

# The new standard for CPD

**Philippa Cordingley, Chief Executive of CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education), writes...**

My session at the forthcoming SSAT Teaching Schools Conference aims to help school leaders, teachers and CPD facilitators use the new standard for CPD to create a dynamic and coherent environment for continuing professional development and learning. We will be concentrating on Ofsted's frequently repeated challenge to schools to evaluate the impact of CPD more effectively; and looking at ways of doing this that also enhances the quality of the process for teachers and for their pupils. Here's a mini blog that I hope will tempt you to join us.

## **Evaluating impact in ways that really help**

Ofsted frequently remark in their individual and annual reports on the superficiality of efforts to evaluate the impact of CPD and the lack of evidence about connections between support for CPD and pupil learning. We will be looking at examples of enhancing CPD in ways that embed better evaluation of impact, thinking specifically and in connected ways about how to organise this around aspirations for pupils (rather than end of the day 'happy sheets'!)

The first ever systematic review of CPD carried out by CUREE, and sponsored by NUT, revealed that glowing evaluation forms at the end of a programme or session were often negatively linked with benefits for pupils. Support for CPD that makes a difference seemed to involve trying new things that, in the early stages, can look daunting or involve some unlearning and discomfort. Such challenges do not necessarily lead to positive short-term evaluations.

What seemed, from this evidence, to matter much more was the way teachers felt about the CPD support after a sustained period of trying to put what had been learned to work.

Facilitators will no doubt tell us about the difficulty of accessing feedback at a later date. Because out of sight can mean out of mind and teachers are busy, returns to follow up surveys are low. So more meaningful teacher feedback on what teachers have learned and how they have used that depends on:

- Teachers seeing the benefit for them and for their pupils
- The profession taking responsibility for making such contributions



We know from the research that went into the *Developing Great Teaching* report, and all our previous systematic reviews, that the CPD process needs to be evidence rich. Professional learning conversations work best when they focus on how pupils are responding to our own professional learning as we try out new approaches. We will be exploring an example of, in effect, effective assessment for learning for teachers in which the evidence about pupil learning arises naturally out of the support offered by CPD providers and teachers' own experiments – at scale across a whole school (and, potentially, a Teaching School Alliance).

### **Aligning everyone's contributions**

When CUREE has been supporting schools in evaluating the impact of CPDL we have been helping them explore evidence at the level of the teacher, the CPD event or activity. More importantly, we have explored the effectiveness of the CPDL investment made by the school as a whole, to identify different kinds of naturally occurring evidence that can contribute at all three levels, and ways of aligning them.

We will be looking at how to use the guidance for the CPD Standard. This means setting out the specific contributions of all of the professionals in this partnership, to create an evaluation framework that works for the pupils, the teachers, the school and the CPD facilitators.

The *Developing Great Teaching* report offers a different challenge in evaluating the impact of CPDL and quality assuring support for it. In focusing on continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) rather than just the CPD support offered to teachers, this review suggests that CPDL is not an intervention but an embedded teaching and learning process. It is carried out through a partnership involving teachers, facilitators, school leaders and the pupils whose learning the CPDL is setting out to support.

If CPDL is not an intervention, surely powerful evidence of impact needs to focus more on how teachers learn and progress in meeting their aspirations for their pupils; something that arises from lots of different contributions rather than a simplistic analysis of specific sessions and events?

***“CPDL is an embedded teaching and learning process carried out through a partnership involving teachers, facilitators, school leaders and pupils.”***