

# **Hidden Legacies And Surprising Catalysts:** lessons from international research for subject specific and pedagogic CPD

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# Subject specific versus generic CPD

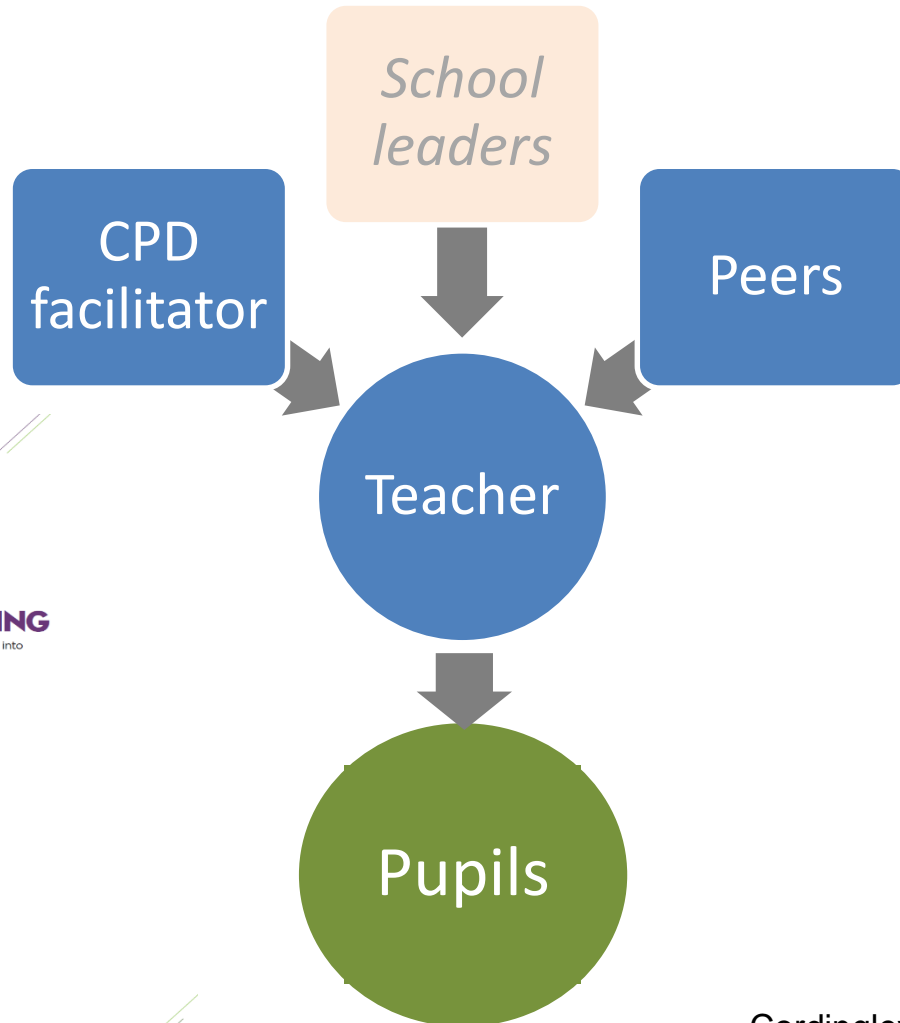
**Subject specific CPD** - programmes and activities which focus on:

- enhancing teachers' understanding of the subjects they teach, how pupils learn in those subjects and how to teach them – encompassing both subject and pedagogic content knowledge; or
- helping teachers understand how pedagogic issues and approaches might apply to specific learning issues in the subjects they teach, in explicit and structured ways.

**Generic pedagogic CPD** - activities and programmes which seek to develop teaching and learning approaches which can be applied across any subject area.



## Developing Great Teaching review - 2015



### Consistent finding across all reviews

Carefully designed/aligned teacher CPDL with a strong focus on pupil outcomes has a significant impact on student achievement

Generic pedagogic CPD does not work - effective CPD is contextualised for subjects

## International comparisons

Teachers in England engage in less CPD overall and are less likely to engage in SSCPD than in most other high performing countries.  
E.G.

- Under **50%** of teachers in England experienced curriculum-related CPD in the 12 months before TALIS - but almost **90%** of teachers in Shanghai and **80%** of teachers in Singapore did.
- English teachers **three times less likely** than international peers to say they need more subject-specific CPD



# Headline findings from practice review in England/UK

- **Existing subject knowledge of teachers is often weak** – compounded by recruitment challenges
- **Needs differ between schools** – eg size, phase and stage on improvement journey. Schools that need SSCPD sometimes least likely to be able to access it
- Subject Specific **CPD is mostly restricted to English and maths in primary schools**
- Changes in **curriculum and assessment policies** are key drivers of demand for SS CPD, but often be limited to exam board/ assessment briefings etc



# Subject specific differences

- There lots of similarities *and* some important **disitnctions between different subjects** (maths, science and English) in terms of how the effective CPD in these areas is designed for impact.
- Differences relate to:
  - how the **subject content connects with the curriculum and pre-existing teacher knowledge;**
  - **how new approaches** and new subject/pedagogic content knowledge **are supported through classroom materials for different subjects; and**
  - **how CPD content reflects the values and nature of the subject discipline in question.**



# Key findings from review in England/UK

- **School cultures and levels of expertise** shape how far subject specific needs are identified and addressed. Some schools don't know what they don't know about subject expertise and subject specific CPD
- **Performance review, when done well,** is widely used to **identify and balance individual and whole school CPD needs.**
  - Schools with a strong CPD offer put a lot of **effort into doing this systematically**, using different evidence sources and aligning analysis of individual needs with school self-evaluation, improvement and CPD activities
  - **Offering choices** to teachers and ensuring a range in the CPD offer; and
  - More individualised CPD processes such as **enquiry, coaching and lesson study**
  - also help schools achieve this balance





# Key findings from review in England/UK

- **School leaders** have a big role in setting CPD expectations and shaping how far SSCPD is prioritised, supported and integrated with other internal initiatives.
- Middle leaders, heads of departments and senior leaders:
  - **Enable staff to participate** in CPD and to implement what they learn from it,
  - **Create the necessary conditions** for effective SSCPD to flourish.
  - **Determine the level of control** that individual staff have over their own CPD
- This varied across school case studies and phases, but in general **teachers had less control in lower performing schools.**





## Discussion – in pairs/threes

- What is your best experience of subject-specific CPD – what does ‘good’ look like in your view?



## Barriers – findings from the review

- **Budgets and resources** - most significant?
- **Teacher workloads**
- **Perceptions of CPD quality** - a vicious circle of low expectations or a healthy reliance on in-school and school to school support models?
- Lack of quality assurance in the **market place** - schools rely on what is familiar and focus on codified knowledge ('best practices')
- **Competing improvement priorities** – impact of the accountability framework



## Overcoming barriers – findings

- **Networks** – have grown in importance in England as LA support reduced. Some Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) developing subject-specific expertise in core teams and Teaching Schools often have subject networks
- **Secondary schools with strong CPD** do still seek out external SSCPD support
- Many **primary schools seek out SSCPD for English, maths, and** (less so) science



# Implications

- **Changes in curriculum and assessment policies are key drivers of demand** - but need to move beyond exam board/ assessment briefings and raise the quality bar
- Low expectations are not universal – but **need to identify and share what great – and poor - practice looks like.**
- The **current CPD market isn't providing this, so need government to step in** to create some stepping stones – though consultation on QTS and funding for SSIF/TLIF etc potentially helpful.



# Implications

- Schools and CPD leaders need help in understanding **the real costs of CPD** and to be able to spend their money more effectively on things that last and work. The accountability system and CPD market isn't encouraging this.
- There is a need **for more CPD for school and CPD leaders** to help them:
  - understand the evidence about what effective CPD looks like, especially the evidence about the nature and impact of subject-specific CPD;
  - judge the quality of CPD opportunities/ provision suggested by heads of departments/phase and/or external providers.



# Another international angle on this evidence?

- England is unusual in separating teacher training from studying subjects
- In other countries teachers get to interrogate their teacher training through their subject learning and vice versa
- Primary teachers often specialise in core plus 2-3 subjects and cover those in school
- In South Korea they have courses on using both to critique text books!
- What do teachers in England gain and lose out from studying teaching after their degrees?
- Is that part of the reason teachers in England say they need subject specific CPD so much less than in other countries?



# What might success in applying these findings look like in in Blackpool?

- **A student facing goal** could be to
  - ensure students can make strong connections between their learning within subjects and the learning beyond to school in order to deepen their engagement and accelerate progress
- **A staff facing goal** could be to
  - deepen subject specific CPDL and give priority to it to ensure that teachers feel able to contextualise the learning they are doing in response to analysing progress for specific subjects
- **A leadership facing goal** could be to
  - help Middle leaders recognise and support research informed, subject specific CPDL by identifying and analysing existing strong practices and barriers to such practices in other contexts.





# What might success in applying these findings look like in in Blackpool?

This might mean:

- identifying and ***enquiring into how subject specific CPDL works*** in faculties/ departments where this is already working well; and
- helping colleagues involved ***distil the CPDL principles, activities and assumptions*** on which this approach depends and the benefits it bring to students and staff
- identifying ***areas where curriculum structures and or staffing patterns make this more difficult*** (eg areas with specialist teachers working solo or where leaders are inexperienced)
- ***exploring ways of adapting and transferring successful practices*** in one subject area to others, with appropriate support, including and especially work around progress tracking and use of the research route maps; and
- identifying ***areas needing new approaches or additional support*** Eg for time working and learning in other schools is needed



- To what extent would you say that schools and the wider system in England are ambitious with respect to developing SS CPD for teachers – what are the challenges/issues?



# Why does it matter?

- It isn't that we are saying that teachers don't know enough. Many do. Or that only subject knowledge matters. Far from it
- But in a fast-changing world subject knowledge grows rapidly, teachers are being asked to teach beyond their specialisms and skills/ capacities flourish in the context of deep knowledge.
- By locating CPD in different subject contexts we give teachers chance to:
  - enrich their own and their pupils' learning.
  - consider and make deeper links between subjects, skills and capacities and the wider world. EG learning to deepen thinking through Geography or History creates powerful stepping stones into demanding pedagogies whose full potential is rarely realised.
  - explore the skills and capacities that subjects enhance and depend upon.
- Above all SSCPD helps teachers push beyond narrow assessment requirements to work in ways that bring knowledge and subjects to life for their pupils



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