear. CPD and CPDL need to focus on subject knowledge, contextualised in the curriculum, as well as pedagogy. Generic, pedagogic CPD does not work. This is not yet widely recognised across the system. Indeed many schools have understandably, significantly increased the focus on generic, pedagogic CPD because this is a manageable way of identifying topics and issues that are relevant to all colleagues for whole school CPD events and policies. The issue is not that we need all CPD to be subject based but that pedagogic CPD activities depend on schools and/or programme providers planning for helping teachers contextualise strategies for different subject contexts. Such plans for subject/curriculum based contextualisation need to include support on a sustained basis over time if

the pedagogic strategies are to be effective for both teachers and pupils. The converse is also true. Subject based CPD requires planning ways of enabling teachers to explore how enhanced subject knowledge interacts with different pedagogic approaches over time.

Lack of connections between CPD, CPDL and aspirations for specific pupils. We know from our [SKEIN research](#), that many schools and CPD providers fail to make links between CPD and impact on pupils because of the complexity of the intervening variables. Many that do try to make such connections try to link CPD and pupil success at a whole class or cohort level. While this is no doubt important for accountability and monitoring purposes, effective CPD and CPDL depends on teachers having the opportunity to *work in depth with a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence* about how their own learning connects with their pupils' learning from trying new things. The most effective and manageable way of ensuring such depth is asking teachers to identify specific aspirations about how the achievements and learning of specific sub groups of pupils will change as a result of their own professional learning. This also has the effect of increasing their ownership of and commitment to CPDL. It means that formative assessment can be both taught to teachers and used by them in a contextualised way, to track and refine the ways in which they are using new approaches from both a pedagogic and a subject/content perspective.

Q2: To what extent and how do teachers currently evaluate their professional development? What would support more rigorous evaluation?

The most prevalent form of evaluation is the completion of personal evaluations at the end of a CPD activity. These are usually amalgamated by providers (including the schools themselves) to create a "read across" the group's perspectives. In schools where CPD is effectively led and/or for effective programmes there will be:

- an explicit conversation about how a programme has the potential to contribute to ongoing development plus
- follow up surveys some three months after an event to explore how far initial impressions have been sustained, whether follow up action has been taken and how pupils have responded

But this is relatively uncommon.

Deep professional learning often involves unlearning and/or re-evaluation of current, dialled-in practices. This can be very uncomfortable and generate negative immediate feedback that translates into much more positive feedback once teachers have had a chance to reflect on the learning and explore what it means

Some, highly effective programmes build in systematic evaluation by asking teachers to identify their aspirations for specific learner outcomes for specific pupils and to collect evidence about how their own and their pupils' learning are interacting. Such programmes include well structured Research Lesson Study, Response to Intervention, evidence rich co-coaching and *some* forms of action research. The latter include some, but by no means all, Masters programmes and many models of the Outstanding and Improving Teacher Programmes that are currently proliferating across the system.

It is important for teachers and schools to realise that teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of CPD at the end of a programme can be very misleading. Deep professional learning often involves unlearning and/or re-evaluation of current, dialled-in practices. This can be very uncomfortable and generate negative immediate feedback that translates into much more positive feedback once teachers have had a chance to reflect on the learning and explore what it means for their pupils. Teachers who learn about something deeply often downgrade their assessment of the effectiveness of their own practice in the light of an expanded sense of what is possible. This too might lead to an immediate negative assessment of a programme's effectiveness that paves the way for a subsequent much more positive assessment. Also, highly effective teachers often under-estimate what they know, understand and do, and their stage of development –because they know how much more can be done. Similarly emerging teachers often overestimate their stage of development and what they have learned because they cannot yet see how much more there is to do. Both these factors may lead teachers to over or underestimate the effectiveness of CPD and CPDL. So surveys of perceptions about the impact of CPD need calibration, need to be followed up over time and also to be accompanied by a range of evidence about links between CPD and work based CPDL.

Very high quality evaluation, generating the most convincing evidence of efficacy, involves teachers trying out the new knowledge and/or skills imparted via the CPDL in classroom practice and monitoring the change in pupil performance from a baseline assessment undertaken before the new practice was applied. This can be done by an individual teacher using a simple self-devised assessment instrument approach; by individuals using externally supplied 'micro-enquiry' tools such as [these](#) or by groups of teachers all trying out the same approach (or variations around a common theme) following an 'action learning or [laboratory site](#)' model. Schools (and colleges) using a common protocol and assessment approach can aggregate the results from individual teachers and classrooms to produce persuasive evidence of efficacy for their own use and for the benefit of others

Some software packages/spread sheets attempt to accumulate CPD satisfaction surveys into databases (Blue Sky, CPD genie and, in a deeper, more calibrated way, Bluewave Swift). In the context of strategically planned CPD and CPDL these analyses can help leaders to track connections between particular CPD activities and concrete goals. But in the absence of such planning and in the context of low expectations about CPD and CPDL they risk painting a spuriously quantitative picture of CPD experiences by counting perception data and making it appear quantitative. This can be distracting and involve schools in trying to interpret a great deal of not very meaningful information thus obscuring, rather than illuminating the quality and depth of CPD. Their usefulness for evaluating the impact of CPD and CPDL depends on the depth and quality of the vision for and leadership of CPD and CPDL and its contributions to school improvement.

For rigorous evaluation, in addition to the points made above, teachers and schools need:

- To follow up initial exploration of the effectiveness of a CPD programme or CPDL activity at least three months later and in the light of pupils' responses to teachers' learning
- A means of calibrating judgments about effectiveness that takes account of a) possible teacher discomfort at the start being a prelude to deeper learning and greater satisfaction over time b) differently benchmarked judgments about effectiveness of CPD and CPDL from teachers at different stages of development
- Much deeper, formative exploration of the effectiveness of CPD and CPDL experiences and outcomes during performance review (PR) discussions and cross school analysis of the outcomes of PR, the school development plan and CPD plans.

The points made above, about linking teacher and pupil learning at every stage, are also key to improving the rigour of evaluation

Q3: Where should the balance of responsibility lie between teachers, schools and Government for ensuring that appropriate professional development is undertaken?

How, in the longer term, might responsibility sit with a new independent professional body?

Government should create a system and/or the conditions in which high quality CPD and CPDL and high expectations about what it can contribute are the norm. This includes advocating for raising expectation by, for example illustrating best practice *and* explaining the underpinning principles about why it is working rather than simply describing it. Given the current concerns about practice referred to in the introduction to the consultation and also evidence from our own research, there will need to be some form of monitoring. If this is to take the form of self evaluation, teachers and schools will need benchmarks or standards against which self evaluation judgments can be made. Without this there is a risk that the (currently low) expectation may become only moderately higher. The permissive rather than prescriptive national framework for effective Mentoring and Coaching developed by CUREE for DFES and recently been [updated for the Welsh government](#) is an example of how the balance between clarity about effectiveness and avoiding prescription might be struck.

The standards for school leaders need to specify and/or exemplify in some depth their role in effective CPD and CPDL if their quality and availability is to improve significantly.

The new (Royal) College for Teachers clearly has much to contribute. The relationship between the College and the NCTL is obviously crucial for CPD and CPDL as illustrated in the paragraph about leadership above. Government needs to ensure this articulation is an effective one. The standards for school leaders need to specify and/or exemplify in some depth their role in effective CPD and CPDL if their quality and availability is to improve significantly. Teaching Schools could have an important role to play here. Like other CPD providers, they need access to both support and challenge, given the current state of knowledge and practice across the system highlighted by this consultation and a number of other streams of evidence including the two Logical Chain theme inspections by OFSTED. The role of Teaching Schools as champions of quality and their role as CPD providers also needs to be explored to ensure that the one does not jeopardise the other. The suggestion in the consultation about developing standards for CPD or an equivalent framework would be very helpful in enabling them to manage both roles effectively and transparently.

Q4: Despite the growing reach of Teaching Schools are there areas where coverage of schools would remain a concern. How could any gaps be addressed?

The most urgent need is for intelligence about what current Teaching Schools are doing in relation to CPD and CPDL *and how well* they are doing it. It is also important to commission research into the approaches of “near neighbours” Teaching Schools who pursue CPD as a major improvement driver and those who pursue both CPD and R&D. Comparisons between those pursuing CPD as a major

driver and those pursuing other Big Six drivers would be helpful too. The contributions of Academy Chains who make big investments in CPD need to be understood in the same context. Such comparisons would assist with evaluating what is needed when geographical, or phase gaps occur.

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We understand that many more Teaching Schools are secondary than primary led. This is understandable because the additional burdens of supporting an Alliance are harder for primary schools to manage simply because of their size. We are not clear either how far secondary led Teaching Schools work effectively across primary/secondary boundaries although we do know, from our work as Teaching and Leadership Advisers for NCTL, of some very effective examples. But we are also aware that many primary schools are concerned about “being swallowed up” by much larger secondary schools and that this is holding back access to support and/or the fulfilling of Teaching Schools’ potential. A particular issue may be that the large cohorts of middle and senior leaders in secondary schools who have had to systematise their work across multiple contexts have had to make their knowledge and understanding more explicit. This in turn makes them more confident in working across school boundaries. We suspect that there is a need for more resources for primary based Teaching Schools to help them create a viable infrastructure and, in particular for more research into what it is that exceptional Primary Teaching School Alliances and cross phase TSAs who serve local primary schools very effectively do so.

We are not clear about the distribution of special school Teaching Schools and of special schools within Teaching School Alliances. But we are very aware of the distinctive needs of and opportunities for CPD and CPDL for teachers in special schools. Demands on colleagues’ (teachers and support staff, in schools catering for children with multiple needs in particular) specialist knowledge and expertise are extensive. Yet, the nature of expertise required can and does change very quickly as each new group of children potentially requires learning about new medical conditions and how to support/what to expect from these learners. In this context:

- Immediate relevance of any training is an issue: whilst it might make sense from a school’s point of view to do a whole school inset on autism (apart from anything, staff might need it next if not this year), it will feel as an add on to those working with children with different conditions as they are very focused on learning about these
- Given the amount of training staff have to regularly undertake to comply with statutory, H&S requirements and to learn about their learners’ conditions it becomes very difficult to give time and attention to CPD focused on pedagogic or subject specific professional learning
- Teachers in special schools need well developed leadership and management skills to carry out for their job in the classroom because they often oversee very large (e.g. 10) numbers of other adults/staff
- Wide use of observations (other than through use of video) is next to impossible due to difficulties of releasing staff not least because children with special needs need continuity and even a minor change of what they are used to can cause problems
- Staff development needs can vary hugely and include aspects that aren’t usually an issue in other sectors, e.g. some staff see the purpose of their job as care and are reluctant to e.g.

develop their own maths and English skills or knowledge/skills to do with teaching and learning

Our sense is that the role and use of SLEs within the TS movement is not yet, well established. We think there are gaps in the system in relation to the purposes and practices of SLEs, the criteria and processes for selection and the benchmarks for monitoring effectiveness, This means it is hard for them to acquire the status and respect previously accorded to, for example ASTs. So their potential contribution to CPD and CPDL is as yet unfulfilled.

Q5: What should the funding criteria be for Teaching Schools wishing to draw on the new funding pot for professional development?

Should there, for example, be a requirement for Teaching Schools to work with a predetermined proportion of schools which are not already “good” or “outstanding”?

The criteria should also ensure we can explore how CPD helps us address current “wicked issues” so we can build a critical mass of *explanatory* examples/ cases/ archetypes of effective practices clustered around themes. If these themes are chosen in areas where there is currently an established research base about effective CPD, then both the content and the CPD process can be research informed, thus reducing the number of variables in play. This would in turn mean that evaluation of the impact of the funding can focus on the quality of the CPD and CPDL rather than having simultaneously to explore the quality of the intervention itself. For example the criteria might encourage bidding Teaching Schools to focus on using the CPD funding pot to:

- Improve the depth of understanding of mathematics in key stages two and three – i.e. the point at which an over-reliance on algorithms starts to block access to further mathematical development
- Focus on fluency, inference and comprehension in key stages 2-3 where lack of these skills blocks access to the curriculum.

These areas are not necessarily well taught even in good schools. Concentrating the use of the fund for CPD *in a specified range of contexts* will help drive improvements in key areas across the system as a whole. Organising the fund so it addresses a few big challenges in depth will also help with subsequent evaluation of impact.

Teaching schools were set up drawing on the analogy of teaching hospitals in the health system – aiming to maximise the interaction between training, development, support and practice. As the system has developed TSAs have, in practice, taken on a role more like family doctors or local health centres than specialist teaching hospitals. For instance they diagnose ‘patients’ (local schools) – or respond to ‘screening’ (e.g. OFSTED reports) and prescribe and administer treatments (usually CPD in various forms) usually on a case-by-case basis and deploying whatever expertise they happen to have available within the Alliance.

..if in reality TSAs are the ‘front line’ in school improvement/CPDL, they need better access to and articulation with the specialist expertise that does exist

They are not specialist centres of expertise in, say, areas of the curriculum (in health this might be cardio-vascular or orthopaedics) or pedagogy (analogous with specialist treatment centres like oncology). These specialist centres do exist in education (e.g. NCTEM/maths hubs, Science Learning Centres) but the range of curriculum coverage is limited. Other areas of expertise are either none existent or are poorly articulated with the rest of the system. So there is no equivalent of NCTEM for humanities or special education though there are undoubtedly pockets of expertise in, say, subject associations, university education departments or a range of third sector organisations in the special education domain. But they lack an infrastructure to make them accessible and or co-ordinated.

So, if in reality TSAs are the 'front line' in school improvement/CPDL, they need better access to and articulation with the specialist expertise that does exist. Setting TSAs targets to work with a given number or proportion of weaker schools will have limited impact without incentives. The resources required to provide those incentives would be better spent supporting TSA's capabilities to access and use specialist knowledge and expertise, for instance:

- by requiring them to specify how they are going to do it (with some subsequent monitoring);
- by encouraging development of, or linking up with, specialist centres (like the maths hubs are intended to);
- by making the specialist expertise more accessible/widely available (current funding approach encourages siloism) to the 'GP'

In a well resourced world, government would resource other centres of expertise in the poorly covered curriculum/pedagogy domains and this could be a role for a new College of Teachers (again analogous to the function of the medical colleges in supporting and co-ordinating knowledge exchanges between specialties)

Q6: Will teachers benefit from an online platform that collates and presents evidence about best practice?

The teachers for whom CPD is most needed require examples of practice at various stages of development –they need a calibrated “breadcrumb trail “between where they are now and best practice. It is also important to remember that those teachers and schools who might most need access to such a database may be those least likely to use it. The Sutton Trust toolkit has been widely promoted, is genuinely thought of as credible and schools are required to demonstrate to OFSTED how they take its evidence about pupil premium into account. Despite this, it is very rare for us to find any of the hundreds of classroom teachers and school leaders participating in, for example, the Close the Gap Test and Learn Programme who have heard of it. Consideration needs to be given to what will make teachers want to use whatever database is developed. , Our experience shows that an online data base of summaries of research findings hot-linked to high quality teacher research into high quality practice exploring the same issue is more useful than a database of evidence about best practice (which is in itself a challenging concept given the diversity of pupil needs and school contexts). Teachers are infectious to each other in a way that academic research findings (which are always abstracted) policies and databases are not. Such links will draw teachers in and also promote and model high quality teacher evaluation of their practice. You can see [examples of this approach here](#) .

Q7: In addition to the proposals outlined here, what other approaches would help schools to remove barriers and incentivise effective professional development for teachers?

There are a great many approaches that could be helpful here. Key strategies highlighted by the evidence we work with and our responses to this consultation set out above include:

- Ensuring CPD about generic pedagogy includes opportunities for teachers to contextualise this for different subjects and pupil groups
- Identifying ways of evaluating the effectiveness of the professional learning environment created by the school – <http://www.skein.org.uk/>, <http://bit.ly/18Jxknx>, <http://bit.ly/1BRsUSR>. Much is written about effective Professional Learning Communities. But it is hard to evaluate a community. It is, in effect an outcome rather than an approach or input. The review of reviews mentioned above also shows that PLCs in and of themselves are not linked with benefits for pupils. The alterable variables are the systems and principles that schools put in place to support CPD and CPDL which are, we believe, more usefully understood and evaluated as the professional learning environment
- Raising expectations about differentiation for teachers at different stages of development within all CPD programmes and amongst school leaders
- Extending the policy spotlight to encompass CPDL as well as CPD. This will have the effect of highlighting teachers' responsibility for their own and each others' learning in response to CPD activities. It highlights the way that responsibilities and opportunities interact.
- Raising the profile of the use of formative assessment for both the teachers and the pupils whose learning they are focussing on during CPDL should be considered as:
 - a key goal,
 - a crucial learning process,
 - a means of contextualising generic pedagogic CPD in curriculum content/subjects
 - a tool for helping facilitators provide increasingly differentiated support to participating teachers; and
 - a major indicator of success
- Introducing a degree of structured, benchmarked, evidence based peer review into the evaluation of the impact of CPD
- Ensuring all CPDL starts form clarity about how (in some depth) teachers want the learning of a sub group of learners to look different as a result of the CPDL so they can work more deeply with evidence during the process
- Ensuring departmental/phase meetings are planned as carefully for professional learning as schemes of work and classes are planned for pupil learning

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