The

CPD
Curriculum

Creating conditions for growth

Zoe Enser and Mark Enser
Foreword by Caroline Barlow

First published 2021.

Cover image © tadamichi – stock.adobe.com.

Foreword

We know that teachers are drawn to the profession for compelling reasons, including a desire to make a difference, a passion for their subject and a motivation to work with young people. These are the people who – over the course of a career – can raise achievement, change thousands of lives and inspire future leaders. It is in our collective interest, therefore, that these professionals are supported to be the best that they can be throughout their careers. As both a head teacher and an advocate for educational excellence, it seems to me that there are many reasons to champion a coherent approach to exceptional teacher professional development, not least the transformational impact on both pupil outcomes and teacher retention.

We have known for some time that the greatest influence on pupil outcomes is teacher efficacy. Twenty years ago, Dylan Wiliam detailed the limited impact of school structure, textbooks, computers, teaching assistants, class size, setting and even extensive national strategies over the huge impact of the quality of teaching, later confirming:

> **We also know that the quality of teachers in our classroom is one of the most important determinants of how much children learn in those classrooms, with the very best teachers generating four times as much progress for their students as the least effective.[1]**

1 Dylan Wiliam, *Leadership for Teacher Learning: Creating a Culture Where All Teachers Improve So That All Students Succeed* (West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences International, 2016), p. 182.

Yet despite eye-watering amounts of investment in education and research enhancing our understanding of the component parts of great teaching, the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively remains largely in the hands of the facilitator in an overcrowded marketplace of professional development.

Recently published workforce census data from the Department for Education shows an ongoing trend of falling retention rates for teachers beyond five years, coinciding with the point at which initial training and growth starts to plateau.[2] Research into factors affecting teacher retention stated possible solutions including more in-school support and professional opportunities.[3] Indeed, repeated studies have shown that investing in teachers' continued improvement increases commitment to the profession:

Participation in professional development seems to increase retention for new and experienced teachers alike.[4]

Subsequent government action launched a recruitment and retention strategy which promised to transform the initial teacher training (ITT) market, led a drive on workload to create supportive school cultures and launched

....

2   Department for Education, *School Workforce Census 2019: Guide for Schools Including Academies Within a Multi Academy Trust* (June 2019). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908776/School_Workforce_Census_2019_school_and_MAT_returns.pdf.

3   Department for Education, *Factors Affecting Teacher Retention: Qualitative Investigation – Reacher Report.* Ref: DFE-RR784 (March 2018). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686947/Factors_affecting_teacher_retention_-_qualitative_investigation.pdf.

4   James Zuccollo and Harry Fletcher-Wood, How much impact does CPD really have? Here's the evidence, *Schools Week* (19 February 2020). Available at: https://schoolsweek.co.uk/how-much-impact-does-cpd-really-have-heres-the-evidence/.

an Early Career Framework[5] to radically transform support and development over the first two years. The strategy also set out the intention to support career-long opportunities. In 2020 new National Professional Qualifications, along with a focus on subject-specific leadership, behaviour and culture, included a framework and qualification for those that lead teacher development.

It does seem that there is growing sector-wide recognition of the importance of high-quality continuing professional development (CPD) and its impact on both pupil outcomes and teacher retention. Yet studies have shown that in a climate of tight budgets and increasing costs, CPD is a casualty of tough decisions in both primary and secondary schools. Annual figures published in 2019 by the Teacher Development Trust (TDT) and SchoolDash showed that, in 2017, schools had shown a year-on-year 12% fall in spending on CPD, committing just 0.40% of secondary and 0.66% of primary budgets on that aspect of provision which is repeatedly shown to make the biggest difference.[6] So, as a head teacher facing significant funding issues, every penny counts; *how* we spend our limited time and money holds increasing importance.

My personal philosophy on this is underpinned by the understanding that it is not easy, it takes time and it is complex. However, there are ingredients that have to be present for me to feel that investment of my staff's time and our limited budget is worthwhile. There must be clear focus and genuine purpose; it is much easier to achieve professional satisfaction if there is a sense of progression towards a clearly stated goal or outcome. For me, that outcome needs to link to the wider goals of the

----

5   See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-career-framework-reforms.
6   David Weston, Further falls in CPD spending: 5 things you need to know, *Teacher Development Trust* (18 November 2020). Available at: https://tdtrust.org/2020/11/18/further-falls-in-cpd-spending-5-things-to-know/.

organisation. The process must include practice and theory that draws on high-quality academic research. It is much more likely to be effective when delivered in an iterative process over time, combining multiple approaches which ensure instruction by experts, opportunities for discussion and practice in a subject- or context-specific environment. Ultimately, I want to ensure that a change in teachers' habits is achieved and understood, developing new mental models that allow for different independent, informed decisions to be made in the classroom going forward. This combines the autonomy and mastery of self-determination that we know are fundamental to teacher satisfaction and expertise.

If we are moving to a greater understanding across the sector of what equates to high-quality professional development, and there is a commitment at all levels to provide the frameworks that make it happen, then there is hope that we will see the impact on teacher retention and on pupil outcomes. It needs more than government directives and qualifications, though; it will need every leader within the sector to understand and accept that authoritarian, homogenous, quick-fix solutions cannot be part of the landscape. We need a national dialogue to raise understanding and awareness of the quality, content and contexts of genuine career-long development. The future leaders amongst our pupil and staff body deserve no less and whether we get this right or wrong, we could see the impact for generations to come.

Caroline Barlow
Head Teacher, Heathfield Community College

Contents

Introduction

Zoe writes …

For many years, my own experiences of CPD were patchy to say the least. It often felt like I was lurching from one INSET day or course to the next, with little sense of purpose or direction. Often CPD was valued on the basis of what three things I could put in place in my class the very next day, how many free sticky notes could be palmed, or the quality of the lunch. It was about quick wins and I will be honest in saying very little changed in the long term following some of these sessions, even if the materials were fantastic and the content and delivery amazing.

Absolutely no emphasis was given to the idea of the learning which took place both within and outside of these arenas, and I was generally unclear about my own learning process. My thinking rarely went beyond my next step on the career ladder and focused instead on answering those tricky questions at my next performance management meeting: questions largely answered to appease the listener and fill in a box as opposed to evidencing any actual change or development.

This could have so easily continued, with me plodding through my own laborious trial and error experiments in the classroom or waiting for a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) to force a change in practice, had it not been for a shift in my own mindset. I stopped talking about my development and started talking, and thinking, about my

learning. The shift might seem to be a point of semantics, but for me, and others I have worked with since, it was a significant revelation.

I had always loved learning, usually around my own subject, and missed the process of being at university and following a structured course. So why, when I was surrounded by so many learning opportunities, was I not making use of all that was available? All of a sudden, a visit to the theatre, whilst enjoyable, was also a way to enrich my subject knowledge. I grew thirsty to read books and research my subject and the theories which underpinned pedagogy. I wanted to spend weekends and evenings on Twitter talking to other professionals about the work we do and to hone the practice I had been developing for years. My enthusiasm for teaching had been revived!

So, let's unpick why that had such an impact.

Firstly, that simple change of language made me feel much more empowered. Study after study shows that teacher autonomy – both over certain decisions in the classroom and over our own development in terms of performance management – is an important factor in teacher satisfaction. Studies of teachers in the UK show that professionals who believe they have greater autonomy or agency over their own development and learning report higher levels of satisfaction at work and are more likely to remain in their schools.[1] Importantly, as we shall show, they have the biggest impact on their pupils' outcomes. Seeing your learners improve is not only what our role is all about but is also a significant motivator.

. . . .

1   Jack Worth and Jens Van den Brande, *Teacher Autonomy: How Does It Relate to Job Satisfaction and Retention?* (Slough: NFER, 2020). Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/3874/teacher_autonomy_how_does_it_relate_to_job_satisfaction_and_retention.pdf.

Knowing that your own choices and behaviours have led to the improvement cannot be without impact on your own sense of value.

This, however, goes beyond just being handed autonomy. You can only take charge of your own learning when you have the sense of self-efficacy to do so and know that the changes you want to make are both possible and in your control. This needs to be developed as part of the environment you are in and the experiences you are routinely offered. We need to feel that improvements are within our own power to enact and that they are not reliant on external drivers. We also need to know that we are not being held accountable for that which is beyond our control. That leads to a sense of futility and little incentive to develop practice other than through threats of competency proceedings.

Developing a sense of self-regulation and efficacy can only come when you feel empowered and supported. Expert learners have good metacognitive skills and can self-regulate effectively. As we guide teachers to expertise, we want to hand the baton to them. As I became more aware of my professional learning, I could set myself goals, use familiar strategies and see the immediate impact in the classroom, be that through changing how I used modelling to securing a greater depth of knowledge around a topic. This level of reflection is an important part of the learning process and by considering myself a learner I was able to devote time to this part of the process before I started to act.

Note the repetition of the words "I", "me" and "myself" here. In previous performance management cycles I was largely told what my targets would be and then had to do a quick think of an area I would

like to develop, usually either linked to leadership or, in my early days, improving my teaching of grammar, or something of that sort. The focus was always on the outcome and never the process, and lots of time was spent considering how I would evidence this "development". This comes back to the principles of autonomy and efficacy. My learning, whilst needing to link to the requirements of the school, was mine to shape.

"Development" is also a rather nebulous word. I was never quite sure how my "development" was going to be shown, despite my list of to-dos on my performance management sheets, such as "write a scheme of work including grammar" or "form a stronger sense of cohesion across the team". However, I could evidence my learning process, showing what I had read or attended or discussed and then how I had included that into my scheme or lesson or meeting. Thinking about my learning anchored me into something much more concrete, even if I didn't use every idea I came across. The abstract was becoming much more concrete, and that was empowering.

This, of course, all sounds very nice for me: wandering around with my renewed vigour, with a look of contemplation and contentment on my face, but how can this relate to the CPD, or CPL (continuing professional learning),[2] of a whole school?

This is what has driven me to develop different approaches when planning CPD for my own teams and school, and is what has driven me to want to bring it all together into a book. There is a wealth of

---

2   The term CPL is growing in popularity as it suggests that teachers are actively learning about their practice, not simply developing through experience. However, CPD is still the most widely used term so we will use that for ease/clarity.

research out there regarding professional learning, from both within and outside of education, and this book will draw that all together in order to allow other teachers to have the same epiphany that I had and for leaders to support their staff in achieving it.

Mark writes …

When I started teaching, the term CPD was largely used to refer to those occasional opportunities you had to go out of school on a course. These were embraced because it was time out of the classroom – *and* coffee, cake and lunch would be provided. Despite these relative luxuries, I always left at the end of the day feeling somewhat deflated. We would usually be bombarded by an enthusiastic, and professional, CPD coordinator who would tour the country with sessions entitled something like "101 ways to create extra-specially engaging lessons for your most able!!!" and ask us to write lots of things on sugar paper and suggest various activities we could do with card sorts, then we'd go on our way. The chances of us remembering what was discussed by the time we got back to school the next day was slim, and the chance of us having the time to actually use the ideas was slimmer still.

CPD in school was little better. We had outside trainers come in to teach us about the now widely and passionately debunked ideas of Brain Gym and differentiating by pupils' learning styles, or interminable sessions on adopted assessment for learning through writing targets on the front of pupils' books. The biggest difference between the out-of-school and the in-school sessions was that those delivered in school

contained the ideas that we were expected to adopt into our own teaching and demonstrate at every available opportunity. No time was ever given to looking at how these ideas might look in different subjects or to evaluating whether they were having an impact; there was input and we were expected to turn it into output.

It was when I joined my current school that I really saw CPD differently. Here, genuine professional development was prioritised. There was a clear curriculum so that the individual, department and school priorities could be recognised and support given. Most of those charged with leading CPD were teachers, most from within the school, and I now number myself amongst those who help to plan and deliver these sessions and their follow-up. Because, yes, there is now a follow-up on CPD, in which teachers are encouraged to reflect on each idea in their own subject and context and to evaluate whether it has an impact. Importantly, time is given to this.

Over the years, I have turned from being a sceptic when it came to CPD – someone who could be found in the staffroom snarling at each and every new imposition to my professional autonomy – to a CPD evangelist. Now I am someone who recognises that, when done well, CPD gives teachers the agency to make professional decisions informed by the best evidence and experience we have to hand.

This book is a look at how we can create in-school CPD that lives up to its name. It suggests that too much of what gets called CPD is nothing of the sort. Firstly, it is not *continuing* but an ad hoc jumble of strategies relating to different people's priorities and to knee-jerk reactions to the latest big idea or crisis. Secondly, it is not

professional; it is an imposition of non-negotiables presented to teachers as a fait accompli that they are expected to demonstrate rather than own. Finally, it is not *development*. Listening to the deputy head run through the mock exam data does not develop anyone's professional practice and is not really CPD. Nor is a one-off session on cognitive load theory, restorative practice, or any other aspect of the job. Sadly, we have to add, despite being education writers, nor is reading this book. CPD does not happen through a particular input of information; CPD occurs through what happens next.

We argue that we need a fresh approach to CPD and a move away from what teachers are offered, or subjected to, on too many occasions. We need CPD that learns from the lessons of the same kind of thinking that we give to the curriculum we provide for our pupils. CPD should have a clearly planned programme that builds on our prior knowledge. There should be an end goal in mind: this is our intent. We also need to consider how this intent is realised, by which we mean how it is organised and delivered in such a way to ensure that it leads to learning and a change in practice: this is our implementation. Finally, we need to have a way to monitor whether our intent really is being realised and our implementation is working: this is the impact. These three ideas, commonly used in schools following Ofsted's latest inspection framework,[3] are used in this book to structure our thinking around how we make sure that teachers get the CPD they need and deserve.

. . . .

3   Ofsted, *The Education Inspection Framework*. Ref: 190015 (May 2019). Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ education-inspection-framework.

What is CPD?

CPD is concerned with *teacher learning* but, as with discussions around children's learning, this term is not without its controversies. Peter Kelly suggests that teacher learning be used to "refer to the process by which teachers move towards expertise" and he suggests that most models of this teacher learning take a cognitive approach. They:

> all share a common view: individuals acquire skills, knowledge and understandings in one setting, often specifically designed for that purpose, and are subsequently able to use these skills, knowledge and understandings elsewhere.[4]

This model of teacher learning is one with which many teachers will be familiar. There is an input of new information about an aspect of our practice that we are then expected to go away and do. There are times when this model of teacher learning may be absolutely appropriate – for example, when working with teachers who are new to the profession. Novice teachers may benefit from specific guidance about the best way to start a lesson or use retrieval practice in class. Much like the novice learners to whom we impart our subject knowledge, these teachers have not yet got the body of prior knowledge to work things out for themselves, or at least to work it out as quickly and as effectively. It would be simpler to direct them to the conclusion they would be likely to reach themselves only after much trial and error. It may also be appropriate for elements of the teacher's job that do simply need compliance, such as how to report safeguarding concerns.

---

4   Peter Kelly, What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective, *Oxford Review of Education* 32(4) (2006): 505–519 at 506.

However, Kelly points to a number of weaknesses in the cognitive approach to teacher learning. He suggests that it presents a simplistic approach to learning in which the only knowledge that is considered is a form of declarative knowledge – that which sits in the head of the teacher as declarable "fact". It ignores tacit knowledge-in-practice, which comes from experience and may be harder to transfer from person to person. He also points to a body of evidence that suggests transfer between contexts is very unlikely to happen. What a teacher hears during a CPD session in a school hall may never be used in the classroom. In a review of the evidence on effective CPD, V. Darleen Opfer and David Pedder show that this is a particular issue with what are termed *style shows*, wherein teachers attend one-off conferences or workshops, and consequent change in practice is rarely seen.[5]

Kelly also suggests that because the cognitive approach to teacher learning assumes that knowledge about teaching sits in the head of teachers, to be passed from one to another, it ignores the way in which knowledge about teaching is distributed throughout the profession but also beyond it, in the minds of pupils, academics and textbooks. Teachers can learn not only from other teachers but also from observing what is happening in a classroom, from reading about pedagogy, assessment and curriculum, or from working with academics on practitioner enquiry. The cognitive approach also ignores the fact that teachers' minds are not blank slates when they arrive at a CPD session: what they hear and what they learn will be affected by their existing teacher identity and prior experiences.

Kelly suggests that one alternative to the cognitive model of teacher learning is a sociocultural approach, which recognises that teacher identities are significant and will shape the way in which a teacher will respond to new

5   V. Darleen Opfer and David Pedder, Conceptualizing teacher professional learning, *Review of Educational Research* 81(3) (2011): 376–407.

information. For example, a teacher who sees their role as being to develop the whole child through pastoral care in the classroom may be resistant to CPD sessions focused on how to maximise pupils' grades. This could be mitigated against if the ideas were presented in a way that aligns to how they see their role, perhaps by pointing out the life-changing benefits that could arise from a good set of GCSEs.

The sociocultural approach also recognises that teacher expertise is highly situation dependent and that teachers need to be adaptable when new circumstances present themselves. For example, it may be very well to give novice teachers clear advice on how to start a lesson, but what happens if the context changes? If pupils have to get to the lesson from another part of the school and are routinely late or another lesson overruns, or if pupils turn up immediately after an assembly that dealt with difficult issues that they are still processing. The teacher in that moment may need to adapt the way of working that was presented to them. For this reason, the sociocultural approach also acknowledges the importance of not just declarative knowledge but also of knowledge in and knowledge of practice. This tacit knowledge about how to teach well sits within a range of different sources and not just in the head of the teacher, or those who seek to teach them. Kelly concludes that this means that CPD should be organised in such a way as to allow teachers to collaborate together, to share and build their knowledge and to reflect on their practice and learning, so that they can put new ideas into practice.

Fred Korthagen also argues that there is a gap between what is known about making teaching more effective and the practice on the ground, and that CPD has been very slow at closing this gap.[6] He points to the fact that two

6   Fred Korthagen, Inconvenient truths about teacher learning: towards professional development 3.0, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 23(4) (2017): 387–405 at 387.

Expert and practical guidance for schools on designing and delivering continuing professional development (CPD) that truly lives up to its name.

There is a wealth of research available on professional learning, from both within and outside the education sphere, and in this book Zoe and Mark Enser pull it all together to help school leaders optimise teachers' ongoing learning and growth.

Zoe and Mark explain how schools can overcome issues with CPD that can leave teachers plateauing in their development after just a few years, and share a variety of case studies that illustrate the key components of an effective CPD programme that builds on teachers' prior knowledge.

Split into three parts – intent, implementation and impact – the book explores a range of key areas, including: coaching and mentoring, subject-specific CPD, empowerment and self-efficacy, delivery methods and quality of materials.

Suitable for school leaders, heads of department and CPD leads in all settings.

A template for more intentional, thoughtful practice. Highly recommended.

Mary Myatt, education writer and curator of Myatt & Co

Makes a compelling case for why CPD matters and what great CPD looks like.

Andy Buck, founder of Leadership Matters and creator of the BASIC coaching method

This book acts as a highly effective tool to ensure that more CPD in schools leaves teachers energised and with a greater sense of efficacy, satisfaction and agency.

Kathryn Morgan, Head of Leadership Content, Teacher Development Trust

Provides a really good overview of current issues and related research.

Tom Sherrington, author of *Teaching WalkThrus*

CPD is a lifelong journey of growth towards expertise. This is the perfect travel companion for the way ahead.

Andy McHugh, Head of Law and teacher of Religious Education, Editor, *HWRK Magazine*

An essential book for those in charge of staff development in schools.

Haili Hughes, teacher, author, journalist and speaker

This book is a call to revolution – and every brave school leader should be answering the call.

Chris Dyson, Head Teacher, Parklands Primary School

Zoe Enser was a classroom teacher for 20 years, during which time she was also a head of English and a senior leader with responsibility for staff development and school improvement. She is now the lead specialist English adviser for Kent and an evidence lead in education (ELE). **@greeborunner**

Mark Enser has been teaching geography for the best part of two decades and is a head of department and research lead at Heathfield Community College, as well as being a specialist leader of education (SLE) and an ELE. **@EnserMark**