Progression Through Partnership: The Evolving Story Of How The Educational Institute of Scotland’s Learning Representatives Are Helping Scottish Teachers’ Professional Development And Learning

By

A. Alexandrou, S. Macaulay and A. J. Rae


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Alex Alexandrou (University of Edinburgh), Simon Macaulay (Educational Institute of Scotland) and Ann J. Rae (University of Edinburgh)

Background

Trade unions have historically been involved in education and training in the workplace, and in the United Kingdom this activity has gained greater credence and importance due to the recent emergence of union learning representatives (ULRs), a new category of unpaid lay representation with statutory rights operating within the workplace (Employment Act, 2002, ACAS, 2003). They are part of the present UK and Scottish Government’s drive to expand and improve lifelong learning and professional development and learning to create what they term the learning society (DfEE, 1998; Scottish Government, 2007). In Scotland, the McCrone Report (SEED, 2000), particularly its continuing professional development (CPD) recommendations and the subsequent 21st Century Agreement (SEED, 2001) combined with the development of a CPD Framework for Scottish teachers (O’Brien, 2007), has added impetus to the roles of ULRs within the Scottish teaching profession. The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the teacher union that represents the overwhelming majority of teachers in Scotland, has taken up the challenge of progressing the professional development and learning of teachers by launching a learning representatives (LRs) initiative with the expressed desire that these LRs work to advise, broker and facilitate improved professional development and learning opportunities for their colleagues.

We have been involved in observing and researching the development of ULRs since their inception in the late 1990s. As part of our ongoing research in Scotland sponsored by both the EIS and the Scottish Government, we have embarked on a long-term examination of the EIS LRs. This paper will report on the findings of our second major study that was completed at the end of 2008. It will concentrate on examining the impact they have had on their colleagues in terms of how they have helped them engage in meaningful and constructive professional development and learning.

At the same time as the evaluation of the LRs initiative was taking place, a further unrelated study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was also underway in Scotland investigating women primary teacher’s perspectives of their own learning.

Research Approach

ULRs are a recent phenomenon, and as such there is a lack of a substantive academic literature analysing and problematising this type of representative (Shelley, 2008), particularly from a teaching perspective (Stevenson, 2008). Thus we have adopted the following research approach to help initiate such a debate in relation to teacher LRs and their impact on their colleagues’ professional development and learning.
A mixed-methods approach (Ivankova et al., 2008: 3) was chosen, and the subject of the research lent itself to an underpinning quantitative analysis based on a preliminary questionnaire supported by substantial qualitative data collection (Weiss, 1998: 261). For the purposes of this part of our ongoing research we engaged with the second cohort of EIS LRs (made up of local authority-based LRs, more commonly referred to as Multi-Establishment (ME) LRs and school-based LRs); EIS national officials; officials from the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), National CPD Group and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE); Local Authority CPD Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs); head teachers and teachers. In total, 85 stakeholders were involved in the second phase of this long-term study. There was a 100% response rate in terms of participants agreeing to an interview and completing a personal record, and a 90% response rate in terms of the 36 EIS LRs returning a completed questionnaire. Such a significant response to this phase of the research we believe enhances the validity of the results and strengthens our aim of contributing a piece of work to the emerging literature in this field that will stimulate debate, further research and articles in relation to the professional development and learning of Scottish teachers and the important role EIS LRs can play in this.

The women primary teachers’ perspectives of learning study adopted qualitative methods: semi-structured interviews for data creation and constructivist Grounded Theory methods for data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Interviews were carried out with local education officers, headteachers, chartered teachers and teachers. The evidence for this paper is based on the interviews with 12 woman primary teachers and a CPD co-ordinator as it provides an interesting comparative insight into how professional development and learning opportunities are accessed in the absence of advice from a LR.

The Teacher Continuing Professional Development Agenda

The McCrone Report (SEED, 2000) and 21st Century Agreement (SEED, 2001) have ensured that CPD for Scottish teachers is a key element of the Scottish Government’s education strategy in terms of raising the professional aspirations of teachers and helping to improve the quality of teaching delivered in Scottish schools.

The following sections will indicate how the strategic stakeholders are monitoring CPD developments. The next section will deal with recent reports by Audit Scotland (2006) and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (2007a) that have examined the progress of the 21st Century Agreement (SEED, 2001). They will outline the CPD and Chartered Teacher (CT) elements of these reports as they are the most pertinent to this evaluation.

Audit Scotland’s and HMIE’s Initial View of the 21st Century Agreement

In May 2006, Audit Scotland published a report that examined the implementation of the 21st Century Agreement (SEED, 2001) based on questions such as:

- What measurable outputs have been achieved with the funding provided?
- Have the milestones for change contained in the Agreement been met?
- Have the changes brought about by the Agreement made teaching a more attractive career? (Audit Scotland, 2006: 3).
The report stated that: ‘...The study does not assess the impact of the Agreement on the quality of teaching and educational attainment of children’ (Audit Scotland, 2006:3).

The HMIE’s report in relation to the progress of the 21st Century Agreement (SEED, 2001) followed in January 2007. It highlighted the importance of the quality of teaching required and the importance of CPD if the aims and objectives of the agreement are to be achieved. The inspectorate’s stance was laid out very early on in the report when it stated that if:

‘...Scotland’s children are to succeed educationally, socially and economically we need to deliver an education system which is not only of the highest quality to meet the learning needs of today but which is flexible and responsive enough to equip our children with an education which will serve them well in an uncertain future. Of critical importance to learning is the quality of teaching and the professional skills, attitudes and attributes that successful teachers bring to the learning process’ (HMIE, 2007a: 3).

This is a direct and powerful statement and indicates that CPD and CT are crucial elements if the above are to be achieved. This implies that there will be a key role for EIS LRs to play and the more colleagues they assist through effective advice and guidance, the more likely it will be that a greater proportion of teachers will take up CPD and CT opportunities, thus, helping to impact positively on and improve teachers’ classroom practice.

The Audit Scotland report stated that virtually all the milestones set for 2004 had been met bar one and it found that there had been ‘...increased and more consistent access to CPD opportunities for teachers’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 9). As for the CT scheme the report explained that:

‘...Although the Scottish Executive set no specific target figure for numbers likely to participate in the scheme, the numbers of teachers currently participating in the scheme (2,800) and who have successfully completed the scheme to date have been small. These numbers are lower than the Scottish Executive’s financial modelling would have suggested (based on the costs associated with the salary enhancements which accrue to teachers upon completion of the scheme). Only 45 per cent of the estimated amount required was used in 2004/5’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 14).

In relation to CT, the HMIE highlighted similar issues to those raised by the Audit Scotland Report, particularly in relation to the expectations and uptake of CT. It observed that:

‘Initially, some education authorities had set high expectations (25-30%) for the proportion of non-promoted staff who would enter and move up the six points of the chartered teacher scale. However, uptake of the chartered teacher programme was significantly lower than these figures in all authorities...This meant that the ability of chartered teachers to make a positive impact on the learning and teaching in schools was as yet limited’ (HMIE, 2007a: 8-9).

Audit Scotland and the inspectorate are correct in highlighting the uptake figures which they point out are low. However, it is important to note that the CT scheme is relatively new and it
will take time for teachers to embrace the CT concept. As the first evaluation highlighted there is still deep cynicism amongst teachers in relation to CPD and CT. This is backed up by Connelly and McMahon’s (2007) recent survey of teachers following the CT programme. When asked what their colleagues thought about them undertaking the CT programme the teachers stated they had encountered hostility and negativity. Connelly and McMahon (2007: 101) point out such reactions hinted at:

‘…CT being a clandestine or isolating activity, whereby teachers choose not to reveal to colleagues that they are pursuing it. As a consequence they risk missing out on potential encouragement and support, while the school loses out by not being a partner in teacher development and change’.

This resentment will take time to work itself out of the system of not only individual teachers but also the education sector in general. As Connelly and McMahon (2007: 101) state the hostility ‘…may subside with time as CT becomes an accepted part of the CPD framework’.

The evidence suggests EIS LRs will have a crucial role to play if there is to be a sustained uptake of CT and the HMIE (2007a:9) is encouraged that 2,000 teachers are now on various points of the CT scale. Connelly and McMahon’s (2007: 101-102) findings add weight to the inspectorate’s optimism that teachers are embarking upon the CT programme due to the following reasons: professional development; financial motivations; fulfilment of the need for intellectual stimulation; improving personal status and recognition; disinterest in a management route to enhancement and that they have a significant ‘... desire to engage in formal processes for developing personally and professionally’.

The inspectorate also noted that:

‘In addition to the low numbers of teachers joining the scheme, another weakness was that teachers were able to self select for the programme. Headteachers and education authorities had no opportunity to influence the selection process and were therefore unable to ensure that the best teachers were participating’ (HMIE, 2007a:9).

This observation indicates that EIS LRs and LA CPD QIOs working together can do more to encourage uptake of CT and help teachers make the correct decisions in terms of their professional development be it through CT or other routes. It can be argued that EIS LRs are in a good position based on their training, knowledge and expertise to advise colleagues as to their suitability for CT. They are trusted colleagues who have no economic or political axe to grind. Matthew MacIver, (formerly Chief Executive of the GTCS) is of the opinion that the EIS LRs should not only be the first port of call for their colleagues in relation to CPD and CT but also are the people who can be most trusted by teachers (Alexandrou, 2006: 15).

As alluded to above, the teaching profession is sceptical of the CT scheme and the HMIE clearly found this to be the case as the following observation shows:

‘Many teachers did not regard the chartered teacher programme as an attractive proposition. The reasons given included money and time costs for individual teachers. Few teachers appeared to accept the argument that the cost of qualifying through the stages
would be balanced by salary increases as they moved up the scale, or that relatively young teachers could enjoy up to 25 years of enhanced salary once they had reached the top of the chartered teacher scale. Few teachers agreed that the chartered teacher route had the potential to provide fulfilment in their careers’ (HMIE, 2007a: 9).

In relation to CT, Audit Scotland made the following observations in terms of the impact of the scheme:

‘The new Chartered Teacher Scheme has not yet had the expected impact on the career structure for classroom teachers. [The] Scottish Executive indicated that 30,000 teachers were eligible to participate when the scheme was introduced in 2003 of whom around 6,000 indicated an interest. By February 2006, 2,800 teachers were participating in the scheme and 201 teachers had achieved full chartered teacher status, the vast majority of these by the accreditation route.

Newer entrants to the profession appear much more willing to participate in the scheme than those who have been in the profession longer. Seventy-four per cent of those who have been teaching for less than three years say it is likely that they will participate in the scheme in the future, compared with 32 per cent of classroom teachers overall. While it is unlikely that all of these teachers will participate, the positive attitude among newer entrants means that uptake looks set to rise as these teachers become eligible to participate.

The main reasons that classroom teachers are likely to participate in the scheme are to further their career opportunities (39 per cent), further develop their teaching skills (39 per cent) and for the additional salary (38 per cent).

In contrast, teachers who have been in the profession longer are significantly less likely to participate in the scheme in the future. The percentage of those likely to take part in the scheme drops from 40 per cent among those who have been teaching for three to ten years, to 15 per cent among those in the profession between 11-20 years, down to three per cent of those who have been teaching for 21 years or more. The main reasons given by those teachers unlikely to participate are that it is too expensive (31 per cent) and time consuming (24 per cent).

If a future increase in uptake of the scheme is fuelled primarily by newer entrants to the profession, as would seem to be indicated from the evidence, there is a danger of a two-tier system emerging among classroom teachers. There is a need to ensure that high-quality teaching practice continues to be expected, and recognised among all teachers, regardless of chartered teacher status’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 30).

Reeves (2007: 66-72) vividly highlights this problem in her study, as the cohort of CT teachers she evaluated raised a number of issues and problems when undertaking a project linked to their collaborative professional enquiry module. These included: clear problems in undertaking collaborative enquiry with colleagues; teacher culture being a barrier to negotiating access with all colleagues and school managers and there were differences in principle between the process of action enquiry and school development planning.
These observations indicate there is much work to be done in convincing the teaching profession of the merits of CPD and the CT concept. Again it can be argued that the EIS LRs have a crucial role to play in helping to change attitudes as they can be regarded as trusted confidantes who are there for the benefit of colleagues to help them achieve their long-term aspirations.

However, Reeves (2007: 62) in her survey of the CT initiative is very positive about the scheme and argues that

‘The clear commitment in this Standard [for Chartered Teacher] to criticality and independence of judgement as a characteristic of teacher excellence in Scotland is both heartening and surprising, given that the Scottish system is as swamped with paper, performance indicators and targets as anywhere else in the UK. What this standard affords for both providers of Chartered Teacher programmes and those teachers who wish to achieve the status is a space in which to assert a form of teacher professionalism which is in marked contradiction to the educational operationalism model’.

In relation to CT, Audit Scotland concludes that the:

‘...changes to be brought about by the Agreement were seen by the signatories to it as a long-term process, perhaps spanning a whole generation of teachers and pupils. This means that forming judgements on some aspects, for example, its impact on educational leadership and performance improvements (such as school attainment levels), can only take place once an appropriate period of time has elapsed; certainly longer than the five years which has currently passed since the Agreement was signed.’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 15).

Significantly, in relation to CPD in general, the Audit Scotland report states that the ‘...quality and variety of CPD has improved under the Agreement’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 24) and goes on to highlight that:

‘Our evidence indicates that the additional 35-hour maximum CPD has been put in place across Scotland. Of those teachers interviewed in our survey, 93 per cent reported that they have a CPD plan and 96 per cent an individual CPD record’.

Whilst the HMIE (2007a: 19) noted that:

‘Almost all education authorities found the introduction of 35 hours of CPD to be relatively straightforward, and had built purposefully on existing staff review and development procedures...[and that almost]...all teachers had now accepted the mandatory nature of the 35 hours of CPD and had taken full responsibility for maintaining their development profile’.

This is an encouraging finding in one sense but the question is are teachers doing just enough to ensure that they tick the box when it comes to completing their 35 hours of CPD to comply with regulations rather than using this opportunity to take advantage of professional development opportunities to improve their practice and job prospects? Again this is another example of where EIS LRs can play a critical role in ensuring that the latter is the case for the reasons cited above.
Audit Scotland reported that:

‘The teachers we surveyed are generally positive about the benefits of the additional CPD. Eighty-three per cent feel that CPD increases teacher skills and 75 per cent feel that it improves curriculum development. Only half (51 per cent), however, feel that it improves teacher motivation.

There is a noticeable difference in attitude by length of time in teaching. Those who have been teaching less than three years are markedly more positive towards the new arrangements and the benefits arising from them, than those who have been teaching longer.

While teachers are positive about the benefits of the additional CPD time, it is difficult to assess educational benefits and value for money as few local authorities have put in place effective monitoring and evaluation schemes. Opportunities exist to learn from other professions where CPD is an integral part of career development (eg, law, medicine, accountancy)’ (Audit Scotland, 2006: 24-25).

The HMIE (2007a: 20) backs up Audit Scotland’s findings noting that:

‘Increasingly, schools were taking a broader view of what constituted CPD. Approaches were often underpinned by the idea that teachers benefited most when training focussed on improving learning and teaching and was attuned to their own classroom practice’.

Whilst:

‘Mandatory CPD reviews were now embedded in the practices of all authorities. Most education authorities had implemented a system of yearly reviews…[and] …Education authorities were increasingly introducing follow-up surveys on the impact of CPD on learning and teaching by asking teachers, six or nine months after they had participated in training to recount how their teaching had improved as a result of the training…However, there was little evidence as yet of sufficiently effective and cohesive monitoring and evaluation of the impact of CPD on pupils’ experiences and attainment at school level’ (HMIE, 2007a: 20-22).

In relation to CT, the above findings are backed up to a degree by firstly, Kirkwood and Christie (2006: 439-441) who in their limited evaluation of one CT module found their teaching cohort to be very positive about it. They show that:

‘…module activities had facilitated interchange of opinions and sharing experiences; the content was stimulating, challenging, and reflected current thinking and research; module activities had enabled respondents to be more creative when planning lessons and teaching, and to apply ideas from research to their own teaching; and the assessment approach was ideal. For some participants, the module had the effect of injecting a feeling of renewed enthusiasm and confidence…

…[There was] further evidence of the positive impact on professional practice, which had continued beyond the duration of the module. There are, for example, accounts of successful
attempts to link theory to practice resulting in significant shifts in practice, and of respondents adopting a research perspective on their own teaching...

...A further development indicating the sustainability of their [cohort being evaluated] professional and personal commitment was the involvement of nine former participants within a collaborative learning community in which various forms of enquiry on teaching thinking were pursued”.

Secondly, Connelly and McMahon (2007: 98-100) found that their small cohort of teachers engaged on the CT programme had benefited from it in terms of engaging with new ideas or educational research, developing confidence and that their schools had to some extent benefited from their CT activities as the following quote indicates:

‘The fact that a number of respondents were able to identify benefits for their pupils is encouraging and is an indicator of the impact of the practice-related focus of CT courses and assessments’.

Thirdly, Reeves (2007: 64-65) found that by the end of the first module her cohort had completed, positive changes in classroom practice had been noted, notably: the teachers had a greater sense of agency, self-confidence and increase in expertise; had developed an ability to cite texts to justify their actions and opinions; became more confident in trying new things in the classroom and teachers felt the module had also allowed them to reclaim some of their classroom autonomy.

The HMIE (2007a: 22) is also positive about the future of CT and CPD as it concluded that:

‘Overall, the Teachers’ Agreement has stimulated and supported the development of a more comprehensive and rigorous approach to all aspects of CPD. It has led to staff having access to a wider range of CPD opportunities, supported by education authorities and partnerships with private companies and universities. For many staff, the Teachers’ Agreement has led to increased levels of self-awareness and a sense of focus on personal and professional needs. It has helped many to understand the importance of CPD in improving the learning experience and achievement of pupils’.

A positive conclusion and one that can be built upon as EIS LR s in partnership with CPD QIOs work together to encourage more teachers to look upon CPD as a positive experience from both a personal and professional perspective. Particularly, as Audit Scotland recommended that the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government):

‘...in partnership with other parties to the Agreement, needs to identify a comprehensive set of outcome measures against which the ongoing cost and impact of the Agreement can be assessed. Measures could cover areas such as:

- impact on educational attainment
- improvements in classroom practice
- the quality of educational leadership
- workload and skill-mix
The analysis of the two reports and supporting academic findings indicates that the EIS LRs may well have a key role to play in sustaining and pushing forward the CPD and CT agenda. Significantly, the LRs were not mentioned once in either report unlike the other stakeholders they work with. However, it must be noted that following contact with HMIE personnel in relation to this evaluation and members of the inspectorate reading and discussing the first evaluation, I was notified that HMIE inspectors were hoping to meet a focus group made up of EIS LRs in the inspectorate’s next set of school visits (Carlisle, 2007).

**Review of the Chartered Teacher Project**

Following on from the Audit Scotland and HMIE reports, the then Minister for Education, Hugh Henry announced a review of the Chartered Teacher project (SEED, 2007). In its covering letter explaining why the review was taking place SEED (2007) explained that the:

‘...background to this review is that while the Executive is committed to rewarding excellence in classroom practice we consider that the time is right to review the impact of the project. In particular we want to consider whether there are any improvements that can be made’.

Some of the key issues that the review considered were: eligibility criteria, age profile of those undertaking the CT project and issues affecting uptake of the Chartered Teacher project (SEED, 2007). The Chartered Teacher Review Group (CTRG) reported in June 2008 and it can be concluded that there is strong support for the CT initiative as the following statement indicates:

‘The Group wish to highlight their support for the original principle behind the CT scheme which was stated by the McCrone Committee in their Report...The recommendations in this Review Report are intended to continue to support and further develop the CT scheme in line with the original principle’ (CTRG, 2008:8).

This comment should be regarded in a positive light in relation to the CT initiative and could help to embed the EIS LRs further in the CPD and CT communities of practice that are being established within the Scottish teaching sector. Particularly, as the Group found that:

‘...in some areas of the scheme [CT] is not actively promoted by either the local authority or school senior management team’ and ‘...there was a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence relating to inconsistent, insufficient and inappropriate deployment of CTs, that some headteachers were unsure as to what they could require of CTs, and that some CTs wanted to do more or less than was being required of them’ (CTRG, 2008: 11-13).

As with Audit Scotland and the HMIE, the Group found ‘...there was a lack of evidence around the impact on and outcomes for learning and teaching of the CT scheme’ (CTRG, 2008: 13). In the light of these and other findings the Review Group made a number of recommendations. The recommendations of the Review Group indicate a long-term future for the CT scheme and one can deduce from them that there is a key role for the EIS LRs to play
in helping to implement them. For example, the third recommendation which states that ‘...all stakeholders should actively promote the CT scheme’ (CTRG, 2008: 9). However, what is noticeable by its absence is any mention of the EIS LRs and the role they can play in helping to sustain the CT initiative.

The Review Group echoed the findings of Audit Scotland and the HMIE in relation to the relatively low uptake of CT. It stated that as of September 2007 ‘...we had 521 full CTs and over 2,000 who were working their way through the scheme’. The Review Group went on to highlight that cost, time commitments, career progression and the lack of promotion of the CT scheme in some areas by either the local authority or the school management team (as highlighted above) mitigated against many teachers signing up for CT scheme (CTRG, 2008: 11).

However, it did point out the salary enhancements accrued as a result of achieving CT status was a positive factor in teachers joining the scheme (CTRG, 2008: 11). Connelly and McMahon’s (2007: 98) study also found financial motivations as one of the key reasons along with professional development, fulfilment of the need for intellectual stimulation, improving personal status and recognition and a disinterest in a management route to enhancement for embarking on CT.

The observations of both the Group and Connelly and McMahon indicate that EIS LRs can play a key role in promoting CT amongst colleagues and encouraging those who are eligible to sign up. They should also pick up on Reeves (2007: 62) observation that in the CT scheme there is a clear commitment ‘...to criticality and independence of judgement as a characteristic of teacher excellence in Scotland’.

In her response to the Review Group’s report, Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning reiterated the Scottish Government’s support for CT. The Cabinet Secretary highlighted that as of June 2008, there were 611 accredited CTs with almost 2,500 working through the programme and emphasised that it was crucial ‘...that we use the skills of Chartered Teachers to the full for the benefit of children and young people’ (Hyslop, 2008: 1).

However, the minister expressed ‘...a degree of frustration and disappointment that they [the Review Group] seem to have ducked some of the most difficult issues’ (Hyslop, 2008: 2-3) and highlighted a number of areas where she felt there was the potential to push the scheme forward. For example, teachers to consider seeking the endorsement of their school management to participate in the CT scheme; demonstrating to colleagues school-based evidence that needs to be validated; that schools recognise teachers who have achieved CT status as a valuable resource and to fully utilise them and asking the HMIE to ‘...undertake a review of the impact of Chartered Teachers in Schools. This will give us valuable information about the current position; and it will allow us to identify and disseminate good practice’ (Hyslop, 2008: 3-7).

The Cabinet Secretary’s observations have implications for all education stakeholders including the LRs. It seems that the EIS LRs could well have a role in advising teachers as to
how to include senior colleague endorsement in relation to their suitability for CT and the type of school-based evidence required; advising their CT accredited colleagues in relation to the role they could and should play within their schools and provide evidence to the HMIE (based on their experience of advising and helping colleagues) in relation to the inspectorate’s proposed study of the impact of CT in schools.

This section has concentrated in the main on the CT initiative but it must be noted that there are a number of other CPD routes that can be pursued. For example, significant emphasis has been placed on and resources allocated to identifying and developing the future cadre of school leaders, through the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). As SEED (2002) stated the SQH ‘...was introduced to ensure that people who wish to become headteachers can obtain the professional development opportunities they need prior to their appointment’. Cowie and Crawford (2007) and Reeves et al. (2005) have critically assessed the SQH programme in its formative years and along with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2007) and the HMIE (2007b) highlight the importance and necessity of leadership development within the Scottish education system. Thus, the LRs have a role to play in advising and guiding colleagues in relation to this programme.

The following sections will outline how the EIS LRs are attempting to engage, with and advise and guide their colleagues in relation to taking up professional development and learning opportunities.

**The Organisation and Delivery of Joint CPD Events**

The Institute has sought to promote the role of LRs as well as CPD and CT through the organisation and delivery of joint CPD events with local authorities. We have attended such events and observed first hand the positive impact they have had on the teachers who have attended them.

Although a relatively recent concept it was essential to understand the impact that these events were having in relation to the LRs; their relationship with LA CPD QIOs; members; outcomes and what the future strategy would be in relation to such events. Six of the LRs who were involved in organising these CPD events agreed to answer a questionnaire in relation to such events.

The participants were asked how the idea of a joint CPD event in their area came about. In four cases, such an event came about through the intervention of the EIS LR Administrator either in one-to one discussions with the relevant LRs or in meetings that included both the LRs and LA CPD QIOs. In the two other cases the LRs explained how the events came about as follows:

‘Multi-Establishment LRs discussing ideas of improving our profile + meeting teachers as getting permission to get into schools was slow’.

‘In discussion with the CPD coordinator when looking into ways which the LA and EIS Learning Rep could work together to promote CPD in the area’.
The LRs were asked if they had a good working relationship with their LA CPD QIO prior to the event being organised. There was a fifty-fifty split in the answers and the following answer is indicative of the barriers encountered by some of the LRs:

‘While I had met with the Support for Staff Service Manager on several occasions, she was not prepared to work with me it appeared. I suggested that it might be useful to involve me in the CPD Reference Group & she made all sorts of excuses for this not to happen’.

The LRs were then asked if their working relationship with the officers had improved or developed since the event. The answers were more positive with four stating that the relationship had improved and developed whilst two stated that it had not. One LR gave the following explanation as to why this was the case:

‘However, although still not involved in CPD Reference Group, has allowed me, after my suggestions to come and speak to the CPD Coordinators (Sec.) Meeting regarding my role. Reminded me that some CPD Coordinators not keen on me coming to their meeting, as I only represented one union. Agrees to meet with me occasionally, always very busy, doesn’t see our working together as necessary or important’.

Although this may be an isolated case, it should be a cause for concern because if this is being repeated in a number of authorities it firstly, undermines the partnership approach based on the 21st Century Agreement and as currently advocated by the Scottish Government (2007) and secondly, the LRs and their ability to carry out their role and responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

The following examples are indicative of positive effects and outcomes of such events:

‘Wider networking opportunity. Staff pressing H.Teacher to have us visit. Lifting of self-esteem of teachers making them motivated to do it for themselves’.

‘It has increased my profile within the authority and in some schools. It has helped, personally, in my ability to communicate and work with council officials/outside agencies effectively. It also enhanced my understanding of the standards required to become a CT’.

As for the impact these events have had on the LRs themselves, the respondents were positive as the following examples indicate:

‘I am now organising the Providers’ Open afternoon (also an event previously done by [local authority] CPD manager). I will be organising the next joint Spring conference and my personal client list has expanded and several colleagues are now doing Module 1. I am enjoying the work and it is heartening to know that it is a contribution to the CPD process for colleagues. Having backing of CPD Manager gets us into schools’.

‘Recognition by colleagues where I work and teachers from other schools in the L.A at CPD events. I know this as I am often informally asked for advice – My disappointment in the system is that I very rarely have been asked for a formal appointment – teachers presently do not seem to want to take that step further for advice in their career’.
The LRs were asked if their profile had been raised amongst teachers in their authority area due to the CPD event. In all six cases they stated it had but one of the respondents tempered their positive response with the following additional comment: ‘...but still little personal contact from members’.

In terms of how successful the CPD events had been the respondents made the following observations:

‘We had over 60 people attend and I know of 6 colleagues who are doing Module 1 as a result. [The local authority] CPD manager wants it to be an annual event. Our [local association] EIS Executive supports us fully in this project and with pay for the breakfast at the conference’.

‘All three have been successful in their own way – possibly the 1st and 3rd more so. Each year numbers have increased and an evaluation carried out at the last event resulted in very positive feedback’.

All six respondents stated that there were plans to hold joint events in their area in the future although one of them tempered their response with the following proviso:

‘...but not at present due to the uncertainty in who will be the contact person and all the new school builds we feel that staff will want to concentrate on this’.

The LRs responded to the invitation to make additional comments in relation to the issues raised by the questionnaire and their answers. The following observations should help the EIS and other stakeholders construct a meaningful strategy in terms of reaching teachers in relation to CPD and CT:

‘I thought that the event would encourage school reps to invite me in to talk to the staff in connection with the CT route and other CPD issues, to explain what I could do for the whole staff or individual. I did send out a flyer to every school through the local association mailing but still little contact, (will try to send out a further flyer this year’.

‘Despite it being around since 2000, the idea of teachers having “to do” [CPD] (as part of their job remit) is still seen as a chore. Many teachers are still finding the prospect of being learners daunting and therefore do not take full advantage of engaging in CPD unless prompted to do so by HT or line manager. This takes away ownership from the individual and also having someone else drive their CPD teachers do not feel the need for advice on how to take forward their own development/career. In turn this results in EIS Learning Reps finding progress slow especially in offering formal support to their members’.

One of the respondents who completed a personal record wrote about a CPD event she was organising and what she hoped it would achieve from a number of perspectives. Her observations overlap with issues raised in the evidence presented above and show what a difficult position LRs find themselves in with their local authorities and colleagues:
‘My own “institution” is an IT support unit for schools (still seconded). I must admit I haven’t said a lot about the LR role although they all know I do it. I think they’ve been a bit unclear about it. Anyway, as we’re planning a big CPD event soon I’ve asked them if they’d like a stand – because we are a major provider of CPD anyway. It’s also a chance for each section of the team to explain a bit more about what we do. We’ve been working on a presentation along these lines anyway. I think this will help them see what it is I do on Thu PM [Thursday afternoon]. I’ll be on the EIS stand, and will be contributing to the event’ (Personal Record 5).

Lyn McClintock (the EIS LR Administrator) has been instrumental in getting the CPD events initiative off the ground and in her opinion there was a specific need for these events as she explains:

‘I thought that if teachers saw that the authorities and the union were working together to promote CPD it would have several benefits: it would promote CPD generally, improve relations between authorities and the union and bring requests for assistance from members for the LRs’ (McClintock, 2007: 3).

To date, CPD events have been held in South Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Clackmannanshire, West Dunbartonshire and Edinburgh authorities. I have attended some of these and they have been an undoubted success on many fronts as stakeholders have banded together to ensure this. The LRs and CPD QIOs have got together to organise and promote the events; CPD and CT providers have pitched up with and manned stalls and number of respected individuals have given keynote presentations including representatives from the GTCS, HMIE and eminent academics as well as the LRs and officers themselves. The EIS LR Administrator highlighted the following example as to the success of these events:

‘It was felt that a maximum of 60 teachers would attend and 45 actually attended the event...The venue was excellent and may well have played a part in ensuring attendance. It was held from 4pm so there was no issue of time off for people to attend – it was open to all teachers, not just EIS MEMBERS. The most interesting thing was that after the event finished there was a line of people waiting to speak to the two speakers and [the LR]. The following day 12 people signed up for CT and [the LR] has had more contact and an invitation to attend a meeting of school members. From the success of this event it was felt that it was feasible to try and roll these out across Scotland’ (McClintock, 2007: 3-4).

Further joint CPD events have since been organised and delivered and discussions are currently in progress regarding further joint events in other local authorities throughout Scotland.

Learning Representatives Connecting with Colleagues

The study found that the LRs had built up a positive working relationship with their local authority and school CPD counterparts as highlighted above and reported by Alexandrou and O’Brien (2008) and the purpose of this paper is to highlight what type of a knock-on effect it
is having in terms of the LRs being able to connect with their colleagues. It is paramount to the long-term sustainability of this initiative as the first evaluation (Alexandrou, 2006) highlighted relatively few teachers taking up the opportunity to seek advice, guidance and support from the EIS LRs.

**Colleagues Seeking Advice and Guidance from the Learning Representatives**

The participants were asked if colleagues regularly asked them for advice and guidance and the answers make for grim reading. Only four ME LRs (33.3%) answered in the affirmative and eight (66.7%) stated they were not regularly contacted by their colleagues for advice and guidance. Asked why this was the case they gave the following answers:

‘As I am not formally promoting my role I’m not asked for regular advice. I have spoken to colleagues who know I am a learning rep...No agreed time-off. Not really started Multi-Establishment work – But have worked with colleagues in own schools (I think productively) and introduced self to a few staff from other schools)....This has been v. slow to build. People wary of union activity. Have out dated idea of union even though members; Most people only beginning to get to grips with CPD etc and LA has a comprehensive service...Not enough awareness raising nationally. I get no facility time or real recognition from Local Authority so difficult for me to drum up business!...I don’t know. I am asked about other work-related matters. Perhaps I have too many offices for them to home in on the LR one. The few who do ask for advice do come back for more. I think they appreciate that the advice is well founded and sound....It’s building up, but I probably wouldn’t say its regular yet. A lot of people know I’m a CT and CT advisor and ask me for advice anyway, without realising I’m a LR as well...I have no idea I’m afraid. Presumably they don’t feel the need...Colleagues have asked for advice & guidance, but this is slow at the moment. Working to raise my profile’.

Interestingly, the situation is somewhat more positive amongst the School LRs. Eight (40%) indicated that colleagues regularly sought advice and guidance from them, whilst eleven (55%) stated their colleagues did not and one participant (5%) did not answer the question. The following explanations are examples from the LRs who indicated that their colleagues did not regularly seek advice and guidance from them:

‘I have given advice and guidance when asked and this has been fruitful but not at all regular...Occasionally but not always able to help due to management still controlling CPD...In my last school a small number would approach me but CPD a v. low priority...Most people autonomously select course/reading relevant to own need...Few know that I am an LR, and we have no time for dialogue...Ask in my role as CPD Coordinator, rather than LR...Colleagues (establishment) largely self-motivated. Occasional advice, not regular...I have had only one colleague approach myself... I do publicise courses and try and connect electronically...Some colleagues ask advice in Chartered Teacher work as they know I have my Masters otherwise no’.

Four of the respondents who completed personal records dealt with this issue and overall, their observations were consistent with the above comments in terms of their negative overtones.
The non-connection with members as highlighted by these negative answers can in part be linked to a lack of experience, in that ten out of the above twelve respondents who answered in the negative or gave no answer have not held a union position before. In part the lack of colleagues coming through the door to seek advice and guidance can be put down to inexperience in the role as a union activist. It also highlights the need for the EIS to do more at both national and local level to raise awareness of the existence of LRs and ensure that they have assistance both from local activists and national and area officials in promoting their role.

The inability of the LRs to connect with members is an ongoing problem. To ascertain why this is the case I decided to carry out a short one-to-one questionnaire survey amongst teachers who were attending one of the CPD events jointly organised by LRs and LA CPD QIOs in 2007. It was estimated that anywhere between thirty to fifty teachers would attend and I decided that I would attempt to survey thirty participants. On the day forty four teachers turned up and thirty were approached to participate in the survey. All thirty agreed to be involved in this part of the research process. The results make for interesting reading and shed further light as to why teachers are not engaging with the LRs in significant numbers.

Of the thirty participants, twenty four (80%) were EIS members, so in theory they should have all known about the Institute’s LRs to some degree. However, as the following findings will indicate this is far from being the case. The participants were asked if they read the Institute’s regularly published members’ magazine, the Scottish Educational Journal (SEJ). The reason they were asked this question is because the SEJ regularly runs features on the LRs and their activities and at the back of each edition there is information and contact details for the LRs. Nineteen (63.3%) stated they did read the SEJ article whilst eleven (36.7%) admitted they did not. This snapshot indicates that a number of EIS members are not getting the message that there are representatives who can help advise and guide them in relation to CPD and CT.

The EIS may have to examine ways in which it can make the SEJ more attractive to read, particularly when there are so many other competing interests for the precious free time of teachers and as the following explanation from Lyn McClintock runs counter to the evidence above:

‘One of the issues which was highlighted in the first evaluation and has been discussed widely at LR meetings is that there is still not as much contact from members for the LRs as we had hoped. We have established a campaign of constant publicity for the LRs. As well as the contact details for multi LRs featuring in every edition of the SEJ, each SEJ also contains articles on CPD, CT and LRs. Individual LRs have written articles about why they became an LR, what they were doing etc. We think that members relate to seeing something in the SEJ by someone from their particular area or school. Articles about CPD and CT also keep this to the forefront and constantly remind members how important and beneficial CPD is. The next thing we are planning to do is to get teachers who have been helped by LRs quoted in the SEJ. This is the next logical step and will help to personalise LRs and what they can do for members’ (McClintock, 2007: 3).
The participants were then asked if they knew what a LR is and sixteen (53.3%) admitted they did not know what a LR is while fourteen (46.7%) did. This is despite the fact that four-fifths of the participants were EIS members. Again this suggests that at both local and national level the EIS is failing to get the message across to its members that LRs exist and are there to help and guide members in relation to CPD and CT.

The participants were asked if they had utilised the services of a LR and unsurprisingly the overwhelming majority had not. In fact only two (6.7%) had. The participants who answered in the affirmative were asked if it had been a positive experience and both indicated it had been and described how as follows:

‘Very helpful because I am going through Chartered Teacher...The Learning Representative is knowledgeable, approachable and professional’.

These positive experiences indicate there is a chink of light for the EIS and its LRs. If the Institute can build upon the good work that the LRs are carrying out (albeit on a limited scale) and publicise it at both local and national level using as many communication mediums as are available this may well stimulate more interest amongst the membership and encourage teachers to seek out the LRs for advice and guidance.

The participants who stated they had not utilised the services of LRs were asked why this was the case and the following diverse examples give an indication as to why this is the case:

‘I am not in a mainstream school setting because most of my work is social work orientated...I’ve only been teaching three months...I have not felt the need to...It was only after I had completed Chartered Teacher that I got to know that they existed...I did not know they existed until I looked on the [EIS] website...Time – Reflective Time – Shortage of it...If I do not know what one is how can I utilise one?...I have not needed their assistance...Not aware how they could help me...I did not know how to access them but since attending this event I now know there is a Thursday drop-in session which I will attend at some point...Because we have a CPD Co-ordinator in school and she makes our life easier’.

The above comments indicate a significant core of EIS members is unaware of the existence of LRs and what they can do for them. However, as one of the above comments shows, if the members are alerted to the existence of the LRs then they will be willing to utilise their services as and when it is appropriate to them and their CPD requirements.

The Institute should note the above findings and the challenge the Scottish Government has laid down to trade unions in terms of developing the position of LRs within their organisations. The evidence suggests this is not happening, particularly at local level. The EIS may have to consider strongly advising local associations to put together a strategy to inform members within their local authority area as to the existence, role and responsibilities of EIS LRs.

One approach could be for local association lay officers and activists along with ME and School LRs to visit each and every school in their designated area and inform teachers that the LRs are there to help them. If they adopt this approach they may want to show a short
A film about professional development and LRs in Scotland, screened on Teachers’ TV in February 2008. It features two LRs talking about their activities, role and their own CPD and Dr Jim O’Brien of the University of Edinburgh discussing various issues pertaining to the professional development agenda in Scottish education (Teachers’ TV, 2008).

A second could be to use a new ICT tool that has been created by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and adopted by the STUC. It is called the union learning Climbing Frame. As the TUC (2007) explains:

‘The union learning Climbing Frame is an easy-to-use electronic tool which allows learning reps to create pathways of learning and action plans for individuals that can be reviewed and updated as they progress on their learning journey.

It also provides up-to-date information and advice for ULRs about a broad range of learning opportunities, and also allows individual unions to adapt it to their own needs.

In addition, ULRs can keep ongoing records of who they’re working with and where they’re heading, while unions can generate accurate profiles of their own learners.

It is set to make life a lot easier for ULRs and is certain to help promote the idea of learning in the workplace’.

A third approach should be to organise joint CPD events as the evidence in previous sections shows they are a proactive method of informing teachers that LRs exist as well as explaining to them what LRs do and how they can help them.

Lyn McClintock has highlighted a fourth approach and that is for there to be a significant EIS LRs presence at the Scottish Learning Festival. In the past two years the LRs have conducted well attended seminars at the festival and she describes the positive impact of this initiative as follows:

‘...There were around 20 people at each seminar which is a good number for these types of seminar and the Mentoring and Coaching seminar caused considerable discussion. Both seminars gave the LRs the opportunity to promote themselves and what they can do to assist teachers. Having attended all the seminars to date I felt a change in the ones this year – with larger audiences and the fact that those present were asking questions of the LRs. I feel that their role is becoming more widely known. I also feel that respect for our LRs is growing’ (McClintock, 2007: 6-7).

The LRs have also made their presence felt at the Scottish Parliament by participating in what was termed “Trade Union Week”, where they met up with MSPs and spoke about their experiences, achievements and the problems they faced (McClintock, 2007: 6-7).
The next section will analyse how colleagues who have not interacted with LRs access professional learning and development activities.

**Colleagues Not Seeking Advice and Guidance from the Learning Representatives**

The teachers in the Women Primary Teachers’ Perspectives study had no contact with LRs. These women therefore relied either on browsing the authority catalogue to access professional development and learning opportunities or being directed to learning considered appropriate by their management team. While this combination of self selection and guided development and learning may appear to provide the balance suggested in the McCrone Report between personal and school needs (SEED, 2001) managerial control is more constraining than a first glance suggests.

When the requirement to complete learning as a contractual obligation (SEED, 2001) first came into force, attendance at courses was most often mentioned by these teachers

‘... when McCrone first came through and it was 35 hours and 20 hours for this and 10 of that and in the beginning I thought ‘Right so you have to go on courses for these 10 hours, so what courses can I go on? Right where is the book and I’ll go on this one and this one’ and basically you filled your 10 hours and you thought ‘Right I've done my 10 hours and that is great’.

Yet although attendance at courses was likely already the most familiar form of learning, management also played a significant place in the women’s conceptualisation of learning. A high instance of course attendance was revealed as

‘I felt that was what my management wanted at the time’.

Overtime, for some of the teachers, a somewhat more thoughtful understanding of professional development and learning appears to be developing which now includes professional reading, making use of electronic resources such as Teachers TV and Learning and Teaching Scotland Websites along with membership of various school working parties and authority curriculum networks. This evolving conceptualisation however has been both driven and constrained by management. One teacher explained

‘My boss thinks that if you sit and read a professional magazine or a professional book, we have a professional library, if you sit and read that, that is CPD to him, you are learning, he likes it if you are reading’.

Management validation of reading was a strong theme with another teacher describing a light-hearted use of the staffroom whiteboard to catch teacher’s attention

‘... the CPD co-ordinator for the school .. will stick up new courses and things but she also writes it up on the whiteboard ‘Hello, new book here!’ [with the book attached]’.

So while reading is now sanctioned as appropriate learning, at the same time managerial control is exercised. In some schools regarding the content of the reading
‘[My HT] basically gave us professional reading to do’.

and in others the quantity

‘It is mostly courses I have attended in fact the vast majority of it is courses there are the other odd bits and pieces but we are not allowed to put down too much, we are not allowed to record very much reading cause you have to account for the hours you do’.

Similar constraints, although it appeared not so evident to the teachers, were also in place regarding the courses teachers were able to attend. Although teachers themselves are able to book places at courses, the request has to be sanctioned by the school CPD co-ordinator before submission to the authority. Perhaps the study participants had not had a course application rejected and so did not mention this, rather they presented the process as straightforward, they browsed, selected then later attended. However, a school CPD co-ordinator indicated in her school that may not always happen. She scrutinised teachers’ requests with the teacher’s needs, school needs and budgetary constraints in mind and if it was considered the teachers’ needs could be met elsewhere, perhaps through peer observation, then a request could be denied.

These initial findings begin to provide an insight into some of the controls that operate to restrict teachers’ professional development and learning opportunities. Although school and authority management teams are concerned to ensure they have a highly qualified workforce, each authority will have its own notion of how this can be achieved and so will value some development and learning over others. As, it can be argued, this will reasonably be reflected in what an authority then makes made available to teachers, a space therefore becomes available for LRs in highlighting professional development and learning opportunities that may otherwise not be made known to teachers.

The next section will therefore analyse how the LRs interact with colleagues and how effective the interaction has been.

**Types of Interaction the Learning Representatives have with Colleagues**

The participants were given a series of options in relation to describing the type of activities they organised in order to liaise with their colleagues. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. The ME LRs gave the following answers: six organised meetings with colleagues; seven organised dedicated one-to-one sessions with colleagues; two had meetings with School CPD Co-ordinators; eight had meetings with LA CPD QIOs; three had meetings with head teachers; four organised CPD Open Days; one had created a dedicated website. Five had engaged in other activities as the following examples show:

‘I regularly speak at CPD open evenings for University of Edinburgh. Involved in setting up a Chartered Teacher network in my region…I run meetings with interest networks…CT Open Day…Set up Joint Union/Authority CPD Event’.

One respondent who took up the opportunity to explain how they planned to engage with members as follows:
‘...I am hoping to target teachers in years 2-6 (those not eligible for c teach yet) as I feel this could be a captive market. I’m hoping to promote the GTC Professional Recognition Prog as a stepping stone into management or c teach’.

In relation to School LRs they gave the following answers: eleven had organised meetings with colleagues; nine had organised one-to-one sessions with colleagues; six had meetings with School CPD Co-ordinators; only one had meetings with LA CPD QIOs; four had meetings with their head master; and not none participant had either organised a CPD Open Day or set up a dedicated website. Four participants indicated that they had engaged in other activities as the following examples show:

‘Setting up a learning team in response to whole-school developmental need...Have raised awareness of role at School EIS meeting and passed on info...Blog created for Chartered Teachers’.

The last example is an interesting development and again shows how the EIS LRs are willing to use IT to aid them in their role.

Of particular concern to stakeholders should be the answer given by one of the participants who could not answer the question at all and gave the following explanation as to why they could not even organise meetings with their colleagues:

‘Attempted this – not permitted’.

Four of the respondents who completed personal records dealt with this subject and their observations add to and expand on the evidence above as the following comments indicate:

‘To further the role of the LR I have used lists of members that I acquired through my position on the Local Association Executive and have attempted direct contact... [with members] ...through our First Class email system. I send details of courses and events and report on meetings. Not everyone is on First Class but I reach a large number of people that way’ (Personal Record 1).

‘CPD feedback forms for teachers and facilitating ways of passing on their information/experiences to [the] Department/whole –school colleagues. Twilight courses in school’ (Personal Record 2).

‘The local authority has been fine. Before the time out was agreed we started having regular meetings with CPD. We’ve set up a charter teacher network with them and have had a big CT event. Now we’re working together on a CPD event. We’re always welcome to add to the CPD bulletins and updates’ (Personal Record 5).

‘I try to focus on raising awareness of the role within the authority whenever an opportunity presents itself – by starting and supporting informal networking groups, by promoting any successful CPD achievements that have been influenced by the L Rep and by joining in with initiatives suggested by the CPD Advisor’ (Personal Record 6).
Karen Gilmore of the UWS is the Co-ordinator of the EIS LR undergraduate and postgraduate training modules. Karen was interviewed as she and the university play a key role in ensuring that the EIS LRs are equipped to carry out their role and responsibilities. Karen stated that since the first evaluation changes had been made to the LR training courses to ensure they are more practically orientated and new LRs are better equipped to interact with their colleagues. Karen explained that the undergraduate module is very practical in nature and the assignment is a piece of action research. The action research is about creating a toolkit for LRs to use when liaising with colleagues. The undergraduate course helps the student LRs to develop in terms of ensuring they have the skills to allow them to deliver as LRs in a practical and progressive manner on behalf of their colleagues (Gilmore, 2007).

Karen pointed out the students are carrying out the action research project to produce the following:

- Learning styles inventory;
- Training needs analysis;
- A directory of resources which teachers can access, which in turn the LRs are encouraged to adapt and add to after they have been accredited;
- A training evaluation tool for their colleagues. This is so teachers can feedback to the LRs as to the merits and demerits of the courses they have attended. This is beneficial to both teachers and the LRs.

All of the above are piloted on two colleagues who then evaluate the LR on their performance and quality of the tools and the LRs then write-up a narrative of their colleagues’ responses. This approach is all about the potential LRs having a go at being a LR before they are accredited and helps Karen observe how they are developing (Gilmore, 2007).

Karen also highlighted one more significant change to the courses and this is project work. She gives the prospective LRs projects that will help them develop future resources as follows:

- The ME students are asked to analyse a new initiative to ensure that they have a sound knowledge of what it is and further ensures the practical nature of the course;
- Single establishment students are asked to undertake group project work. They are asked to analyse initiatives in their own and the Further Education sector as follows - describe what it is; outline the opportunities and limitations for CPD and the implications for the role of LRs.

The aim of this approach is to encourage the LRs to undertake projects that will be relevant to their future role and responsibilities as a LR and give them a fundamental understanding of CPD and CT from the strategic stakeholders’ perspective. Another change that has been implemented through the Blackboard technology is that an experienced LR will answer student LRs questions in a type of ‘...ask the expert exercise’ (Gilmore, 2007).

To test how well LRs are interacting with colleagues, a small number of teachers from two local authorities who had sought advice and guidance from LRs were asked to give an
account of their experiences. The teachers were EIS members and had between 5-30 years service. The participants teach a variety of subjects and perform different roles. One of the teachers was aware of the existence of LRs from their inception, whilst two became aware of LRs once their colleague became an accredited LR about two years ago and one of the teachers became aware of the existence of LRs in the past year.

The participants were asked to explain what they understood to be the role of EIS LRs and they gave the following answers:

‘To make teachers aware of the professional development opportunities available’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

‘To facilitate the members accessing information, advice and consultation on professional development and they are separate from what the authority provides in relation to CPD advice and guidance’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

‘Facilitator with the school to help teachers find out about funding and courses for CPD as well as providing ongoing advice and guidance on CPD matters’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘To increase teachers’ personal and professional learning and advising and guiding teachers on CPD courses and whether funding is available to them’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

These answers show the participants have a clear understanding as to the general role of EIS LRs. The participants were asked what their initial contact was with a LR. In all four cases contact was made because they knew their respective LRs and were in close working proximity to them. This is positive on one level as the LRs have made an impact on their immediate work colleagues but may mean that they have much work to do to reach colleagues in other schools within their authority areas be they ME or School LRs. However, one of the participants explained that initial contact came about because the LR e-mailed all the teachers in the authority informing them that he was an accredited LR (Teacher 4 Interview).

The teachers were asked why they made contact with the LRs and they gave the following answers:

‘When I realised I could get professional recognition from the GTC for the work I was doing in primary schools in relation to literacy’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

This participant went on to explain that she did not actually approach the LR it was the LR who approached her and stated that she take the above mentioned route. This teacher tellingly stated ‘...so that is a learning representative doing their job’.

Another participant explained she is a CPD Co-ordinator, a role she shares with another colleague. She went on to explain that the LR keeps her abreast of developments and in turn the Co-ordinator asks the LR to participate in some in-service training days in terms of explaining to teachers the role of the LR (Teacher 2 Interview).

The two other participants explained their contact with a LR as follows:
‘In this school it’s hard not to make contact with the LR and when I started the Chartered Teacher course that was the formal way but informally [the LR] will come with articles or something off a website that might be useful to a teacher for their own subject or CPD course they are on’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘Because he was in the staff room, he was available and he is enthusiastic about encouraging teachers to undertake courses’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

The teachers were asked what type of assistance they had been given by the LRs and they answered as follows:

‘How to fill in the GTC forms but there seems to be a vagueness by the GTC as how best to fill in these forms and the LR helped me get through the vagueness of the filling in of the forms, for example what to put in each section’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

‘...some teachers have asked me for advice about Chartered Teacher and I have passed them on to the LR’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

‘He gave us books and articles he used; booklists; some of his own work because he had completed Chartered Teacher himself and he explained how he had done the Chartered Teacher course although he had done it online and I am doing it through UHI/University of Strathclyde. He also commented on which books he felt were worthwhile. He was a good starting point for the literature review’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘I went to him about Chartered Teacher and not only did he encourage me to undertake Chartered Teacher and which provider to go to, he has also continued to ask how I am doing and encouraging me to stick with it. He is very prepared to discuss every aspect of what you are doing in CPD terms which is good. He also has a significant collection of books which he lends us to help us with our studies’ (Teacher Interview 4).

The above comments show the LRs the participants have been in contact with are committed, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and in one case a clear role model. This is an important finding as in this study the LA CPD QIOs made it clear that if LRs were to have a long-term future and be a key point of contact for their colleagues they had to be regarded as role models. The evidence suggests that there is at least one such LR and the likelihood is that there are many others in the same mould.

The teachers were asked how they had used and do use the advice and guidance of the LRs and they gave the following answers:

‘...The LR told me to meet with my line manager in relation to this exercise [the filling in of the GTCS forms for Professional Recognition] as there is a section in the form that needs to be filled in by the line manager to support the application’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

‘...gives you an awareness of what to do and the pitfalls of undertaking such [CT] courses. He has been useful in relaying his experience of doing Chartered Teacher through a different provider and this was a good comparison to use. Also for the accreditation for the APL for
Chartered Teacher, [the LR] has been very good and he has gone through the process and has helped me with useful advice and guidance in relation to my own APL application’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘Use it to motivate myself and bounce ideas off him and he is prepared to do this’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

The second and third observations are further proof that a LR can be a positive role model for their colleagues and this will help in persuading even the most cynical and hard-bitten teachers there are professional development opportunities that will be of practical use to them.

Taking this point one step further, the participants were asked what impact the advice, guidance and support they had received from the LRs has had on them from a professional and or classroom perspective. They gave the following explanations:

‘I now have GTC recognition for literacy and supporting pupil learning and with the advice and guidance of the LR it now means that I can go and look for jobs in other local authorities. It gives me a bit of an edge when applying for jobs’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

‘For me as a manager it has been very useful having someone as knowledgeable as the LR which I can access. It has been very good for me as the LR feeds back information on CPD courses and new initiatives that are coming up that have a professional development perspective’ (Teacher 2 Interview, 2007).

‘Very useful, particularly considering size [of this small] school and where there has not been a history of CPD amongst staff, particularly as a lot of senior teachers have not undertaken significant CPD since they left teacher training college. With [the LR] here, you can chew the fat with him about which CPD courses to undertake and his advice and guidance is invaluable because we do not have the same breadth of network of other teachers and schools in relation to dealing with CPD. [The LR] is proactive and acts as a catalyst to promote CPD amongst all staff’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘In this school because we are so small he encourages us to maintain a focus that such CPD is about maintaining standards for the whole of Scottish education. He makes us look at the bigger picture in education terms. He actually confronts all of us including senior management to think about CPD and related issue’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

The above comments illustrate the LRs in these two authorities are having a positive impact on the colleagues they have assisted. Not only in terms of helping them progress their careers and pursue CT but also to think about and acknowledge that their CPD will and should have a positive impact on those that matter most – the pupils they teach.

The relationship between these teachers and the LRs they have assisted has not stopped with the initial advice, guidance and support as all four teachers stated they continue to have ongoing and regular contact with these LRs, because they work in close proximity and have become engaged in a CPD discourse with them. This can be regarded as a significant and
positive move forward, as the LRs are actively promoting professional development; acting as role models and engaging colleagues in discussions that keeps the issue of CPD on the agenda of both schools and teachers.

This has had a further positive impact on one of the participants, as they are now discussing with the LR which training options she should consider for her present position and her future aspirations (Teacher 1 Interview).

The teachers were asked if they could differentiate between the roles of CPD Co-ordinators and LRs and they gave the following answers:

‘CPD Co-ordinators are usually based within a department or school and the LR is usually authority-based’ (Teacher 1 Interview).

‘The LR has in-depth knowledge of CPD courses and initiatives that goes beyond that of CPD Co-ordinators. Thus is able to give impartial and valued advice to both me, my team and teachers’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

‘In my experience CPD Co-ordinators just organise the courses while [the LR] promotes the learning and the advice and guidance. The CPD Co-ordinators organise courses at strategic level while [the LR] is more hands-on at the operational level and provides more incentive for teachers to actively participate in CPD and Chartered Teacher courses because he comes with information on these courses and informs and supports you on them whilst the CPD Co-ordinators do this’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘The CPD Co-ordinator as far as I understand creates our in-service programmes and sends out by e-mail what CPD courses are currently available in the [authority area]. [The LR] is more personable, he encourages you to do CPD courses rather than just informing you about them’ (Teacher 4 Interview, 2007).

These explanations show teachers see a clear and definite differentiation in the roles of LRs and CPD Co-ordinators. The evidence also suggests the LRs are regarded as motivators and persuaders in terms of teachers being actively encouraged to pursue some form of professional development.

The participants were asked if they felt the LRs had made an impact at both authority and school level. In three cases they could not, whilst one participant made the following observation:

‘The LR has made a big impact on the Authority as she sits on a number of strategic working groups and committees. For example, she sits on the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group and that is testament itself to how important she is to Authority in terms of professional development of teachers in this Authority’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

The participants were asked how they thought LRs could improve their colleagues’ understanding of CPD and the benefits of CPD. Not all the participants had a view on this issue but those who did made the following observations:
‘Sometimes teachers think CPD is just about attending courses but the LR can widen their horizons by showing that professional development is much wider in terms of what they can undertake and achieve’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

‘...because LRs are up-to-date on the courses which are available and can pass on this information to teachers as well as being able to give advice and guidance on funding opportunities to take up these courses’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘CPD does not just have to be focussed on the narrow view that comes out of the Authority. The Authority does not encourage teachers to do Chartered Teacher and how such CPD will help you in the classroom. [The LR] does believe in Chartered Teacher and promotes the benefit of it in terms of confidence in teachers being able to express their opinions which teachers have lost over the years and teachers should be autonomous and confident in expressing their views’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

These observations show teachers who have been in contact with LRs and have benefited from their advice, guidance and support see a long-term future for LRs in promoting the benefits of professional development. Particularly, from the perspectives of improving classroom practice, increasing teachers’ confidence and giving teachers the ability to challenge the orthodox thinking of their employers and senior management (also highlighted by Reeves, 2007). If this is achieved in a constructive manner, it can only serve to improve teaching standards for the benefit of pupils and the Scottish education system.

Based on their own observations the participants were asked how they thought the profile of LRs could be raised in their authority areas. Two of the teachers did not have a view, whilst another stated if she had not been working alongside the LR, she would have been unaware of the LR and her colleagues in other authorities were unaware of LRs. This participant went on to state that she was unaware of how LRs were structured within each local authority (Teacher 1 Interview). However, one of the teachers had a definite view on this issue which is concordant with the views expressed by some of the LA CPD QIOs. The teacher stated that:

‘LRs would and should be used as facilitators and mentors in relation to certain professional development initiatives’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

The teachers were asked if they would consider becoming LRs and in all four cases they were emphatic that they did not want to become one. Two of the participants explained why and they gave the following similar answers:

‘No, I have enough on my plate’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

‘Not right now, I have a big enough workload as it is’ (Teacher 4 Interview).

If nothing else these comments show how committed an individual must be to take on the role of a LR because they too must have a significant teaching workload as well as other family and outside commitments.

Two of the participants made additional comments as follows:
'The LR initiative is a good initiative, it needs to be built upon and it must become sustainable’ (Teacher 2 Interview).

‘Funding of CPD courses is an issue. A good aspect of [the LR] is that you feel you can go to him for advice and guidance and will be well received and get some constructive advice and guidance. He is well respected within the school and within the local authority area’ (Teacher 3 Interview).

These comments show how embedded these particular LRs have become within their respective authority areas and in one case they are clearly well respected and regarded as a role model for teachers and school management alike.

Concluding Thoughts

Through its lifelong learning and skills agenda the Scottish Government (2007) has challenged trade unions to engage their members in learning and development that will benefit them as individuals and the nation in terms of being competitive in the global economy. The gauntlet has been thrown down and trade unions are expected to meet this challenge in part by developing a strong cadre of LRs. This evaluation shows the EIS and its cadre of LRs has risen to the challenge.

The second main cohort of EIS LRs is a committed and enthusiastic group. The LRs are dedicated to the cause of teacher professional development and have demonstrated (sometimes against considerable odds) they are willing to work hard, be innovative and resourceful in order to help colleagues. They achieve this by advising, guiding and supporting teachers, firstly by engaging or re-engaging them in CPD, secondly by showing them the available opportunities, and thirdly working constructively with strategic and operational stakeholders to create the learning society that will meet the economic, educational and societal aspirations of key stakeholders, notably the HMIE and Scottish Government.

The dominant themes of this paper are how the EIS LRs have a belief that teachers deserve the best professional development opportunities available and that teachers helped by the LRs have benefited in terms of their professional development.

However, the LR construction of professional development positions learning as formal, often accredited and bounded by time. While it can be seen that the teachers in the Women Primary Teachers study share this construct to an extent, attendance at courses was often a response to managerial demands for accountability resulting in a concern to evidence, rather than engage in meaningful, learning. Alongside this though, the women were also engaging in alternative opportunities such as professional enquiry and collaborative, non-formal learning (Eraut, 2000). Inconsistency can be seen though in the worth of alternative learning opportunities: professional reading is generally sanctioned by management. Yet learning valued by the women teachers, particularly less tangible dialogic experiences (Alexander, 2006) are often not acknowledged (Rae, 2008). An opportunity exists therefore for the LRs to continue to be innovative by drawing attention to contexts for learning beyond traditional transmission training models (Kennedy, 2005) even though attendance at award bearing
courses such as Chartered Teacher can offer valuable opportunities for transformational learning (Williamson & Robinson, 2009). A wider conceptualisation could be based on teachers’ already progressing understanding of professional learning which is beginning to recognise non-formal models such as learning through talk although much of this is presently unrecorded as it does not yet appear to have credibility as legitimate learning, a position which could change with support from LRs.

While promoting the Chartered Teacher initiative has understandably been a focus for LRs thus far, continuing to promote learning mostly as attendance at courses may be a threat to their continued usefulness and at the same time contribute to the creation of an inequitable, two-tiered structure for accessing information regarding professional development and learning. Teachers who are concerned to engage in accredited learning will be generally able to access information not available through their authority from LRs, while those who are engaging in equally valid but alternative forms of learning may be constrained by authority initiatives which may not make space for the interests of teachers as individuals. Presently, unlike their colleagues interested in Chartered Teacher, these teachers do not have the same support and advice from friendly experts. Therefore, in progressing beyond a restricting notion of formal learning, exciting opportunities still exist for LRs to contribute to the progression of an activist profession (Sachs, 2003), as by engaging in wider debate regarding models and purposes of learning, connections may also be made with members whose needs are not presently being met.

The LRs’ continuing non-connection with the majority of the membership is a significant concern. If it continues to persist then it may well undermine the positive developments being achieved in terms of the partnership with LA CPD QIOs, school management’s growing understanding of LRs and their role and the vital role that LRs play in promoting CPD to teachers. Audit Scotland, HMIE and the CTRG have all highlighted the slow take-up of CT and take-up of CPD opportunities differs dependent on a teacher’s length of service. Notably, newer entrants are more likely to engage with CPD than their colleagues with longer service. The EIS and the other stakeholders must be innovative in their approach if they are to turn this situation around. Particularly, in encouraging the cynical teacher, the teacher who has no time and the wounded learner teacher that CPD and CT opportunities currently available will be beneficial to them from both a personal and professional perspective.

Despite, the problems highlighted above, there is much that is positive; teachers who have been helped by the LRs are very positive about the LRs’ advice and support they have received; an eagerness amongst the new generation of teachers for undertaking CPD and the success of the joint CPD events means the profile of the LRs has been raised significantly in the local authority areas where these events have been held.

**Observations**

The evidence presented in this paper shows by encouraging teachers to engage in professional development the LRs are helping the Scottish Government in achieving its goals of promoting lifelong learning that will create a world class workforce and raise the
aspirations of pupils. There are lessons from this paper that should be taken on board. With this and the above overview in mind, we make the following observations that are designed to help make the LRs initiative sustainable in the long-term.

Joint CPD events must continue to be organised and delivered and they should be held at least annually in each of the 32 local authorities. The concept should also be delivered at school level, maybe not on an individual basis, but definitely to clusters of schools with specific themes that meet local needs. The aim should be to create a stronger working relationship between both ME and School LRs and School CPD Co-ordinators.

If LRs are to be the role models, mentors and have a higher public profile through joint CPD events as advocated by both strategic and operational stakeholders, then the EIS must enter into discussions with the UWS to construct courses that will meet these demands and ensure there is a structured CPD Pathway for its LRs.

At national level the EIS needs to devise a communication strategy with two key aims. Firstly, how best to advertise the existence and benefits of utilising the services of the LRs amongst the wider membership to overcome the lack of awareness of this tier of lay representation and ensure the LRs long-term sustainability. Secondly, to promote the benefits of CPD and CT to its members who have either not yet realised or have refused to take advantage of the professional development opportunities available to them. Adopting this approach should help to raise the profile of the LRs and their engagement with members.

To increase the engagement of LRs with their colleagues the EIS should, firstly, adopt the TUC/STUC Climbing Frame ICT tool and advertise the fact that its LRs have this tool at their disposal to help teachers construct a coherent professional development plan. Secondly, all LRs should organise regular drop-in sessions and, thirdly, organise sessions where teachers who have been helped by LRs talk to other teachers both about the benefits of using the services of a LR and of the CPD and CT opportunities they have taken advantage of.

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