An integrated approach towards impact-led research and CPD for the teaching profession


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Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has always been the servant of the Learning Professions and has championed the concept of Professional Learning within the workplace domain of activity. The English Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) has, however, recently introduced a new postgraduate professional development (PPD) funding scheme for UK qualified teachers (QTS) that requires HE-accredited in-service programmes to provide evidences of impact upon teacher quality and work-based learning in schools. Thus, all PPD Higher Education Institution (HEI) providers in England are now required to build-in impact evaluation instruments into their mainstream postgraduate qualifications programmes that enroll QTS teachers for which they receive an annual funding grant subsidy. Such an outcomes-led policy of CPD suggests to many HEI PPD providers new opportunities to integrate programme delivery with new opportunities for impact-led research. This approach towards integrating CPD teaching and learning with new professional-led research to deliver impact evidences for evaluation and ownership by the teaching profession is considered as being timely by the UK’s Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET). UCET has recently set up a special interest group (SIG) to report findings on CPD-based Impact in order to shape new policy proposals with key stakeholders such as the TDA and UK Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The authors of this paper wish to build upon and develop a framework model for impact related research outcomes from accredited PPD activity. This initiative builds upon the conceptual framework developed in Harland and Kinder's (1997) seminal work, which is also linked to Soulsby and Swain's (2003) report on accredited CPD to the TDA.
The TDA’s Postgraduate Professional Development funding scheme

Recent changes in HE accredited postgraduate funding arrangements by the Training and Development Agency (TDA) for schools in England has seen the introduction of a new scheme called Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) since the 1st of September 2005. The new PPD has created a new kind of CPD scheme from which universities need to rethink their existing programmes and credit/award structures. The first triennial funding PPD round from 2005-2008 required seven key criteria to be met by all providers through embedding these items into accredited programmes:

i) lead to recognised qualifications at M-level or above;

ii) have as its main objective the improvement of pupils’ performance through the embedded improvement of teachers’ knowledge, understanding and practice;

iii) develop teachers’ research and problem-solving skills through the critical evaluation of evidence and research from a range of sources, including academic research and other data available to schools;

iv) directly involve teachers, schools and other local and regional stakeholders in planning, reviewing and developing provision to meet the identified needs of schools and teachers in the region(s) where it will be offered;

v) reduce identified barriers to teachers’ participation in postgraduate professional development;

vi) be subject to internal and external quality assurance procedures;

vii) provide specified management information, and include an evaluation of the programme’s impact on practice in schools.

PPD criteria 2, 4 and 7 can all be interpreted as having a practice based on the job research agenda that levers educational change, demonstrating a resulting impact on professional practice. This understanding of the PPD represents an epistemological assumption about the nature of how educational research through CPD can produce new knowledge for the teaching profession. Clearly, this approach suits an applied educational research agenda that supports action inquiry, action learning and action research methodologies supported by the recent EPPI centre report on “The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning: What do teacher impact data tell us about collaborative CPD?” (Cordingley et al, 2005). This applied educational research agenda (TTA, 2003) that produces useful impact-led research for the profession is also supported and recommended in the OECD (2002) report on the state of education research in England.

However, the TDA PPD funding requirement states that providers need to submit an annual impact evaluation report, based upon the findings and results drawn from their accredited CPD programmes. Paradoxically, the TDA also requested that the impact evidence should be drawn from teachers and schools without putting any additional
burdens upon them. In order to solve this Catch-22 situation Coombs and Denning (2005) proposed to integrate the impact evaluation reports by teachers with their parallel need to produce a self-evaluation form (SEF) of their CPD activity as part of the school’s Ofsted (2005) evidence file. A teacher’s impact evaluation evidence can also be appended and submitted as part of the new performance management review appraisal process required in all schools in England. This three-in-one approach towards collating impact evaluation evidences from teachers is seen as a smart way of eliciting professional development reports without imposing additional burdens.

Coombs and Denning (2005) proposed the following instructional design rationale for integrating impact-based teacher research activity into programs:

In summary we have identified the key PPD CPD design issues based upon programme requirements that proffer a culture of professional learning:

- The need to integrate CPD impact evaluation evidence across the normal range of professional tasks that are engaged in by programme participants.
- To improve the accessibility and flexibility of the CPD programme to all potential participants. To ensure that the programme design represents a flexible range of delivery and assessment mechanisms that are commensurate to enabling meaningful professional learning tasks that personally impact on the quality of teaching.
- To encourage greater completion of CPD programmes by increasing the pedagogical bandwidth to cover a wider range of acceptable vocational and academic targets.
- To also encourage greater progression of teachers towards achieving professional learning at M and D level awards for the greater benefit of the profession, i.e., via disseminating action research PhD projects that provide useful new knowledge towards the evidence base of the teaching profession.

The case for impact-led educational research in schools

The case for impact-led educational research in schools has been strongly triangulated across several key reports. The Soulsby and Swain (TDA, 2003) report to the TDA (formerly known as the TTA) on the merits or otherwise of their old award bearing Inset scheme provided the following links between on-the-job action research projects and school improvement:

“long courses, often reinvigorate and rejuvenate participants and improve their teaching, especially when the satiated with some small-scale action research or with an objective and critical look at their and practice” (annex 31).

“The increasing emphasis on school improvement projects and an action research approaches come together powerfully to achieve this. Many teachers completing an award demonstrate that they have the skills needed to manage small-scale change and
to evaluate the outcomes from the specialist perspective of their own subject or age phase” (annex 36).

Soulsby and Swain (ibid) maintain that the evidence of impact upon schools is more probable under the following conditions where:

- The head takes a personal interest and takes account of the training in performance management.
- A significant number of staff are involved in longer-term CPD projects and outcomes are evaluated and disseminated.
- The provision is both intellectually stretching and focused on practice.
- Assignments are flexible enough in form and content to enable teachers to engage with issues which are relevant to them and their schools.

(Annex 37)

This model of teacher-led control of the change management process conducted through accredited CPD is also confirmed in Harland and Kinder’s (1997) model of outcomes for implementing impact-based CPD. They propose a nine point typology of Inset outcomes and maintain a number of key design processes, representing a framework for all accredited CPD to ensure:

- the degree of teacher initiation, ownership and control;
- forms of provision, set in various contexts;
- CPD activities based on different epistemologies; and,
- different models of managing and implementing the change process.

The Ofsted (2004) report “Making a difference: The impact of award-bearing in-service training on school improvement” also supports the above findings regarding benefits to school improvement through accredited award-bearing Inset. The main emphasis of this Ofsted report is that positive impact from accredited CPD activity is more likely to occur through on-the-job projects, where school leaders support their staff engaged in such change activities. This leadership support is “a major factor in determining the extent to which the participants are able to implement initiatives in their schools, which arise from the (CPD) courses” p.6.

All of this evidence suggests a very strong case for PPD partnerships to concentrate on setting up action inquiry and change management CPD modules to initiate school improvement projects. Ofsted (ibid) and others (CPD Update, 2006) believe that a concentration of effort upon CPD-led whole school improvement projects, supported by the leadership of that school can lead to effective and lasting change. This has indeed been CPD PPD policy at Bath Spa University (BSU), where 84% of QTS enrolments have been achieved mainly through whole school CPD projects engaged in some form of action inquiry during academic year 2005 to 2006. This result and its subsequent impact evaluation evidences have been fully reported in the BSU annual report to the TDA, whereupon five types of data sources have been obtained (all are in the process of being developed) and disseminated. These impact evaluation sources include:

- Evaluative feedback from partnership schools And local authorities.
• Impact evaluation reports from all programme participants.
• Module tutor reports from all CPD tutors.
• Module evaluation forms completed by participants on an optional basis.
• Ofsted reports linking Bath Spa University CPD provision with partnership schools (this source of data is in an embryonic phase of development).

Examples of Impact Evaluation Instruments

An example of the BSU tutor module evaluation form can be seen in appendix B. in this particular case the evaluation form has been completed for a conventionally taught campus delivered core module called Learning and Knowledge Technology. Even in this case, it has been possible for the tutor to identify and record some potential impact evidences, because the assessment is connected to a practical project that requires the module participants to integrate ICT into their curriculum and report this through a group presentation exercise.

A more interesting impact evaluation report was obtained from a local CPD partnership project with the local authority - Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES). This project is called the Pupil’s Attitude to Self and School (PASS) and its impact evaluation report, based upon a network of schools involved is exhibited in appendix C.

The UCET CPD SIG on Impact

The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) CPD committee has been heavily engaged in joint partnership with the TDA to help develop appropriate impact evaluation systems and templates for HEI members. UCET has provided members with regular guidance materials and has recently set up a special interest group (SIG) to investigate and report on all matters connected to PPD impact evaluation. A summary impact evaluation template based upon the TDA prototype, with explanations on how to complete it was provided by the UCET CPD committee to all its members -- see exhibit in appendix A. The impact evidence sources recommended by the UCET CPD committee are as follows:

Examples of evidence sources for impact are:

• participants’ assignments
• participants’ career development
• tutor course logs
• anecdotal evidence
• participant evaluations in relation to expected and unintended outcomes/consequences
• stakeholder evaluations in relation to expected and unintended outcomes/consequences and also the school development priorities
• analyses of pupil performance data
• identification of strengths and issues in need of attention in relation to the external examiner’s reports.
Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion we recommend that all PPD partnerships adopt the following framework and approach towards developing impact evaluation research CPD:

i) Develop impact evaluation instruments around the UCET guidelines.

ii) Build upon the Harland and Kinder (1997) instructional design protocol and framework for designing and implementing/evaluating high impact postgraduate CPD programs and individual modules.

iii) Work with UCET and other HEI providers to develop an ongoing database of impact-based educational research projects. These can be cross-referenced into the annual TDA PPD impact report and represents the professional learning knowledge of the teaching profession.

iv) Consider what flexible learning CPD modules your programme could be deploying to enable action enquiry projects run within schools by school leaders as part of a whole school improvement project. Such flexible and distributed learning accreditation modules needs to follow the code of practice defining such work prescribed by the QAA (2004) for higher education.

References


(http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs_summary&id=3493)


(www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=4129.)


Appendix A

Summary Impact Evaluation Report

This template will serve as a summary of the evidence and judgements collated to assess the impact of PPD within partnerships. Full reports required by the partnerships and HEIs will be made available on the UCET (CPD) members site, and on request to the TDA. The purpose of the summary sheets is developmental, in that the reports will guide colleagues to effective and efficient procedures, and for the TDA to ensure that funding conditions have been met.

The TDA role is to support and identify best practice. This will be achieved through a sampling activity aimed at identifying effective tools rather than whole institutions.

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<th>How has the understanding of the impact changed in the light of experience (in terms of the tutor perspective, participant perspective and stakeholder perspective)?</th>
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<th>Which intended outcomes have not been achieved, and of these which will be pursued and which will are no longer relevant?</th>
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<td>How and on what basis have these decisions been reached?</td>
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<th>Have there been any outcomes which are over and above those originally intended?</th>
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<td>What evidence have you got to support this judgement?</td>
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Module Tutor Evaluation Report

Due to recent changes in TDA funding it is now a requirement that all course tutors complete a Module Tutors Evaluation Report which can be fed back to the TDA within the context of our PPD annual report.

Name: Dr Steven J Coombs
Module: PR4110 – Learning & Knowledge Technology

1. Please use the space provided to give a brief overview of the project/module in which you have been involved including the teaching methods used.

This core module is run as taught class over 6 seminar contact sessions. Much of the support work is provided through online learning activities preparing materials and content knowledge for student presentation in the seminars.

2. Please confirm the number of participants involved and the attendance rates.

The class had 10 students enrolled for this year. A combination drawn from both the full-time and part-time PMP.

3. Please identify how you have incorporated the participant’s initial needs analysis into your module design and allowed for differentiation to accommodate any differences in individual needs.

The PR4110 is a taught, but flexible learning module. Individual needs are determined through the answering of the project question “How does LKT connect to your profession and how can it be integrated into your teaching and learning?”

4. Please identify the assessment methods used.

Assessment is through a final 15 minute presentation seminar requiring PowerPoint slides to support an academic paper 1000-2000 words. Much like the format for international academic/professional conferences.

5. The support that I received in designing my C10 project was appropriate.

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Please explain your reasons for your score

Not applicable as this is a fixed design PMP core module.

6. The support that I received in developing my module design was appropriate.

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Please explain your reasons for your score

Not applicable as this is a fixed design PMP core module. But CPD staff development days have informed revisions such as greater clarity for integrating the H and M Level academic criteria.
The facilities provided (venues, resources, equipment, refreshments) were appropriate.

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Please explain your reasons for your score

Yes, the teaching seminar sessions are booked into suitable rooms with refreshments for adults attending in the evening from 6pm to 8pm. The campus room booked did have problems. Because delivery was in the evening the heating was inadequate and no technicians to resolve broken equipment such as the overhead LCD projector. The flexible learning resources are supplied both in hard copy materials and on the PR4110 Minerva VLE website facility.

I used Minerva as part of my learning resources for the module

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Please explain your reasons for your score

The flexible learning mode outside of taught sessions depends on providing distant adults a VLE platform from which to access resources, e.g. former PR4110 student exemplar case studies etc.

I found Minerva useful and a good medium for my participants to learn

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Please explain your reasons for your score

Face-to-face seminars and supervision tutorials are generally a superior method of learning support for such adults attending a taught class. However, Minerva provides a different type of learning support that enables the participant to become a more pro-active self-organised learner. Thus, blended learning is the correct balance for this module, although a totally distance learning mode via Minerva could be useful in the future.

Overall I was satisfied with the module

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The module delivery systems are in constant revision and represent a balanced compromise between the needs of the professional adult learner and what can be organised to meet those needs. Thus, I enjoyed operating a flexible learning service backed up by taught formal seminar sessions. For larger enrolment numbers the delivery support methods would need to be revised, i.e. for this coming academic year I’ve increased the seminar workshops from 2 to 3 hours to give sufficient time for individual presentations.

Please identify how well you feel the module has achieved its learning objectives? Please identify the evidence that you have to support any judgements made and identify the methods used to collect and analyse the evidence.
The final evidence is the submission of the individual presentation projects showing how the learning theory has been situated into the participant’s professional domain. Student feedback comments also support that these learning objectives have been met and that the presentation/conference assessment mode was deemed as being useful and relevant. Presentation evidences are submitted on CD-ROM and placed upon Minerva.

12 Please provide a synopsis of the impact that this module/course has had on its participant’s professional development?

Through the change of learner disposition regarding the power of LKT and subsequent integration of ICT into the participants curriculum and presented as a case study exemplare of either changed or proposed change to future practice.

13 Please provide a synopsis of the impact that this module/course has had on the participants within the context of their own school, institution?

Those participants employed in schools (half the group are full time students and thus not employed) have made positive connections regarding professional learning and change management consequences. This was evidenced in both the projects submitted via the seminar presentations as well as student feedback.

14 Please provide a synopsis of the impact that this module/course has had on the participants own learners?

For most, this short module provides the basis for future change in practice by helping participants to rethink the instructional design of their curriculum and how ICT tools might be incorporated as a LKT. LKT also influences the design of potential final Master’s projects for some participants.

15 Please identify any areas of impact that were not originally anticipated?

Indirect professional learning projects – see comments 13 and 14 above.

Future developments

16 What future course needs have you identified?

To get extra dedicated help in providing many of the fixed readings as an on-line study pack. This would allow greater access by the participants and also allow easier updating and revision of the PR4110 module. Need to both motivate and integrate threaded discussion board conversations with final assessment evidences. Most adult participants didn’t engage with this stating that they didn’t have time. Hence, need to consider some method of increasing the learning status of such activity, i.e. integrated into assessment tasks.

Also need a better presentation PC workbench console. Current instructor bench in ICT lab's is inadequate for public seminar presentations. A BSU WMS request for improved facilities and ICT room layout.

17 What proposed changes will you consider making to your course to result in greater impact on participant practice both personally and in the context of their own schools as well as development of their own learners?

See comments above. Plus, put all PR4110 case study ICT school integration projects (for QTS participants) onto a national impact database as proposed by UCET, IPDA & CASP. BSU is sharing
in a joint impact project to deliver this objective.

Please use the space below to provide any further comments.

This is a valuable module that uses LKT to seek integration of ICT both into and across the curriculum of schools, colleges, universities and training centres – given the wide educational range of participants.

Please return this completed sheet to Alison Denning no later than.

The School of Education gratefully acknowledges the work of the University of Sydney in the production of this evaluation survey.
Appendix C

PASS Project Evaluation 2004-2005

In September 2004 the PASS (Pupil’s Attitude to Self and School) survey was launched in B&NES. Bath Spa University took a key role in the project supporting a network of schools that were using PASS to inform their approaches in schools. Of these schools, six registered with Bath Spa University formally and have completed impact evaluations. This report is a summary of these evaluations.

What areas of focus did the first PASS survey highlight?

There were a mixture of factors highlighted by PASS as concerns. Schools mentioned the following:

- Factor 1 - Feelings about School
- Factor 2 - Perceived Learning Capacity
- Factor 3 - Self Regard
- Factor 4 - Preparedness for Learning
- Factor 5 - Attitudes to Teachers
- Factor 6 - General Work Ethic
- Factor 7 - Confidence in Learning
- Factor 8 - Attitudes to Attendance
- Factor 9 - Response to Curriculum Demands

In most schools there was a general positive attitude to school, and where factors were highlighted they were indicative of a small number of children, or a particular year group.

As a concern group, girls were mentioned by 4 schools and Y4 girls in particular by 3 schools. Y6 boys were mentioned by 2 schools.

How did these concerns relate to whole school focus or self evaluation?

Schools seemed to feel that they were generally aware of the issues, but that the PASS data had helped to focus them.

Girls were already identified as under performing in lit and especially num. Was it style of teaching? Strategies in place to engage boys (pacy snappy etc) but not time for reflection, may have hit girls self esteem and confidence in learning.

In Oct 2004, nothing was in place, as although we were aware of the problem, there was no foundation on which to build. This was a springboard for action

We were already looking at the response to curriculum demands to engaging children actively and following their interests

It brought something new to light – the issue with boys hadn’t come out through from the PANDA, so PASS refined this and other data. For Ofsted the discussion was tighter, looking beyond the PANDA

There was also a feeling that an awareness of issues could have skewed the way that results were analysed (ie looking for results that confirmed suspicions
We had questions over whether we looked for it to confirm suspicions (is that what we were looking for?)

The PASS project has been pivotal in addressing the focus area

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Why?

*Being able to talk, plan discuss ideas and have input directly from PASS company. Communication between schools, support and networking*

*It gave us an agenda, an opportunity for practical action. The group gave it a credibility that although agendas might be different there was enough commonality for it to become ‘vocabulary’ between professionals.*

*It helped to crystallise my thinking through professional dialogue – thinking space and time was set aside.*

*Really useful, inputs from the experts, reinforcement of understandings helped to get to grips Networking with other schools doing the same things, talking through issues in the same way.*

*There was credibility when other schools were working in the same way and it was interesting because none of the schools were in present network – great range of schools to draw ideas from, who we wouldn’t normally be working with*.

*It was good to have the support and it has kept PASS alive – the discipline of attending meetings, reporting back findings.*

What interventions were planned as a result of the findings

These ranged hugely from school to school. In some schools the learning to learn agenda was already in place, and schools took approaches that supported that. In other schools specific groups of children were targeted. Self assessment and target setting were a common feature.

Aims for Interventions

*By raising confidence and learning and self regard, a better engagement with learning is becoming apparent, particularly apparent in lower juniors*

*The whole way that teachers and pupils talk about learning is different - using learning intentions, linking learning intentions – this has changed dramatically*

*That they will feel better about themselves and their ability to learn and will enjoy school more*

The PASS project has helped me/the school better to identify the needs of learners

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How do you know?
Putting the self evaluation agenda at the core of the whole ethos of the ‘learning school’, embedded it
as philosophy, learning from each other – the whole school as learners, learning partners in the
classes and KS teams

Because of the ability to identify children who’s poor attitudes may not be immediately apparent – the
sharp focus of the PASS survey

There was also a feeling that the PASS project, rather than raising the issues, had supported existing approaches

…there were lots of other initiatives too – so not just PASS

The PASS interventions have had a significant and direct impact on children’s attainment

Agree 1
Neutral 5

It was felt that there were many factors that affected children’s attainment and that in
most cases this could not be attributed solely to PASS interventions

Relation to ECM

In relation to the Every Child Matters agenda, head teachers felt that the third
outcome ‘To enjoy and achieve’ was significant in their PASS approaches. There was
also a feeling that aware as they were of the issues, PASS had helped to sharpen their
approach.

Insights gained from a second round of PASS

These were varied. In some cases the results had been slightly less positive, causing
heads to wonder if as a result of being more aware of themselves as learners, the
children had been more ‘honest’ in their responses.
In other schools there was improvement across the board and more consistent results,
particularly where these were positive.
In other schools, there were less clear cut target areas or groups.

FM/PASS Project Evaluation Summary/Mar06