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CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Issue 15

CollectivED Working Papers

Professional Learning and Development Special Issue

Working Papers from CollectivED; the Centre for Mentoring, Coaching and Professional Learning

A University Research and Practice Centre where collaborative conversations create powerful professional learning

2022

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Introduction to CollectivED and Issue 15

by CollectivED Director Rachel Lofthouse

CollectivED The Centre for Mentoring, Coaching & Professional Learning is a research and practice centre based in The Carnegie School of Education. We form a community of professionals, academics and students with shared interests. Our aims are to

- Encourage and enable collaborative conversations which create powerful professional learning
- Build capacity of educators to create contexts which support inclusive career-long and profession-wide learning
- Remove barriers to professional development
- Increase opportunities for educational change through enhanced professional agency and well-being

The research undertaken by the CollectivED community relates to formal and informal professional learning and practice in all sectors of education. Our research focuses on

- teacher education and professional learning at all career stages
- learning through mentoring, coaching, digital pedagogies, workplace and interprofessional practices
- teachers' and leaders' professionalism, identity, wellbeing, self-efficacy and agency
- educational policy and partnership

You can find out more about CollectivED here https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/collectived/ where you can access each issue of our working papers and other activities.

In Issue 15 we have selected papers which extend our understanding of professional learning and development. We include papers reflecting a number of educational settings and locations and offer a range of perspectives from research and practiceWe conclude Issue 15 with notes on our working paper contributors, and information on submitting papers for future publication.

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The Great Divergence: How subject specialism could be an interesting strand of retention for teachers

A think piece working paper by David Preece

In the most recent issue of *Impact*, Graham Chisnell described an [interesting scenario of recruitment and retention around the career progression of teachers](). This resonated with me, and left me pondering some particular and peculiar thinking of the education profession.

Like most people, my first identity in education is in my subject. A really interesting recent discussion session at the Geography Teacher Educator conference, and [work by Ruth Till]() asked some interesting questions about how that identity is constructed: but for me, it's about the expertise and choices I have made over my lifetime that play a huge part in it. I have, of course, taken different roles and interests: as a form tutor, as a UCAS advisor, and as a middle leader and ahead of a department, but in all of those parallel jobs, my core business has remained teaching and learning in my subject on a pretty full timetable. Even as a HoD, I've taught 20/25 lessons this week. Most of my reading, professional development and approach has been through the lens of my own disciplinary thinking and upbringing as a graduate and post graduate student, and it's still endlessly fascinating and exciting to me. My associations with the RGS date back over two decades now, and Chartered Geographer status is a hugely powerful statement about how much I see myself as a Geographer, first and foremost.

But in potential career path and progression, I am about as high as I can go, while still keeping my core business the teaching and learning of Geography. In schools, certainly, the next step on the academic leadership ladder comes with a whole school focus, and a reduction in contact and timetable time in geography. While some of what I have learned could be applied to staff development, or teaching and learning, there is a natural changing in identity away from my subject – what I've loosely termed the "Great Divergence", with apologies to both Pomeranz and Ferguson. For many people, I suspect, this is a reasonable trade off. They want to be wider in their influence, and therefore need to adapt their identity. But what if you want to keep your subject at the heart of what you do?

Subject Specialism: the heart of progression models?

This is where Chisnell (2021)'s article is so interesting, by comparison to the Singaporean model. Becoming a specialist in your subject, playing a wider role within the discipline is a valid and powerful pathway to development and career progression.

Career tracks for Education Officers

Director General of Education

Teaching

Principal Master Teacher
Master Teacher
Lead Teacher
Senior Teacher

School Leadership

Cluster Superintendent
Principal
Vice Principal
Head of Department / Year Head
Subject Head / Level Head

Senior Specialist

Chief Specialist
Senior Principal Specialist /
Principal Specialist
Master Specialist
Lead Specialist
Senior Specialist

Classroom Teacher

Career Tracks within the Singaporean Education System (Singapore Ministry of Education)

By contrast, many of the components of that progression: examining, work with subject associations, leading conferences, or speaking, or developing ones subject knowledge further are all regarded as "hobby activities" in our education system. They are nice, to be sure, and they are valued for developing your expertise, but they don't lead directly to career progression, and are not *always* recognised, validated and encouraged by our school system, which can take a fairly narrow view of one's circle of influence.

Becoming a better Geographer, or better Geography teacher, then, is only going to take you so far within the UK system – by comparison to the Singapore system, where you can stay in schools much longer.

I should note that I don't work in a MAT, and the Specialist Leader of Education role, or research lead is not available, but this seems to be the closest proxy to this kind of disciplinary specialism that is available to people in the sector, without crossing over. Harris Academies, for example, have Geography leads across their Trust, and some individuals have followed this pathway with a different Education Trust. I know of people who have converted their work in their subject in to subject associations, and of course, there are still some Local Authorities who appoint subject specialists across a whole area (e.g. Zoe Enser's work in Kent with English).

But.. don't these roles exist elsewhere?

Of course, one might take on work with Higher Education, ITT/NQT mentoring, or supporting university partnerships, but I believe these, too, are regarded as "diversions" by the school system, rather than components of your professional development. Unlike in the Singaporean system, they are a completely different world – they aren't alternative paths to the same end destination.

Even in my (albeit very distanced) understanding of these worlds, there's quite a schism in identities in domains – ITT is associated with the Education Department, and education researchers who are (broadly) thinkers about pedagogy; rather than the subject areas. Alex Ford's recent Tweet on this got me thinking about how the divisions might exist, too. I don't know how many trainee teachers doing their PGCE at a university spend time in their subject Department, rather than in the Education Department – or how often lecturers from the Discipline come and talk to the Education trainees.

Similarly, a recent discussion with Professor Lofthouse has made me more aware of the potential politicking associated with the divisions in different aspects of The Academy – schools, ITT, disciplines etc – and I'd be fascinated to see an extension of Chisnell (2021)'s work in to if (and how) the overlapping pathways construct a more symbiotic relationship at university level, as well as within schools.

Isn't this just what "leadership" looks like, though?

My final reflection is the extent to which this is a problem that is unique to education – and whether this is, therefore, a concern that we should have in our profession alone. I am married to a commercial solicitor. For her profession, associates, senior associates and partners all spend a large portion of their time in their original specialist discipline. Yes, of course, there are managerial, or business development divergences with seniority, but you still identify as a specialist and as a solicitor first, and your secondary roles differently. The "Great Divergence" in identity happens significantly later in your professional career; and even then, only if you choose to aggressively pursue managing roles and team leadership. Solicitors, at least, don't encounter significant identity problems in pursuit of professional development and career progressions.

I am left uncertain of where the best models might lie, and what might be the best outcomes for our profession. For some, I'm sure, the divergence of identity is a natural and positive part of career development. For others, I think, it will be a major barrier to the traditional routes of progression, and perhaps that is a real shame. But Chisnell's article on Singapore makes me reflect on whether we would benefit from seeing multiple pathways for leadership and success, and whether there *is* room in our system for subject champions and experts, who want to keep their core business in the discipline that they love?

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Singapore Ministry of Education, https://www.moe.gov.sg/careers/become-teachers/pri-sec-jc-ci/professional-development/, accessed 16/02/21

The PROMISE project: examining the use of complex professional dilemmas as a vehicle for teachers' professional learning

A research insight working paper by Mhairi C Beaton and Rachel Lofthouse

Abstract

This working paper describes the findings and implications from an Erasmus+ Knowledge Exchange project undertaken collaboratively between seven organisations spread across Hungary, Slovenia, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. A key project objective was to develop deeper understanding of the professional challenges that teachers across Europe face as they encounter increasingly diverse cohorts of pupils in their classrooms. Findings from the project indicate that there were similarities in the professional challenges being faced by teachers across national and sectoral boundaries. There was also similarity in the challenges being faced by teachers are different stages of their career. A distinctive feature of the professional dilemmas being articulated by the teachers was their complex nature. These findings have implications for how student teachers are prepared and experienced teachers are supported as they work with diverse cohorts of students in European classrooms.

Introduction

Few, if any, teachers in the UK work in monolingual, monocultural schools. Every class is a community of learners with a range of individual characteristics and needs. Schools are microcosms of society, playing a key role in developing inclusivity in increasingly diverse communities. Indeed, it is anticipated that classrooms cohorts will continue to diversify in the future (Adams *et al.,* 2007). To do justice to this educational objective there is a need to teachers to continually learn and develop practice. This is by no means unique to the UK, and thus learning with and from the international community makes sense.

'Promoting Inclusion in Society through Education: Professional Dilemmas in Practice' (PROMISE) is an Erasmus+ funded project which is led by Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University. The project consortium is composed to a range of organisations with different remits related to teacher education including universities, colleges and government agencies in The Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia, Scotland and

Hungary. Some partners work directly with student teachers, others work with experienced teachers seeking further professional development and qualifications in a range of sectors from early years to further education contexts. The core purpose of the project was the development of relevant resources for professional learning as open-access materials for teacher educators and teachers to be used by teachers individually or collectively (https://promise-eu.net/). The foundation of the new materials was a research and development process undertaken in partnership with teachers and teacher educators in each of the participating countries.

Methodology

Stories of dilemmas faced by teachers form a core part of both the project data and the professional learning resource. We defined 'professional dilemmas' as practice-orientated challenges which have no obvious solution. Narratives were collected from teachers from all career stages and school phases. The narratives described a range of professional dilemmas but for example, in one vignette the immediate issue identified by the teacher was that of challenging behaviour. In the narrative, the teacher writes initially about the surface challenging behaviour occurring in the classroom but then reflects how this challenging behaviour might be related to students' experiences of the curriculum and

pedagogy not matching the needs of individual students. In another vignette, an SEN leader reflects on the struggle of integrating the work of Speech and Language Therapists supporting a child with their own classroom practice reflecting on the challenge posed when two separate professions must work together – often without sufficient collaborative consultation time.

The premise of the research design was that offering teachers the opportunity to tell these stories permitted deeper understanding of how teachers experience challenges posed by increased diversity in their contexts (Beaton *et al.,* 2021). Within the research design, in addition to the professional dilemmas they faced, contributors were invited to write about the ways in which they had chosen to respond to these dilemmas.

This use of narratives as a data collection tool allowed teachers to express their dilemmas in their own words without the constraints of a standardised research instrument (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999). The project team propose therefore that our evidence base was authentic. The team used the narratives to create 'vignettes' containing the same information such as context of the educational setting, indication of level of experience of the contributor, description of the dilemma and solutions that had been tried. Thematic analysis of the vignettes enabled the project team to identify themes

arising from both the professional dilemmas and responses to these dilemmas and to recognise the significance of the policy contexts, cultural differences and terminology used across the European partners contexts.

Findings

The findings from the study indicated that the educators articulated similar professional dilemmas or challenges. The vignettes were categorized under seven themes: behaviour, inclusion, didactics or pedagogy, classroom management, interprofessional working, digital learning and psychological problems. These themes emerged in each national context and were not limited to any specific career phase or educational sector. Issues related to students' challenging behaviour, for example, were reported across all sectors of education from very young pupils to those undertaking vocational studies in their late teens.

Although the vignettes construction by the research team for purposes of analysis and creation of the professional learning materials on the website resulted in categories based on the predominant cause of the professional dilemma being faced by the teacher, perhaps most strikingly, the narratives written by the teachers revealed the complexity of the challenges and decision making that teachers face. It was notable that the process of writing the original narrative permitted individual

teachers to reflect deeply about the causes of the professional dilemma concerning them. Often the narratives indicated the root causes of their professional dilemmas were not singular in nature but rather multi-dimensional. For example, although on the surface the professional dilemmas might relate to challenging behaviour, the root cause might lie not just with the student's choice to behave in certain ways but instead be located within ongoing family issues or curricular and pedagogical choices being made by teachers within the school that do not match the learning needs of the individual.

The invitation to write their narratives allowed the teachers dedicated time to consider the underlying causes of their dilemmas including 'thorny issues' such as whether their own practice was inclusive of the students at the centre of the identified professional dilemma. In some instances, the writing process allowed the teachers to think more widely about the practice of the school or indeed the wider educational policy and the impact these were having on individual students and their ability to participate meaningfully in educational opportunities. Individual teachers noted that even some of the policies and practices which had been specifically designed to enhance inclusion, when viewed reflectively through the lens of writing the narratives, were not working in

effective ways to enhance the meaningful participation of individual students.

Analysis of narratives also indicated that professional challenges articulated by educators often required collaborative working with and through other professionals. Given the complexity of the dilemmas illustrated through the narratives, this was not surprising. Increasingly, it is acknowledged within both research and policy that many of the challenges facing teachers cannot be solved only by educational professionals but require interprofessional decision making and action on behalf of the student or students in question. The narratives also surfaced that this interprofessional working was not simple to achieve and required both time and skill from all involved in order to cross traditional professional boundaries and achieve harmonious cooperation. At times, this can be physical boundaries when professionals, including teachers, must physically attend meetings out with their usual place of work. However, a greater challenge is to cross professional boundaries where training and modes of working must be adapted to allow different professionals to work collaboratively together. This may require the individual professional to be willing to mentally cross a boundary from their own professional knowledge and assumptions to be able to work in effective ways with other professionals.

Another distinctive feature of the narratives was the recognition that boundaries between home and school required to be crossed to ensure that professional dilemmas being articulated by teachers might be addressed. Although this requires a different type of boundary crossing, nevertheless, the notion of working cooperatively with families and students to address professional dilemmas was a strong element of several of the narratives. This might require teachers to adapt their practice once they consulted with students and their families but often deeper insight into the student's individual experience of school permitted a new perspective on their inclusion in the classroom and provided an effective response to a professional dilemma.

Implications

The research underpinning the development of the professional learning materials for the Erasmus+ project indicates a range of implications. The wider study certainly indicates that a new approach to professional learning for inclusion should be adopted (Beaton *et al.,* 2021). This approach would take as its starting point the complex professional dilemmas that educators articulate rather than viewing them as discrete issues that can be addressed separately. The learning arising from this approach would be non-judgemental, collaborative and interprofessional where

much of the agency for the focus of the learning is undertaken by the teachers themselves.

However, revisiting the teachers' narratives which formed the basis of the study reinforces our understanding that teachers working across Europe are facing a range of professional challenges that they are keen to respond to in ways that improve the experiences of their students. Reading the narratives written by teachers across Europe reminds us that many of these teachers are experiencing a profound sense of isolation as they seek to address professional dilemmas. Many of the narratives articulated that the teachers initially sought to respond to their professional dilemmas alone; individually trialling a range of different responses as they sought a way to solve professional issues of concern. Many of the decisions they made in responses to these challenges were made 'in the moment' as they were teaching their classes.

In contrast, the study highlighted that permitting teachers the opportunity to take time out from the 'busy-ness' of the classroom to write about their professional dilemmas is both productive and therapeutic. Allocating dedicated time for teachers to reflect critically about the potentially multiple causes of the professional dilemma was welcomed by the participating teachers. It might be suggested that this deeper professional understanding cannot be developed within the immediate moment of the classroom but must be undertaken out with classroom time. Dedicated time for reflection in our schools is in short supply but it might be suggested that building this activity into the school week or year might reap significant rewards for the whole community.

Additional to dedicated time for writing and reflection, it was notable that when teachers were offered the opportunity to work cooperatively with others – both teachers and other professionals – they were often able to discover more successful responses to their professional dilemmas that if they had been working alone. This cooperative working might take a number of forms. There is ample evidence within the narratives that the critical reflection afforded by the writing of the narratives highlighted for the teachers that they might profitably approach other members of staff for advice or support in addressing their professional dilemma. Within the professional development materials on the PROMISE website, this is exemplified by the professional learning game developed by one of the Dutch colleagues (https://promise-eu.net/units/inquiry-stance).

It might also be suggested that cooperative working might involve coaching as productive conversations between teachers might draw our further understanding of the professional

dilemma beyond that possible only through the writing of the narratives. Indeed, it might be suggested that the most effective use of the narratives was not the writing of them but their use as a basis for professional collegiate conversations or dialogue around professional dilemmas. The notion of narratives of this nature being used as the basis for coaching conversations was trialled within one of the PROMISE project online learning events. During the session, teachers from each of the project partner countries and representing a wide range of educational sectors and career stages were invited to prepare narratives of current professional dilemmas and grouped in triads to undertake coaching conversations to develop a more critical understanding of those dilemmas through comparison across national boundaries, sectoral boundaries and career stages. Additionally, it was hoped that these coaching conversations would provide novel responses to individual professional dilemmas through dialogue and sharing of professional knowledge and skills across these multiple boundaries.

This notion of sharing coaching conversations across national, sectoral and career stage boundaries is a relatively novel one for the partners involved in the PROMISE project. Nevertheless, it was an activity that was welcomed and valued by the participants in the online learning event. The partners therefore plan to explore in more depth the possibilities coaching conversations or other

forms of professional dialogue hold in a future project RAPIDE – Reimagining a Positive Direction for Education. Since the inception of the PROMISE project, the world has changed rapidly and significantly for educators and the RAPIDE project will seek to build on the findings from the PROMISE project examining how coaching conversations might support teachers to address the professional dilemmas rooted in the need to embrace the affordances of digital education within their classrooms.

The RAPIDE project will also permit the partners to examine in more detail the opportunities that are afforded by partnership with parents, carers and students to address these same professional dilemmas. We would hope to provide our findings in a future CollectivEd working paper.

Summary

Research indicates that teachers across Europe continue to face professional dilemmas rooted in the diversity of the classroom cohorts they are teaching. Teachers across Europe are committed to providing effective and meaningful educational opportunities for all the young people in these classrooms but the enactment of inclusion policy as a goal is contextual and complex (Adams *et al.*, 2007). The PROMISE project indicated that a new approach to professional learning is required if these goals are to be

realised (Beaton *et al.,* 2021). Revisiting the narratives written by the participating teachers to underpin the development of the professional development materials in the project highlighted that many teachers are experiencing a sense of isolation as they seek to respond to these ongoing professional dilemmas. In addition to a new approach to professional learning, it might be suggested that a new approach to ongoing support for teachers in our classrooms is required; opportunities to use narrative writing to critically reflect on these dilemmas and opportunities to engage in coaching or professional dialogue about these dilemmas with other teachers, professionals and students and their families. Only then will teachers be able to engage in the professional boundary crossing that is necessary to address these complex and pernicious professional dilemmas.

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The Practice of Values

A Practice Insight Paper by Lou Mycroft

English further education has seen a significant shift since March 2020 away from an expert-led 'CPD' towards an educator-driven, values-led landscape of 'professional learning'.

This is 'a' moment for collective affirmative ethics in further education and - I would like to think - more broadly in the world (it's easy to think that 'our' history is the only history there is). This practice insight paper presents a values-led praxis which is emerging and rhizomatic. Like all good explorations of praxis, it attempts to hold the middle ground between theory and practice.

A Collective Affirmative Ethics

Some definitions:

Value(s) - a value is something which drives you. Values are formed through lived experience and self-reflection. They go deep.

(Practice) Principles - a practice principle is how you enact a value, or values.

Ethics - your personal ethics is the sum of your values. Our ethics change over time as they should, we grow and learn.

Integrity - this means acting according to your ethics. You know how it feels - or at least, you know how it feels when you don't.

The phrase 'affirmative ethics' comes from the work of posthuman thinker Rosi Braidotti (2017) and it's linked to the concept of *potentia*.

Braidotti brought the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza into my life. Amidst the new certainties of the Enlightenment, Spinoza got on the wrong side of most of his contemporaries by rejecting the notion of a transcendent god-on-a-cloud. He wrote about the life energy which infused relations between humans, and between humans and the non-humans which share this earth, animate or not. He called this *'zoe'* and this was his god: a god in all of us (Deleuze, 2001). Centuries later, French thinker Gilles Deleuze secularised 'god' to 'joy' and my journey into an affirmative, joyful ethics began.

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Writing his 'Ethics' in Latin, Spinoza had two words for 'power' at his disposal. In English, we have only one.

Potestas is what we would recognise as power-as-usual. Status, hierarchy, politics. We think of power as connected to the individual, as well as to their rank. It's useful to think of the metaphor of a tree, growing upwards, root and branch 🌳

Potentia is an activist energy, Spinoza's *zoe*. It's about influence unconnected to rank, it tends to be collective; people come together to pool energies and ideas. The botanical metaphor is rhizomatic, think bluebells. You may plant them, and they may thrive or not, but they carry on doing their work underground, popping up in unexpected places. Rhizomes are persistent and subversive. You might call them *'nomadic'* 🌱

Potentia is the power behind this shift from expert-led CPD (which has its place) to a more rhizomatic, educator-led ecology of professional learning. It could be chaotic, and it's certainly messy, but what anchors it to purpose is an affirmative ethics. Values are explicitly spoken about, shared and enacted. Here in practice is Spinoza's move from expert (on-a-cloud) to leadership in all of us. And although the work is joyful, it's also true of

potentia activism that it channels pain. It gives our pain something to *do*. When we see inequality all around us, we design our work as a practice of equality, for example.

Through decades of being undervalued and overlooked in policy, English further education carries a lot of pain, which before the pandemic was descending into cynicism. Practising an affirmative ethics enables us to be critical of practices which need to change, whilst using our collective *potentia* to drive change. It also resists critique, which inevitably needs the *status quo* to bounce off, thus leaving no room for new thinking.

Braidotti describes affirmative ethics as also *transversal*, by which she means looking far beyond our own echo chambers. There's no integrity without difference. The practice of difference means inviting unheard and disregarded voices into the work as equal thinkers; this might mean students, or identity perspectives, or the farthest reaches of further education that don't get heard because colleges have the airspace: offender learning, for example. It also means looking outwards into the world, beyond our local communities. And across the silos - and hierarchies! - of subjects and 'levels'. These old containers constrain new thinking.

Lines of Strategy

After watching FE educators be the engine room of change from the start of the pandemic onwards, I am firmly convinced that it's possible to run two lines of strategy alongside one another, to a potentially entangled far horizon.

KPI Line

None of this change is happening at policy level (yet). FE is still burdened by overwhelming levels of scrutiny; trust between state and the organisation seems at an all-time-low. To ensure financial survival, assumptions are made at leadership level which leave little room for values-led design. This can only change nationally. But that's not a reason for avoiding values-led work.

Values Line

What if a Values Line runs alongside the KPI Line when it comes to strategic and operational planning? To the naked eye, it might look like a parallel track, but don't all lines converge on the far horizon? I'll explore the practical application of values below, but just sit with the possibility for the moment.

Language matters, and it particularly matters when we are trying to do something new. Using terms like 'the bottom line' privileges the KPI Line over the Values Line. It's a trump card, used as a blocker, however unwittingly. In the tension between these two strategic approaches, we see *potestas* and *potentia* playing out their inevitable dance. Yet in Deleuzian thought, the state (e.g. organisation) and the nomad are always present in the same space. The dance is inevitable. The nomad (rhizome, *potentia*, Values Line) clears a space to dance for a time, the state (tree, *potestas*, KPI Line) re-territorialises it. In public sector speak, we call this sustainability and we see it as an aspiration, the point at which the pilot work becomes incorporated into the organisation, for example. Some nomads move on, some accept incorporation, a new dance begins.

One way in which this is playing out currently in English further education is around *go-backery*, the assumption that, as the pandemic becomes endemic in our lives, we should pick up the practices we laid down in March 2020. The term go-backery was coined by FE educator Jennifer Thetford-Kay and it resonates strongly amongst *potentia* educators who are battling go-backery mindsets. Hence the moment for an affirmative ethics. If we accept our responsibility to collectively change the world, we need values-led practice.

Practice Values Workshops

Practice Values Workshops may take different forms (and may not be called that), but they all do the same work. In long experience of

doing values work, educators contribute willingly when asked about their values. Words differ, but trust, equality, care (or kindness) and openness/honesty feature in any word cloud.

The next step is to formulate questions. Educators always know which areas of practice need working on, by which I don't mean their personal practice. 'Expert lead CPD' for practitioners (rather than CPD for managers/leaders) focuses on areas of personal practice. Professional learning, with its collective, affirmative and hopefully transversal ethics encourages educators to bring their *potentia* into play: where can collective areas of work be infused with values? Examples from practice workshops include:

What might timetabling look like as a practice of trust?

What might assessment look like as a practice of innovation?

What might appraisal look like as a practice of equality?

A values discourse begins here. The upheaval in further education since March 2020 has begun to establish the Values Line in some organisations across all levels of hierarchy: a transformation.

In further education, we tend to think about transformation being an end product, and an individualistic one: the learner transformed through FE (Husband and Mycroft, 2019). The work of FE trust researcher, Dr Christina Donovan offers a new lens. Donovan's research (2020) established 'transformation' as the first step towards (re)building trust. People unify around a significant change, forming a critical mass at which point they begin to thrive and feel optimistic again. Hope is a powerful driver, and another active practice.

Constellations

Digital practice has provided a vehicle for FE practitioners to engage in professional learning outside their organisations and this is a significant shift, allowing people to meet and think together beyond the frameworks of 'official' professional development[1]. Grassroots spaces already existed, most notably the #FEResearch movement. FE Twitter is a generally affirmative space,

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[1] Not to undermine professional development programmes such as those funded by the Education and Training Foundation, who have

certainly supported rhizomatic initiatives such as #APConnect.

enabling the conduit of information and, as the umbrella project #AmplifyFE (ALT, 2020) evidences, practitioner-led professional learning spaces are manifold, along with a flourishing of educator-led podcasts and workshops.

In a Spinozean genealogy, initiatives such as these are defined as 'constellations of practice' (Mycroft and Sidebottom, 2018).

Constellations belong to the rhizomatic landscape: nomads whose work together on time-limited, open-bordered, common-purposed practices of difference.

This constellations approach has brought an anti-competitive flavour to much professional learning in further education. Of course, there are still teachers who hoard their resources, that's human nature right there, but the pooling of ideas and *potentia* energies via professional learning constellations - along with a commitment to citing and amplifying the work of others - makes a refreshing and optimistic change.

Conclusion

This practice insight paper has attempted to capture a culture shift in the landscape of English further education. It's not a culture change - yet. So much *potestas* is embodied in

the systems, structures and processes of FE that will be difficult to overcome, if a coming together of the KPI Line and the Values Line is to be realised. And, of course, the *status quo* benefits some, if not many, in the sector. But as the fall-out from an extraordinary two years continues to be examined, I echo the hope of the JoyFE movement that instead of doing things differently, FE can start to do different things (Dennis, 2022 forthcoming).

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Head Teachers as the last outpost for Disabled Pupils? Knowledge-based leadership to safeguard the right to Education

A research insight working paper by Claudia Gillberg and Emma Rosengren

Abstract

Head teachers are in a position to facilitate disabled pupils' access to and participation in Education. However, head teachers' difficulties in creating inclusive schools are considerable. Regarding disabled pupils' rights, governing bodies sometimes find it too easy to dismiss the Education Act concerning access and participation in relation to disabled pupils, prioritising budgetary concerns over disabled children's rights. This article discusses the possible role of ethical and educational leadership in disrupting the ableist assumptions that underpin so much of the Swedish education system. This is no small feat in a society that perpetuates a public discourse of disability as an inferior state of being and as a tragedy to be overcome. The authors make a case for school as an integral part of society, hence the need for disability to be understood as a knowledge subject in its own right.

Introduction

Disabled pupils' needs and rights to Education are contested areas in the public sphere (Slee, 2019), not only in Sweden but worldwide. One of the authors of this article is a head teacher in Sweden. In her (Emma Rosengren) experience, a lack of awareness of systemically ingrained ableism lies at the heart of the Swedish school system. In Sweden, school governance is subject to legal and governing frameworks posing specific problems for head teachers regarding disabled pupils and their equality of access and participation in school (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019). Consequently, dilemmas are rife in complicated, sometimes incomparable chains of school governance, which is a persistent rather than a new problem (Norberg and Johansson, 2007; Rönnberg, 2015, Nafsika et al, 2019, Rönnberg et al, 2019). Rosengren contacted this article's co-author (Gillberg) to discuss a 2019 paper's content (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019) and the potential co-production of knowledge relating to head teachers' unique role and position concerning disabled pupils'

participation and equal rights within the current Swedish educational and societal climate. Some of the ethical issues we raise are not limited to Swedish schools or Swedish School Leadership as they are of an ethical nature easily recognisable in a UK context and through discourses of inclusion/exclusion.

In exchanges over several months throughout 2020, Rosengren and Gillberg, who did not know each other prior to this work, established there was enough common ground to explore the consequences of ableism in schools and to reflect on how ableist actions and words might be disrupted and ultimately undone. Our mutually beneficial learning has resulted in this article to which we invite other Educational Leaders and Head Teachers.

Head Teachers and Governing Bodies in Sweden

Head teachers in Sweden are under obligation to provide inclusive schools based on the tenets of equality (1 Chapter. 8§ Education Act 2010:800). Head teachers are, however, also under considerable pressure to stay within the budgetary limits set by their respective governing bodies. The Swedish Education Act stipulates that all children have a right to schooling (7 chapter 3§ Education Act 2010:800) and disabled children are to receive the support they require. Legal

frameworks for Swedish schools are complex, as they include municipal laws and regulations as well as strict work environment regulations, while the Education Act is partially self-contradictory on points of the duty/right to schooling and resulting loose interpretations of rights in the case of disabled children (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019).

While a head teachers' mission is reasonably clear according to the Education Act, some governing bodies have issued vague or weak descriptions concerning the practicalities of equality of access, i.e., the implementation of routines conducive to disabled pupils' participation. Ambiguously worded briefs for head teachers pose problems in that they may weaken the rights of disabled school children which are, in theory, non-negotiable. In practice, the entire governing chain, from the schools' respective governing bodies to head teachers to teachers, to every single school practice would have to firmly incorporate such rights, and contrary to public discourse and sometimes explicitly ableist opinions of some head teachers, there are no legal grounds for claims such as budget concerns preventing disabled pupils from receiving the education to which they are entitled.

Head teachers wish to entertain good relationships within their respective organisational frameworks. If a governing

body informs a head teacher of resources being scarce for the ongoing budget year, the latter will find it hard to demand more resources. Governing body and head teacher need to cooperate if a school is to succeed in leading all pupils' learning towards specific learning goals. A governing body whose view is skewed in favour of budgetary concerns will force a head teacher to reduce special needs provisions. But recruitment of special educational needs teachers is costly as are additional teaching assistants, and if required such costs cannot and should not be avoided. Rosengren has always been strongly supported by her governing body in complying with the Education Act, but stories about colleagues with little support from governing bodies are numerous. A serious issue raised here is that many, if not most, head teachers are uncertain if they are under greater obligation to municipal law (budget) or if the Education Act overrides budgetary frameworks (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019). For political reasons at the local or municipal level, mainly to avoid causing friction with municipal governing bodies, many head teachers choose to stay within their allocated budgets, unintentionally curtailing the right to schooling for disabled school children.

In those cases where governing bodies insist on budgets being strictly adhered to, irrespective of disabled schoolchildren's needs, for a head teacher to raise the subject

of educational leadership pursuant to the Education Act (2010:800) can become a potential tool for change in that it at least vocalises a challenge to the normalised discourse of budgetary frameworks overriding school law and the right to schooling. Educational leadership differs from managerially interpreted leadership and sometimes, educational leadership is considered too soft. But to uphold educational values, and in fact legally stipulated requirements, in such a governing climate constitutes a strong ethical stance. Educational leadership, which is interwoven with democratic values such as equality, parity of access and diversity, serves as a reminder that a head teacher's job is to protect the interests of their (disabled) pupils. It disrupts the more powerful monetary interests of some free schools while questioning those timid municipal governing bodies who dare not challenge the government on their distribution of sufficient school funding.

What is Ableism in Schools?

In brief, ableism is the persistent devaluing of disabled people in society. Disability is considered an undesirable, inferior state of being (Campbell 2009, Lalvani and Baglieri, 2020, Lalvani 2019). Disabled children's needs, in such a system, can easily be curtailed or removed altogether should

changed economic and other circumstances require it. If ableism is rampant, disabled schoolchildren can find themselves rejected or excluded from some schools, with the explanations given for such actions sounding reasonable and acceptable, sometimes even to the parents of disabled children (Lalvani and Baglieri, 2020, Slee, 2019). Through the lens of Ableism disabilities are inherently tragic and must be overcome. The state of Abledness is the only desirable state and must always be aspired to (Campbell, 2009). Through such a lens, it becomes evident why the notion of disability rights is fraught. Ableism is not easily detectable for most people whose field of expertise and interests lie elsewhere. Some overworked or ideologically motivated teachers refer to disabled pupils in pejorative and disparaging terms (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019), incapable of identifying potential unintended consequences and other negative impacts on disabled pupils' lives. A head teachers' role here would be to step in and end the events that over months, perhaps years, have led to a point where teachers openly mock disabled schoolchildren.

The Swedish National Association, ATTENTION (sic), which represents pupils with neurological and neuropsychiatric conditions such as attention deficit disorders and autism, reports that this group of pupils does worse in Swedish schools year after year (Adolfsson et al. 2020). Ableist practices, veering into outspoken discriminatory conduct, involve schools that uphold neurotypical model pupils as the desirable norm. School absences, deterioration of grades and future opportunities are at stake if head teachers are encouraged to apply leadership that has little to do with democratic and inclusive values.

In their recent publication, special education and disability scholars Lalvani and Baglieri (2020) point to a more overarching problematic, namely the lack of knowledge about the history of disability and the many implications of disability-related policies in schools and society. The authors maintain that too little is known about the terms and conditions of disabled schoolchildren's lives and their future possibilities, and far too much school practice is still based on conjecture, prejudice, and the biased knowledge paradigms of old. They argue that the field of special education too, is suffused in prejudice and wrongdoing, predicated on ableist assumptions that often go together with the medical model of disability (Slee, 2019, Lalvani and Baglieri, 2020). The underlying philosophy of disability is still widely depicted as a tragedy or failure of medicine and science and is reflected in the selected course literature and exam tasks, and those are deliberate decisions made by faculty (Lalvani, 2019). Lalvani, through her multi-layered lived experiences as the mother of a disabled child

and her research as a disability scholar, connects the complexities of ableism from the birth of a disabled child, the expectation of a mother to be crushed by the 'bad' news, the reactions from friends and society, all the way to the adulthood of a disabled child, while she also experienced how disability was taught to social work professionals and special education teachers over twenty years ago, with little discernible change today.

The ensuing (unintended or other, intentionality requiring more debate) consequences for disabled pupils in such a system are mostly not conducive to disabled pupils' development and participation in society let alone their sense of worth and belonging in the world. Schools' role in society clearly exceeds the teaching of core subjects. Teachers and head teachers are categorically wrong to assume that their work is limited to their subject, especially as in Sweden, schools are also tasked with a compensatory brief that is supposed to level the playing field for all pupils. The motto 'A School for All' is enshrined in the Education Act - values are inscribed in law. A proactive inclusive approach, inside and outside of classrooms, in school corridors, in school playgrounds, on school outings, and in teacher-parent encounters is mandatory, but teachers and head teachers are often at a loss due to a lack of knowledge about Disability and a concurrent chronic lack of adequate funding,

resulting in exhausted and even hostile expressions (cf. Gillberg and Pettersson 2019).

Rosengren routinely uncovers ableist practices in her professional capacity. Recently, she learned about the introduction of strict dress codes in a school where it was claimed that dressing smartly was in (disabled) children's best interest. Casual wear was said to be associated with criminality, further disadvantaging disabled pupils. Since this was written about in a national newspaper these unsubstantiated claims, alas, were not limited to idle gossip or private concerns about assumed criminal links of comfortably dressed disabled schoolchildren. To make nonsensical claims more palatable, ableist discourse is often cloaked in phrasing that purports concern for marginalised, underprivileged, and 'problematic' schoolchildren (Gillberg and Pettersson, 2019; Slee, 2019)

Language, then, can convey underlying ableist assumptions. Statements such as 'we only want what is best for these children' whilst separating and placing them in classrooms that are removed from mainstream schooling with no meaningful offers of activities, are commonplace, illustrating the chasm between words and actions (cf. Slee, 2019). It is also common to refer to families with one or several chronically ill and/or disabled children

as 'problem families' regardless of their background or overall situation (Lalvani, 2019). The moment a family has a child that needs to stay at home for health reasons, it is referred to as 'problematically absent' or some such. Research examining many cases of school absences in the U.K. (there are no comparable studies in Sweden) has established that, invariably, there are serious reasons for such absences (House of Commons Education Committee, 2019, Notfineinschool, 2020). Commonly, these children wish to attend school but cannot due to severe illness. Rosengren suggests that the term 'involuntary school absence' ought to be used instead of 'problematic school absence'. It is, after all, the schools' responsibility to welcome pupils to their schools and provide them with the accommodations required for them to participate. The use of 'problematic' is a widely identified ableist term that immediately connotes the disabled person, in this case the pupils or their families, as the problem. Such language fails to acknowledge that there are physical and attitudinal barriers constituting a breach or even denial when it comes to disabled pupils' rights to access and participation. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was almost unthinkable in most Swedish schools to mention the possibility of home schooling or distance learning as a solution and it remains doubtful whether Covid-19 related measures will prevail once the pandemic is under control. The physical performativity and normativity of the 'functioning body' is so deeply institutionalised that more than a pandemic may be needed to effect long-term change at the systemic level.

Rosengren highlights another problem, namely the internationally debated Swedish Free School System (Rönnberg, 2015, Rönnberg et al, 2019), which we do not have the scope to discuss at length in this article. Indubitably, this system has reinforced the division of school children, in terms of needs and rights. Neurotypical and healthy pupils find it much easier to choose a school of their liking than disabled children whose needs can be costly and who will be rejected by some schools.

Conclusion

School leadership based on an understanding of society as inherently diverse and pluralistic, where disabilities naturally and organically interplay with all spheres of public and private life, is a realistic possibility for Swedish schools. Unfortunately, many appear to have lost sight of such a possibility, giving way to the budgetary concerns of governing bodies. Yet, schools are an integral part of society, not a waiting room from which some aspiring, normatively approved pupils will be sent into society, as if it is a body detached from school and education and for which one must first

qualify by conforming to head teachers' and teachers' preconceived notions of abledness.

Disabilities (plural) must become an integral part of teacher education and head teachers' continuous professional development. Disabilities are not special, not disjointed occurrences. Hypothetically speaking, we are all only moments away from chronic illness or disability. Accidents and serious illness do not only happen to others. We are the others. The others are we. If we truly understand this, solutions for inclusive societies and the type of education system required to build, develop and uphold such societies can abound.

Meanwhile, prioritising the Education Act over municipal budgetary frameworks as well as an adherence to national curricula in which diversity and inclusion, equality and other goals are clearly stated must become fully understood, too. Inclusive practices appear to have evolved into something that some head teachers regard as absurd or illusory, buoyed by public opinion and the tragically normalised mistreatment of disabled people. The legitimisation of such a dismissal seems ingrained in the very structures that managerially led schools are built on. Some

uninformed or unaware head teachers and teachers do not find it troubling to place the needs and rights of disabled school children against their own rights (shrouded in euphemisms about their work environment and other rights under The Employment Act) as they have come to see these children - and especially their parents - as unreasonably demanding. New generations of teachers and head teachers educated in such a system will find it increasingly difficult to navigate their own educational values and beliefs.

We hope to see discussions on the absolute necessity of Disability as a knowledge subject in its own right within the discourse and knowledge base of School Leadership. We agree with Lalvani, Slee and others who argue that Disability must be moved into mainstream education with a strong sense of urgency, and we would like to add that Educational Leadership should be at the forefront regarding social justice issues in school. We hope that this article contributes towards a dialogue on the unreasonableness of disregarding school law and the unethical dismissal of disability rights, especially in the field of School Leadership.

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UCET Discussion paper on Continuing Professional Development

A research insight working paper by Paul Vare, Justin Dillon, Lizana Oberholzer and Cathal Butler

Summary

This report is based on the wealth of experience and scholarship shared by UCET colleagues. It reflects on key aspects of CPD-related policy, practice and research over the past 50 years and highlights the following principles:

- Education professionals require an **expanding range of competences** over their career; these are often **context-specific**, unforeseen and go beyond any single framework

- As well as being **research-informed**, CPD should **engage educators in theory** so they can adapt their learning creatively to enrich their own setting

- **Reflective practitioners** are best cultivated by supporting teachers' in conducting their own research

- Effective CPD is built on **trusted relationships** between deliverers and learners and include a strong element of **coaching** and/or **mentoring** often by peers

- For sustained impact, CPD needs to be **sustained over time** (at least across two terms), making use of **multiple formats**

- By engaging teachers in their wider social, economic and environmental contexts, CPD will ensure **responsible professionals** in the fullest sense

- Developing teachers' **agency** will enable them to consider their practice critically, lead their own learning and thus maximise the positive impact they have on their learners

- All CPD should be subject to **robust quality assurance** mechanisms.

1. Introduction

The marketisation of continuing professional development (CPD) provision for schools over recent decades has brought benefits in terms of choice and enhanced professionalism but has raised concerns around quality assurance (QA) as provision has become increasingly

fragmented. The Government's current tendering and procurement exercise for the national roll-out of the Early Career Framework (ECF), for example, marks an effort to ensure consistency of content while moving a step closer towards the comprehensive privatisation of CPD provision for schools. The QA processes that run alongside these developments tend to focus on programmes and projects as they happen while it is equally important to evaluate longer term outcomes and impact, both in relation to particular provision and across the range of provision.

The national roll-out of the ECF, together with the revised National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for school leaders, prompted members of UCET's CPD Forum to come together in September 2020 to discuss our own preferred approaches to the structure, content and delivery of effective teacher CPD. Our initial discussions were wide-ranging while being guided by UCET's agreed statement on the Intellectual Basis of Teacher Education (IBTE) (BERA/RSA, 2014).

This document reflects our discussion while adding some historical background and additional information on what research tells us about effective CPD.

2. Historical background

Taking a 50-year perspective, the James Report of 1972 outlined requirements for in-service education for teachers (INSET) with a focus on knowledge and skills (DES, 1972). James recommended that teachers should be entitled to INSET with pay for no less than one school term for every seven years of service. Needless to say, this recommendation was not taken up by government.

In the 1980s, growing dissatisfaction with the ad hoc nature of CPD left the government to try to standardise provision through Teacher Related in Service Training (TRIST), Grant Related in Service Training (GRIST) and Grants for Educational Support and Training (GEST) which took a school and system focus.

Post Education Reform Act (1988), appraisal schemes linking teachers' professional needs with schools' requirements became more common. Devolution of funding to schools and the introduction of five INSET days gave schools funding which could be used in part to decide on, provide and buy in training and consultancy for CPD.

In the 1990s, further devolution of funding to schools led to a greater focus on local education authorities (LEAs) to provide and deliver training. There was a marked increase in private training schemes, including consultants specialising in leadership and an increased involvement with industry. These

changes, coupled with more 'flexible' and market driven university structures (Bolam, 2000), brought changes culminating in more systematic, programmed and professionalised CPD opportunities (Law and Glover, 1998).

Founded in 1994, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) provided HEIs with opportunities to bid for professional development delivery for both early professional development (EPD) projects as well as MA Projects (TDA n.d.). Meanwhile, the Masters for Teaching and Learning (MTL) was introduced under the Brown premiership to encourage research informed practice within schools in challenging circumstances (CUREE 2009).

The above national strategies aimed to provide direction via regional directors to help support and shape the provision for teachers and teacher educators. As a result, the collaboration between the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), Universities and Schools, reflected how collaborative professionalism can lead to school improvement broadly conceived.

After the 2010 General Election these schemes and the funding for them were soon abandoned. The DfE launched and published 'Learning and Teaching: A strategy for professional development' (71/2010). Devised in consultation with the General Teaching Council (GTC), the strategy was designed to ensure that teachers were given more

opportunities for relevant, focused, effective professional development; and that professional development was placed at the heart of school improvement. This document defined CPD as 'activities...that increase the skills, knowledge and understanding of teachers, and their effectiveness in schools and also promotes continuous re-examination, reflection and of professional learning.'

3.   Current initiatives and frameworks

Since 2010, the teaching profession experienced many changes, for example, the Education White Paper 2010, brought with it a wave of reforms, addressing changes in the National Curriculum for all Key Stages, as well as the way in which assessments take place. Funded MA provision was replaced by a scholarship scheme, which was subsequently removed after 2012. School Direct and Teaching Schools were also introduced with the latter envisaged as the hub of for teacher education, newly qualified teacher recruitment and Appropriate Body provision, all of which involved a move away from existing expertise held by Local Authorities, Universities, and Training Schools, who tended to work in collaboration.

Projects such as the Early Professional Development provision, which was a funded project for recently qualified teachers (RQTs)

was removed leaving a gap in the support that had been provided prior to the 2010 White Paper. Meanwhile, Moor *et al.* (2005) had already highlighted that the teaching profession lost up to a quarter of its workforce within five years so the impending recruitment crisis was quite foreseeable.

The Carter Review (2015) highlighted the varying practices in initial teacher education (ITE) as well as the importance of mentoring, and the mentor's role to support the teacher trainee to grow and develop as new teachers. The review highlighted areas that needed to be addressed further by the ITE curriculum, for example, training and development to meet learners' needs (Teachers' Standard 5, DfE, 2012) and behaviour management.

As a result of the review, three documents were produced in 2016 entitled: Initial Teacher Training: Government Response to the Carter Review, which included:

- Developing Behaviour Management Content for Initial Teacher Training
- A Framework of Core Content for Initial Teacher Training
- National Standards for school-based Initial Teacher Training Mentors

The 2016 Education White Paper continued to highlight the importance of extended Initial Teacher Education and Newly Qualified Teacher development.

These initiatives were all responded to in a variety of different ways, The Framework of Core Content (DfE, 2016a) was used by providers to map their provision, and to ensure that they embed the suggested issues outlined by both the Carter Review and the Framework. Mentor Training was mapped against the National Standards, and it was often noted that Ofsted Reports would make reference to practices in relation to these frameworks.

In addition, the Department for Education published the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016b), this document stated that CPD needed to adhere to the following requirements:

Effective teacher professional development is a partnership between:

- ***Headteachers*** *and other members of the l****eadership team****;*
- ***Teachers****; and*
- ***Providers*** *of professional development expertise, training or consultancy.*

In order for this partnership to be successful:

1. *Professional development should have a focus on **improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.***
2. *Professional development should be underpinned by **robust evidence and expertise**.*

*3. Professional development should **include collaboration and expert challenge.***

*4. Professional development programmes should be **sustained over time**. And all this is underpinned by, and requires that:*

*5. Professional development must be **prioritised by school leadership**.*

(DfE, 2016b)

While this is open to a wide range of interpretation, the transactional, if not mechanistic emphasis on 'improving and evaluating pupil outcomes' may preclude some of the wider purposes of CPD.

The Chartered College of Teaching (2016) was also introduced as the professional body for the teaching profession, currently delivering CPD opportunities via its Chartered Teacher Course (2018) and Chartered Leadership Course (2020).

As **teacher retention** became a key concern, the Government set out its vision of how it would retain teachers within the first 5 years of their careers in the 2019 Teacher Retention and Recruitment Strategy. This vision included the Early Careers Framework (ECF) within which it outlined the requirement for a 2-year support programme for Early Careers Teachers (ECT). In addition, it outlined the value of mentoring, and how it could make a significant difference in supporting ECT to progress and flourish.

The early pilot for the ECF is currently being delivered and all the pilot materials will be made available online for others to engage with. In addition, interested providers are currently engaged in bidding for future opportunities to deliver the ECF nationally. This procurement process sees large commercial organisations with limited expertise in teacher education and development collaborating with the sector to bid for the provision. The current reforms include the ITT Core Framework and a Trainee Teacher Behaviour Toolkit, both published in 2019.

Although the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) were initially decentralised, running through a local delivery model outlined in the 2010 White Paper, the 2020 NPQ reforms are moving more towards a more centralised approach, again with national scale contracts being awarded. The reform proposals include the removal of the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML) which is being replaced with an NPQ for Teaching and Learning, NPQ for Behaviour and an NPQ for Leading Teacher Development. These NPQs aim to provide a development pathway for teachers to continue to progress during the first five years of their practice. The principal idea is that the ITT core Framework, ECF and NPQs work together to create a clear professional pathway to ensure that ECTs are able to continue to grow and develop throughout

their journey to become confident professionals. That said, there are concerns that the removal of the generic NPQML will leave a significant gap in CPD provision given that many OFSTED reports, of both primary and secondary schools, highlight the continuous need for general middle leadership development.

All of this suggests that any CPD provision needs to align with this ethos of interconnectivity as well as being underpinned by sound practice and being research informed. It should be noted that the emerging picture provides rich and varied opportunities for UCET members to play a prominent role in supporting the development and roll out of these key initiatives in order to make a lasting impact on the development of future teachers and educators. The extent to which these opportunities are mediated by large contracting companies may be determined by the ability of UCET members to work together to engage in the Government tendering processes.

4.   What does research tell us about CPD?

The conventional wisdom is that if you get the design of CPD programmes right then you will get the desired outputs. A number of studies have focused on what effective CPD might look like (for example, Joyce & Showers, 1995). However, more recent studies challenge the orthodoxy (Kennedy, 2016). So, design features may be unreliable predictors of programme success and may have acquired almost mythical status in education.

Perhaps the most widely asserted design feature is that CPD should focus on content knowledge. However, Kennedy's review found that: "programs that focused *exclusively* on content knowledge tended to have less effect on student learning" (2016, p. 27, emphasis in original). "When programs offering content knowledge were successful, the content was subsumed under a broader goal, such as helping teachers learn to expose student thinking" (p. 27).

Another widely promulgated design feature is "collective participation" which can lead to proponents advocating professional learning communities (PLC). However, not all learning communities are equally effective and Kennedy reported that in her review one PLC, which used video-based analysis of classroom teaching actually had a negative impact on student learning.

A third design feature that is frequently regarded as critical is intensity which can refer to the total numbers of hours that teachers are involved in programmes or the total time (for example, 60 hours), from start to finish, of a programme (for example, two years). However, Kennedy's review found that

"intensity appears to be less effective when combined with prescriptive messages, for instance, but more effective when messages provide strategies or insights" (2016, p. 28).

No discussion of CPD design would be complete without mention of coaches and coaching. However, coaching does not always lead to effective CPD in terms of student outcomes. Kennedy reported that "Coaches in more effective programs collaborated with teachers on lesson planning, providing a model of strategic planning".

Kennedy argues that "education research is at a stage in which we have strong theories of student learning, but we do not have well developed ideas about teacher learning, nor about how to help teachers incorporate new ideas into their ongoing systems of practice" (p. 29). Despite optimistic claims that we know "what works" in education we only know what might work in some situations at some times. Over-simplistic frameworks for CPD based on such notions of "effective teaching" are likely to fail to produce desired outcomes. CPD is far more than a framework designed to structure career development, narrowly conceived as a means of improving academic performance. It also needs to be understood as something that supports teachers' criticality, intellectual curiosity, pedagogic creativity and professional agency through engagement in and with research and development.

5.   Rationale and Key Principles

Building on UCET's IBTE document, we note that all CPD should seek to develop teachers as

- *competent and confident professionals* – clearly this is a concern of the ECF and NPQs although focusing on this aspect alone suggests a narrow conception of the teaching profession.

  The UCET CPD Forum has a desire for CPD to have a broader remit, that is **not narrowly and directly focused on student attainment**, the aims are to focus on developing educators to **deepen t**heir learning which, as a result will impact positively on their practice – and ultimately pupils' attainment and resilience as lifelong learners.

  While adhering to broad principles such as **research-informed practice**, it is also critical to view teachers as individuals and to ensure **context-specific** CPD is embedded as a matter of principle.

- *epistemic agents* – this is of particular importance given the reduced opportunity to engage in theory during initial teacher education (ITE). Teachers can be agents of change in their professional settings in terms of more

than knowledge and can address a wide range of desired outcomes for education.

If teachers do not have a grasp of the theoretical foundations, and underpinnings of their own practice they will find it hard to a) improve and respond to local changes in a bottom-up manner and b) respond effectively to changes that are promoted in a top-down manner.

- *reflective practitioners* *engaging in enquiry-rich practice* – this has been a running theme in teacher education from the work of Lawrence Stenhouse to current thinkers such as Door (2016). Teachers engaging in their own research should be seen as a central plank of CPD. It is important that CPD develop reflective practitioners *and* critical thinkers. To ensure that CPD develops critical thinking and reflection, it is also imperative that it is research informed.

It is important that we do not shy away from encouraging critiques of the status quo by early career teachers. This is a sure way of ensuring that professionals including ECTs understand the rules-of-the-game and engage fully within them while seeking opportunities to improve practice and push boundaries beyond the frameworks within which they find themselves working.

- *responsible professionals* – this includes addressing the wider social, economic and environmental context in which teachers work; the ECF and NPQs are silent on broader societal values, aspects that can both engage learners and speak to the wider purposes that schools find themselves addressing and which can themselves provide valuable learning opportunities (e.g. aroundersenseofpurpose.eu).

Although frameworks, such as the ECF are welcomed as an initial first step to systematise CPD provision, it is also important to continue to develop critical and reflective practitioners, who understand how to align with the expected frameworks and standards. Indeed, professionals need to learn to look at developing a broader range of competences as their career advances. It is important to look at the status quo with a critical lens, to enable educators to think creatively, and ensure that they are motivated to not only deepen their own learning but develop skills to address deep learning for learners in their care too. This principle needs to be embedded in CPD practices in general as well as at subject and phase specific levels.

CPD is a **continuum from ITE through to senior leadership and/or through to**

increased confidence and professionalism over a teacher's career. We therefore need to recognise that there are different dimensions in terms of content and purpose as well as different levels of CPD; these may be contested and are not necessarily linear. We may wish to consider strands and content in a three-dimensional model.

- In short, CPD frameworks also need to ensure that teachers have the opportunities to develop their **agency** to enable them to lead on their own learning, deepen their practice, and consider practice with a critical lens to develop research informed practices that will benefit all learners in their care.

6. Practical implications for (a) UCET members and (b) other stakeholders

This guidance provided by the key principles, is not intended to be overly prescriptive in relation to structure and delivery; we recognise that research on what is most effective can be inconclusive and more importantly, that there is a complex interplay between the structure, content and delivery of learning programmes that impact effectiveness more than any single dimension of a given programme.

That said, we do recommend that teacher CPD moves away from the single session 'firework display' model in favour of a longer-term approach, with repeated/multiple sessions wherever appropriate.

There is also scope for a mixture of face to face and additional online support, whether it be online taught sessions or online coaching and mentoring support. Online CPD does and can further provide opportunities for staff who may find access difficult as well as making training available in a manner that is more convenient to them. Historically, evidence does not provide a strong basis for recommending online methods for teacher CPD, however this is likely to change given recent advances in this area and with increased familiarity with a range of tools (TEAMs, Zoom, etc.) during periods of lockdown due to COVID 19. Supervision of Master's and Doctoral study that supports powerful professional learning has already been happening online for years.

Within longer-term CPD programmes, the use of portfolio-type models, particularly e-portfolios which will be familiar to NQTs and early career teachers, is also worth considering. This type of evidence, along with any formal certification, is key for supporting teachers as they advance in their careers. For this reason, we are cautious about narrowing the focus of CPD impact down to pupil attainment. It is self-evident that an

additional focus on the well-being of teaching staff, particularly in their early career, will have a profound impact on retention. This will, in turn, favour student outcomes but this is a non-linear relationship that cannot be captured by short term data gathered over a single academic year.

We would also highlight the importance of CPD being flexible and adaptable to the needs of individual learners and their contexts. This can best be achieved through localised provision and through programmes that encourage learners to adapt and build upon content covered in taught sessions and which involve an element of student-led action research. While frameworks are useful for ensuring coverage of core material, every effort should be made to avoid detailed prescription; consistency must not be confused with uniformity. CPD needs to be responsive to changing circumstances and its content must support teachers in new learning e.g. in pedagogic developments for safe schools and in sustainable ecologies for education.

We commend and support the work of local networks, supported by School Groups and by HEIs, and the multi-dimensional relationships that are built in such contexts. These span a range of teacher education activities, including student placements and research. Such relationships can ensure that CPD is tailored to the needs of a particular school or

a cluster of schools as well as adapting effectively to changes in circumstances as they arise.

The importance of strong quality assurance (QA) for CPD is also key. We recognise the robust nature of QA processes that underpin M-level and doctoral level professional development in HEIs, as well as those followed by other national providers (Chartered College, National Colleges, etc.).

Related to this, we would also stress the need to be assured of the qualifications of those providing CPD. We advocate the need for providers of CPD to hold appropriate qualifications and experience in a field related directly to their provision.

We expect CPD to be in line with the principles set out elsewhere in this document and in particular for CPD providers to be able to demonstrate how the work they are presenting is research informed. Contemporary research and policy developments are key elements that should be expected to underpin good CPD.

Concluding comments

In the light of the implementation of the ECF and the NPQ reforms, the UCET CPD principles provide an important complement, based on research and the rich experience of UCET members. We have outlined the key

characteristics that we feel will enhance CPD to ensure that it has a powerful and lasting impact on the development of teachers and leaders for the future of the profession and the learners that it serves. The principles here highlight the need for CPD to be contextualised, bespoke, individualised, and provide teachers with agency to become critical, reflective practitioners, with a deep understanding of their practice, and with a strong knowledge base to impact positively on the learning of others and their organisations.

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Laying a Pipeline: Strategic Planning for the Identification and Development of Teaching Excellence

A Practice Insight Paper by Kevin L. Merry

Introduction

The concepts of talent identification and talent management were popularised in the late 1990s by Chambers et al. (1998) in the paper 'War for Talent', which highlighted that the rising demand for talented individuals in many sectors largely outpaces their supply. Subsequently, talent identification and management programmes have become common, as institutions attempt to strategically and deliberately increase their efforts to find, attract, select, develop, and promote talent within their organisations (Stahl et al., 2012; Ingham, 2007). Talent identification and management represent one of the key ways in which many institutions attempt to drive performance, by defining a "talent pool" that stands apart from the rest of the workforce due to their capability or potential (Stahl et al., 2012).

At De Montfort University (DMU), from a teaching perspective, the institution's internal group of Teacher Fellows (TFs) represents a clear "talent pool". For example, over a sustained period, there are numerous examples of how the community of TFs has driven institutional performance in learning

and teaching. For instance, in the QAA's 2015 Higher Education Review (HER), Teacher Fellows were reported on in glowing terms, being highlighted as pivotal in DMU's management of student learning opportunities by developing new initiatives directed towards enhancing pedagogy, teaching, and student support. In addition, TFs were described as playing a critical role in the strategic promotion and development of learning, teaching and assessment. Similarly, when DMU achieved Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold in 2017, Teacher Fellows were highlighted as being instrumental in creating a culture that values, promotes and rewards outstanding teaching. Subsequently, it comes as no surprise that 14 of DMU's last 15 institutional National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) nominees have come from the Teacher Fellow Community, with six successfully claiming the accolade. Such is the importance of the TF community as a "talent pool", DMU has strategically and deliberately increased its efforts to find and develop future TFs as part of a talent identification, management and development programme that sits within its wider Developing for Success (D4S) staff development strategy and subsequent policy.

The remainder of this practice insight working paper will focus on why, from a theoretical perspective, the DMU TF community represents a clear "talent pool" in the Higher Education context.

DMU Teacher Fellowship Scheme (DMU TFS)

As part of the D4S strategy, a new DMU TFS was created. The scheme was designed for excellent teachers who want to develop further as leaders and innovators. The purpose of the scheme is to reward and disseminate excellent teaching across the University, as well as providing a critical career development step for those wishing to progress their careers down a learning and teaching route.

Key duties of the DMU TF role include:

- Leading/contributing to strategic learning and teaching projects or initiatives
- Leading/contributing to the creation of institution-wide learning and teaching strategies and / or policies
- Mentoring early career staff
- Membership or chairing of relevant learning and teaching committees
- Development and delivery of learning and teaching focussed staff development
- Leading on bids for internally or externally funded learning and teaching projects.
- Participation in regional and national learning and teaching networks

- Showcasing innovative practice in learning and teaching through masterclasses, workshops and showcases
- Supporting and reviewing of HEA Fellowship applications
- Contribution to the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE (PGCLTHE) as a mentor and/or tutor
- Organisation of the annual University Learning and Teaching conference
- Support for potential DMU TF applications as a mentor

Any member of staff involved in supporting student learning can apply to be a DMU TF. To apply, applicants must provide a written application which demonstrates the following:

- Sustained evidence of transforming the student learning experience
- Sustained evidence of leading, influencing and inspiring colleagues
- Sustained evidence of commitment to and impact of continuing professional development

A letter of endorsement from the applicant's line manager is also required. Each application is judged by a panel made up of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), the Director of the Centre for Academic Innovation, the Lead for Academic Development and several of the current TF community. Successful applications are shortlisted by the panel and invited to

interview. At interview, shortlisted applicants must provide a presentation during which they provide further elaboration on their engagement with the three criteria.

Talent Identification

As part of the talent identification aspects of the D4S strategy, multiple winners of the student nominated University Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award (VCDTA) are encouraged to apply for a DMU TF role. The VCDTA recognises and celebrates staff that have demonstrated teaching excellence through their inspirational and transformative teaching. Each year up to 12 nominated staff are awarded a VCDTA following selection by the above panel. Since the number of staff nominated by students is so high, arriving at a final list of 12 can be a challenging task. Therefore, to be selected for a VCDTA on one occasion represents a considerable achievement. To win multiple awards clearly demonstrates the potential for driving institutional teaching performance. The award has provided a fruitful pipeline into the DMU TF community, with the current community brimming with former winners of the award.

Talent Management and Development

In relation to managing and developing talent, Pruis (2011) defined five key principles successfully underpinning the process. These principles are clearly evident in the DMU TF scheme.

Principle 1: Formulate a clear "talent" policy

Pruis (2011) states that talent development must encompass the formulation of a clear "talent" policy. The policy should reflect sustained high performance, with the potential for further excellence within or beyond the current role and with clear links to specific organisational initiatives and organisational performance (Swailes, 2020). The DMU TF application criteria, with their emphasis on sustained excellence and impact on student learning, represents a clear talent policy as far as learning and teaching is concerned. Since the role requires those that successfully join the scheme to engage in strategic learning and teaching initiatives, the potential for further excellence that Pruis (2011) describes when defining "talent" policy is clearly evidenced. Furthermore, excellence is exemplified in the number of TFs that have successfully applied to be a National Teaching Fellow.

Principle 2: Talent development should be an integrated process

Principle 2 states that talent identification and development should be an integrated process, forming part of career pathway planning. For example, providing colleagues with a roadmap of steps through which they can

develop their career and at some stage join the talent pool represents 'responsible talent management' (RTM) (Swailes, 2020), which itself enhances employee engagement and subsequent organisational performance (Ali et al., 2019). At DMU the D4S strategy outlines the specific developmental pathways staff can take to advance their career at DMU, detailing the developmental initiatives that can support the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and behaviours that may support their progression into a higher level role in future. In this regard, Teacher Fellowship is identified as a key initiative supporting promotion into a higher level role in the Teaching, Learning and Scholarship route. As such, for those interested in developing a career pathway based on learning and teaching, achievement of a DMU Teacher Fellowship represents a critical and integrated step.

Principle 3: Talent should be utilised to fulfil clear and present organisational needs

According to Bradley (2016) talent management in university settings should be clearly aligned with organisational strategy and metrics. DMU TFs fulfil clear and present organisational needs in relation to learning and teaching since they are deployed to develop and deliver strategic, institution-wide learning and teaching developments and initiatives, aligned to strategic themes, even contributing to the writing of DMU's latest Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

(LTAS), as recognised in DMU's TEF submission (2017) and the QAA HER (2015). Furthermore, since the central purpose of the University is to deliver an outstanding and transformative student experience to its learners, it comes as no surprise that the pursuit of such a purpose requires colleagues capable of delivering on it. Subsequently, the talent development efforts of the organisation align directly with what Sinek (2011) would call the 'why' or higher purpose of the organisation.

Principle 4: Talent should be mentored using appropriate role models

When a colleague applies to the DMU TF Scheme, they are allocated a mentor from the existing TF community. For example as Ruijters (2006) notes, talents, especially future leaders, generally possess two preferred methods of professional learning. The first is learning through observation of a role model or mentor, the second is through active discovery. As such, the mentoring relationship is intended to support both of these learning preferences, since the mentor can be the role model as well as provide opportunities for discovery learning through supported engagement in various projects and initiatives. For example, DMU TF candidates are often recruited to the organising committee of the University Annual Learning and Teaching Conference to work alongside the TFs on the committee and

learn from them through observation in real-life work settings. Of critical importance here is that the mentoring relationship plays out in the real-life work environment because the transfer of what a mentee can learn from a mentor is augmented when learning takes place in a real environment (van Dinterent and Lazeron, 2010).

Principle 5: The power of the talent pool should be harnessed

According to Bryan and Joyce (2007), of critical importance is the manner in which organisations organise their talent pool. For example, collectively a talent pool offers a significant cognitive surplus to their organisation. As such, the power of the talent pool is realised when talents come together to work collaboratively on various projects or initiatives, with a shared or common goal, rather than individually. The DMU TF community is a collective group that operates as a unified community rather than as a collection of separate individuals. Teacher Fellows meet regularly as a community to share and disseminate their work, as well as provide the collective cognitive surplus that Pruis (2011) discusses on various projects or

initiatives commissioned by the University's Academic Professional Development Unit (APDU) such as the design and delivery of action plans intended to bridge gaps in institutional National Student Survey (NSS) performance (assessment, feedback, teaching methods etc.) or projects commissioned by the University Centre for Academic Innovation (CAI).

Conclusions

At DMU we aim to maintain the highest standards of teaching by creating a community of excellence from those colleagues that have demonstrated a sustained transformative impact on learning, teaching and student outcomes. Entry into the community is underpinned by a clear talent policy, and membership of it represents an integrated part of career planning and pathway development for those interested in career progression through teaching. The community provides a cognitive surplus that is utilised to support strategic organisational needs in collaborative, rather than individual fashion.

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Solidarity and curiosity: planning peer coaching into professional learning

A think piece working paper by Rachel Lofthouse

As educators we acknowledge the curiosities, anxieties and the scepticism that learners naturally bring to new learning situations. We know that not everyone starts with the same background knowledge or experience. This is true in professional learning and development situations as well as in our school and university classrooms. I was recently asked to make a video to introduce peer coaching as a feature of new DfE NPQ programmes. This blog summarises some of my thinking in relation to the possibilities and potential of adding peer coaching into any form of ongoing professional learning course.

Professional learning programmes have objectives, a curriculum, selected resources and common patterns of engagement for participants. Including peer coaching in the programme design offers participants the chance to personalise these elements, and to bring what they are learning to life. Coaching is one of the means by learning can become more nuanced, specific and contextualised.

Let's take a broader view and draw briefly on research into coaching.

In a literature review for recent research into coaching Trista Hollweck and I (Hollweck and Lofthouse, 2021) highlighted the following key ideas from other researchers:

- Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another (Downey, 2003)
- Coaching is recognized as a powerful vehicle for increasing performance, achieving results and optimizing personal effectiveness (Bachkirova et al., 2014)
- Coaching might imply a monolithic activity, but the term refers to a diversity of practices aimed at generating individual or organizational positive change. (Grant, 2013)

In another research paper I defined coaching in education as an interpersonal and sustained dialogue-based practice in which a coach works with a coachee to facilitate self-reflection and effective decision-making and action in the context of their own personal and professional challenges (Lofthouse, Rose and Whiteside, 2021). This definition works well within the context of peer coaching as a component of participation in professional development.

Evidence presented in that paper from three case studies of coaching in education demonstrated that coaching led to professional and personal formation, allowing the coachee to experience growth, development and self-efficacy. It also demonstrated that while coaching is an individualised one-to-one process, it produces ripple effects with the potential to impact more widely not only on the coachee's educational setting but also on their future professional roles and working relationships with others. If people become more conscious of the value of coaching type conversations from direct experience and feel more familiar with the coaching stance it is likely to impact on the way that they work with colleagues. This might include using

coaching conversations to support the development of practice amongst a team.

Finally, earlier research presented evidence of the significance of the relational aspects of effective coaching which can create a social space in which teachers and others in the education system can feel heard and valued, and where their knowledge and skills are brought to the fore to be worked with and extended through co-construction with their coach (Lofthouse, 2019).

There are many existing and emerging coaching models and tools (including the GROW model and dilemma-based coaching model (Lofthouse, 2021). These have value as the can help to guide those new to peer coaching in both their roles as coach and coachee. It is helpful to reflect on them as learning tools (Lofthouse, 2020) they can then act as a scaffold not a script, which allows more fluid and fluent coaching conversations overtime. With practice the coaching models may start to become internalised, and participants may find themselves using the approach when working with others in their professional context or even when thinking things through independently.

In peer-coaching participants work reciprocally – and sustain this partnership over time. This can support learners as themes being introduced in professional learning programmes can be worked on together as the peers explore them further. Typically, this might include identifying areas of practice that the programme participants would like to develop and ways in which you might achieve this. Alternatively, the peer-coaching conversation might trigger a curiosity leading to further reading or seeking out experts or colleagues in particular roles in the participants' context for exploratory conversations.

It can be helpful to reflect on a metaphor. A professional learning programme can be seen as a learning journey, with a route and destination mapped out. Peer coaching provides participants with regular episodes in which they can connect, clarify, consolidate, contextualise and co-create to enhance their own professional learning. Think about those conversations which take place during a journey between travelling companions –

as they set off, as they travel and as they reach their destination. In a peer-coaching relationship, participants each take responsibility for the quality and integrity of conversations that they have – appreciating each other's learning and holding the space for thinking and decision making. If working well, the peer coaching will help them to activate learning and stimulate change.

So, if you are designing professional development programmes – for any career stage, and online or face-to-face – you might like to include peer coaching. And if you are participating in a programme without it you might even initiate a peer coaching relationship with someone else in your cohort. Some useful starting points are to remember that coaching involves asking questions with intelligence, being appreciative of each other's practice, knowledge and insights and welcoming the opportunity to engage as empathetic peers. Coaching can help to build and sustain curiosity and solidarity – a good basis for professional learning.

This think piece was first published as a CollectivED blogpost
https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/carnegie-education/2022/01/solidarity-and-curiosity/

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Thinking Out Loud with Kathryn Grice

In this series of think pieces educators talk about their professional learning and educational values.

Please tell us who you are and what your current role in education is.

I am Kathryn Grice. I am a former secondary English teacher, founder of The Teacher Empowerment Project and a tuition centre owner and tutor. I am currently working on a project that seeks to bring widespread access to psychological support for those working in critical occupations. I also develop partnerships with schools on behalf of the Migrant Leaders charity that provides students from disadvantaged backgrounds with senior mentors from FTSE100 companies.

Please reflect on an episode or period in your career during which your own learning helped you to develop educational practices, which remain with you today. What was the context, how were you learning, and what was the impact?

When I first became a head of faculty, I believed I would be a good leader if I protected my team from increased workload. I worked tirelessly to shield the team from operational and strategic decisions and stresses. It resulted in me experiencing burn

out as well as resentment from my team. This was not ideal.

Coaching allowed me to reflect on my own desire to learn as an early career teacher and made me realise that teachers crave learning, opportunities and to be appreciated for what they bring to the table. Learning to delegate, recognise individual's talents and teacher's need for autonomy was a huge learning experience which resulted in a more cohesive, content and fully functioning team.

When you work with colleagues or other professionals to support their development what are the key attributes that you bring with you, and what difference do these qualities make?

Vulnerability, professionalism, and commitment. I want them to know it is ok to find something hard but that we need to bring our best selves to the job and be committed to working through challenges that we face. Giving up is not an option, being supported and creative with the challenges we face, is.

How do you turn educational challenges into learning opportunities?

A mixture of reflective practice and creativity. Thinking of creative and engaging ways to deliver challenging material is an exciting and integral part of the job. This also applies to larger issues in education. Reflecting on issues

we face and wondering how things can be done differently is something we should embrace. Teacher engagement with The Teacher Empowerment Project has made me realise this. As a profession we are keen to acknowledge problems, but we should be as keen to tackle them creatively. Action as well as acknowledgement is needed. There are no better people than educators to turn challenges into opportunities for positive change. Often, we have far more power to do this than we realise.

Who has influenced your educational thinking, and in what ways has this allowed you to develop?

I am grateful for my former teacher Mark Moorhouse, CEO of Watergrove Trust in Rochdale. As a student he made me feel empowered in the classroom; that my mind and drive could take me anywhere. I wanted to make my students feel the way he made me feel and it was a huge part of the reason I became a teacher.

His teaching style and the schools he leads are built on a foundation of Carl Roger's unconditional positive regard and of Eric Berne's transactional analysis – powerful tools that allow people to feel respected and valued. I would like to say I was aware of this as a student of his, but it took me years to work that out.

Do you feel part of any specific educational community, and if so who are they and why do they matter to you?

I feel a part of the teaching community in all its complexity. At times I can see myself in both successful high achieving colleagues fully engaged in their chosen community and, at others, in the colleagues who feel burnt out and wonder whether they are in the right job anymore. There can be a fine line between communities and cliques, particularly on social media. Sometimes these can serve to simplify and divide what is an incredibly complex profession.

When someone you meet tells you they are thinking about becoming a teacher what advice do you give them?

That we need them. 21st century teachers are a gift to the profession; they bring expectations of work life balance, flexible working, and a fresh perspective that we should embrace rather than dismiss as unrealistic. Theirs are worthy expectations that will make us stronger, more effective as a profession and will ultimately help us tackle the retention crisis. I also say that it can be the best job in the world but that it does not come without challenges - if they see something that they do not like they should become a part of changing it.

If you could change one thing which might enable more teachers to work and learn

collaboratively in the future what would you do?

I would like to see a free, de-politicised space, for all teachers to come together as often or as little as they would like. In the remote age, this is possible. We have the technology to be a community outside of fees and politics. A free, collaborative online space for people to share practice and to connect that is available year-round would be wonderful. A virtual conference hall, teach-meet space and staff room. This question might have given me a new mission, ha.

If you could turn back the clock and bring back a past educational practice or policy what would it be and why?

APP grids. I jest.

What is the best advice or support you have been given in your career? Who offered it and why did it matter?

My professional coach, Eileen Hinds, gave me a card with a quote on the front which reads 'Be yourself; everyone else is taken.' Eileen taught me that if I brought my whole self to work, I gave permission for others to do the same. Supported autonomy to be your authentic self in the classroom or as a leader is important. The card sits in my classroom and reminds me that we are all stronger when we are valued and able to be ourselves.

'A bit of a story': monitoring, texts, and the learning of recently qualified teachers in further education

A research insight working paper by Rachel Terry

Abstract

The majority of further education teachers in England qualify to teach via an in-service route, yet the process by which they learn, both during and after qualification, remains under-researched. This article presents findings from a case study that explored *what* and *how* former in-service trainees learn in the workplace in their first year after qualifying. It brought together understandings of learning as a social practice and methodological tools offered by Institutional Ethnography to trace how the teachers' learning is connected to wider educational policy, as enacted within their organisations. The monitoring of staff, carried out in part through the observation of teaching, formed a key theme in this respect. Regulatory texts, such as those produced by the national inspection body (Ofsted), were found to play an active role in shaping teachers' practices, stimulating the production of further texts, such as lesson plans and emails, and necessitating a complex negotiation of meaning. This process of negotiation is recognised, following Wenger, as learning. Findings are conveyed in this article through a vignette, which represents in contextualised, story form, aspects of the experience of monitoring and observation which were evident across the data set. While the vignette demonstrates the power of texts to co-ordinate practices within and between institutions, it also highlights the importance of recognising the tension between such generalising practices and the local, embodied experience of both teachers and students.

Background

Wenger (1998) tells the story of a day in the life of Ariel, a processor of medical insurance claims, whose fictionalised workplace experiences embody the author's theory of learning through a community of practice. This article is similarly centred on a vignette, used to convey in condensed form themes from a case study of recently qualified teachers in further education. The article considers the process through which data was transformed into this narrative account, and the significance of the findings it represents. It thus has a dual focus on methodology and findings. Readers may find it helpful to read

the vignette before continuing with the article.

The case informing the vignette was made up of six teachers in further education (FE) who had recently achieved a higher level initial teaching qualification through one university in the North of England. There was significant diversity within this case, as the two-year in-service qualification was delivered through a franchise arrangement with local colleges and the teachers were employed across four organisations. This 'on the job' initial teacher education (ITE) is the dominant model within FE and contrasts strongly with the pre-service model characteristic of the schools sector, although this has been subject to reform (Whiting et al, 2018). It means that the employer plays a significant role in the trainees' development, often before they even embark on the ITE qualification.

Yet the capacity of the FE sector to provide appropriate support for the development of new teachers has been strongly questioned. The lack of clarity around the sector's purpose and the turbulence of policy within it (Hodgson, Bailey & Lucas, 2015, pp. 1-2) make it an unstable context for teacher development. Rather than honing their pedagogical expertise, trainees placed in FE colleges learn to 'cope' with their chaotic surroundings (Dixon et al, 2010, p. 390) or, as Francisco found of novice vocational teachers in Australia, 'to do what others in their

teaching department did' (2020, p. 15). This study sought to investigate what teachers continued to learn in the workplace following qualification, and how this was shaped by the wider educational policy landscape.

What is learning?

The study draws on Wenger's social model of learning (1998, p. 5) to define learning as *the negotiation of meaning necessitated by participation in practice*. Wenger illustrates his theory through the actions of Ariel, the medical claims processor. When faced with an insurance claim, she draws on multiple aspects of her context and prior experience to know how to respond; the claim, as a physical object, also carries with it its own history and obtains its meaning and significance from its interaction with the practices of the claims community. Through this process she learns to be a claims processor. In a teaching context, a teacher preparing a session necessarily participates in the accumulated practices of their organisation, of the students who come (or do not come) to their classes, and of their own historical development as a teacher; these practices are reified through artefacts such as schemes of work, teaching resources and the physical space of the teaching environment. To participate fully in the practice, the teacher must experience it as meaningful, a process which is both individual and social.

Methodology

The close connection between participation in practice and reification makes texts central to the process of meaning-making, and hence to learning. They shed light on the processes of participation that produce(d) them, offering a valuable methodological tool. This goes beyond the use of documents characteristic of case studies (Simons, 2009, p. 63), instead drawing on methods associated with Smith's Institutional Ethnography (IE). Smith regards texts as 'in action', shaping and regulating our activities (2005, p. 167). The social world is itself 'textually mediated' (Smith, 2002, p. 39), the replicability of the text allowing it to turn up in an identical form in other contexts. Texts are thus fundamental to the 'ruling relations', forms of organisation that are 'trans-local' and that we may normally label 'bureaucracy', 'management' or 'mass-media' (p. 45). Certain higher-order or 'regulatory' texts (Smith, 2001, p. 175) perform a key role in maintaining the ruling relations, standardising other subordinate texts and governing people's actions.

This qualitative case study used a range of methods to explore the connections between the teachers' learning and their institutional context, itself constituted by the ruling relations. Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013) was used to scrutinise relevant policy documents and to identify language that might appear in the talk of the participants. Texts, such as lesson observation records, were also collected from the research sites. The primary method of data generation, however, was semi-structured interviews, carried out near the start and towards the end of the participants' first year after qualifying (2017-18). The interviews made it possible to map the connections between regulatory and other texts, and to trace the role played by texts in the everyday doings of the teachers. An example of this mapping, based on a combination of document analysis and interviews with one teacher and one manager of teaching and learning in a single setting, is presented in *Figure 1 (next page)*.

The vignette

A vignette allows the researcher to bring together aspects of the data that are 'taken to be representative, typical or emblematic' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 81). These are presented as a 'bit of a story' (Thompson, 2017), which hovers somewhere between fact and fiction. The vignette's value for my analysis lay in the systematic process it involved of moving from themes identified across multiple individuals and sites to a single, contextual representation of these. The mapping of regulatory texts within one institutional setting (*Figure 1*) provided the underpinning for the textual processes involved; however, the power of the vignette derives from the universality it claims: this is how a teacher negotiates the experience of

monitoring and observation within their institutional setting, on the basis of the data analysed within this study. It allows tensions to be maintained, while guarding the anonymity of the participants. The specificity of the account also encourages naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 1995, p.85) on the part of readers familiar with this field.

Figure 1: Mapping of regulatory texts (Middleton College - anonymised)
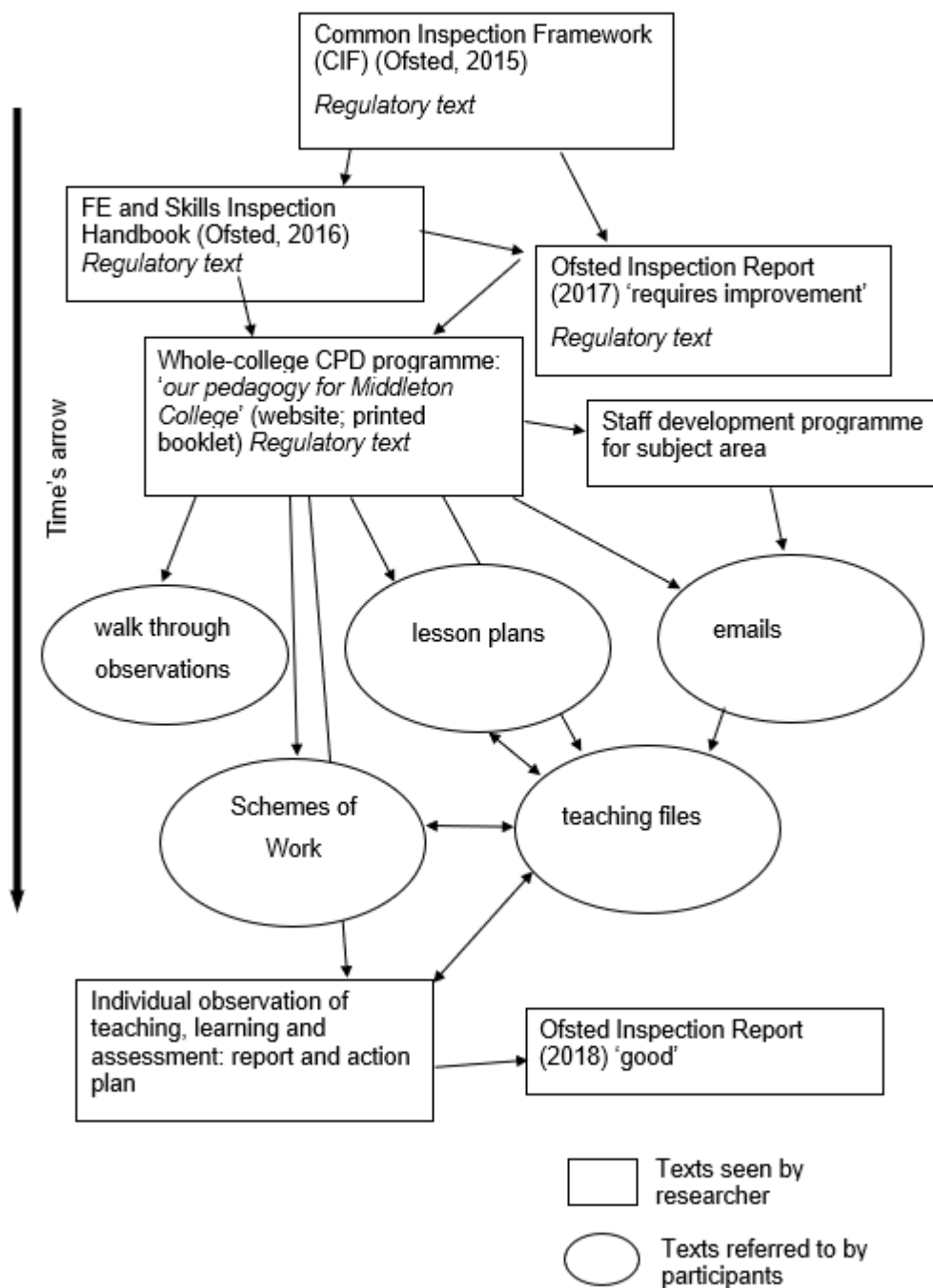
Some caution should be exercised, however, in drawing conclusions from this account. The study was limited to six college teachers who were not taken to be representative of a wider population. The insights offered are highly contextual, contingent on the individual and the relations within their organisation. Some generalisation is enabled, however, through the very nature of the institutional processes involved. As Smith argues, 'institutions are themselves generalisers' (2002, p. 25), co-opting the local, everyday actions of individuals into the trans-local structures of the institution. This vignette seeks to make this process of standardisation and regulation visible, while maintaining the tension between this and local practices.

Vignette: Of coasters and posters

Chris checks his phone as he pulls into one of the last spaces in the car park. Ten minutes to spare until he needs to walk through the staffroom door. He listens to the end of the track on the radio and then heads towards the college lobby. It has changed beyond recognition in the four years he has been there and now reminds him more of Ikea than a college. A glass façade has been added and the brickwork inside is painted in the college's colours, partially covered by larger than life photos of smiling students. The lobby is still quiet as most of the actual students haven't arrived yet. He swipes through the automatic barriers, barely registering who is on

reception, and takes the shortcut through the canteen to the Victorian building that houses his department.

He notices that new posters have gone up in the corridor showing the college's mission statement and letting students know that 98 percent of them were satisfied with the quality of their course in the last survey. With another Ofsted inspection due, it's not surprising that the building is being spruced up a bit. The staffroom still has its familiar smell, though, and nobody has managed to reduce the mess of files cluttering every surface. He can see the top of his line manager's head in the glass booth in the corner. Chris is pleased to find a computer free and logs on quickly so that he can check his emails and do a final bit of printing before class. He spots an email from the Vice Principal with information about the next whole-college staff development day and flags this to remind him to come back to it later. His manager wants to know why a learner didn't attend his maths class yesterday. He spoke to the learner about this at the end of the day but didn't get time to enter the information on the system. He responds quickly and then goes to the photocopier to pick up the worksheet for his starter activity.

One of the new members of the team is struggling to fix a jam in the machine. He helps out, silently regretting the loss of his friend and mentor, Fiona, who left at the end

of the previous year. Although he is recently qualified himself, he is now one of the longest standing members of the team and seems to be the one that people go to when they have difficulties. He makes a mental note to contact Fiona later to see if he can speak to her about his application for the Health and Care post.

Opening the door to his classroom, he feels like he is entering his own space. It makes him proud of the effort he has put into creating a welcoming learning environment for the students, even with limited resources. After all, these are students who were switched off by school and had no idea what vocational path to take at college. He sometimes thinks of his department as a kind of 'prep' school for the deeply underprivileged. Many of the students would be better off in work, he is sure, rather than being recycled within the education system, but he tries to bring a bit of the outside world in. With the help of YouTube and his partner he has taught himself to do things he never imagined he could do. He even got them making drinks coasters last week.

As the clock nudges closer to 9am he becomes more anxious about who is going to turn up. He has the obligatory starter activity ready on the screen, with the handout set out on the tables. If anyone came in to do a walk-through observation, he would be able to show them his teaching file, containing his lesson plan for the session, his scheme of work and evidence of each student's progress against their

individual targets. But this doesn't count for much if the students don't attend.

He reconsiders the layout of the tables. When he was observed with this group before Christmas twelve out of fifteen students arrived late. The observer suggested he prepare a 'late table' so that the stragglers wouldn't disrupt the rest of the group. But that could be a very large table! He included it on his action plan anyway, and when he was re-observed with a more punctual group it was ticked off as a development point. It is so hard when you're working with students with such difficult home lives. That's the problem with the standardised approach that the college has adopted since the last Ofsted inspection: 'This is how we do it here'. But should that be the same way for a Level 3 group as for Level 1 learners like his? They think you're just moaning when you say it doesn't fit your students. But sometimes it's like forcing a square peg into a round hole.

At the start of the year, he was still in touch with a couple of others from his PGCE group. It helped to talk to people from outside college; you don't want to ask too many questions at work. It's not somewhere you feel you can make mistakes. But now he feels more prepared to try things out and just see if they work. You've still got to chisel in all the ICT, the British Values, the spelling and the individual targets, but you can do it in a way that works for the students. He's hoping that

today's session will get them interested. They seemed to enjoy designing their posters in the last session and it generated some great discussion, although not always about the topic in hand.

The door opens and Hayley and Emily throw themselves at one of the tables, fighting over the seats. He knows he's supposed to challenge this kind of behaviour and establish the college expectations. But they are there, on time, and ask if they will be able to produce their posters that day. He adopts his most enthusiastic tone of voice and welcomes them in.

Implications for policy and practice

The vignette demonstrates how the everyday practices of the teacher are suffused with the monitoring processes of the institution. The attendance of individual students and the actions of staff in addressing this are recorded in a central 'system', showing the power of texts to prompt action. The expectations of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), as set out in the *Common Inspection Framework* (2015 - current at the time of the study), initiate a chain of connected regulatory texts, which seek to align the practices of teachers with standardised interpretations of Ofsted's inspection measures. As such, the inspection body serves as a powerful policy lever. Small changes in the formulation of policy at a national level can thus engineer significant

change in the practices adopted within institutions.

However, the translation of policy into practice involves a complex negotiation of meaning. The teacher may provide visible representations of their compliance with institutional expectations, establishing a 'late table', for example, but this process appears to support Biesta's diagnosis of a simulation of learning, or 'learnification' (2009, p. 36), as opposed to representing a genuine process of growth (Boud & Hager, 2012, p. 20). My study suggests that engendering the latter in both students and teachers would require pulling policy levers that reduce the emphasis on measurable targets and performance, and allow space for professional judgment in the context of practice.

By developing a critical awareness of the part they play in co-ordinating the practices of the institution and in mediating the impact of policy, teachers might themselves exert more influence over this process, albeit within significant constraints. Their close relationship with students, and the continual process of negotiation that this relationship demands, makes the contribution of teachers to institutional processes and policy making particularly important.

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Contributing a CollectivED working paper

Introduction

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Contributors to the working paper series are given Carnegie School of Education Professional Associate status making them eligible to use the Leeds Beckett University library facility (in person or online). They can also apply to become CollectivED Fellows.

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The CollectivEd working papers are intended as an opportunity to connect educational practice, policy and research focusing on coaching, mentoring and related forms of professional development. They are written with a diverse audience in mind: teachers, governors and school leaders, academics and students, members of grassroots organisations, advocates, influencers and policy makers at all levels. We intend that the content and audience is national and international. The working papers will enable a diverse range of informed voices in education to co-exist in each publication, in order to encourage scholarship and debate.

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We invite academic staff, research students, teachers, school leaders, and members of the wider education professional practitioner communities to contribute papers. This is chance to share practice, research and insights. All papers submitted should demonstrate criticality, going beyond descriptive accounts, problematizing professional development and learning practices and policy where appropriate and recognising tensions that exist in the realities of educational settings and decision making. The following types of contribution are welcome, and some flexibility will be built in around these:

- *Research working papers:* These might be in the form of summaries of empirical research, case studies, action research or research vignettes. These will normally be about 2000-2500 words in length, and will be fully referenced using Harvard Referencing. Please limit the amount of references to those which are absolute necessary to the understanding of the article, and use the most recent references possible. Research papers should include a consideration of the implications for practice and/or policy at an appropriate scale. Research papers should be accompanied by an abstract (max 250 words). Abstracts should outline the research undertaken, methodology and conclusions drawn.

- *Practice insight working papers:* These will be focused on aspects of relevant professional learning and development practice, and should communicate its particular features, its context and the decision making that shapes it. These will normally be 1200-1800 words in length and should reference policies or research that influence the practice.

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In order for the working paper series to be inclusive and become a platform for a range of voices we would expect a range of writing styles. However, we do need to maintain the following writing conventions.

- Papers will be written in English, which should be accessible and clear to a range of readers. Text can be broken up with subheadings, bullet points, diagrams and other visuals.
- Papers cannot be submitted anonymously. The names of author(s) should be clearly stated, and where appropriate their educational context should be made clear (secondary teacher, PhD student, education consultant, ITE tutor etc).
- Names of schools, universities and other organisations can be included, and we require authors to confirm that they have consent to do so.
- Children and young people may not be identified by name and every effort should be made to ensure that their identities remain confidential.
- Adults (such as colleagues, and professional or research partners) may only be named with their consent, and where appropriate we encourage joint authorship.
- A limited number of images may be submitted with the papers, but please note that we will use discretion when including them according to formatting limitations. Please be clear if the inclusion of an image (such as a diagram or table) is critical to the working paper.
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- Each paper should state a corresponding author and include an email address, and / or twitter handle.

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They should be submitted as word documents, Arial 11 font, 1.5 line spacing, with subheadings included as appropriate. Each word document should include the title, names of authors, context
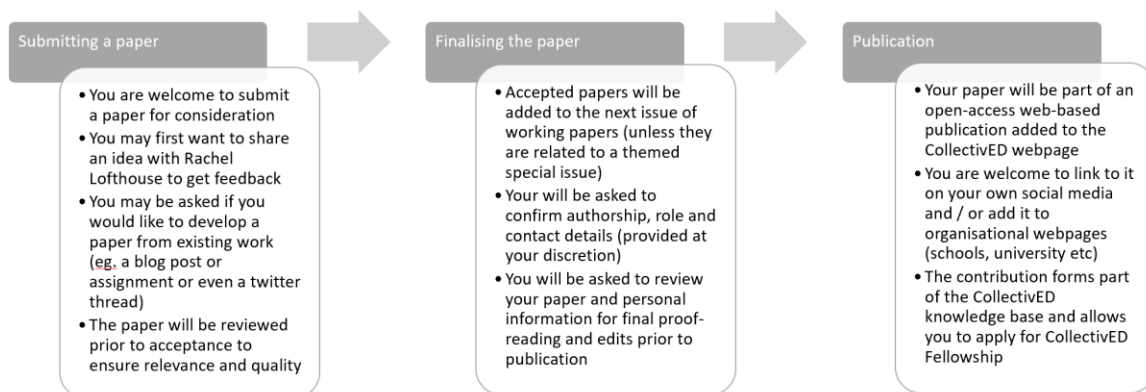
and affiliations of the authors. Essential images should be embedded in the word document, and discretionary images should be sent as attachments.

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- You are welcome to submit a paper for consideration
- You may first want to share an idea with Rachel Lofthouse to get feedback
- You may be asked if you would like to develop a paper from existing work (eg, a blog post or assignment or even a twitter thread)
- The paper will be reviewed prior to acceptance to ensure relevance and quality

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