Effective Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL)
A review of reviews

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Review approach

• ‘Umbrella’ review:
  – Provides a rapid consolidated view of the field
  – May miss most recent evidence
  – Can identify evidence gaps
• Balance between speed and being systematic
• Search approach
  – Connoisseurial review plus standard search for rigorous CDP/TPD/teacher learning studies in English since 2000
• 947 ‘hits’ identified, 46 screened. Included and classified:
  – 1 consistent and rigorous – Timperley (2007)
  – 3 robust, but specific
  – 4 persuasive
  – 1 plausible
Classification of claims

1. Consistent and rigorous
   Consistently positive impact on student outcomes from studies with research designs appropriate for causal inference\(^1\) across studies.

2. Robust, but specific
   Examples of positive impact on student outcomes from research designs appropriate for causal inference.

3. Persuasive
   Supported by evidence of impact on student outcomes from research designs without causal evidence (e.g. correlational studies).

4. Plausible
   Consistent with the available evidence, but not directly supported with data.

\(^1\) Randomised trial, well matched experiment, regression discontinuity, etc
Carefully designed/aligned Teacher CPDL with a strong focus on pupil outcomes has a significant impact on student achievement - consistent finding across all reviews.
1. Substantive development has to be sustained over time- 2 terms plus (but one-offs can work for very specific practices)

2. Multiple, iterative activities and opportunities following initial instruction to refine/adapt practice in multiple contexts in light of pupils’ responses

3. Time alone isn’t enough - Banarama principle!
Participants

4 Need:

• individual starting points to be recognised and develop a collective sense of purpose
• to focus on aspirations for pupils and how they learn/ progress in response to teachers’ learning
• to explore existing theories, beliefs and practices, but often challenge these

5 Relevance matters - but that and volunteers vs conscripts matter less than environment / time / peer learning/ focus on pupils

Coe, Cordingley, Greany, Higgins, Teacher Development Trust, forthcoming
CPDL Approaches

6 Formative assessment is key – for modelling approaches, refining support, contextualising for subjects/ pupil groups and evaluating impact.

7 Need for external input, to challenge orthodoxies *supportively* - sometimes complemented by internal specialists.

8 Facilitators as subject, evaluation *and* process experts

9 Peer support - learning together with peers; reciprocal vulnerability speeds up risk taking.

Coe, Cordingley, Greany, Higgins, Teacher Development Trust, forthcoming
Findings

Approaches

11 Setting out deliberately to develop meta-cognitive control eg by:
   – Analysing and evaluating CPD content and evidence re pupils’ responses and interpreting them; and
   – Iterative opportunities to encounter, understand, respond to and reflect on new approaches as part of the day job

12 School leaders must create the conditions for this - resources, modelling and challenge

13 No single element or process works – crucial to combine them, align them with goals – effectively!

Coe, Cordingley, Greany, Higgins, Teacher Development Trust, forthcoming
What doesn’t work?

• Generic pedagogic CPD – contextualisation for subjects and pupils is crucial
• Telling teachers what to do or providing materials without chance to develop skills and explore impacts
• Failing to provide a strong focus on aspirations for pupils or assessing links between teacher and pupil learning
• Providing time and or frequent support without structured opportunities to engage with, understand and reflect on the implications of new approaches/ practices
• Be clear about what you want to achieve and the implications for designing and resourcing CPDL – time is the key
• Set explicit and high expectations of pupil learning oriented CPDL
• Expect facilitators to be able to define their practical theory - what will be different and why – and explore that with teachers
• Expect facilitators to model and use AFL for teachers throughout
• Define and implement a structured, formative, collaborative process with a regular rhythm which engages teachers and involves multiple opportunities to apply and test learning in practice and to gather evidence and reflect on impact
• Link this learning to wider school processes and journey – eg performance management
• If it’s not challenging it’s probably not learning!
Policy implications?

- Caveat: nature of evidence in relation to school-led system
- How can schools/alliances be incentivised to provide the resources and commitment required?
- How should appropriate external expertise be brought in?
- How to develop facilitators of effective CPDL at scale?
- How to ensure a focus on generic and subject specific knowledge and pedagogy?
- Peer support and learning necessary but not sufficient. Does focus on Joint Practice Development risk introverted models that recycle existing practice?
- Links to work on evidence-informed practice and knowledge mobilisation?
Further research

• Overlaps and some potentially significant differences between subjects
• Patterns were valid either to all subjects or for science and maths or science and literacy. There was no overlap between mathematics and literacy
• Facilitator contributions for Maths and Science were distinctive
• We need to understand this better by analysing the individual studies behind key findings; and
• We need to explore specifically what is known about school based and school to school supported CPD