

High quality CPD

Good CPD and bad CPD

At recent Computing At School (CAS) Master Teacher training sessions, teachers were asked what they thought good and bad CPD looked like.

GOOD CPD

Presentation: interactive, hands-on, engaging, not too much talking from the front

Content: relevant to the curriculum, directly applicable, something to take away

Trainer: good subject knowledge, approachable, classroom experience, enthusiastic

BAD CPD

A dull and unenthusiastic presenter

A presenter who lacks appropriate subject knowledge

Little or no interaction throughout the session

Few resources provided for the session or follow-up

These points will help you start planning a CPD training course. Good CPD sessions need careful planning. However the CAS view is that CPD does not start and end at the actual training event. It is a long-term collaborative process sustained over time. This is backed up by research.

What does the research say?

There are numerous studies relating to how to deliver effective CPD. One meta-study developed by the Centre for the Use of Research Evidence in Education (CUREE) looked at numerous reviews of studies and published a report (CUREE, 2012) describing five criteria that CPD should meet to have the maximum impact on learning. It should be:

1. Collaborative
2. Supported by specialist expertise
3. Focused on aspirations for students
4. Sustained over time
5. Exploring evidence from trying new things

Collaborative CPD involves teachers working together on a sustained basis and/or teachers working with other professional colleagues. In an earlier study by Cordingley et al (2005) looking at 266 studies of collaborative learning, all but one of them was found to support teacher improvement.

So encouraging teachers to work together will facilitate greater results in the classroom.

Being 'sustained over time' means that the CPD needs to last well after the session has finished. This can be achieved by follow-up activities or group tasks, or by making arrangements to check back on progress made. It also means that teachers should be prepared in advance for attending a workshop, perhaps by carrying out an activity beforehand or articulating what they hope to achieve by attending.

In order for CPD to be sustained, it also needs to be relevant to teachers' current teaching as that will give them an opportunity to practise. Another meta-study, by Guskey and Yoon (2009), highlighted that follow-up activities are extremely important, and that CPD workshops should be seen as just one part of a broader programme of professional development activities. This is the approach taken by Aileen Kennedy (2005), who talks about CPD being 'transformative' if it combines a range of CPD approaches which complement each other. Other elements of CPD could include peer coaching, action research projects, and working together in a 'community of practice'. This is very much the CAS approach. Another element of transformative CPD is the opportunity for it to be accredited. One place this is available is via the BCS Certificate in Computer Science Teaching (computingatschool.org.uk/certificate). Attending CPD sessions that you run in school can contribute to the evidence a teacher has to put together to gain this certification.

In summary, the available research enables us to see that as well as planning CPD events that are hands-on, fun, interactive and run by an enthusiastic trainer, we should ensure that the learning from the event takes place before and after the session and that there is an opportunity to work together with colleagues. This will maximise the benefit afforded by the CPD.

References:

- Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Thomason, S. and Firth, A. 'The impact of collaborative continuing professional development (CPD) on classroom teaching and learning. Review: How do collaborative and sustained CPD and sustained but not collaborative CPD affect teaching and learning?', *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, 2005.
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