FOOTT PRINTTS:
Focus on Teacher Training

Practical Guidelines for
In-Service Teacher Trainers

PROJECT BRIEF: Review of the literature on quality continuing professional development

Introduction

Teachers' continuing professional development is among the most important factors for ongoing improvement in school effectiveness and in student learning outcomes.[1] As highlighted by a 2017 European Commission Communication, teaching involves lifelong career development.[2] Recent education reforms challenge teachers to work with new technologies, to integrate competence-based curricula and new methods for teaching, learning and assessment, to tailor learning to diverse learners' needs, and to collaborate with peers.

The Erasmus+ project, Focus on Teacher Training – Practical Guidelines for In-Service Teacher Trainers (FOOTT PRINTTS) project focuses on continuing professional development (CPD) for early career and established teachers. A key aim of the project is to identify the elements of effective CPD: in terms of CPD provision (micro-level), the teacher trainers and training institutions and schools (meso-level), and policy levers (macro-level). This will serve as a foundation for the development guidelines to support quality assurance processes in different country contexts in the next steps of the project.

This project brief highlights some of the key findings from the review of literature conducted as a first output of the FOOTT PRINTTS project. The review covers a broad scope, including research in the academic and grey literature addressing effective CPD; teacher trainer development; and policy-level support for teacher professional development. The review also includes a mapping of school governance and policies that shape project partner countries' approaches to CPD. The partner countries are Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Portugal, and Poland.

Defining teachers CPD

There is no one agreed-upon definition of continuing professional development in the literature. The European Commission defines professional development as beginning in initial teacher education and continuing until retirement. This approach underlines the view of teaching as a "lifelong learning" profession.[3] The OECD defines teacher professional development as "… activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher" (p. 49).[4] Continuing professional development, the OECD emphasises, may include formal learning (e.g. in a

1   Chapman C., Harris A. (2004) 'Improving schools in difficult and challenging contexts: strategies for improvement', Educational Research, 46(3), pp.219-228. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188042000277296

2   Ciesielski E.J.M., Creaghead N.A. (2020)' The Effectiveness of Professional Development on the Phonological Awareness Outcomes of Preschool Children: A Systematic Review' Literacy Research and Instruction 59 (2), pp. 121-147. DOI: 10.1080/19388071.2019.1710785.

3   Livingston, K. (2012) 'Approaches to professional development of teachers in Scotland: pedagogical innovation or financial necessity?', Educational Research, 54(2), pp. 161- 172.

4   OECD (2009) Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS. Paris: OECD Publishing https://www.oecd.org/education/school/43023606.pdf

structured course, workshop or qualification programme) and informal learning (e.g. learning among colleagues within schools and across teacher networks, and/or with coaches or mentors).[5] This broad definition accords with situated and cognitive views of learning as social and interactive.[6]

Scholars highlight that CPD should support changes not only in teachers' knowledge and competences but also their attitudes and beliefs.[7] Avolos (2011) argues that teacher professional learning – both individual and collective – requires cognitive and emotional engagement, a readiness to examine convictions and beliefs, and to try alternative approaches to support improvement or change.[8] Daryai-Hansen and Henriksen (2017)[9] suggest that developing – or challenging – teachers' theoretical knowledge can support cognitive changes in teacher knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Montero-Mesa et al. advise that CPD place emphasis "…on improving teachers' ability to deal with the uniqueness, complexity, uncertainty and conflicting values that characterise teaching practice, and on the role of teachers as researchers of their own practice and producers of knowl-

edge" (p. 2).[10] Szempruch (2022) observes that the ability to develop autonomously as a professional, as well as examining and analysing the work of other teachers and questioning and testing ideas within classroom research procedures, are important aspects of professionalism.

These various definitions and conceptual approaches are relevant for all types of CPD providers and settings (e.g. targeted courses higher education institutions[11] or through private or non-profit providers, in formal and informal settings, online or face-to-face), and for teachers at all levels of school education (early childhood education through upper secondary) and subject areas. They also recognise that teachers' work varies significantly depending on the learner age group, the geographical context of the school, and the socio-demographic characteristics of students. Teachers themselves have varied backgrounds (e.g. years of teaching experience, individuals who have entered through alternative pathways as mid-career professionals, etc.)[12] and CPD (external as well as internal to schools) needs to respond to heterogeneity of the teacher workforce.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Lave J. and Wenger, E. (1991) Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355

[7] Guskey, T. R. (2002) 'Professional development and teacher change', Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 8(3/4), pp. 381-389.

[8] Avalos, B. (2011) 'Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years', Teaching and Teacher Education, 27(1), pp. 10-20.

[9] Daryai-Hansen, P. and Henriksen, B. (2017) 'Lærerkognition som centralt udgangspunkt for lærernes praksisnære professionsudvikling – en ny efteruddannelsesmodel' Studier i læreruddannelse og kognition', Didaktiske opmærksomhedsfelter, 2(2).

[10] Montero-Mesa, L., Fraga-Varela, F. , E Vila-Couñago, E. and Rodríguez-Groba, A. (2023) 'Digital Technology and Teacher Professional Development: Challenges and Contradictions in Compulsory Education', Education Sciences, 13, 1029. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13101029

[11] Teachers may return to higher education to earn a master or doctoral level certificate while continuing to teach. Formal studies in initial teacher education or to earn a higher-level education teaching degree, such as a master or doctorate degree, are beyond the scope of this study.

[12] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2018) Boosting teacher quality – Pathways to effective policies, Luxembourg: Publications Office https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/069297 (Main authors: Halász, G., Looney, J., Michel, A. and Sliwka, A.)

Ongoing debates on research methods and findings

Early research on effective CPD focused on identifying specific programme elements associated with positive outcomes. The studies were based on controlled studies of programme impacts, programme evaluation results, participant surveys, and so on. Studies consistently identified the importance of elements such as content-specific knowledge, the incorporation of active learning practices, sustained duration of training (weeks, months or academic years, including follow-up with teachers in their school and classroom contexts), and the importance of developing in-school professional learning communities where teachers reflect on their practices and adapt approaches to their diverse learners' needs (Darling-Hammond et al.[13], 2017; Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis, 2005[14]; Stoll et al., 2012 [15]).

While the findings of empirical studies on the effectiveness of specific features of CPD are remarkably consistent, more recently, several researchers have noted that programmes that adopt these features are not consistently successful (Kennedy, 2016[16]). Several argue that research might more productively focus on the processes and mechanisms of teacher learning (Kennedy, 2016[17]; Richter, undated[18], Lipowsky, 2018[19]). For Daryai-Hansen and Henriksen. (2017)[20], the focus on teacher cognition is important because teachers' capacity for reflection on their pedagogy bridges theoretical and practical aspects of professional learning. It emphasises the importance of professional exchange and development through collaboration. Asterhan and Lefstein (2023)[21] highlight the importance of trainers' characteristics, the quality and quantity of learning, as well as the use teachers' make of training, which is in turn influenced by teachers' prior knowledge and competences and their school context. The various studies underscore the complexity of CPD processes – and of learning itself (see also Webb, 2009[22]).

[13] Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M.E., Gardner, M. and Espinoza, D. (2017) Effective Teacher Professional Development, Learning Policy Institute (June) https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

[14] Ingvarson, L., Meiers, M. & Beavis, A. (2005). Factors affecting the impact of professional development programs on teachers' knowledge, practice, student outcomes & efficacy

[15] Stoll, L., Harris, A. and Handscomb, G. (2012) 'Great professional development which leads to great pedagogy: nine claims from reearch' National College for School Leadership, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dd479ed915d2acb6ee639/Great-professional-development-which-leads-to-great-pedagogy-nine-claims-from-research.pdf

[16] Kennedy, M. (2016) 'How does professional development improve teaching?', Review of Educational Research, 86(4), pp. 945-980, http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626800.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Richter, D. (undated) 'On the effectiveness of teacher training programmes and the conditions for successful transfer' Presentation. https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/erziehungswissenschaftliche-bildungsforschung/prof-dr-dirk-richter/publikationen

[19] Lipowsky, F. (2018). Designing effective training programmes for teachers, Presentation, Catholic Academy Schwerte (12 June). https://www.frank-lipowsky.de

[20] Daryai-Hansen and Henriksen (2017) Op cit.

[21] Asterhan and Lefstein (2023) Op cit.

[22] Webb, N.M. (2009) 'The teacher's role in promoting collaborative dialogue in the classroom', The British journal of educational psychology, 79 (1), pp. 1–28.

Online CPD

The OECD's 2018 TALIS found limited teacher participation in online CPD (Minea-Pic, 2020)[23]. It is possible, however, that in 2020 the move to emergency remote learning during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced more teachers to participate in online courses on regular basis.

Currently, only a few studies explore the features of effective online teacher CPD Two small-scale studies identified in our research compare hybrid models online only CPD. In both studies, researchers found no difference between the two modes of delivery (Li et al., 2023; Mary and Cha, 2021). Other research has found that learning environments that blend face-to-face CPD opportunities appear to be more effective and to be preferred by teachers over formats that are purely virtual (Minea-Pic, 2020).

Meyer, Kleinicht and Richter (2020)[24] found that online platforms that promote reflection, present new information and approaches that cause teachers to question their routines, provide new insights, and initiate discussions among participants approaches), high clarity and structure of activities, and moderate levels of participant collaboration are seen as more effective. Other research has found that the effectiveness of online professional learning communities depends on the presence of skilled community moderators. School-level support, content and opportunities for professional collaboration are also important (Minea-Pic, 2020[25]). Nevertheless, only a minority of teachers participate actively in online communities even though these networks offer plentiful opportunities for teacher collaboration within and beyond their schools.

Studies on teacher trainers and quality assurance

Literature on teacher training and quality assurance highlights the lack of a "codified knowledge base" for teacher educators and lack of attention to research on the impact of their professional learning opportunities. [26] This is an important gap. Dengerink,

Lunenberg and Korthagen (2015)[27] highlight that the role of teacher trainers/educators is substantially different than the teaching profession itself, and researchers cannot rely on research for teacher CPD to stand in for training of teacher trainers.

[23] Minea-Pic, A. (2020), "Innovating teachers' professional learning through digital technologies", OECD Education Working Papers, No. 237, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/3329fae9-en.

[24] Meyer, A. Kleinknecht, M. and Richter, D. (2023). 'What makes online professional development effective? The effect of quality characteristics on teachers' satisfaction and changes in their professional practices', Computers & Education. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104805

[25] Minea-Pic, Op cit.

[26] Goodwin, A. L. and Kosnick, C. (2013). Quality teacher educators = quality teachers? Conceptualizing essential domains of knowledge for those who teach teachers. Teacher Development, 2013 Vol. 17, No. 3, 334–346, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.813766 DOI: 10.1080/13664530.2013.813766

[27] Dengerink, J. et al. (2015) Beiträge Zur Lehrerinnen Und Lehrerbildung, (3)33.

In addition, teacher educators typically do not have any kind of induction period and are left to themselves to create their professional identity in this new role (Goodwin and Kosnick, 2013[28]).

School-level factors and teacher CPD

School-level factors have a profound impact on teacher professional learning. Johnson, Kraft and Papay (2012) found that teachers working in supportive contexts develop professional competences more quickly and remain in teaching longer. The quality of relationships, opportunities for collaboration, and responsive school administrators, and academic and behavioural expectations for learners matter more than modern school facilities.[29] Teacher collaboration to support opportunities for professional learning, including through mentoring, peer feedback, and critical examination of teaching practices[30]. Active learning in job-embedded contexts; extended duration of CPD (with learning over weeks, months, or the academic year) also have an impact.[31]

Sprogøe, J. and Sunesen (2021) highlight the need to balance the development needs of individual teachers and of the school as a whole, and argue that that teacher training needs to satisfy the needs of learners, teachers, the school, and the educational community as a whole. At the individual level, Costa and Silva (2000)[32] highlight the importance of ensuring that teachers design and actively participate in the training process. In this way, teachers "build" rather than "consume knowledge" and integrate new practices in their own school and classroom contexts.

28 Goodwin, A. L. and Kosnick, C. (2013) 'Quality teacher educators = quality teachers? Conceptualizing essential domains of knowledge for those who teach teachers', Teacher Development , 17 (3), 334–346, doi:10.1080/13664 530.2013.813766

29 Johnson, S.M., Kraft, M.A. and Papay, J.P. (2012) 'How Context Matters in High-Need Schools: The Effects of Teachers' Working Conditions on Their Professional Satisfaction and Their Students' Achievement', Teachers College Record, 114(10), pp. 1-39.

30 Neves, I. (2007). A Formação Prática e a Supervisão da Formação in: Saber (e) Educar 12, p. 79-95. Available at http://repositorio.esepf.pt/bitstream/20.500.11796/716/2/SeE12A_FormacaoIvoneNeves.pdf Borko, H. (2004) 'Professional Development and Teaching Learning: Mapping the Terrain', Educational Researcher, 33 (8), pp.3-15.

31 Johnson, S.M., Kraft, M.A. and Papay, J.P. (2012). How Context Matters in High-Need Schools: The Effects of Teachers' Working Conditions on Their Professional Satisfaction and Their Students' Achievement. Teachers College Record, Vol. 114, No. 10, pp. 1-39.

32 Costa e Silva, A. (2000). A formação contínua de professores: Uma reflexão sobre as práticas e as práticas de reflexão em formação, in Educação & Sociedade, ano XXI, pp 89-109.Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26357033_A_formacao_continua_de_professores_uma_reflexao_sobre_as_praticas_e_as_praticas_de_reflexao_em_formacao

Most European countries combine some form of internal and external school quality assurance approaches, which may include: external school evaluation, school self-evaluation, teacher appraisal and national student assessments (European Commission, 2020)[33]. Ideally, these different approaches provide complementary insights on school and teacher performance and development needs.

Quality frameworks setting out the key elements of effective CPD

Most European countries have developed teacher competence frameworks which set out general guidelines and expectations for teacher quality over the course of teachers' careers (Halász, et al.).[34] While teacher competence frameworks may be considered as general guidelines for teacher development, professional standards set out more precise, measurable definitions of what teachers should know and be able to do, and can be more effectively linked to quality assurance processes. Examples of teacher professional standards that may also guide CPD quality may be found in Australia, Ireland, and Scotland, but most countries have not developed standards systems.

Monitoring and evaluation of CPD quality

Currently, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of CPD provision does not occur on a systematic basis in most countries. While evaluation may be more challenging in countries with an open market for public, private and non-profit CPD providers, there are some models of how this might work. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, for example, which funds CPD provision at the local level, has set five quality criteria for CPD evaluation, including: sustained duration; active learning opportunities; coherence with education policies and teachers' knowledge and beliefs; collaborative learning opportunities, and focus on subject and pedagogical content knowledge. The national directorate and the local governments survey school owners, leaders, and teachers about CPD, and students about their learning experience. This information is triangulated with student learning outcomes. Schools may use this information to evaluate teacher CPD experiences and their learning needs. and produce annual reports (OECD, 2020).[35]

[33] European Commission (2020). Quality Assurance for school development. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. (Main authors: Melanie Ehren, Dita Kudelova, Janet Looney)

[34] European Commission (2018). ''Boosting Teacher Quality: Pathways to Effective Qualities.' Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/95e81178-896b-11e8-ac6a-01aa75ed71a1

[35] Boeskens, L., D. Nusche and M. Yurita (2020) Op cit.

A shared vision of teacher professionalism

While there is a significant body of research on effective approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that can support evidence-informed practice (e.g. Hattie's ongoing work sharing effect sizes based on meta-studies, https://visible-learning.org), the understanding of teacher quality and professionalism is ultimately a normative endeavour. As noted by Caena (2014)[36], "[a]ll that has to do with teacher preparation and practice is bound to be fraught with controversy, since it involves underlying ideologies and touches the sensitive ground of values and beliefs concerning the aims and objectives of schooling" (p. 315).

Ultimately, any CPD quality assurance system needs to be based on a clear statement of what counts as 'good quality' CPD. The involvement in representatives from different stakeholder groups in defining teacher professionalism can ensure that any definition represents a shared vision and understanding of teachers' roles, both individually and within their schools and communities.

36 Caena, F. (2014). Teacher Competence Frameworks in Europe: policy-as-discourse and policy-as-practice, European Journal of Education, 40 (3) pp. 311 – 330. DOI: 10.1111/ejed.12088
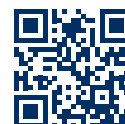
FOOTT PRINTTS

is an Erasmus+ co-financed cooperation partnership with seven European educational training institutions and organizations, ensuring a comprehensive approach to in-service teacher training.

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