CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Position Paper

November 2014

Introduction

The INTO has traditionally supported the continuum of teacher education, and has argued over the years for an induction programme for all NQTs and comprehensive provision of professional development/inservice education (CPD) for all teachers.

The social, cultural and economic contexts in which teachers operate continue to change at a rapid pace highlighting the need for continuing professional development for all teachers throughout their careers. Teaching is considered a complex activity in a constantly changing world. Lifelong learning is increasingly seen as essential.

Teaching has moved towards being a more collaborative profession where teachers are expected to work in collaboration with their colleagues and as part of a team. Relationships with the wider community, such as parents and other professionals have also become a defining aspect of teacher professionalism.

Professional development

The school has become more important as a locus for teacher professional development in recent years. School-based CPD and the development of schools as learning communities has become part of the discourse on CPD. A second important dimension of the current discourse on CPD is that it is teachers’ responsibility as professionals to engage in CPD throughout their careers. Other features of current discourse include action research, enquiry-based learning, evidence-based practice, networking, professional conversations, mentoring, coaching, communities of practice, shared practice, reflective practice and accreditation. Developing a policy for teacher CPD should reflect the political, pragmatic and professional dimensions of the issue.

1 Bottery, 2006
Current INTO Policy

The INTO has long called for a framework of CPD in which system, school and individual needs are addressed. An individual teacher's needs are seen to include both personal and professional needs. In general, the INTO's position is that inservice/CPD to meet system needs (such as new curriculum implementation, child protection etc) should take place during contracted school time and at no cost to the teacher. CPD to meet school needs could take place in schools (whole school days or visits from cuiditheoirí / advisors) or at external venues, but should also take place during school time/Croke Park hours, and at no cost to the teacher. The INTO also argues that teachers should be facilitated to attend seminars or courses on behalf of the school through the provision of substitute cover, and at no cost to the teacher. CPD to address teachers' own personal and/or professional needs could take place in both school time and teachers’ own time (summer courses, evening courses, accredited courses) with incentives provided to teachers to engage in such CPD (EPV, allowances, refund of fees) in recognition of their contribution to their own and their pupils’ learning. Recommendations most recently made by INTO in relation to CPD are as follows:

- A national framework for CPD be established;
- All current support initiatives become part of a National Framework;
- Support persons/facilitators be appointed to support schools with development planning and CPD;
- Provision be made for teacher sabbaticals and study leave as part of the National Framework;
- Teachers be facilitated to network and engage in collaborative learning activities, including research projects, through the provision of time and space;
- The provision of e-learning and web-based learning be further explored;
- The allowance structure to be renegotiated to allow for a range of allowances for accredited courses;
- All schools be allocated a multi-annual CPD budget
- All schools be allocated a number of CPD days per annum
- All schools be allocated a number of substitute days to enable teachers to attend CPD as a representative of their staff;
- Incentives such as Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days, with substitute cover, to be available to teachers who engage in CPD in their own time.

(INTO, 2006, p.41)

The INTO wrote to the DES in 2008 requesting that all schools be granted four whole-school days per annum to allow for collaborative activities such school development planning and professional development at school level. Since 2011 schools have additional hours at their disposal, equivalent to one hour per week, for collaborative activities and professional development, generally referred to as Croke Park hours.
Changing Context

The Teaching Council now has responsibility for promoting CPD, and for reviewing and accrediting CPD. Section 39 of the Teaching Council Act has not yet been enacted. The Teaching Council has published its policy on the continuum of teacher education, but has yet to prepare specific policy pertaining to CPD.

It is likely that mandatory CPD for teachers will be linked to continuing registration. A link between ongoing registration and engagement in professional development is the norm in other professions. Recommendations of this nature are to be found in policy documents pertaining to teacher education policy. References to schools as learning communities are also found in policy documents.

The current support service – Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) – has a total team of 68, of which 44 are regional advisors in six regions providing direct support to schools (both primary and post-primary). The fulltime seconded advisors are supplemented by associates, who are full time teachers (or retired teachers) who can provide support for up to 20 days each. A number of associates will be attached to each Education Centre. The PDST will also provide support to schools post WSE and to teachers arising from the implementation of Section 24 of the Education Act. The PDST is a regional service and the Education Centres have become more central to the process. However, the reduced number of advisors, has led, in some cases, to a more surface treatment of topics, rather than offering indepth support.

The professional development aspect of Induction is now available to all NQTs through the induction workshop programme. The Teaching Council has decided that participation in the professional development workshops is now mandatory for all NQTS. NQTS must engage with 10 out of twelve workshops within their first three years. The professional development workshops take place after school hours in the Education Centres. Holistic school-based induction – mentoring, observation, feedback - is available on a small scale – pending the continuing building of capacity for mentoring. Schools that have participated in induction have found the experience professionally rewarding for all teachers.

The Teaching Council has introduced Droichead – an integrated induction and probation programme - on a pilot basis since September 2013. The INTO issued a directive to members not to participate in Droichead pending developments concerning the inclusion of an external model for evaluating teachers. The Directive has since been lifted and it is envisaged that schools will participate in piloting Droichead, including an external model, in September 2014. A small number of schools that had indicated their interest in participating prior to the issuing of the directive are participating during the current school-year.

Engaging in CPD is seen both as a professional responsibility and an entitlement. Given the changed context it is timely for the INTO to review its policy on teacher professional development.

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4 Teaching Council (2011) Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education


Recommendations (draft)

Policy Level

The INTO believes that engagement in high quality CPD should be an integral part of teachers’ professional lives throughout their teaching careers and therefore, that all teachers should engage in CPD.

Teachers’ personal and professional well-being should be at the core of CPD. CPD should include opportunities for teachers to develop their professional and personal attributes, enhance their knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy, deepen their understanding of how children develop and learn, broaden their professional skills, discuss educational values and principles and critique current education policy and practice.

CPD should be defined in broad terms and should include professional conversations, school development planning, reflection, enquiry, attendance at seminars, conferences and courses, and engagement in research.

The Teaching Council should ensure the quality of CPD.

Each teacher should maintain a record of their engagement with professional development. Such a record could form an important dimension of a verification process for engagement in CPD. Records could be held electronically or in hard copy.

The INTO supports the retention and development of the Professional Development Support Service for Teachers, which should be adequately staffed and funded.

Framework

The Teaching Council should develop a framework for CPD, to encompass system, school and individual needs, which should be inclusive of a variety of models of CPD and address the issues of accreditation and incentives. The Framework should outline a vision for the future of teacher CPD and address the why, what and how of CPD.

Such a framework should be developed in consultation with the teaching profession and other partners in education.

The framework should enable priorities to be decided at system level, and supported at school and individual level.

Funding

Funding for CPD should be provided by the DES to meet all system and school needs. A percentage of the DES payroll should be allocated to CPD.

The DES should allocate a budget to all schools for CPD. The current capitation grant is insufficient to include professional development costs. The budget should be sufficiently adequate to fund teacher participation in seminars and courses on behalf of the school, to pay costs associated with visiting speakers, presenters or facilitators not part of PDST or DES and other professional development activities.

Schools should be allocated a number of substitute days (based on size of school) to provide substitute cover to enable teachers to be released to participate in CPD activities at school level or to attend seminars and courses of relevance to the school in response to system and school needs.
The DES should also fund incentives for individual teachers to engage in CPD for their personal and professional development.

**Providers of CPD**

All providers of CPD for teachers should be registered with Teaching Council, in order to ensure quality of provision.

Education Centres, both full-time and part-time should continue to be funded to provide CPD in response to local needs, within school time, in the evenings or during the summer.

Colleges of Education and Universities should be considered as valuable providers of teacher CPD.

The INTO should continue as a recognised provider of CPD.

Recognised providers should seek to have each course/CPD programme sanctioned or recognised for the purposes of CPD by the Teaching Council in order that teacher participation can be accredited for the purposes of meeting the requirements of registration. (This would not apply to school-based activities, such as teacher reflection, professional conversations or school development planning).

**Education Centres**

Education Centres play a central role in driving CPD and in responding to CPD needs of schools and teachers in their region within an overall policy framework.

In addition to the PDST team, Education Centres should have access to a panel of teachers with expertise in various areas, in order to support the professional development of teachers in their region.

Education Centres should continue to support seminars/workshops for teachers given by college personnel and/or visiting experts.

**System Level Needs**

All CPD to address system level needs, such as the introduction of revised curricula, child protection, self-evaluation and other system priorities should take place during school time. Substitute cover should be available where teachers (including both teaching and administrative principals and learning support and resource teachers) need to be absent when engaging in professional development.

CPD to meet system needs should comprise a combination of whole-school seminars, both on-site and off-site, representative seminars (where one or two teachers attend on behalf of a school with time allocated for follow-up at school level), cuiditheoireacht, and time for reflection and inquiry.

System level CPD needs should be identified by the DES in consultation with the education partners, reflecting developments in curriculum and assessment, policy priorities (e.g. child protection, school evaluation), findings from national and international assessments and other relevant research (e.g. the Growing Up in Ireland [GUI] longitudinal study, ESRI/TCD).
School Level Needs

Schools should have discretion to decide how to identify and meet professional development needs within the school.

Schools should have a budget for CPD activities, separate to the current capitation grant.

*Schools should be given additional funding to meet professional development needs arising from WSE and/or Section 24.*

Individual Level

CPD is both a professional responsibility and an entitlement for teachers. Individual teachers should be encouraged and supported to engage with CPD in response to their personal and professional needs. Incentives for teachers to engage in CPD should form part of a policy framework on CPD.

Summer courses should continue to attract three EPV days for a 20 hour summer course.

EPV days should be available for engaging in CPD during term-time in teachers' own time.

Substitute cover should be available for EPV days.

The Refund of Fees scheme should be continued and the budget increased to reflect the fact that salary allowances are no longer available for further study.

Allowances for professionally relevant post-graduate qualifications should be re-introduced.

A number of sabbaticals, with pay, should be available each year for teachers to engage in education research / professional development activities. (See Appendix)

Academic accreditation should be available to teachers who engage in CPD, whether in response to system, school, personal or professional needs. Criteria for academic accreditation of CPD should be developed by the Colleges of Education and Universities.

Models / Approaches

There should be a variety of models of CPD available to teachers. Models of CPD should also reflect the fact that teachers are at different stages in their career; that CPD is integral part of practice; that reflection and inquiry supports the development of evidence-informed practice; and that collaboration and collegiality promote peer-learning in the context of practice7.

A national framework of CPD for teachers should include a variety of models, such as summer courses, evening courses, weekend courses/seminars, academically accredited courses such as certificates, diplomas, master and doctorate degrees and online and blended courses as well as participation in collaborative learning/research projects.

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**Informal CPD**

Much teacher learning occurs through informal professional activities, such as professional dialogue between teachers, or between teachers and other professionals (inspectors, psychologists) or between teachers and other members of the school community (parents, pupils). Teacher learning also occurs through professional reading, self-reflection and attendance at conferences. Any CPD framework should acknowledge such teacher learning.

**Summer Courses / Schools**

The INTO supports the continuation of the summer course model of professional development for teachers – whether online, blended or face-to-face.

Summer courses should not be confined to addressing system needs but should also address school and individual needs.

Summer courses of 20 hours duration should continue to attract three EPV days.

Providers of summer courses should have the flexibility to organise 20 hour summer courses over three to five days.

All summer courses should continue to receive sanction from (in the future the Teaching Council) in order to ensure quality.

**Networking**

Opportunities for teachers to collaborate and network should be developed within the system and such activities to be recognised as CPD. Such activities could include, network meetings between teachers based on special interest (e.g. infant teaching, learning support), either within schools or across schools, online networking, collaborative projects within or across schools or through professional learning communities. (There is some funding currently available from Dublin West Education Centre for TPCs – Teacher Professional Communities⁸)

**Mentoring / Coaching**

Experienced teachers who take on the role of mentor to NQTs, and/or student teachers often gain professionally themselves. However, opportunities to mentor or to be mentored need to be built into the infrastructure of CPD, allowing for teacher-release time to engage in such activities, when required.

Teachers requesting support with particular aspects of their teaching should be able to avail of coaching from a colleague, either a colleague in their own school or a colleague from another school or a support service. Teacher release with substitute cover should be available when required to do this.

**Support Service**

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) should be involved in addressing both system needs, through devising national programmes when required, and in supporting schools address their own identified needs. The Special Education Support Service should provide continue to support schools in the area of special education.

The PDST should be available to work with teachers in schools (cuiditheoireacht) when requested by schools, and should also facilitate school staffs, or groups of teachers address issues when invited to do so.

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⁸ [www.dwec.ie](http://www.dwec.ie)
The PDST should provide seminars / courses for teachers, either in schools or in Education Centres, to address needs identified by teachers at local level.

The PDST should be sufficiently staffed and funded to provide comprehensive support to teachers and schools.

The fulltime team in PDST should be supplemented by associates with particular expertise who can be called upon as necessary.

Research

Teachers engaging in research, including action research, whether as part of an academic accreditation or as part of action research projects, whether or not a recognised institution is involved, is a form of CPD and should be recognised as such.

Post-graduate Qualifications

Universities and colleges should be invited (by the DES/Teaching Council) to establish Diploma/Certificate courses which would be aimed at meeting system needs, similar to the Special Education Diploma, (for which an allowance would be payable). Topics, which could be considered, include: mentoring, ICT, early years education, Irish-medium education, English as an Additional Language9.

Mandatory Requirement for Continued Registration with Teaching Council

The Teaching Council is likely to require teachers to engage in CPD in order to retain their registration. If CPD events are to be accredited for the purposes of meeting registration requirements, issues such as definitions of CPD, accreditation of courses, and recognition of providers come into play. The INTO makes the following recommendations.

The requirement for teachers to engage in CPD should be quantified in terms of credits (not hours).

Teachers should be required to obtain a certain number of CPD credits over a five year period, as opposed to annually.

The definition of what constitutes CPD for the purposes of registration should be broad and encompass a combination of system, school and individual, personal and professional needs.

Teachers should self-declare at time of renewal of registration that they are engaging in CPD. Teachers should keep a record of CPD credits accumulated. (The Teaching Council may wish to have a verification process – possibly random checks)

All CPD should attract credits. The number of credits should be determined by the Teaching Council and reflect the level and depth of engagement required. (When courses, seminars or other CPD activities are being organised, the number of credits available should be advertised.)

All teachers should receive an automatic fixed number of credits (a percentage of required credits) for professional engagement at school level such as professional conversations, and professional development during Croke Park hours.

9 Note: The TES funds the cost of providing the Special Education Diploma, and no fees are payable, though teachers give of their own time in addition to some DES funded release time.
Teachers who take on leadership roles at school level, such as leading educational projects or initiatives should also be entitled to credits – e.g. Comenius Projects, Mentoring, Link Persons

Other Issues for Consideration

Professional Portfolios

Teachers should keep a record of their own engagement in CPD. In future, NQTs may start their teaching career with a professional portfolio, commenced during initial teacher education, and to which they add during their induction year and throughout their careers. Issues around professional portfolios include definitions, purposes and access. Work around these issues in the Irish context is in its early days. The obligation to keep a professional portfolio, however defined, should be optional for teachers who are currently registered.

‘Chartered’ Teachers

A Chartered Teacher Initiative could be developed to encourage teachers to engage in research, collaboration and mentoring. Chartered Teachers could be remunerated and have responsibility for mentoring and induction and CPD at school level. The strength of Chartered Teacher Initiatives is to retain good teachers in classrooms and could be seen as an alternative ‘promotion’ to principalship, but very much part of school leadership.

Partnerships

Partnership arrangements with Colleges / Universities to support CPD, induction, mentoring, teacher research and enquiry could be explored, where benefits accrue to whole schools in relation to professional development. Colleges and universities also benefit by being in touch with the realities of school and classroom life.

Summary

In summary, INTO supports the view that CPD is integral to the work of the teacher. Professional development should be funded by the DES as a legitimate part of payroll costs. According to the INTO’s survey of its membership 10 (2014) members are very interested in developing their professionalism and see a role for the INTO in supporting their professional development and in being a provider of CPD.

10 Forthcoming, Howard Stephenson on behalf of INTO
Appendix 1

Sabbaticals

Option 1
Every teacher should be entitled to apply for a sabbatical after 7 years teaching, in order to engage in educational activities, such as teaching abroad, research, project work.

Salary (either full or proportional) should continue to be paid to teachers on sabbatical leave, to be determined by the nature of activity undertaken during the sabbatical\(^\text{11}\).

A fixed number of sabbaticals should be available each year e.g. 100 per annum.

Sabbaticals could be for one term, two terms or for a full academic year.

Option 2
Teachers should be able to seek the payment of their salary over a period of years, with a view to taking a year’s sabbatical. For example, teachers could opt to be paid the equivalent of 9 years’ salary over 10 years, or the equivalent of four years’ salary over 5 years, or seven years’ salary over eight years, or in some other combination.

Internships / Scholarships
A scholarship scheme, similar to the Government of Ireland Scholarship Scheme\(^\text{12}\) for research in the humanities, should be established for teachers, where teachers engaged in educational / school-based research would receive a stipend of €16,000 per annum, while on study leave. Such study leave, though not salaried, should count as service.

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\(^{11}\) Note: In general, University staff do not receive full salary when on sabbatical. They are also responsible for funding replacement lecturers if required. If in receipt of remuneration as part of sabbatical activities, they cannot be in receipt of more than annual salary. Arrangements vary from college to college.

\(^{12}\) The Government of Ireland Scholarship scheme is open to applicants engaged in research in the humanities (usually at PhD level). The scholarship is for a maximum of 3 years. Some teachers have been granted scholarships, and usually take career breaks. The current scholarship is worth €16,000 per annum plus fees.