

Centre for the Use of
Research and
Evidence In
Education

More Than an Intervention – Quality, CPD and Partnership

I always enjoy ResearchEd but the London conference on Saturday really broke previous records for sessions I was keen to get to - tricky decisions at every point!

Personal highlights

There was all the usual thought and analysis about quality and about what kind of research is useful for what purpose. But there were increasing numbers of examples of high quality disciplined practitioner enquiry (eg a really good qualitative investigation into how to make the new English curriculum work and its relationship with research about spacing and memory from Ashlawn School in Rugby and a mini experiment from Huntingdon in Cambridge into preparations for exams with some neat modelling of learning from school leaders thrown in). I also loved the thought provoking piece of scholarship from Laura McInerney about who teachers are and why they leave the profession. Another theme was calmness and rationality – both in the important reminder from Tim Leunig that evidence will play an important part in the debate about grammar schools (*if* presented rationally and in an orderly fashion) and in the calm and non defensive listening to ideas and suggestions about Ofsted from Amanda Spielman as she prepares for her role as HMCI.

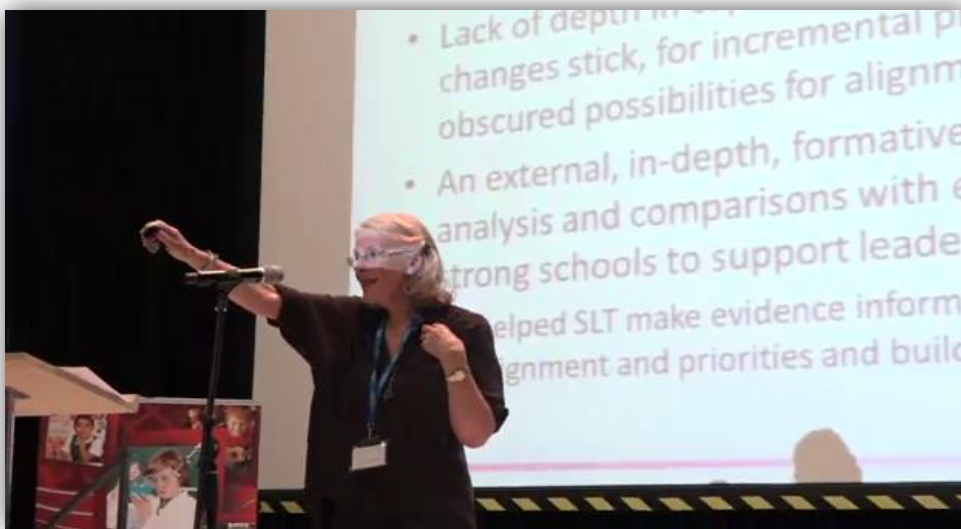
More than an intervention – quality, CPD and partnership

Several members of the Expert Group that developed the CPD standard (www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-for-teachers-professional-development) were there and our wonderful Vice Chair, Helene Galdin O' Shea was, of course, a key architect of the programme - for which huge appreciation! Some of us grabbed a quiet moment over the lunch break to reflect on where we are, what is needed and the forthcoming conference at RSA where we hope to identify next steps and partnerships that will help us achieve them (which you can find out more about at www.curee.co.uk/node/3292).

One key issue is quality assurance. One group member, the amazing Rob Coe, constantly reminds us that a standard isn't a standard if it isn't quality assured. On the drive home I started to think about what this means in a Self Improving System where the government certainly isn't going to introduce new regulation. Here are six connected but not necessarily wholly aligned questions that might work as a starter for ten for thinking about quality assurance in preparation for the event on 3rd October.

1. Ofsted frequently remark in their individual and annual reports on the superficiality of efforts to evaluate the impact of CPD and the lack of evidence about connections between support for CPD and pupil learning. Can we use their reports to identify effective practices in schools that do get this right? Do the reports of schools you work in or know provide any detail about this?
2. The first ever systematic review of CPD carried out by CUREE and sponsored by NUT (www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/1246025289/The%20impact%20of%20collaborative%20CPD%20on%20classroom%20teaching%20and%20learning.pdf) revealed a number of common characteristics of CPD that were linked with successes for pupils and some intriguing, albeit less consistent, evidence about evaluation; positive reports in "happy sheets" at the end of a programme

or session were often negatively correlated with benefits for pupils. Support for CPD that makes a difference seemed to involve trying new things that can look daunting or involve some unlearning and discomfort in the early stages. Such challenges do not necessarily lead to positive short term evaluations. What seemed, from this evidence, to matter much more was the way teachers felt about the CPD support after a sustained period of trying to put what had been learned to work. Is it really so hard to distinguish between an end of session evaluation sheet that provides feedback on issues that can be evaluated immediately (like the physical environment, accessibility and catering) and issues that need to be explored at a later date? Facilitators will no doubt tell us about the difficulty of accessing feedback at a later date. Because out of sight can mean out of mind and teachers are busy, returns to follow up surveys are low. So more meaningful teacher feedback on what teachers have learned and how they have used that depends on a) teachers seeing the benefit for them and for their pupils and b) the profession taking responsibility for making such contributions.



3. The Developing Great Teaching report (tdtrust.org/about/dgt) offers a different challenge in evaluating the impact of CPDL and quality assuring support for it. In focussing on continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) rather than just the CPD support offered to teachers, this review suggests that CPDL is not an intervention but an embedded teaching and learning process carried out through a partnership involving teachers, facilitators, school leaders and the pupils whose learning the CPDL is setting out to support. If CPDL is not an intervention at what level is “evaluating the impact of CPD” a meaningful concept?

4. We know from Developing Great Teaching and all our previous systematic reviews that the CPD process needs to be evidence rich; that professional learning conversations work best when they focus on how pupils are responding to our own professional learning as we try out new approaches. How can we use the evidence that teachers need in order to focus and structure their professional learning to evaluate the contributions of facilitators and school leaders too?

5. When CUREE has been supporting schools in evaluating the impact of CPDL we have been helping them explore evidence at the level of the teacher, the CPD event or activity and the effectiveness of the CPDL investment made by the school as a whole, to identify different kinds of naturally occurring evidence (see, for example, 4 above) that can contribute at all three levels and ways of aligning them. The guidance for the CPD Standard takes this one step further by setting out the specific contributions of all of the professionals in this partnership side by side, including those who are providing facilitation whether internal or external. Do the different aspects of CPD whose

connections are illustrated in the guidance start to map out the issues for which evidence should be collected and /or hint at the kinds of evidence that might both be useful to the actors concerned?

I hope they tempt you into coming to join us and help think about this both deeply and practically! We are really looking forward to learning from and with all the delegates and, for example, the case study schools. It would be great in preparing for the event to have additional questions and/or responses to these!

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