

# INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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## FIXED VERSUS NEGOTIATED CPD: ABRIDGING THE BEST OF THE TDA'S PPD WITH THE NEW MTL

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper will present an overview of the Training and Development Agency (TDA) for schools Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) funded programme at Bath Spa University (BSU). Accredited school-based continuing professional development (CPD) at BSU is offered under the aegis of the Professional Masters Programme. The programme is delivered flexibly via 'process accredited' shell modules that allow for a needs analysis with our partnership schools and Local Authorities leading to unique negotiated projects. This design ensures impact-based project outcomes that are reported back to the TDA. A negotiated curriculum approach toward professional learning has been very successful. Hence, a major challenge is how to abridge this methodology and framework for CPD with the validation of a much more proscribed Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) curriculum for schools.*

### A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Post-graduate Professional Development (PPD) at Bath Spa University emerged from the embers of the old-style award-bearing in-service and education training (Inset) courses for teachers. With the aim to improve outcomes for children, and address local and national needs (2010, TDA) this newly funded scheme offered us a catalyst to 'up our game', and reassess our values about professional learning. Another factor which we had to deal with were the challenging target number of teachers that we needed to engage in the programme – particularly at a time when Master's Level learning seemed to be viewed by those in schools, and indeed Local Authorities, as out of touch and irrelevant to practice. In addition, the first four years of the millennium were dominated in schools by a roll-out of various training models (from the National Strategies) or vocational training models (from what was then the National College for School Leadership) with product as the key, either in terms of acquisition of transferred knowledge, or a recognition of one's ability to be a school leader.

We needed our PPD work to bridge a professional gap, to focus on learning and changed practice, recognising that, *"Learning is best conceived as a process not in terms of outcomes"* (Kolb, 1984: 26) [author's emphasis], whilst still attaining an academic rigour that we felt to be truly professional and, indeed, 'masterly'. For us this means reflection on professional practice, reference to theory and / or relevant research and critical engagement.

### THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAMME AND ITS AFFORDANCE

We had previously validated 'content-free' work-based action enquiry and independent study 'shell' modules, within our Professional Master's Programme (PMP). These set up the structures for us to meet with school leaders and Local Authorities, not only to discuss their needs but also, using a consultancy style approach, to develop bespoke project modules, which were tailored to the directions in which these client groups wanted to travel. Our small, but dynamic and flexible CPD team offered specialisms in Leadership Development, Coaching and Mentoring, and Curriculum Change and Innovation. We saw that our role as facilitators (Heron, 1999) was to enable the challenge of assumptions and to guide teachers to a place of critical reflection:

*"The process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitments as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching: and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives."*  
(Day, 1999: 4)

The action-enquiry model proved very popular. Teachers were keen to engage in their own experiential and self-directed learning (Kolb, 1984; Boyatzis, 2002), but welcomed the framing and external support and challenge that we could give. We found that offering teachers the opportunity to come together in clusters of schools was particularly beneficial. Whilst fairly common practice in primary education, we found this less common in secondary schools, yet these teachers made specific note of the value of working with and learning from others.

Early on we realised that whilst we could entice teachers into the programme with the promise of high-quality professional development, few were actually interested in achieving academic recognition for their work. We wanted to break this barrier, and provide a positive, rather than deficit model; whereby teachers could complete the modules through their critical engagement, attendance and reflection. All were actively

encouraged and supported to take up the accreditation option and we found this a positive means of encouraging academic participation, resulting in a higher rate of academic submission than before. All teachers, regardless of their intentions to submit work at this higher level were required to engage in a detailed impact evaluation process as described later in this paper.

## HOW DOES OUR TEAM ENGAGE ADULT PROFESSIONAL LEARNERS?

An expectation built into our modules is that teachers carry out some form of action research. Based on new understandings that they've gained from reading, discussions and activities within sessions, they introduce new ideas into their work; observe what happens as a result of these changes, and then reflect upon them and build them into their future teaching where they perceive it as beneficial for pupil learning. This links very closely to Kolb's model of learning cited in Zeus & Skiffington (2000:188) – see figure 1 below.

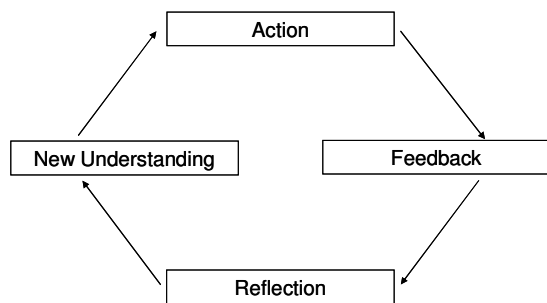


Fig 1 Kolb's Model of learning

For instance, within the Mathematics and Problem Solving Action Enquiry Project run by Bath Spa University as part of our PMP accredited CPD, teachers discussed the need for child talk with reference to the Williams Report (2008). Williams highlighted that children should engage in “*high quality discussion that develops children’s logic, reasoning and deduction skills, and underpins all mathematical learning activity*”(p65). This gave the teachers a clear focus. In between sessions teachers began to explore ideas in their classroom in order to enhance the quality of discussions with their pupils. They collected evidence as feedback and reflected upon it. Where they observe improvements in children’s learning they are likely to embed new ways of working into their practice. The aim is Argyris’s triple-loop learning; a transformational experience, “*whereby there is a shift in a [teacher’s] point of view about him or herself*” (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000: 188). Below is an example of one teacher’s views on the impact of the Mathematics and Problem Solving module.

*“The research has had the single most impact on myself as a professional since finishing my PGCE ..... The dialogic talk (and listening) principles have completely renewed the way I teach; not only has it changed the way maths has been taught, but has transformed guided reading conversations and class discussions. The focus on talk rules and talk cues have proved incredible for bringing out the pupils voice in the classroom.”* (Teacher A, July 2010).

Bubb & Earley (2010) provide a framework which is summarized below. It reflects upon how we engage adult professional learners by taking into account how they learn.

- objectives are realistic and important
- they have self-direction and prior experiences, knowledge, interests and competencies are acknowledged
- they have some control over their learning
- There are direct, concrete experiences which can be applied in their context
- There is support to sustain learning
- They have feedback on the results of their efforts
- A range of learning styles are taken into account

Each element of the framework is used below as a basis for reflecting upon what is offered to ensure that the adult professional learner's needs are met.

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#### THE OBJECTIVES ARE REALISTIC AND IMPORTANT

A CPD project's objectives are devised as a result of negotiations with groups of teachers, Local Authority (LA) advisors and school CPD coordinators to ensure that they are relevant for the target group. Further to this, each teacher is asked to complete a professional needs analysis (PNA) where they outline what they want to gain from the module. This is taken into account in planning the fine detail of the course.

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#### THAT THEY HAVE SELF-DIRECTION AND PRIOR EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE, INTERESTS AND COMPETENCIES ARE ACKNOWLEDGED

The teachers know what they want to gain from the course and identify this clearly within their PNA along with sharing their previous experiences, knowledge, interests and competencies. The tutor uses opportunities to draw on particular participants' expertise. The assignment focus is very broad enabling teachers to choose a focus that is directly relevant to their context. The tutor uses a coaching approach to help them to refine it to create a manageable project.

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#### THAT ADULT LEARNERS HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THEIR LEARNING

At the first meeting we encourage teachers to share what they hope to gain from the module and ways of working are negotiated. The agreed meetings are run at a suitable venue within the LA rather than at the University; although much of the teacher's learning happens back at their school for when they are carrying out the chosen activities.

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#### THAT THERE ARE DIRECT, CONCRETE EXPERIENCES WHICH CAN BE APPLIED IN THEIR CONTEXT

Teachers are expected to read set chapters and articles and to highlight elements that resonate for them in preparation for subsequent discussion within sessions. Session activities are also used to demonstrate key teaching points and teachers are encouraged to adapt and apply these within their context, many of which will be directly relevant to their individualised project or assignment.

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## THAT THERE IS SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN LEARNING

Modules take place over an extended period to ensure that the key messages are prioritised and regularly revisited leading to a change in the teacher's practice. Inter-sessional tasks ensure that the module continues to be a focus in between sessions. The module culminates in teachers presenting their research and findings with their peers and indicating how they plan to embed their learning in the future.

Other modules focus on aspects of their role beyond the classroom. For instance, within the Coaching module teachers carry out formal coaching sessions and are expected to practice these skills by coaching a colleague between sessions. Further to this they're asked to keep notes on their reflections which they discuss in the follow up session.

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## THAT ADULT LEARNERS HAVE FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS

Teachers are encouraged to submit a draft assignment so that they can gain feedback before they submit their final work for accreditation. They also gain feedback within sessions when they share project/ assignment progress and for when they present their project to peers.

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## THAT A RANGE OF LEARNING STYLES ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Whilst Zeus & Skiffington (2000) acknowledge that adults may have a preferred learning style they suggest that the adult needs to try to strengthen other learning styles in order to develop a broader learning base. As module tutors we aim to provide a range of opportunities for learning covering a good balance between different learning styles so that all teachers should be able to access the material in a useful manner.

## LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

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### ETHOS OF THE PMP – THROUGH ENGAGEMENT IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE YOU BEGIN TO DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

The Professional Masters Programme (PMP) at Bath Spa University require participants to become reflective practitioners underpinned by the view of professional practice being at the heart of teaching. But definitions of reflective practice are not without challenge and there is no universally held 'right way' of conceptualising or doing it.

The work of Donald Schön (1983) is seminal in helping us to understand the concept of 'reflective practice' as a tool he purported to help professionals enhance their practice. His work focused upon professional practice and the challenge of responding to innovation and evolution. Before Schön, the work of Lortie (1975) espoused that the prior learning experience of teachers was an important vehicle in considering and improving upon classroom practice. Such approaches reference 'reflective practice' as an opportunity to look at current or old behaviours, beliefs and thoughts, through new lenses as it were; that such new lenses were being created as a result of new knowledge (internal and external) and experiences.

Hatton & Smith (1995) identified four essential issues concerning reflection that included a focus upon behaviour and cognition change that are based upon the reconfiguration of challenges and analysis through a process of looking back.

Kennison and Misselwitz's (2002) define reflection as:

*"The purposeful contemplation of thoughts, feelings, and happenings that pertain to recent experiences. With thoughtful consideration, one challenges one's initial thinking and the feelings embedded in a meaningful experience. With further review and exploration, one creates and clarifies the personal meaning of the lived experience"* (p. 239).

It is this meaningful experience through considered enquiry that we seek to proffer through the PMP CPD that enables participants to consciously evolve in their professional practice. This is what Schön refers to as 'knowing-in-action':

*"The sorts of know-how revealed in our intelligent action"* (Ibid: 50).

This can be surmised as knowledge linked to conscious activities that are specific in nature.

Pollard's (2002) later work builds upon the seminal works of Dewey, Schön *et al* to develop seven characteristics of reflective teaching (ibid: 12-23) that are also relevant in terms of the breadth of their framework paradigm and help to understand reflective practice in its most broad and holistic sense:

1. An active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency
2. A cyclical or spiraling process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously
3. Competence in methods of evidence-based classroom enquiry
4. Attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness
5. Teacher judgment, informed by evidence-based enquiry and insights from other research
6. Dialogue with colleagues
7. Creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning

These seven characteristics can be seen in the variety of approaches adopted within the PMP and align closely to notions of leadership.

So the view of scholars like Bolton (2005:7) that: *"reflective practice is learning and developing through examining what we think happened on any occasion, how we think others perceived the event and us, opening our practice to scrutiny by others"*, is not one we fully subscribe to, as the individual participant's scrutiny (rather than more public scrutiny) is what we encourage and prefer. In that sense we encourage participants to create their own knowledge of what works. This subtle difference could be what we might term as *professional reflective practice*, which is in turn linked to a learning environment underpinned by critical professional learning.

So how does *professional reflective practice* contribute to the leadership development of teachers, knowingly, or as part of a targeted leadership development programme?

In Chris Day's work (2000) on effective leadership and reflective practice in 12 'good' schools, stakeholder responses to the question about how they recognized their school Principal's effectiveness revealed:

*"Underpinning these, either implicitly or explicitly, was their capacity to be reflective in different ways about (i) their values, beliefs and practices; (ii) those of their staff; (iii) the position and progress of their schools in relation to others in local and national contexts; (iv) current and emerging policy matters which affected management and the curriculum; and (v) conditions of service for teachers in their schools"* (Ibid: 117).

Pollard (2005:15) espouses that *"reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences as well as means and technical competence"*. This 'moral' concern is an important one within school leadership as espoused by Fullan (2001), who asserts that 'Moral Purpose' is an essential component of Leadership. Moral purpose meaning *"acting with the intention of making a difference"* (ibid:17). This concept has support from Warwick and Swaffield (2006:250) who posit that *"to us reflective teaching and leadership are both imbued with moral purpose, with an active concern for the aims and consequences of classroom practice and beyond"*. To that end they describe a resonance between Pollard's framework and Fullan's core characteristics of Leadership (ibid: 251) and the powerful link between 'Moral Purpose' and an explicit concern for outcomes.

As is the case for the way in which participants on the PMP are asked to critically reflect with the end in mind, as it were; improved professional practice and outcomes for children being the goal. This not only informs consideration of programme content and pedagogy, but also how we encourage and support participants to engage in academic Master's level critical reflection. This happens through a range of learning methodologies and opportunities including: Action Research; critical reflection of self; exploration of models and concepts, and their application to participants' work place context, etc. Our approach and assumptions of what is meant by educational action research is underpinned by the work of McNiff and Whitehead (2002) who espouse that: *"Action Research involves learning in and through action and reflection, and it is conducted in a variety of contexts."*

In the formal preparation for headship, through the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in the UK and other similar programmes across the globe; like the 'Leaders in Education' programme in Singapore, there is a strong, almost central focus upon training through 'action learning'. Cited by Bush (2008:57) Chong *et al* 2003 report on headship preparation, whereupon participants' create their own professional knowledge through team-based learning activity.....facilitated by a university professor.

And so it is with the PMP CPD, where academic tutors provide information, challenge and support to received knowledge and 'wisdom' through group facilitation and by encouraging participants to look again at what they do; how they do it, and what underpins it. Of necessity this requires complex multiple processes to take place at the same time, as participants consider their practice and actions on an individual, phase and/or department and whole school level.

The four generic modes of leadership development as advocated by Bollam (1999:196) are relevant to all PMP participants, regardless of targeted subject specialism. They are:

- Knowledge for understanding
- Knowledge for action
- Improvement of practice
- Development of a reflective mode

In conclusion, the PMP within the CPD Department at Bath Spa University engages teachers in critical reflective learning through a variety of means that lead to the same desired outcomes – multi-level change achieved through professional reflective practice tasks.

We therefore contend that such a transformative process is consistent with the development of leadership competencies and higher-order thinking skills. By engaging in such Level 7 accredited CPD that is both validated and funded by the TDA's PPD, all participants become enhanced leaders of learning through the embedding of masters level thinking into authentic leadership practice.

## IMPACT EVALUATION AND POSTGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### THE TDA'S REMIT

Ever since the launch of the Training and Development Agency (TDA) for schools' Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) programme from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 there has been a requirement for providers to demonstrate whether their programme achieves *impact*. The origins of impact came from several reports on the apparent benefits of accredited award-bearing in-service continuing professional development (CPD) offered to teachers by higher education institutions (HEIs). A review of the pre-PPD funded in-service scheme by Soulsby & Swain (TDA, 2003) in England highlighted differing levels of success with regards to the type and amount of evidence which has been gathered by in-service providers relating to impact on individuals, schools and pupils' learning. Reports by Ofsted (2004 & 2005) linked award-bearing CPD to school improvement and considered the nature and design of CPD programmes that levered such change. In particular, Ofsted noted that the impact of CPD on schools tended to measure mainly effects upon teachers rather than pupils/students. The TDA (2005) picked up on this point by seeking to require more evidence from providers regarding the impact of their programmes upon schools. Indeed, the naïve hope was to establish a simplistic cause and effect relationship between good quality CPD and school improvement in terms of direct results on pupils/students. Naïve, because the whole learning process of teachers working in schools to achieve improvements in the classroom is much more complex than just providing a good CPD experience, although there has been valuable indirect evidence to suggest that CPD does indeed support this goal.

Indeed, this concern was highlighted by HEI providers of award bearing CPD in Ofsted's (2004) report on impact in schools, whereby in annex 24 they reported that:

*"While recognising the importance of monitoring the impact of their courses, several providers raised serious doubts about the feasibility of linking improvements in pupils' attainment to a teacher's participation in a course and of separating such effects from other school improvement initiatives" p. 12.*

In the initial TDA proposals for the PPD during October 2004 there were no clear definitions of the nature and scope of impact as required within the stated funding criteria for HEIs. This raised the question as to the exact meaning and nature of what impact really is.

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## DESIGNING AND REPORTING IMPACT WITHIN THE PMP

We reported to the IPDA (Coombs & Denning, 2005) that the BSU PPD submission document given to the TDA in October 2004 gave a holistic definition of impact and a deep rationale of the CPD department's ontological assumptions. Within the CPD department at BSU we defined the concept of impact in the following way:

- That impact means an improvement in learning for the learner.
- That the *learners* include *all* the social players and stakeholders engaged in the learning process.
- That we have identified the learners as being pupils/students, teachers and their peers, school leaders and the wider workforce including parents and governors.
- That impact embodies the concept of school improvement within a learning organisation.

It is from these assumptions of the nature of impact that we built a new CPD framework that informed the instructional design of our individual course modules and wider programme referred to as the Professional Master's Programme (PMP). These assumptions of impact also underpin the design rationale of any PMP evaluation instruments designed to both inform the improvement of our own CPD as well as report useful findings to the TDA.

Reeves et al, (2003) tell us that there are many difficulties surrounding the issues of attempting to directly measure the impact of teachers' CPD on pupils as learners. The collection of data relating to impact on schools may also be difficult as the level of impact of the CPD activity may not be apparent at the end of the programme. Its relevance may only become apparent once the participant initiates and engages in change within their school environment and evaluates the impact of the changes that they have made. This is suitable for some CPD activities such as work-based action enquiries, but will not necessarily be appropriate for all activities. Therefore, not all CPD activities will have the same types of impact upon all the constituent learners. The more theoretical and academic delivered modules, such as research methods, will tend to provide essential underpinning prior knowledge for other CPD research-led activities that are more engaged in the school improvement process, for instance the PMP's work-based action enquiry module. Clearly, an action enquiry conducted without the proper knowledge of a research framework and methodology would lead to less valid research evidences obtained from the project and thereby undervalue the wider dissemination and acceptance of any reported impact. This raises the question of the need to discriminate between direct and indirect types of impact evidence and to report the integrated effects of impact evidences across a programme's entire set of modules.

Coombs & Harris (2006) evaluated the literature and suggested a strong case for PPD partnerships to concentrate on setting up action enquiry and change management CPD modules to initiate school improvement projects. Ofsted (*ibid*) and others (CPD Update, 2006) believed that a concentration of effort upon CPD-led whole school improvement projects supported by the school leadership can lead to effective and lasting change. This has been CPD PPD policy at Bath Spa University (BSU), where over 80% of QTS enrolments have been achieved mainly through school-based CPD projects engaged in some form of action

enquiry. This has been regularly achieved over the period from academic year 2005 to 2006 up to the present time. This school-based CPD work and its subsequent impact evaluation evidences have been annually reported to the TDA, whereupon five key types of data sources have been obtained and include:

- Evaluative feedback from partnership schools and local authorities.
- Impact evaluation reports from all programme participants.
- Module tutor reports from all CPD tutors.
- Module evaluation forms completed by PMP participants.
- External reports linking Bath Spa University CPD provision with partnership schools (this source can include bodies such as CUREE as well as potential school Ofsted reports).

Much of this evidence has been achieved at BSU within the PMP by employing a standard impact evaluation reporting template used by all qualified teachers to report their module professional learning experiences. Similarly, all module tutors reported their observations of impact using a similar standard template.

From last year's 2009-2010 PMP PPD Impact Report we established key findings through the following set of identified themes:

The key themes identified and evaluated for the 2009-10 TDA PPD Impact report were:

1. More reflective and critical of own practice
2. Updating of teaching expertise, improved knowledge of teaching methods
3. Increased subject knowledge, increased confidence and self-esteem
4. Informing of leadership styles and strategies, improving leadership skills
5. Knowledge of action research and benefits of utilising research in the classroom
6. Opportunity for dissemination
7. Increased opportunity for children to use creativity in their learning
8. Increased skills and knowledge
9. Improvement in attainment
10. Increases in confidence
11. Improvement in attitude and behaviour
12. Increased sense of achievement
13. Increased use of pupil voice, pupil reflection
14. Improved interactions with colleagues in school and improved relationships with parents
15. Improved networking with colleagues across departments/schools
16. Formulating school policy
17. Updating of practice

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## THE FUTURE OF IMPACT

Like it or not impact is here to stay. At the time of writing this conference paper in November 2010 the future of TDA funded programmes such as the PPD and the more recent Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) look bleak. However, despite this the TDA has actually given even greater importance to the value of the annual PPD Impact Evaluation report from HEI providers due on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010. This has been evidenced by the recent tailoring of the report to glean specific feedback from each provider's programme. For the PMP at BSU this has meant a concentration of questions focused upon the design, delivery and practice of our mainly school-based CPD modules. There is also an interest in unearthing the reasons why many teachers prefer to exit with an official university Certificate of Participation rather than submit work for credit. We understand

that the PPD represents good value for money and that if a positive case for school-based impact can be made nationally across the sector then a new replacement of the current PPD by the new Coalition Government's Department for Education may be likely. The latest DfE (2010) Business Plan for 2011 – 2015 published in November indicates a change of emphasis from the old 'targets' culture to the new '*Impact Indicators*' (pp. 22-23) as a new measure of achievement and progress. The DfE Plan also states that it wishes to reform CPD to attract and retain the best teachers, linking this idea to former statements about teachers obtaining masters degrees and defining success against international benchmarks such as the Performance in International Student Assessment (PISA) and other OECD league tables. No doubt these policies will all be reflected in the new Education White Paper due out towards the end of November 2010.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Two recent national developments have raised issues relating to the future development of PPD at Bath Spa University. These developments are 1) the National Awards for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (NA SENCO) and the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL)

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### THE CPD NATIONAL AWARD FOR SENCOS

The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (NA SENCO) is a category of professional development based on learning outcomes that incorporates master's level 7 work as a requirement for gaining the award:

*"To achieve the National Award for SEN Coordination the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) requires that teachers should meet all the learning outcomes in Criterion 6 of this specification [of which there are 55]. The Nationally approved SENCO qualification should be validated at Masters level, and provide 60 credits" (TDA: 2009a).*

Thus, SENCOS have become the first group of teachers, other than headteachers, for whom a national award is a condition of the job and, only in the SENCOS case, for this to be accredited at Level 7 within the NQF.

The nature of the learning outcomes and the fact that they need to be 'validated at Master's level' creates a certain tension, since the learning outcomes encompass a range of practice, knowledge and understanding, with not all of it easily linked to Master's level study. In practice this can be evened out through the use of the PMP's validated Critical Reflection mode of assessment: Portfolio – with supporting critical reflections to demonstrate Level 7 understandings (The National Award for SENCO handbook: BSU 2009). This would be one or a series of professional reflections on the content of the portfolio of evidence for which SENCOS are required to keep as part of their ongoing practice. However, in order to satisfy some of the outcomes relating to the notion of *high incidence* SEN and those which specify the use of research and inspection evidence to inform practice we make use of the PMP CPD module 'work-based action enquiry'. This also meets a TDA requirement to: "*identify and develop effective practice in teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, e.g. through small-scale action research*" (TDA 2009b).

We have sought to ensure coverage of the learning outcomes, whilst still offering some element of choice in the professional learning tasks offered to SENCOS on the BSU accredited PMP. Therefore, each SENCO has a university approved mentor, drawn from a Local Authority pool of experienced SENCOS to ensure professional coverage of the vocational learning outcomes. The University tutors provide tutorial support for the accredited

assignments, which are negotiated on an individual basis and also address the same the learning objectives and outcomes linked to the PMP professional learning assessment tasks. This is our practical response to resolving this dilemma over the integration of both vocational and academic learning objectives.

But the question still remains as to whether this Masters level work is envisaged by the government merely as a way of raising the professional standards of SENCOs in schools; or are they truly interested in the development of a Masters level profession? This is a common issue for all accredited CPD work for all professionals across all sectors, whether they are engaged in teaching, social work, charities etc. It was one reason why we decided to have the PMP recognised as part of the Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) (DfES, 2006) for validation across the Children’s Workforce (DCSF, 2007) and the fact that it was recently endorsed by the TDA.

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**USING M LEVEL TO RAISE SENCO STANDARDS: IS RAISING STANDARDS THE ISSUE?**

Government reports have established that there was no consistency in the level of training, if any, received by SENCOs (DCSF, 2009). The former Education and Skills Select Committee expressed serious concerns about the role, status and training of SENCOs and said that it should be strengthened. Ensuring that SENCOs are qualified teachers, together with the future requirement that all new SENCOs undertake nationally accredited training, responds to many of those concerns (DCSF, 2009).

Consequently, the DCSF commissioned the TDA to manage this process. Interestingly enough, there seems to be no reference to the Masters level requirement in the statutory instruments, but the phrase ‘nationally approved training’ is used often and therefore implies a linkage to the NQF level 7 that would be sensible for an all graduate profession such as teaching. It was only once the TDA had gained the approval of the DCSF to run the SENCO National Award CPD training programme that the Master’s level requirement was established. The only other reference to the obligatory requirement for 60 Master’s level 7 credits was in an FAQ sheet distributed by the TDA after the tendering process to prospective providers had been completed.

(28)	Can new SENCOs achieve the National Award SEN without completing studies at a Masters (M) level?	No
(29)	How does this dovetail with SENCOs not wanting to do M level study?	Ministers have decided that new to the role SENCOs should complete M level training in order to develop the skills needed for this important role.

(31)	<p>What happens if a teacher, contracted to school as SENCO, either fails or does not complete the National Award within 3 years? Would they face dismissal or disciplinary?</p>	<p>When the regulations come into force, completing the award will be legal requirement on new [as defined in the regulations currently out for consultation until 22 May] appointees in order to be qualified to carry out the SENCO role. Ministers were clear they wanted this requirement. Should an individual fail to qualify within the time specified in regulations it means they are not qualified in law to carry out the function.</p>
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## VIEWES ON SENCO TRAINING

The Top-view: The government set out in their Government Response to the Select Committee Report on Special Educational Needs (HMSO 2006a in DCSF: 2009), that they wished SENCOs to undertake national award training:

In their response to the Select Committee (October 2006, Cm 6940, paragraphs 20-23), the then DfES Ministers declared their intention to make regulations relating to the role, responsibilities, experience and training required of SENCOs and, further, gave specific commitments to both Houses of Parliament during the passage of the Education and Inspections Bill (HoL, 19 October 2006, column 960 and HoC, 2 November 2006, column 542) to introduce a requirement for nationally accredited training (DCSF, 2009). However, as noted above, there is no stipulation that the new National Award should be at Master's level.

The Out-view: Bath Spa University responded to the specification for a tender set by the TDA, (cited above) but also considered the nature of the award and felt that from a structural point of view the professional outcomes and required Masters level credits might be considered delivered as both a professional strand and parallel academic Masters strand respectively. This is reflected in the structure of the submission: portfolio of evidence with some reflections and assignments based on the University's modes of assessment: critical reflection, case study, action research and presentation. All linked to the vocational professional learning tasks required by SENCOs in the workplace.

The In-view: The first cohort of SENCOs in training has shown some resistance to the Masters level requirement. They all feel that training based on the vocational outcomes is sensible since they describe the role of a SENCO well. A key reason for discontent was that when the SENCOs were first appointed, there was no suggestion (or official information provided at the time) that they should undergo this type of training; with news of accreditation via providers arriving late in the summer during July and August. This has been less of a problem with the second cohort, which were already aware of the formal training requirement and have also accepted the Masters level component as part of it.

We would then ask the question of whether there is a tension between achieving basic training competencies and objectives through merely doing the job; versus the professional development goal of achieving a deeper understanding of the role through in-depth critical reflection?

Subsidiary questions might be whether vocational competencies can be generally studied, met and learned at Masters level. If it is felt that the majority of these competencies are mainly vocational in nature and that there is no need for a critical understanding of the role, then it does call into question the purpose of the Masters level component for many practitioners. If competencies determine the nature of the educational

programme, in this case, the proscribed and well-defined fifty-five learning outcomes; can learning be truly delivered at Masters level, without enabling the student's own critical choices in study, methodology, etc.? Our experience of offering our PPD programme strongly supports the view that critical choice and self determination are key elements of professional learning study and engagement at Masters level.

This would be a good discussion in terms of this award, but also in relation to other educational CPD initiatives such as the new Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) and even NPQH referred to earlier in this paper for *training* school Leaders. However, in practice we have had to find a working solution, which means cross-referencing and mapping the vocationally required SENCO learning outcomes to the Masters level assignment tasks at each stage of its development: approval of study, tutorials and feedback to drafts.

Bath Spa University's PMP modes of assessment and personal choice of study offer flexibility in the liberal tradition of Higher Education. If flexibility is provided in this liberal tradition, will it meet the prescribed competencies? Is there ultimately a clash between being task competent versus criticality of the task?

Are these different aims – should they be? Or can they both be happily integrated? This last question will remain since it is a matter of principle yet to be resolved between the perceived paradigms of teacher education versus teacher training.

## BATH SPA UNIVERSITY AND THE MASTERS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING.

The introduction in the Summer of 2010 of the Masters in Teaching and Learning was arguably one of the most significant developments in CPD since the "Baker Days" that followed the introduction of the National Curriculum in England in 1988. Building on the idea that teacher development should be an ongoing process that would continue throughout their career, the MTL raised the notion that teaching should ultimately be a Masters profession. There are a number of implications arising from this idea.

*The move towards a more highly qualified profession is likely to mean a reduction in the number of qualified teachers in schools working with a larger number of teaching assistants and ancillary workers. Ward & Eden (2009)*

The intentions for this qualification raised many questions concerning the nature of a Postgraduate Masters Programme. The MTL was first mooted in the Children's Plan (2007) and the TDA were charged to oversee its implementation and management.

In the first instance, recruitment to the MTL was restricted to newly qualified teachers taking up posts from September 2009 in the North West Government Office Region and, outside that region, to NQTs in National Challenge and City Challenge schools. Newly appointed heads of department were identified as an additional cohort of eligible teachers in National challenge schools and secondary schools facing challenging circumstances.

The engagement of Higher Education Institutions in this programme was dependent, amongst other criteria, upon the OFSTED grading of their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision. The rationale behind why any accredited CPD provision such as the MTL should ever be linked and conditional upon having an ITT provision

by the same provider was never made clear. Whilst the Ofsted grade 1 for our BSU Primary ITT provision would be seen as acceptable this was not the case for our secondary ITT provision upon which MTL participation has a prerequisite for either a grade 1 or 2 Ofsted. This also suggests that Primary ITT providers would also not be eligible to bid for MTL, even where CPD HEI providers may have had a track record of TDA funded CPD accredited provision via the PPD scheme. Clearly, the political intentions of the MTL were aligned as a continuum to ITT with its dominant linkage to the teaching standards, similar to the previous arguments for the National Award for SENCOs. Consequently, such disqualification meant that the CPD Department at BSU were obliged to watch this development from the sidelines despite receiving TTA and then TDA funding for delivering accredited CPD for well over a decade.

The bid to be the regional provider of the first phase of the MTL in the South West was won by 'TRANSFORM: South West Consortium for educational transformation'. The consortium consists of the University of Bath, University of Bristol, University of Exeter, University of Gloucestershire, University of Plymouth, University College Plymouth St Mark and St John and a significant number of school partners. In spite of the ineligibility of Bath Spa University to actively participate in the delivery of MTL we were, however, invited to attend meetings in anticipation of the time when our secondary ITT provision was to be re-inspected and hopefully reclassified with an Ofsted grade 1 or 2 for the provision. Bath Spa University did, however, win a £15k MTL research grant to evaluate TRANSFORM's MTL Phase 1 delivery.

We are led to question the extent to which our lack of engagement in the MTL programme has placed us at a disadvantage. Is the MTL to be considered the only route into Master's level work? The TDA's view is that the MTL is not a replacement for other forms of Master's level provision. Their argument is that if the MTL does have an impact on standards and the quality of teaching and learning then it will drive up the demand for other M-level routes. This may well be the case, although our experience is that we have not found a lack of teachers who are interested in engaging in Master's level CPD. The more important question is; when is the best time for teachers to engage in this type of work? The TDA's view is that the early stages of a teacher's career are the best years to offer this opportunity, as it is the time that they need the most structured support. This raises the question as to whether engagement in a Masters programme is the best form of structured support for an NQT. An alternative view is that it would be better to engage in such study after three or four years when teachers have had the opportunity to learn the craft of the classroom and to have established themselves as an early professional. They are then in a better place to be able to reflect critically on what they have learnt and how they are impacting upon their students and place that in the wider context of what it means to be a teacher.

What is emerging is the view that there should be an explicit link between ITT/ITE and Master's level work and that provision of this nature should be equitable. Are not all children entitled to have a teacher who has professionally engaged with their reflective practice in a systematic manner? There is an argument perhaps, that it would be best to establish a continuous programme of professional development lasting some six years that includes all the stages from the PGCE course, the NQT year and then deeper engagement with Master's level project work (Teachers TV, 2010).

The evolution of the MTL development has since been overtaken by new national political objectives for education with recent implications for the demise of this initiative. However, the new Education Secretary of State in England, Michael Gove, has stated that he would make it easier for teachers to take master's degrees, or doctorates, as a way of improving their professionalism and career progression and this is also linked to higher first degree entry qualifications into teacher training (DfE, 2010). There is no doubt that the new Education White Paper due in late November 2010 will clarify this evolving policy for ITE and CPD. It was recently reported (Guardian, 2010) that he was hoping to follow the model of *Maths for America*, a privately sponsored scholarship option:

*"I want as much as possible to collapse the idea that there are two types of people involved in education – lecturers and academics at university who are thoughtful and intellectual, and teachers who do not live the life of the mind. ....It is part of a new approach that recognizes that you cannot improve education unless you enhance the prestige and esteem of teaching overall" (Watt and Wintour, 2010)*

Currently, the whole MTL project is on hold until we learn more from the new Coalition Government's White Paper on Education. Progression from ITE into CPD to create a more joined-up model of professional learning accreditation is an ongoing project and also depends on proposed reforms to ITE/ITT as a consequence of the forthcoming White Paper on Education.

The key issues identified by the CPD Department at BSU for the forthcoming year post April 2011:

- Will the TDA continue in its current form or will it be significantly changed or merged with other agencies of the DfE along with its overall remit?
- Will MTL continue or is it likely to be scrapped as a scheme by the new Coalition Government and DfE?
- Is the currently TDA funded PPD going to be withdrawn after 2011 under the current 2-year phase out plan? Ironically, this demise of PPD was initially planned to make way for the new MTL (sic!); but now, instead, represents a potential total loss of *all* TDA CPD main income streams for HEIs in England.

Clearly, there are many ongoing challenges to our CPD programme from many quarters. The main challenge looming this year has been both the rapid introduction and collapse of the Masters in Teaching and Learning. It is unlikely that this scheme will continue as envisaged, particularly as the high level of funding for a few cohorts may not be sustainable. Having proposed a timetable for accrediting and joining the MTL scheme with the southwest Transform consortia it now seems most likely that the MTL scheme inherited from the old New Labour government will not continue and that we will have to plan an alternative future for providing accredited CPD services.

This problem is also compounded by the fact that the current PPD triennial round comes to an end in August 2011 with no final decision for its replacement yet taken. This pending decision has now been in abeyance for the past 2 years and all that has been announced from the TDA is a 2-year phased withdrawal from the scheme with reduced numbers allocated to providers over 2011 – 2013.

## A REFLECTIVE POSTSCRIPT

Over the past 20 years the drive to improve standards in education has focussed principally on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Much has been achieved and the current generation of teachers is seen as being the "best yet". However, the improvement in national standards has also reduced the sense of professionalism that many teachers have and, in some cases, has seen them as being merely the compliant technicians of government policy. Bronowski (1973) warned that: *"There is an age old conflict between intellectual leadership and civil authority"* p. 429. Civil authorities seem to want compliance, whilst intellectual leaders argue the benefits and freedom of critical thought. Education is on the side of freedom of thought, expression of ideas and the advancement of civilisation. It is clear that we deserve a better future and that we need to rebuild the self-esteem critical capability of the entire educational profession. In that sense we would agree with Michael Gove's assertion that teachers should become more thoughtful and intellectual, like their peers working in the university sector. In this mission we need to support all teachers to understand, articulate

and critically engage with notions of what it is to be a professional. And that this professional quest is long overdue. It is with this core irrefutable and long standing educational value in mind that we can frame our work as teacher educators and confidently map out our CPD expectations irrespective of where or how our future programmes might be funded. In the words of Jacob Bronowski (1973) our critical observation and understanding of the world is everything; he maintains that:

*“History is not events, but people. ...it is people acting and living their past in the present”* p. 438.

*“...In every age there is a turning point, a new way of seeing and asserting the coherence of the world”* p. 20.

As we come to the close of this paper the new Education White paper ‘The Importance of teaching: The schools white paper 2010’ has just been released on the 24<sup>th</sup> November on the eve of the 2010 IPDA conference in Birmingham.

A quick analysis indicates some of the following issues for future debate:

<b>White Paper Policy</b>	<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Implications for teacher education</b>
Scholarships for individual teacher’s CPD.	Movement from centrally funded CPD to a new ‘teacher premium’ funding methodology.	How do we organize and attract sufficient numbers of teachers to participate in HEI accredited CPD in the future. Do we move back to university-based level 7 work or can we still offer school-based CPD, or maybe a mixture?
Initial teacher training being centred more in schools.	Will such QTS still receive HEI accreditation?	A further separation of the QTS license ‘to teach’ from other more academic educational qualifications.
University Training Schools (UTS)	How will universities develop and operate such future partnerships with schools? Will this open up more opportunities for teachers to obtain a professional masters degree?	Co-design and integration of a range of teacher education services located in a common UTS. ITT, CPD, Leadership and embedded educational research projects.
Move back to a more traditional ‘O’ Level style summative assessment system for GCSEs in schools.	How will this affect classroom pedagogy and pupil/student motivation?	What innovative CPD might be required to support teachers having to deliver a more formal curriculum?

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