Innovation in Teacher Professional Learning in Europe

This book presents critical perspectives on the professional learning and professional development of educators as interpreted in 14 countries across Europe.

Bringing together the comments of European education experts, the book fulfils a need for a better understanding of the changing nature of teacher professional learning in national policy contexts and of the cultural differences existing between various systems. It discusses the new thinking that has emerged in the field of teacher education alongside new models that reflect the changing patterns and policies relating to the ways educational professionals maintain and enhance professional practice. The book highlights that new models of teacher leadership and practitioner inquiry have a strong focus on pedagogy and social justice but are not in place in all countries. It also examines briefly the challenges brought about by the COVID pandemic and the ways in which new approaches to professional learning, specifically the use of new technologies, have begun to transform practice in some countries in Europe.

The book gives insights into the ways in which professional learning policy is interpreted and applied in practice. It will be highly relevant for researchers and post-graduate students in the fields of teacher professional learning and development, school leadership, comparative education, and educational policy and planning.

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Innovation in Teacher Professional Learning in Europe

Research, Policy and Practice

Edited by Ken Jones, Giorgio Ostinelli and Alberto Crescentini

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1 Introduction

Ken Jones

In 2011, the journal *Professional Development in Education* published a special issue titled Professional Development in Teacher Education: European Perspectives, which was later published as a book (Jones and O'Brien, 2014). With chapters from Germany, Sweden, Lithuania, Cyprus, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and The Netherlands, the evolving policy and practice of what was then referred to as professional development was discussed. What became immediately apparent was that "the education systems of the individual nations have … remained stubbornly independent", despite closer economic integration, greater social mobility, and increasing evidence from research showing the importance of prioritising support for professional development at all levels in the education system. The editors stated: "History will show whether the political and ideological changes that have impacted on educational policy have led to significant shifts in practice, with positive benefits for teachers and pupils" (Jones and O'Brien, 2014, p. 1). Just over ten years after the publication of the special issue, it is time to take another snapshot of policy and practice in Europe and to consider what changes have taken place and what the consequences have been. Although not all the countries from that special issue are represented in this 2023 perspective, a number of trends and characteristics are still apparent, and readers will draw their own conclusions on whether or not changes in policy and practice have proved beneficial.

A second stimulus to the publication of this book has been the contribution of researchers to successive European Educational Research Association (EERA, https://eera-ecer.de/about-eera/) conferences. EERA organises an annual conference (referred to as the European Conference for Educational Research, or ECER) which bring together the perspectives of researchers from within Europe and beyond. Network 1 of EERA is titled "Professional Learning and Development", and papers presented within this network at ECER conferences for many years have provided a platform for research into the policy and practice of professional learning (PL) and professional development in Europe. In the 2019 and 2020 ECER conferences, the editors of this book led symposia which allowed participants to consider and critique PL policies in

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a number of European countries. It was interesting to see that some countries were radically changing their approaches to supporting teacher professional learning, building on the growing evidence from research, while others had barely moved from policies and practice employed decades earlier.

Using the contributions of authors from different countries in Europe and combining them in this edited book presented some interesting challenges. The contributors were asked to provide a perspective of current and future policy and practice for teacher professional learning and development in their own countries, giving a general overview of PL in their national context and examining this more closely or focusing on one or two key issues (listed below). They were advised to look critically at the approach to professional learning in their country (i.e. not to present a purely descriptive account) and to align this where appropriate with the current thinking on PL. Recent articles from the journal *Professional Development in Education* (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjie20/current) were suggested as a guide, for example, Strom and Viesca (2021), Jones (2021), Daly, Milton, and Langdon (2020), and Swaffield and Poekert (2020).

We gave prompts to the contributors on the key areas we hoped would be addressed. These were not meant to be comprehensive and, obviously, it would have been impossible to cover all of these within the limited word totals we required. The key purpose of generating questions such as the ones below was to provide an overview of what we considered to be some of the key issues pertaining to professional learning and development in today's schools.

Culture, organisation, and policy: to what extent do current theories of professional learning align with cultural models prevalent in your country? Is responsibility for PL devolved and, if so, has this led to inequity in provision? Has the political context of your country changed in the last decade and, if so, has this impacted on education ideology and policy and on interpretations of teacher professionalism and professional learning?

Professional requirements: is there a contractually required engagement in professional learning (e.g. contractual attendance at professional development activities at the school or national level)? Are minimum qualifications required to teach (e.g. a Master's degree)? How are these renewed/updated?

Provision of PLD support: is most professional development provided through higher education? How accessible is this support? What formal online provision is available? What opportunities for accreditation exist? Other than university departments of education, who are the main providers of PLD? Is PLD support sufficient to meet the needs of teachers in different sectors (i.e. secondary, primary, early years)?

Evaluation and impact: is a linear approach evident (i.e. are the outcomes of formal PLD expected to be transferred directly to the classroom) or is complexity acknowledged? Is there political awareness of the complexity of teaching and is this reflected in PLD policy? What is the relationship

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between PLD and pedagogy? Is the funding of formal PLD linked to evaluation and impact?

Accountability/performance: is there a relationship between PLD and promotion/career progression? Are there national standards for teaching? Is there an explicit link between PLD and teacher performance? Is there a requirement to demonstrate competence to continue as a teacher? Is there a professional updating/appraisal process? Where does the strongest voice of teachers in the country lie – with local and national politicians or with education professionals – and how does this translate into PLD policy? Are there teacher unions and, if so, what is their stance of PL and development?

Research: is there an expectation that teaching is research-informed and, if so, how are teachers able to access current education research? Is teacher/practitioner inquiry evident? Is a critical approach to this encouraged or is practitioner inquiry focused on the school's priorities rather than the teacher's?

Links with current PLD models and theories: in what ways are national policies of PL informed by current international research? Is there a coherence between local practice and national policy? To what extent are school leaders familiar with different approaches to PLD? Is the leadership of PL in schools a high priority on the education agenda?

The COVID pandemic – Implications for PLD: in what ways (if at all) did PLD change during the years of the global COVID pandemic? Was there explicit government support for teacher PLD during the pandemic or did PLD constitute a low priority? How did teachers develop new skills to enable online learning during the period of school closures? Was there adequate support for teacher well-being during the pandemic?

In addition, some specific areas of relevance were suggested, but any reference to these was left to the authors' discretion. Suggested areas of focus were teacher leadership and close-to-the-classroom support for PLD; leadership development; curriculum-led professional learning; networking and collaborative learning; career-related PLD; and experience-related PLD (induction to experienced teachers).

In no particular order, the editors were faced with issues relating to:

Changing scenarios: we wanted to get a snapshot in time, contextualised for readers outside each country who needed to know the cultural, historical, and political forces that had shaped current PL policy and practice. The period of time that elapsed between the invitation to authors to write a chapter and the final publication date meant that we would inevitably be dealing with a moving target: governments change, ministers change, and societies change. The rhetoric of policy is often viewed harshly through the lens of history when we see promises of funding and enhanced provision for schools and teachers proving to be empty words when examining practice

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some years later. Authors were given an opportunity to revise the content of their chapters without adding to the word total, but the final versions published here essentially reflect policy and practice between 2021 and 2022.

PL definitions and terminology: the terminology associated with PLD has evolved over the last four decades, and it is interesting to see how it varies from country to country. For some time, the acronym INSET (in-service education and training) was synonymous with teachers' professional updating but is now seen to be limited in its application. It is often reduced to "in-service training" which has specific connotations (Jones, 2022). When looking at the chapters in this book, it is important to bear in mind that the term "in-service training" could be a shorthand descriptor of all professional education, a remnant of education vocabulary in vogue decades ago, with reference to specific approaches to funded professional education which are narrowly restricted to measurable training or simply due to translation of terms from the original language. The context of the chapter normally allows the meaning of the term to become apparent.

The term "professional development" has been in use in the USA for some time and is closely associated with both school-based and school-focused formal programmes of study undertaken by teachers. The recognition that sustained engagement with new knowledge and skills is necessary led to the use of the term "continuing professional development" (CPD), a term in common parlance outside education in the 1980s and 1990s.

The term "professional learning" has now become the preferred way of encapsulating training, development, and both formal and informal learning (O'Brien and Jones, 2014; Evans, 2019). It is often extended as PLD or PDL to differentiate between *learning* and *development*, and the use of the term may be an indicator of the ways in which policy and practice reflect the more recent approaches toward PL.

Interpretations of "Innovation": our aim was to look for examples of innovative PL. Has any country really transformed its approach toward professional learning? Has this transformation materialised in all schools and in all parts of the country? How were the seeds of innovative practice sown – as central policy diktat or as encouragement for professional growth? Did any transformative practice emanate from research? Was the diffusion of innovative practice inhibited in any way due to cultural, political, or geographical factors? Readers will draw their own conclusions of the extent to which education professionals across Europe are engaging in professional learning and whether new approaches are transformative or simply reproducing policy and practice which reflects political and cultural inertia.

Finally, we asked the contributors to feel free to present their accounts in their own style. As editors, we have intervened to correct the style of authors

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working in English as a second language and to suggest better ways of expressing key points. Of necessity, we have also edited word totals to meet publishing guidelines. This presented a challenge for authors who had to encapsulate complex approaches to policy and practice within a 5,000-word total. To have increased this would have meant removing some countries from our list, so we decided that it was better to have a more comprehensive selection of countries than longer chapters.

We hope that the voices of the individual authors come through strongly in the chapters. The opinions are obviously their own, but the word restriction placed on them in expressing their opinions, and any lack of coherence due to heavy editing of longer contributions, is our responsibility.

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2 A Framework for Analysing Teacher Professional Learning and Development

Giorgio Ostinelli

Teacher professional learning (PL) is a complex phenomenon, and a comparison between different countries further increases this aspect. The aim of this chapter is to lay the theoretical foundations of a framework that will help in getting a clearer comparative vision of what happens in various national school systems. In general, in the social sciences and humanities, there is a widespread tendency to try to rely on models. This is a trend derived from the field of natural sciences, when it started some centuries ago with Galileo's attempt to use geometry for describing a number of physical phenomena and figuring them through stylization and measurement (Geymonat, 1969). In this approach, quantification usually plays a fundamental role and usually the model is held as a reproduction of reality. However, looking outside what happens in classical physics, in situations showing growing complexity together with the presence of interfering variables beyond our control, this way of proceeding presents some difficulties (Shipman, 1997).

Within the field of human and social sciences, as Boylan et al. (2018, pp. 36–7) state, one of the main aspects

> […] is about the complexity of the social world, which is such – we argue – that no single model, no matter how well defined, can ever be universally applicable.

In fact, as these authors argue, the use of models can make sense if we use them as tools, during our interaction with reality, rather than as representations of the reality itself. In the context of teacher professional learning, this calls for moving from descriptive/prescriptive models of teacher PLD to more loose and interactive visions, including only fundamental key references, useful for getting orientation in managing and co-constructing what we could call interactive experiences growing on bounded and evolving fields of possibilities. This kind of vision is based on the concept of interaction in the domain of human and social sciences, and its foundations are

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similar to what Piaget calls "functional invariant" in the field of psychology (Piaget, 1952, p. 4):

> In fact there exists, in mental development, elements which are variable and others which are invariant […] The solution to this difficulty is precisely to be found in the distinction between variable structures and invariant functions. Just as the main functions of the living being are identical in all organisms but correspond to organs which are very different in different groups, so also between the child and the adult a continuous creation of varied structures may be observed although the main functions of thought remain constant, These invariant operations exist within the framework of the two most general biological functions: organization and adaptation.

Further, according to Doll (2012, p. 122), when dealing in particular with education, it is paramount to rely on approaches taking into account not only construction but also complexity and self-organization:

> While the constructivist movement does help us see the efficacy of paying attention to the learner's frame – his/her schemas, the complexivist movement goes beyond this subjectivization to bring forth the concept and practice of transformation via situational self-organization.

We could therefore argue, *mutatis mutandis*, that the presence of certain functional invariants and a complexivist/human ecological paradigm on the background are necessary conditions for the development of evolutionary and innovative interactions in the global context of education and, in more detail, in the practice of teacher professional learning and development (PLD). This is exactly what is actually happening in the most innovative European school systems.

It can be of interest to synthetize how different paradigms succeeded in the education field during the last decades. From the 19th century to the seventies of the 20th century, the dominant paradigm in Western school systems was oriented towards the reproduction of knowledge, culture, and social order (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970): schools were seen mainly as public institutions, whose key tasks were linked to the instruction of increasingly larger numbers of students. Following this vision, teacher professionalism required only some occasional knowledge updates, often performed through some form of training. However, even during the 1960s, some studies started to question the real influence of school systems on aspects like equity and quality of education (Coleman et al., 1966), with a refinement of focus towards school effectiveness, school improvement, and system leadership (Reynolds et al. 2000;

Sammons, Thomas, and Mortimore, 1997). As these approaches evolved, the need for teacher development became more significant and the emphasis moved from teacher *training*, through continuing (or continuous) professional development (CPD) to professional *learning*.

The second paradigm can therefore be roughly characterized as "performance oriented". Looking mainly at system performance has however some limitations: in short, following this vision, school systems are often seen as mechanical entities, manageable through extended standardization. This can lead to some negative side effects, going from low teacher morale to "learning to the test" among students (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021).

As stated earlier, a third paradigm, roughly definable as "sustainability oriented" is currently emerging. Its assimilation by school systems – exactly as happened with the previous ones – is not a sharp and immediate event, but rather a gradual and continuing process, where the new conception establishes itself as a dominant paradigm over the preceding ones. It is important to understand that national school systems include other nested systems (at local/regional, school, and classroom levels): at every one of them different paradigms can prevail, but it is undeniable that on the national plan every country shows a main orientation towards one or the other. In fact, it is difficult to resume in a few lines a process of paradigmatic change that took decades to happen, but for the purposes of this chapter, this brief outline can be adequate.

Following these arguments, therefore:

1. Rather than referring to "sharp" models of various kinds, it seems more appropriate to establish broader and flexible constructivist/complexivist frameworks – based on basic "functional" evidences stemming from educational and organizational research and defining some "bounded and evolving fields of possibilities", here named "paradigmatic criteria", derived from the third, "sustainability oriented" paradigm;
2. More concretely, based on the evidence collected so far from research in the educational field (Downes, Nairz-Wirth, and Rusinaite, 2017), it is also important to define a set of indicators originating from the previously defined paradigmatic framework, useful for individuating and classifying the presence/absence of the corresponding innovative features, inside various teacher PL national systems. It is important to understand that, as stated earlier, both the "paradigmatic criteria" and the indicators are not parts of a reproductive model but constitute a framework that can be a useful tool for our interaction with the context of teacher professional learning in various countries.

In Chapter 3 of this book titled *Using the Framework to Provide a Comparative Overview of Teacher Professional Learning and Development in 14 European Countries*, national teacher professional learning systems are analyzed and

compared based on six paradigmatic criteria and nine indicators that will be illustrated later.

Guba and Lincoln (2011, p. 167) offer a possible description of the basic criteria that characterize a constructivist approach:

> Our own position is that of the constructionist camp, loosely defined. We do not believe that criteria for judging either "reality" or validity are absolutist (Bradley and Schaefer, 1998), but rather are derived from community consensus regarding what is "real", what is useful, and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps). We believe that a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena. The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists/constructivists, simply because it is the meaning-making/sense making/attributional activities that shape action (or inaction). […] Constructivists desire participants to take an increasingly active role in nominating questions of interest for any inquiry and in designing outlets for findings to be shared more widely within and outside the community.

In addition, the development of innovative practices in schools is a clear example of emerging events (Davis and Sumara, 2002, p. 425):

> Emergence refers to the appearance of macrobehaviors through bottom-up processes that are based on local rules and behaviors of individual agents. Each of the phenomena named in the previous paragraph is an example of how distributed control among diverse agents can give rise to new sorts of self-organized unities. To varying extents, interests in such complex emergent events have come to orient new research emphases in virtually every academic domain. […] Within the social sciences, evolutionary dynamics and the principle of self-organization have replaced more mechanistic interpretations of social and cultural phenomena among many economists, anthropologists, political scientists, and others.

The first step is to define the six "paradigmatic criteria" (a–f): *needs satisfaction; meaning; self-regulation; professional diversification; adaptive reorganization*; and *fitness of the global process.*

a) *Needs satisfaction* – PLD is built starting from teachers', schools', and state's needs in a balanced form, functional to optimal pupils' learning (Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter, 2014; Bayar and Kösterelioğlu, 2014). In school, different actors have different needs. At the institutional level, the state often tries to improve teachers' professionalism through the implementation of

reforms linked mainly to the implementation of new methodologies and/or curricular changes and in some cases through some form of dissemination following pilot studies. In this, the state and its delegates act based usually on a shared vision of education, embracing what they trust to be the needs of both schools and teachers (Ostinelli, 2016). Moreover, it is important to remember that for significant changes in school to take place, the centre of the action needs to be located in the classroom. What happens instead in many situations is that the authority-supposed needs do not match very well with what schools and teachers really need. An important step towards innovation could be therefore for every actor in the school context to be able to get satisfying answers to her/his identified needs.

Although CPD is aimed at providing teachers with new knowledge, skills, and expertise, teachers often express reservations against the proposed change because they believe the proposed strategies are not effective or feasible. Fostering satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness can produce greater receptivity towards change, so that teachers come to fully accept and endorse the proposed change. Greater attention on "how" CPD providers can maximize teachers' opportunities to have their basic psychological needs met during training could help to increase the likelihood that teachers change their beliefs regarding the proposed teaching strategies and become inclined to apply these strategies in their practice (Aelterman, Vansteenkiste, Van Keer, and Haerens, 2016, p. 71).

b) *Meaning* – PLD is developed around an attribution of a shared vision, in the context of group dynamics (Elliott-Johns, 2014). If we agree on the fact that the teacher has to be a reflective and expert professional (Schön, 2017; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 2008), it is also important for this process to happen in contexts like communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) and/or professional learning communities (Stoll and Louis, 2007), aiming at the development of shared meaning in innovative teaching and interaction with the pupils.

The idea of shared sense-making through action for change and reflection as a self-monitoring and self-monitored social process extends the concept of reflective practice in a number of ways. Sense-making necessarily involves negotiating meaning and generally requires the significance of ideas and actions to be determined or agreed and so is a social process. Engagement suggests professional and personal commitment to action for change that is purposeful in both practical and value-bearing senses. It also implies taking action to enhance practice along with others in a social and professional setting (McArdle and Coutts, 2010, p. 212).

c) *Self-regulation* – PLD is a part of the intentional and innovative ecologic processes of self-organization and self-regulation (McInerney and King, 2017; Tricarico and Yendol-Hoppey, 2012). Schools are human ecologic systems, and their dynamics reflect this feature. In this context, they evolve through self-organization and self-regulation: therefore, even if they change

continuously, rarely the changes are deep, and their tendency is rather inertial. Only a knowledge of these dynamics and a relative short- and medium-term planning of sustainable changes and relative actions inside them can lead to real improvements. Therefore, innovative forms of teacher PLD should be co-constructed based on visions holding into account these aspects.

Human development is the process through which the growing person acquires a more extended, differentiated, and validated conception of the ecological environment and becomes motivated and able to engage in activities that reveal the properties of, sustain, or restructure that environment at levels of similar or greater complexity in form and content (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 27).

From Deweyan and Vygotskian perspectives, self-regulation is conceived broadly as the product of reciprocal person–context relations. It is defined as the planful pursuit of goals that is flexible and promotes individual growth and social change. Self-regulation is characterized by three types and levels of person–context interactions: (1) internalization and close personal relations, (2) empowerment and contingent environments, and (3) future orientation and social capital (Yowell and Smylie, 1999, p. 469).

d) *Professional diversification* – Innovative forms of PLD take place usually in systems including a number of differentiated professional leadership roles, functional to the management of change (Hunzicker, 2017; Ostinelli, 2019). If we consider an individual school based on Mintzberg's model (1993), its structure (professional bureaucracy) appears substantially "flat": a principal over a row of teachers. This kind of organization usually hinders communication and interaction: a possible evolution could be towards a structure more oriented to "adhocracy", a more flexible kind of organization, allowing for diversification: "The adhocracy approach […] is characterized by a move away from standard solutions; communication among the personnel is the key factor for success in this approach" (Sandström, Klang, and Lindqvist, 2019). Usually, adhocracies require more differentiated professional roles, such as teacher leaders, resource specialists, curriculum specialists, and advisers/researchers.

   Teacher leaders assume a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve. Because teachers can lead in a variety of ways, many teachers can serve as leaders among their peers (Harrison and Killion, 2007, p. 74).

e) *Adaptive reorganization* – The development of innovative teaching practices is characterized by processes of deconstruction and reconstruction and of learning and unlearning (Dunne, 2016). In a dynamic view of knowledge and expertise, their deepening implies the need to occasionally change our paradigms (Kuhn, 1970). Therefore, if we conceive teachers as expert professionals, deconstructing and reconstructing should be a common practice, accompanied by openness towards unlearning some of their beliefs.

All of these examples point to the emergence of new terminology and new contexts for doing and making public the work of teacher education. They also suggest a reconceptualization of the role of teacher educators and a valuable way to think about the ongoing education of teacher educators.

> […] I show that over time, this process involves both *learning* new knowledge, questions, and practices, and, at the same time, *unlearning* some long-held ideas, beliefs, and practices, which are often difficult to uproot.
>
> (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 9)

f) *Fitness of the global process* – Effective process management: it is important that the resources for PLD organization and their format fit the task; that the process is managed; and that there are evidences of its outcomes (Mujis et al., 2014; Thurlings and Den Brok, 2017). Resources and organizational structure of teacher professional learning need to be adequate for the required tasks, and some form of assessment of the processes and results should be present.

A result-driven education system evaluates its success by what students actually know and are able to do. Creating a result-driven education system requires that result-driven professional development programs are judged primarily by whether they change instructional practice in a way that contributes to increased student achievement. The principal measures of a result-driven professional development program are implementation, application, and impact (Krasnoff, 2015).

The criteria described above are rooted in educational research, but they are also included in various documents emanating from international institutions such as the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

> To overcome the shortcomings of traditional professional development formats, various new approaches to supporting teachers' learning have emerged and there is evidence to suggest that some of them are more effective in improving learning outcomes than others. This includes school-based and teacher-led improvement projects that focus on classroom practices and emerge directly from teachers' and their students' needs but also different forms of collaboration (Opfer, 2016) and individualized instructional coaching based on designated teacher coaches (Blazar and Kraft, 2015; Kraft and Blazar, 2017) or matching effective teachers with less-effective ones.
>
> (Boeskens, Nusche, and Yurita, 2020)
>
> Much of the focus of teacher development has been on initial teacher education – the knowledge and skills that teachers acquire before

> starting work as a teacher. Most of the resources for teacher development have been allocated to preservice education, and this is the phase that is most intensely debated within countries. In a number of countries, the initial qualification that teachers earn is a key determinant of their career path. However, given the rapid changes in education, the potentially long careers that many teachers have, and the need for updating skills, teachers' development must be viewed in terms of lifelong learning, with initial teacher education conceived as providing the foundation for ongoing learning, rather than producing ready-made professionals.
>
> (Schleicher, 2016, p. 42)

> High proportions of teachers stated that their professional development activities contained topics for which the lowest percentages of teachers expressed a need. Conversely, in the case of many topics for which high percentages of teachers expressed a moderate or high need, relatively fewer said they covered these topics during their professional development activities. This points to the possible existence of a mismatch between what is offered by these activities and what teachers perceive to be necessary, suggesting that a readjustment to align the two would be welcome.
>
> (EURYDICE, 2015)

While the preceding six "paradigmatic" criteria (a–f) are the foundations of the framework and will be used for a conclusive criterial global analysis, the following nine "operational" indicators derived from them will be used for a descriptive classifying and comparison of teacher professional learning as practised in the 13 countries that form the present study.

1. Needs – Motivation is a key feature in human behaviour (Ostinelli, 2005). Before introducing change, it is paramount to know which needs we aim to satisfy and if this satisfaction is sufficient for leading teachers to accept and implement effectively. Moreover, it is important not only to satisfy existing needs relative to intrinsic motivation but also to be able to induce new needs, through extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Zhang, Admiraal, and Saab, 2021). Last but not least, it is important to satisfy the state's, schools', and teachers' needs in a balanced and effective form.
2. Validity – Teacher PLD should be based on evidences, where possible based on educational research (Cordingley, 2015). In particular, forms of action-research [(Rauch, Zehetmeier, and Posch (2019)] and meaningful adaptation of academic research to school contexts are usually well-suited for assuring validity to professional innovation (Ostinelli, 2016).
3. Organic structure – PLD happens in a complex context (Daly, Milton, and Langdon, 2020). Schools are human/ecologic organisms whose self-regulating processes can be an expression of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral dynamics. Inside them, various actors exert their influence. It is therefore

important for successful forms of teacher PLD to be planned and performed holding into account these aspects (Fullan, 1994).

4. Sustainability – The goals of teacher professional learning should reflect a balance between achievable long- and short-term objectives, commensurate to the available resources (Zehetmeier, 2015).
5. Support – If schools are to be effective in facing today's change, it is important for their structures – as discussed earlier – to evolve from the classical professional bureaucracy format to forms of adhocracy (Dyson and Millward, 2000). This transition implies the creation of new specialized support roles, from coaching and mentoring to leading teachers.
6. Professional learning – The profession of teaching is located between the roles of a civil servant and an expert professional (Ostinelli, 2009). Its proximity to the former function implies concepts such as in-service education and training (INSET) which may have connotations of teacher-proof curricula; more proximity to the latter categorization entails processes such as self-regulation, PLD, and lifelong and lifewide learning. It should also be noted that, besides learning in organized contexts, teachers also learn through informal processes.
7. Frame – Teacher professional learning can take place in concretely different settings: for example, with varying amounts of time spent, contractual or non-contractual requirements, career stages, and face-to-face or remote learning.
8. Form – Planned professional learning can be performed through lessons or seminars, inside the classroom, with participation in projects, inside communities of practice or professional learning communities (Jensen et al., 2016).
9. Effectiveness – It is important to check for the outcomes of teacher professional learning in a fair, rigorous, and shared way (Owen, 2015). Effectiveness and performance are key features in mechanistic paradigms, and for this reason, they are controversial issues: as stated earlier, structuring a system obsessively around the concept of performance can give harmful side effects. Different ways of checking for PLD efficacy which align with processes of sustainable school change could prove useful. In particular, the use of shared forms of multidimensional assessment should be commonplace, where the ability of teachers and schools to self-evaluate their global educative action plays a key role.

Table 2.1 gives a global view of the previously described criteria and indicators:

This framework served as a tool for performing within this book a global comparative analysis of 14 European systems for teacher professional learning. As stated earlier, this is not a model and therefore it does not claim to represent "reality": its function is to help us in improving our interaction and knowledge of the context of teacher PLD. Academics, politicians, and administrators operating in the European countries represented in this book can find here some useful information helping them in better understanding and

Table 2.1 A global view of the previously described criteria and indicators

"Paradigmatic" criteria	*"Operational" indicators*
Needs satisfaction	**Needs** (match between teacher PLD and needs, procedures for the emergence of needs, and stimulation of intrinsic + extrinsic motivation)
Meaning	**Validity** (relationship with academic research, practice of action-research, relationship with evidence, and contextual adaptation of research results)
Self-regulation	**Organic structure** (inclusion in a broader concept of school improvement; linearity; a balance between top-down, bottom-up, and lateral dynamics; and co-construction and positive interaction between professionals, unions, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders)
	Sustainability (realistic goals, medium-/long-term planning, and needs/resources ratio)
Situated professional growth	**Support** (coaching and mentoring and emergence of new professional roles)
Adaptive reorganization	**Professional learning** (development of expert competencies and perspectives of lifelong and lifewide learning)
Fitness with the global process	**Frame** (requirement, resources, training days, etc.)
	Form (seminars, classes, assisted practice, work through projects, etc.)
	Effectiveness (assessment of outcomes, influx on student learning, and data-based corroboration of principles)

locating their national teacher professional learning policies in comparison with what is practised elsewhere in Europe. Since this framework is based on a dynamic and constructivist stance, it is desirable for it to evolve over time, for instance through the inclusion of new relevant criteria and indicators, or by means of some kind of structural reorganization.

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3 Using the Framework to Provide a Comparative Overview of Teacher Professional Learning and Development in 14 European Countries

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Comparing different systems that grew up from different histories and systemic conditions is a task that can sometimes appear artificial. This chapter relates to the results of an inquiry performed through an online survey involving the corresponding authors of the chapters in this book. Our choice, due mainly to reasons of opportunity (in particular, the high number of participant countries and of different languages spoken), relied also on the argument that every author, even if from a subjective standpoint, can be considered an expert of her/his national educational system and is no doubt able to give us some reliable information on her/his educational context. The survey took place from February to September 2022. We defined 30 items in accordance with the nine operational indicators of the framework outlined in the previous chapter: needs, validity, organic structure, sustainability, support, professional learning, frame, form, and effectiveness. We used various types of scales, that is: frequency (never, sometimes, often, and always)[1] and Likert-type (excessive, adequate, and insufficient). Moreover, we asked the respondents to provide further details, where appropriate, through open-ended questions. This proved useful for a better understanding of the meaning of their answers. From an ecological stance, what is investigated in these pages can be useful for an introductory comprehension of the mechanism of evolution in teacher professional learning (PL). We caution the reader that the information resulting from our survey must be considered as an outline for further deepening, at qualitative and quantitative levels.

In this chapter, we use the term teacher *professional learning* (PL) as a broad category including various kinds of approaches to teacher professionalization:

- *In-service training* (INSET), where the main scope is to lead teachers to reproduce some educational practices;
- *Continuous professional development* (CPD), where the focus is principally on continuity in teacher professionalization;

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- *Professional learning and development* (PLD), where the processes of professional learning and professional development are combined to be transformational, and where teachers deepen their conceptual understanding of professional matters and are innovative in extending their knowledge and skills.

In accordance with the previous chapter, we refer to three global paradigms: the first, emerging in the present years, we define as *human-ecological*; a second, more popular between the 1960s and the end of the past century, more oriented to effectiveness, that we refer to as *performance-oriented*, and a preceding third, rooted in the institution of the modern state, that we call *institutional.* Even if it is evident that the information here collected is far from being exhaustive of the complexity of educational systems, in the case of France, Germany, Italy, Finland, and England, we can however compare the collected data with our published article *Policy culture and practice in teacher professional development in five European countries* (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). Moreover, they can also be compared with the more detailed information stemming from the individual chapters of the book. In fact, we ask the reader to consider the results of our analysis as a clue to follow for a deeper investigation on the issues highlighted in these pages.

Needs

The first indicator is about the satisfaction of teaching needs at various school system levels (state, school, and teacher). Our hypothesis is that good PL should have the capability to satisfy the needs at various levels of the whole system. The displayed information includes also the result for teacher motivation, school system paradigm, and type of PL practised.

Table A3.1,[2] the heading of which is here reproduced, shows the situation of a group of four countries practising PLD and sharing a human/ecological paradigm (Finland, Scotland, Estonia, and Wales). In Finland, there appears to be coherence among the educational policy, curriculum, and teacher education indicators, which also is confirmed by the results from our article (Ostinelli and Crescentini 2021, p. 8). Scotland has a Professional Update Scheme, which requires teachers to evidence how they have maintained their professional practice every five years and includes participation in CLPL[3] activities (Forde, Harvie, Torrance, Mitchell, and Kerrigan, this book). In Estonia, CPD and PLD are requirements in the qualification standard for teachers (Sarv, this book). In Wales, there is variation within and between schools. However, the current policy tries to take account of needs satisfaction at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

A second group of national school systems (Republic of Ireland and Denmark) results to follow performance-oriented and institutional paradigms. Both countries appear to be in transition from CPD to PLD. Even if in general Danish

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teachers' professionalism has grown during the past years, new challenges tied to the students' mental health and well-being are calling for prompt answers. They ask for more teacher expertise, but the answer does not seem to come from the latest large school reform that appears to have missed the purpose of the planned goals. The Danish policy only rarely meets the needs expressed at the various levels of the system. In the Republic of Ireland, the policy orientation towards the fulfilling of schools and teachers' needs does not seem to be perceived in this way by teachers. In fact, from our data, it appears that the latitude and autonomy present in the system are often not well embraced and/or understood.

In the following group of countries, teacher PL is performed through CPD (Romania, Northern Ireland, Portugal, England, and Flanders). Respondents perceive the prevailing paradigm in their countries as mainly institutional. In Romania, participation in CPD is compulsory and state regulated (accumulation of 90 professional credits every five years). Schools identify their needs and align them to the existing state CPD offer. There is a link between participation in CPD and teachers' salaries. From the collected information, Portugal and Flanders appear to have a better situation than the other countries of this group; Romania shows a huge difference between teachers' needs and their satisfaction. Northern Ireland shows the most problematic situation, where, according to the gathered information, teachers' needs are rather rarely satisfied. In Italy, the satisfaction of state's needs seems to prevail over the needs of the remaining actors. The paradigm in England can be mainly institutional or performative, depending on the level of influence exerted by the present neoliberal policies on every individual school. In Flanders, the basic paradigm appears to be ecological, and this aspect could perhaps lead in the future to the emergence of more innovative approaches in teacher PL. Finally, we get a group of two countries showing a transition from INSET to CPD (Germany and France). In both countries, our data show that the needs of the state are often satisfied, while those of schools and teachers only sometimes.

Validity

The second indicator is about the theoretical and practical roots of teachers' PL. Our hypothesis is that a connection with educational research and an explicit tie among researchers and school contexts will assure validity to professional innovation.

Table A3.2 shows that the previous group of four innovative countries has high results for this indicator also, in this case in terms of levels of interaction between research and practice and the perception of the efficacy of teacher PL. We find then a group of four countries showing a limited number of weak points: Germany, Belgium/Flanders, Northern Ireland, and Portugal. In Flanders, PL is described as bottom-up (freedom of education). Romania, the Rep. of Ireland, Denmark, and England show only partial validity and fitness in their teacher PL practices. Only Denmark's data show a stronger link of PL

with educational research. From the qualitative data collected, the main stream appears to follow the direction state – municipalities – schools – teachers in all the systems. Finally, the data of France and Italy display a figure where the links between teacher PL and educational research and evidence go from weak to absent. In none of the participating countries is research always, whenever possible, the base of PL. However, Finland, Scotland, Estonia, and Wales data confirm their innovative orientations.

Organic structure

The third indicator is about the concept of organic structure. Educational systems are complex by definition, being also in relationship with other systems expressing their own needs and demands. A system characterized by adaptation takes into account these needs evaluating how to integrate them in its own web of needs and actions. Our hypothesis is that a PL system aware of the complexity of its relationship will better fit the changes coming from today's world. We identify four main sources of influence (state, unions, schools, and teachers) on the structure and organization of PL.

For the sake of simplicity, we will not speak here of the cases where the influence resulted to be "adequate", since we interpret this as a good condition for the systems in their present state. In Table A3.3a, we grouped all the countries that showed at the outside one "critical" evaluation (both Finland and Portugal, where the influence of the individual schools is held as "excessive"). It should be remembered that in Finland teacher PL is mainly under the responsibility of the municipalities and happens at the school level (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). In three countries (Romania, Denmark, and France), the state's influence is perceived as "excessive", while the influx of the remaining actors is generally reputed as "insufficient" (except for unions and schools in Denmark).

Germany and England display both a lack of influence by the teachers and a similar lack by the state (only Germany) and by the teachers (only England). In Italy, due to the last talks between state and unions at the national level, their respective influence appears to be adequate, while teachers' influence is perceived as insufficient. In the last two nations, the influence of the actors appears to be globally "insufficient". In Ireland, unions' influence is however perceived as adequate.

Co-construction and systemic vision are key elements for innovative educational systems and constitute the dynamic aspect of the relationship between the influences exerted by the various actors previously analyzed (Table A3.3b).

Here, a group of countries (Finland, Scotland, Estonia, and Wales) shows a common orientation towards the practice of co-construction, displaying also a systemic vision. A group of five other countries (Portugal, Denmark, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, and Italy) appears to use moderately these approaches. England and Northern Ireland undertake a moderate approach to co-construction, but they result to practise only marginally a systemic vision.

Romania, France, and Flanders (Belgium) show in substance a global lack in co-construction and systemic vision.

Sustainability

The fourth indicator is about the sustainability of the system. The information that has been collected on sustainability, when applied to teachers' PL, takes into account two dimensions, the presence of medium- to long-term planning and the presence of realistic goals. The term "realistic" should be read here in a context of sustainability, where the goals should be not only achievable but also fit the system without harming it, sustaining it harmoniously in its dynamic growth. Our hypothesis is that for being sustainable, PL in an educational system should base itself on medium- to long-term planning and on a definition of ecologically realistic goals (Table A3.4).

Finland, Estonia, Denmark, and Wales show both medium- to long-term planning and realistic goals. It has to be stressed that, with the exception of Scotland (replaced here by Denmark), this group of countries has also shown before an innovative orientation. Four countries (the Republic of Ireland, Flanders, Northern Ireland, and Portugal) do not show medium- and long-term perspectives, but the goals are defined as realistic. The reverse situation holds for Romania and Scotland, where medium- to long-term planning results to be performed, but the goals are not realistic. In the remaining four nations (Germany, Italy, France, and England), the authors participating in the survey stress both the absence of realistic goals and of a medium- and long-term planning of PL.

Support

The sixth indicator is about support. Our hypothesis is that when faced with constant change, a good option for bureaucratic systems is to evolve towards some kind of adhocracy (Mintzberg, 1993). As stated in the previous chapter, "this transition implies the creation of new specialized support roles, from coaching and mentoring to leading teachers" (Table A3.5).

Here also we find a group including Finland, Scotland, and Wales, plus England, where both coaching and mentoring are widely practised and there is the presence of emerging roles. For instance, an important innovation introduced in Finland in current teacher PL is a tutor–teacher model. In 2018–2020, altogether 2,500 state-funded tutor–teacher positions were created. A corresponding form of education provided teachers with support to improve their digital skills, inclusive education management competencies, and expertise in supporting students' learning of transversal competences. In Wales, coaching and mentoring are important for key roles (e.g. newly qualified teachers and new school leaders). Mentoring can be implicit (undertaken informally by colleagues within schools) or formal, on a school-by-school

basis (e.g. where a Head of Department supports another colleague). In Denmark and Portugal, coaching plays an important role, while the same holds for mentoring in Germany and Estonia. Both coaching and mentoring are practised in Flanders. In Denmark, Portugal, and Estonia, new professional roles are emerging. For instance, in Portugal, new roles such as Head of Department and Advisor for Teacher Education are appearing. In Germany, mentoring takes place in the second, practical stage of the German teacher education system. In Flanders, there are some ad hoc initiatives. In Estonia, every school has to develop its school development vision and school curriculum (based on the state curriculum) in a collaboration between teachers and other stakeholders. Teacher–initial teacher education has a strong component of research (classroom research) and the teacher is seen as a reflective practitioner and researcher. The information we collected on Italy, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and France shows that in these educational systems the practise of coaching and mentoring is marginal. Only in France, some innovative roles are emerging and some new actors/coordinators for CPD still exist in specific areas locally. In the Republic of Ireland, coaching and mentoring play an important role in PLD of leaders and less so for newly qualified teachers. Mentoring roles in Romania are beginning to be operationalized by mainly addressing the professional induction of newly qualified teachers. Coaching roles are generally absent, and there are no other emerging roles in PL.

Professional learning

The sixth indicator is about the presence of a long-term vision of PL and the development of teachers' expertise. In this perspective, PL should be part of a lifelong and lifewide learning strategies (Table A3.6).

Estonia, Scotland, and Wales combine visions oriented towards lifelong and lifewide learning with a PL oriented towards the development of expertise in teaching. In Estonia, as described in Chapter 4, based on a long-term vision of education, teachers are seen as lifelong learners inside an open educational space. In Germany and Romania, PL is also oriented towards expertise. However, for the former, this happens in a rather traditional way, and for the latter, only partially in concordance with the other two criteria. Even if oriented towards lifelong and lifewide learning, PL in Denmark appears only partially effective in developing expertise. For the remaining countries (Finland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Flanders, and England), the expressed evaluation of the orientation towards expertise in PL is of partial effectiveness. Finland, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Portugal show a PL orientation towards both lifelong and lifewide learning, while in Italy and Flanders, PL is part of a lifelong but not of a lifewide strategy. In England, PL is usually not part neither of a lifelong or a lifewide learning strategy. For France, PL is somewhat ineffective in the

development of expert teaching, and, as in England, it is neither a part of a lifelong or lifewide learning strategy. From the information collected through the open-ended questions, it appears to be improving, though there is a long way to go.

Frame

The seventh indicator is about the frame of PL. Our hypothesis is that the presence of adequate investments is one of the foundations on which to build up an innovative approach to teacher PL. The information collected is about the resources available and on the compulsoriness of PL (Table A3.7).

In Denmark, Finland, Wales, and Estonia, the resources appear to be "somewhat adequate" (time resources in Estonia "quite adequate"). In Denmark, in 2014, a national goal was defined stating that in 2020 95% of the teaching hours should have been taught by teachers, who have achieved subject-oriented competencies, but more general professional development is not compulsory. In Finland, teachers are allocated three days per year for PL, but Finnish teachers and principals participate actively in voluntary professional development plans (PDPs) (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). For example, between 2014 and 2017 80% of primary teachers, 88% of secondary teachers, and 65% of vocational teachers were participating in voluntary PDPs. In Wales, 5 days/year are mandatory, when the school is closed for pupils' holidays. These days are often used for PL, but teacher professional learning is not limited to them. Further days can be added for initiatives like the introduction of a new curriculum. In Estonia, compulsoriness depends on schools. Usually, courses take place during school holidays and are paid as working days for teachers. In the Republic of Ireland and England, economic resources are considered "somewhat adequate". For the former, time resources appear to be "inadequate" and for the latter "marginally adequate". PL is compulsory only in England. In a group of three countries (Flanders, Scotland, and Portugal), time and economic resources seem to be only marginally adequate. Only in Flanders PL is not compulsory and depends on the professionalization policy/plan of the school, funded by the state. In Portugal, teachers need to attend PL to progress in their career for a total that cannot be less than 25 hours, (in the 5th career level) and 50 hours (in the remaining nine career levels). In Italy, PL is not compulsory and the economic resources are described as "Marginally adequate", while time resources are described as "inadequate". Four countries (Northern Ireland, France, Germany, and Romania) declare that economic and time resources are inadequate. Romania and Germany state that PL is compulsory, while France and Northern Ireland not. In France, it is compulsory only at the primary school level, summing up to 18 hours per year. In Romania, there is no specific number of days per year, but teachers have to accumulate compulsorily 90 professional credits through participation in CPD every 5 years.

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Form

The eighth indicator relates to PL practice in each education system. Our hypothesis is that the presence of some degree of differentiation and variety in the used practices indicates that learning probably happens in a more purposeful way (Table A3.8).

A first big group of countries, including Finland, the Republic of Ireland, Flanders, Estonia, Denmark, Scotland, England, Portugal, and Wales shows a high degree of differentiation, and approaches such as communities of practice, innovative projects, coaching, and mentoring appear to be common practice. In Finland, in addition to three in-service days, there are 120 hours for co-design (development of the curriculum), consultations, and home-school co-operation. In Flanders, teachers follow mainly off-site courses (TALIS, 2009). In Estonia, all forms of PL and CPD are used. The Lifelong Learning Strategy Document uses keywords to highlight learner-centredness, key competencies, problem-solving skills, and teamwork. The practice of individual approaches to learners, the role of the teacher in developing key competencies, and supporting the learner to become a self-directed learner are also promoted. Even if the global picture appears to be encouraging, this is an issue deserving further deepening and investigation for a better understanding of the relationship between used approach and effects on teaching. The following group of countries (Romania, Germany, and France) shows less differentiation and the prevalence of lessons, courses, and workshops. In Germany, all approaches can be found, but courses, mentoring, and workshops are dominant. In France, the practice of workshops is growing, but their share is presently quite marginal. In Italy, PL is practised mainly through courses (workshop, action-research, or coaching only rarely), while in Northern Ireland it holds the reverse. Here, PL takes place mainly via school workshops that can be half-day sessions, often hosted by senior members of staff or by an outside agency.

Effectiveness

The ninth indicator is about the evaluation of the effectiveness of PL. The information resulting from this indicator concerns the presence of any kind of assessment, of quality management of PL and of collected data at the various levels of the school system. Our hypothesis is that the presence of a system of evaluation collecting information at different levels of the system should allow for better management and better knowledge of PL effects (Table A3.9).

Six countries (Estonia, England, Portugal, Finland, Flanders, and Wales) have both evaluation of PL and quality management. Between them, only Estonia, England, and Portugal collect data at the various levels of the system: Finland, Flanders, and Wales perform this task at the school and consortium levels. In Estonia, data is collected by local governments and the Ministry of Education office (Harno). In Flanders, there are at present no central/national

tests, but they are in course of development. Romania and Scotland show that PL is not assessed but they have in place quality-evaluation systems, with the data on PL being collected both at the state and school levels. In Germany, Italy, France, Denmark, and Northern Ireland, there is neither assessment nor quality management of PL. Data are collected at the state level (Germany, Italy, and France); the state and school levels (Denmark); and the state, school, and teacher levels (Northern Ireland). In Germany, there are differences between the 16 federal states. In Denmark, a national evaluation program has been set up as part of the most recent national school reform and this program has evaluated the effectiveness of the competence development initiative. But overall, the general strategy to professional development is not being evaluated. In the Republic of Ireland, PL is evaluated, but there is not any form of quality management. The data are collected only at the state level. Evaluation is one of the main topics at present. Teachers give an assessment on courses/workshops they attend.

At this point, it is interesting to analyze every country individually. We propose here a global synthesis, where the information resulting from the nine indicators of every nation is classified as "strong point", "could be improved", or "weak point". We do not mean for this classification to be exhaustive and/or definitive: we intend it only as a clue aimed at fostering more research and attention to the issues emerging from our analysis.

In ***Finland***, PLD appears to be the usual approach to teacher PL, and the main paradigm in the school system is referred as human/ecological. The information we were able to collect here on the Finnish PL system is in accordance with our previous research (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). Here, the reader can find the key points of the Finnish PL system:

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Full needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *PL fits the task* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Coaching and emerging roles* • *Balanced influence on PL from the various actors* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Economic and time resources* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment*	• *Less influence of schools on PL* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Presence of mentors in schools* • *Increasing lack of economic resources* • *Quality management*	

Estonia shows a picture very similar to the Finnish one. Here also PLD appears to prevail and the paradigm results mainly of human/ecological type. In this case, too, the reader can find a brief synthesis of the characteristics of the Estonian system:

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Full needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *PL fits the task* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Mentoring, emerging roles* • *Balanced influence on PL from the various actors* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Time resources* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *Coaching* • *Need for economic resources*	

Scotland shares various common points with the two preceding countries: PLD appears to be the more common approach to PL and the main paradigm results to be human/ecological.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Full needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *PL fits the task* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Coaching, mentoring, emerging roles* • *Balanced influence on PL exc. teachers* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Time resources* • *Innovative Forms of PL* • *Quality management*	• *More influence on PL by teachers* • *More realistic goals* • *Need for more resources* • *PL assessment*	

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Wales shows a picture very similar to the preceding ones. Here also PLD appears to prevail and the paradigm results mainly of human/ecological type.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Full needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *PL fits the task* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Coaching, mentoring, and emerging roles* • *Balanced influence on PL from the various actors* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Innovative forms of PLD* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *Need for more resources*	

In ***Denmark***, PL appears to be in transition from CPD to PLD, while the basic paradigm results as performance-oriented.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Medium- to long-term planning* • *PL based on educational research* • *Realistic goals* • *Coaching, emerging roles* • *Only school influence on PL is deemed as adequate* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *Teacher motivation* • *Partial needs satisfaction* • *PL foundation on evidence* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Too much influence from the state, too less from teachers and unions* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Extension of mentoring* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers to be investigated* • *Need for more resources* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	

In ***Flanders***, teacher PL is practised as CPD, while the global paradigm in this school system is perceived as human/ecological.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *State's needs satisfaction* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *Realistic goals* • *Coaching and mentoring* • *State's influence on PL* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Lifelong learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *Schools' and teachers' needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Resources*	*Teacher and unions influence on PL is insufficient* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Absence of emerging roles* • *Absence of lifewide learning*

Portugal practises CPD, the paradigm is mainly institutional.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *PL based on educational research* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL fits the task* • *Realistic goals* • *Coaching and emerging roles* • *Balanced influence on PL exc. schools* • *Co-construction* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *Needs fulfilment at all levels in the system* • *PL foundations on evidence* • *Less influence of schools on PL* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Extension of mentoring* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Need for more resources*	• *Absence of medium-to long-term planning*

In the ***Republic of Ireland (RoI)***, PL appears to be in transition from CPD to PLD, while the basic paradigm is perceived as institutional.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *State's needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL fits the task* • *Realistic goals* • *Balanced influence on PL from the various actors* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL*	• *Schools' and teachers' needs fulfilment* • *PL foundation on educational research and evidence* • *Need for more resources* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Economic resources* • *PL assessment*	• *Absence of medium- to long-term planning* • *Coaching, mentoring, emerging roles* • *Time resources* • *Quality management*

In ***England***, PL appears to be practised mainly in the form of CPD, and the paradigm is perceived as in transition from institutional to performance-oriented. The data from England confirm globally the information present in our article on five European countries (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021).

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *Schools' needs satisfaction* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Coaching, mentoring, and emerging roles* • *State's and schools' influence on PL* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*	• *States' and teachers' needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL foundation on educational research and evidence* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Time resources*	*Low teachers' and union's influence on PL* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Realistic goals*

In ***Romania***, PL appears to have globally the form of CPD and the paradigm is perceived as institutional.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *States' needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL fits the task* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Lifelong learning* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers*	• *Schools' needs satisfaction* • *PL foundation on educational research and evidence* • *Need for more resources* • *Co-construction* • *More realistic goals* • *Quality management* • *Introducing innovative forms of PLD beyond action-research*	*Teachers' needs satisfaction* • *Unbalanced influence on PL from the various actors: too much state and too less school and teachers* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Absence of coaching and emerging roles* • *Lifewide learning* • *Resources* • *PLD assessment*

In ***Northern Ireland***, PL appears to have the form of CPD and the global paradigm is perceived as institutional.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning*	• *State's and schools' needs* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Coaching and mentoring* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers*	*Teachers' needs* • *Influence on PL from all the actors* • *Emerging roles* • *Resources* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *PLD assessment* • *Quality management*

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In ***Germany***, PL is undergoing a transformation from INSET to CPD, and its general paradigm results to be institutional. The collected data fit with the information present in our published article (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021).

Strong points	*Could be improved*	*Weak points*
• *State's needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *Mentoring* • *Schools' and union's influences on PL* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers*	• *Schools' and teachers' needs* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Coaching*	• *State's and teachers' influence on PL* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Emerging roles* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *Need for more resources*

PL in ***France*** appears to be in transition from INSET to CPD. The basic paradigm is institutional. The gathered information on the French PL system is in accordance with our published article (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021).

Strong points	*Could be improved*	Weak points
• *State's needs satisfaction* • *Emerging roles*	• *Schools' and teachers' needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL based on educational research and evidence* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Coaching and mentoring* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers*	• *Unbalanced influence on PL from the various actors: too much state and too less schools and teachers* • *Lifelong and lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management* • *Resources*

In ***Italy***, PL appears to have the form of CPD, and the basic paradigm is of institutional type. Also, for Italy, the information present in our previously published article is in accordance with the gathered data here exposed.

Strong points	*Could be improved*	Weak points
• *Lifelong learning*	• *Full needs satisfaction* • *Teacher motivation* • *PL effectiveness in fitting the task* • *Coaching and mentoring* • *PL ability to develop expertise in teachers* • *Co-construction* • *Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral* • *Economic resources* • *PL foundation on educational research and evidence*	• *Lack of influence on PL from teachers* • *Medium- to long-term planning* • *Realistic goals* • *Emerging roles* • *Lifewide learning* • *Innovative forms of PL* • *Time resources* • *PL assessment* • *Quality management*

Conclusion

While reading the data as a whole, it is possible to identify four main groups of countries. We could call the first "innovation oriented", the second "in transition", the third "moving", and the fourth "inertial". The first group shows the use of PLD; the reference to a human/ecological paradigm; satisfying the needs of the various actors in the system; and a relationship between professional learning, educational research, and evidence from the field. The group also displays a systemic organic structure with the participation of the various actors and a co-constructive approach, attention to sustainability, the practice of coaching and mentoring, and the emergence of new roles. In these countries, professional learning is seen as part of lifelong and lifewide learning, there are differentiated approaches to professional learning, adequate resources are allocated to support PL, and there is some form of assessment or evaluation of the effects of professional learning. In this group, we find Finland, Estonia, Scotland, and Wales.

The second group embraces countries "in transition" and includes Denmark, Flanders, and Portugal. Its data are less homogeneous than the ones of the first group. Denmark appears at present to be changing its PL approach from CPD to PLD, while Portugal and Flanders show a CPD approach. Looking only at these data, only Denmark should be considered "in transition". However, taking into account the remaining information, it appears that Flanders and Portugal are also expressing some interesting innovative trends, like the presence of a prevailing human/ecological paradigm (Flanders), the links of PL with educational research, the use of innovative forms of PL, co-construction, the presence of realistic goals, and a relatively small number of weak points.

In the third group – that includes "moving" countries – we can find the Republic of Ireland, England, Germany, Romania, and Northern Ireland. All these nations are trying to change their approach to teacher PL. Here, we can find countries evolving from CPD to PLD (Republic of Ireland), while others practise CPD (England, Northern Ireland, and Romania) and still others are in transition from INSET to CPD (Germany). The panorama is many-sided, going from big countries like Germany, trying to evolve from a well-established system that does not give today the expected results, to nations like Romania where the state still has huge influence on teacher PL. A particular case is the English one, showing a mix of experiences, between state policies oriented toward performance and a rather widespread school culture still inspired by an institutional paradigm.

In the last "inertial" group, we find France and Italy. In accordance with our previously published article (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021), these two countries share a centralistic/institutional kind of policy, including, in the case of Italy, negotiation talks between state and unions.[4] This contributes in a substantial way to the inertia shown by these two national educational systems, in particular, for what concerns teacher PL. A balance in the influence of the various actors (state, schools, teachers, and unions) at the various levels of the system is an important pre-condition for successful teacher PL, but this is not

the case in neither of the two countries. However, considering the use of innovative forms of PLD as a clue testifying a trend towards evolution in teacher PL, it is possible that France and Italy – where this trend is actually only marginal – are slowly starting to change their way in performing teacher PL.

Appendix

Table A3.1 Needs, motivation, paradigm, and type of PL

Country	*State's needs*	*School needs*	*Teacher needs*	*Motivation for PL*	*Paradigm*	*Type of PL*
Finland	Often	Often	Often	Often	Ecological	PLD
Scotland	Often	Often	Often	Often	Ecological	PLD
Estonia	Often	Often	Often	Often	Ecological	PLD
Wales	Always	Often	Often	Always	Ecological	PLD
Denmark	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Performance	PLD/ CPD
Rep. of Ireland	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often	Institution	PLD/ CPD
Romania	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Institution	CPD
Northern Ireland	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never	Sometimes	Institution	CPD
Portugal	Often	Often	Often	Always	Institution	CPD
England	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Institution/ Performance	CPD
Italy	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Institution	CPD
Belgium/ Flanders	Often	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Ecological	CPD
Germany	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Institution	INSET-CPD
France	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Institution	INSET-CPD

Table A3.2 Research base, evidences, and effectiveness of PL

Country	*PL based on education research*	*PL based on evidence*	*PL fits the task*
Finland	Always	Always	Always
Scotland	Often	Often	Often
Estonia	Often	Always	Often
Wales	Often	Often	Often
Germany	Often	Often	Sometimes
Belgium/Flanders	Often	Often	Sometimes
Northern Ireland	Often	Always	Sometimes
Portugal	Often	Sometimes	Often
Romania	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often
Rep. of Ireland	Sometimes	Sometimes	Often
Denmark	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes
England	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
France	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never
Italy	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes

Table A3.3a Influences on PL

Country	*State's influence in PL*	*Ind. schools' influence in PL*	*Teachers' influence in PL*	*Teachers unions' influence in PL*
Finland	Adequate	Excessive	Adequate	Adequate
Estonia	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Scotland	Adequate	Adequate	Insufficient	Adequate
Portugal	Adequate	Excessive	Adequate	Adequate
Wales	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Romania	Excessive	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
Denmark	Excessive	Adequate	Insufficient	Adequate
France	Excessive	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
Flanders (Belgium)	Adequate	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
Germany	Insufficient	Adequate	Insufficient	Adequate
England	Adequate	Adequate	Insufficient	Insufficient
Italy	Adequate	Adequate	Insufficient	Adequate
Republic of Ireland	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Adequate
Northern Ireland	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient

Table A3.3b Co-construction and systemic integration

Country	*Co-construction*	*Integration of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral*
Finland	Good	Good
Estonia	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
Portugal	Moderate	Moderate
Denmark	Moderate	Moderate
Germany	Moderate	Moderate
Republic of Ireland	Moderate	Moderate
Italy	Moderate	Moderate
England	Moderate	Marginal
Northern Ireland	Moderate	Marginal
Romania	Marginal	Absent
France	Marginal	Marginal
Flanders (Belgium)	Marginal	Moderate

Table A3.4 Planning and concreteness

Country	*Medium- to long-term planning?*	*Goals realistic?*
Finland	Yes	Yes
Estonia	Yes	Yes
Denmark	Yes	Yes
Wales	Yes	Yes
Republic of Ireland	No	Yes
Flanders (Belgium)	No	Yes
Northern Ireland	No	Yes
Portugal	No	Yes
Romania	Yes	No
Scotland	Yes	No
Germany	No	No
Italy	No	No
FRANCE	No	No
England	No	No

Table A3.5 Coaching, mentoring, and innovative roles

Country	*Role of coaching*	*Role of mentoring*	*New emerging roles*
Finland	Important	Important	Yes
Scotland	Important	Important	Yes
England	Important	Important	Yes
Wales	Important	Important	Yes
Denmark	Important	Marginal	Yes
Portugal	Important	Marginal	Yes
Germany	Marginal	Important	No
Belgium/Flanders	Important	Important	No
Estonia	Marginal	Important	Yes
Italy	Marginal	Marginal	No
Republic of Ireland	Marginal	Marginal	No
Northern Ireland	Marginal	Marginal	No
France	Marginal	Marginal	Yes
Romania	Marginal	Important	No

Table A3.6 Expert teaching and lifelong and lifewide learning

Country	*PL to expert teaching*	*PL and lifelong learning*	*PL and lifewide learning*
Estonia	Quite effective	Yes	Yes
Scotland	Quite effective	Yes	Yes
Wales	Quite effective	Yes	Yes
Germany	Quite effective	No	No
Romania	Somewhat effective	Yes	No
Denmark	Neither effective nor ineffective	Yes	Yes
Finland	Somewhat effective	Yes	Yes
Republic of Ireland	Somewhat effective	Yes	Yes
Northern Ireland	Somewhat effective	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Somewhat effective	Yes	Yes
Italy	Somewhat effective	Yes	No
Flanders (Belgium)	Somewhat effective	Yes	No
England	Somewhat effective	No	No
France	Somewhat ineffective	No	No

Table A3.7 Resources and compulsoriness

Country	*Economic resources*	*Time resources*	*PL compulsory?*
Denmark	Somewhat adequate	Somewhat adequate	No
Finland	Somewhat adequate	Somewhat adequate	yes
Wales	Somewhat adequate	Somewhat adequate	yes
Estonia	Somewhat adequate	Quite adequate	yes
Republic of Ireland	Somewhat adequate	Inadequate	No
England	Somewhat adequate	Marginally adequate	yes
Flanders (Belgium)	Marginally adequate	Marginally adequate	No
Scotland	Marginally adequate	Marginally adequate	yes
Portugal	Marginally adequate	Marginally adequate	yes
Italy	Marginally adequate	Inadequate	No
Northern Ireland	Inadequate	Inadequate	No
France	Inadequate	Inadequate	No
Romania	Inadequate	Inadequate	yes
Germany	Inadequate	Inadequate	yes

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Table A3.8 Practiced forms of PL

Country	*Forms of PL*
Finland	Lessons, courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, and innovative projects
Republic of Ireland	Courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, and action-research
Flanders (Belgium)	Lessons, courses, workshops, mentoring, communities of practice, and innovative projects
Estonia	Lessons, courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, innovative projects, and action-research
Denmark	Lessons, courses, coaching, communities of practice, innovative projects, action-research
Scotland	Courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, innovative projects, and action-research
England	Lessons, courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, innovative projects, and action-research
Portugal	Courses, workshops, coaching, innovative projects, and action-research
Wales	Lessons, courses, workshops, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, innovative projects, and action-research
Romania	Courses, workshops, and action-research
Germany	Courses, workshops, and mentoring
France	Lessons, courses, and workshops
Italy	Courses
Northern Ireland	Workshops

Table A3.9 Assessment, quality management, data sources of PL

Country	*PL assessment*	*Quality management of PL*	*Level of collected and analyzed data*
Estonia	Yes	Yes	State, school, and teacher
England	Yes	Yes	State, school, and teacher
Portugal	Yes	Yes	State, school, and teacher
Finland	Yes	Yes	State and teacher
Flanders (Belgium)	Yes	Yes	Teacher
Wales	Yes	Yes	Teacher
Romania	No	Yes	State and school
Scotland	No	Yes	State and school
Germany	No	No	State
Italy	No	No	State
France	No	No	State
Denmark	No	No	State and school
Northern Ireland	No	No	State, school, and teacher
Republic of Ireland	Yes	No	State

Notes

1 The meaning of "always" and "never" is different in laboratory settings and field inquiries, like the present study, where their sense is less absolute. We urge the reader to interpret them in the following pages as "at any time, whenever possible" and "hardly ever".
2 The reader can find the tables in the appendix at the end of the chapter.
3 Career-long professional learning, a kind of PLD.
4 For sake of clarity, we remember the reader that the influence of the Italian unions at school level is not the object of analysis in this article.

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4 Teacher professionalism in Estonia

The lost paradise of lifelong learning?

Ene-Silvia Sarv

Culture and context: a national overview

Estonia is situated on the east coast of the Baltic Sea and has a population of 1,294,000 (2012 census). The national/state language is Estonian, but around a quarter are Russian speakers and a small number are from other minorities. Even under the cultural and political influence of foreign countries, Estonians persisted in speaking their national language. Estonia became independent in 1918, was occupied by the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1992 and by Germany between 1941 and 1944. The country regained its independence in 1991, and in 2004, Estonia became a member of the European Union.

The Estonian general educational system consists of state, municipal, public, and private educational institutions. There are 135,000 students in general education. The majority (79%) attend mainstream schools and learn in Estonian. Just under 5% of students learn through the medium of Russian, but it is obligatory to learn Estonian and to have a number of subjects in Estonian in Russian-working schools. In recent years, there has been a lively discussion in society and parliament about making all schools Estonian (with in-depth study in the mother tongue, if necessary). This inevitably has implications for the professional learning of teachers.

Culture of education and lifelong professional learning

Estonia performs well in PISA and other comparative studies. This can be the result of long-term systemic policies aiming at national and school curriculum development, teacher initial education, and continuing professional learning. A key feature of Estonia in the last decades has been the preparation of human development reports.[1] These show the development of future scenarios (geopolitical, economic, educational, etc.) and provide strategies for moving towards the desired future. In these reports and scenarios, the most desired future of Estonia is to become a learning society. This latter is conceived as a complex of learning organisations, learning communities, and lifelong learning

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members of society. Underpinning these documents is a paradigmatic change concerning learning and its development. The broader goal of education and learning is to cultivate a cohesive society created by educated and responsible persons. High results in school education and the high professionalism of teachers are fundamental conditions on this path. But, more than 50% of teachers are aged 50+, and there is an insufficient number of younger ones to replace retiring teachers. There is a policy aiming at bringing people with teacher education back to school, involving professionals with higher education as teachers, and increasing teachers' salaries. The culture of lifelong learning and professional development is widespread in Estonian society.

In Estonia, terms such as education and teaching, instruction, teacher training, and teacher education have a particular meaning. For instance, educating – *haridust andma* or *harima* – has the initial meaning of working with the land, to cultivate it. So, this aspect brings some uncomfortability in translation (Sarv and Krabi 2015a, 2015b). Teacher training/schooling usually means quite a narrow practice-oriented learning process, while teacher education is seen as a wider culture- and science-based process. The concept "teacher education" especially underlines and uses broader foundations: education and research, education and curriculum paradigms, engagement of teacher-students into research, reflective practice, cultural aspects, etc. Lifelong learning and CPD lead to changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, and mental models of how pupils are/are perceived and understood.

Teacher lifelong learning and development

Estonia had a well-developed and nationwide regulated and financed CPD model for general and preschool pedagogy during most of the Soviet epoch. Every five years, teachers (and school leaders) followed a four-week course based on their experience (Table 4.1):

After regaining independence, the system and practice of teacher CPD started to be managed mainly by schools and teachers. In the 1990s, the EU qualification framework was adopted; there was an emphasis on schools as learning organisations, and school-based curriculum development became essential (Sarv 2007; Elken 2015; Männiste 2019, 38).

Table 4.1 Course arguments

Years of experience	*Argument*
3–5	Pedagogical knowledge
8–10	Deep psychological knowledge
10–15	Disciplinary knowledge
20+	Sharing experience

Organisation and policy of teacher professional learning and development (PLD)

National level

In general, national PLD policy is based on the principles present in *Estonian Education 2015*, The *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020*, and the *Estonian Education* strategy *2035*. All those view Estonia as a learning society with a long-term vision, a reflective approach to current development, personalised learning paths, and an open learning space for everyone.

The *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020* was introduced in 2014. The general goal was to provide all Estonians with learning opportunities tailored to their needs and capabilities throughout their whole lifespan. Teachers' lifelong learning has a component of professional learning and development that is generally specified/framed by the nationwide teacher professional and occupational qualification standard.[2]

In Estonia, modern teacher education and lifelong professional development are in harmony with a national curriculum built on a social-constructivist perspective. Teachers' science-based preparation in universities, together with school placements, is one part of the lifelong learning of professional educators. Introducing the results of educational research and conducting academic studies together with the basis of teaching methodology is an essential component in teachers' professional development. The teacher's ability to self-management is necessary for this area. In 1998, Wideen stated that it is necessary to base the teaching–learning process on an innovative paradigm in teacher education. Research in the 1990s showed that constructivist learning programmes and strategies based on learners' activity, meaning construction, etc. provided a different, influential path in teacher education (Dangel, 2011). The discussions about the Estonian teacher education framework (1998–2000) concentrated both on a traditional, cognitive, and a social-constructivist, humanistic approach. This discussion reflected changes in general education (1987–1996), where a social-constructivist curriculum was introduced (Ruus and Sarv, 2000; Mikser, 2005). At the beginning of the 21st century, research was conducted to get a broad overview of the situation in general education. Teachers, school leaders, parents, and students were involved. Several studies on teacher value orientation, competencies, etc. have been carried out in the 2020s and their results have been used to diagnose the peculiarities and needs of professional development and create appropriate support materials and provide learning (courses, etc.). Classroom research is how teachers enter scientific study[3] and reflect on and evaluate their work. Teachers' education had to prepare active, reflective, cooperative educators, not only subject specialists.

Teacher pre-service education in university leads to a Master's degree (MA) and is followed by one induction year in school or kindergarten, where a novice teacher works as a paid full-time teacher and is supported by a mentor from the school and a supervisor from the university. The teacher qualification can be obtained after a successful induction year. The present educational

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paradigm in Estonia has some specific characteristics: grassroots participation by teachers, a visionary approach as indicated in the adoption of laws and regulations; the existence of professional and non-formal associations – supporters of cooperation and professional development; and influential political leadership. In 1996, a UNESCO report (Delors et al. 1996) proposed an integrated vision of education based on two key concepts: lifelong learning and the four pillars of education – to know, to do, to be, and to live together. The development of the general school curriculum in the 1980s to 1990s saw a broad participation of teachers actively involved in subject groups, school experiments, and assessment of curriculum projects (Sarv and Rõuk 2020). The new national curricula were introduced in 2010. Key critical factors for future scenario design (due to the changing paradigm) which also apply to the development of teacher education are:

- external environment (including global, political, and economic), including EU laws/regulations and processes;
- internal factors, including the culture, professional world and the human factor (actual human involvement, substantive participation, laws), culture, and communities – both spatial and cultural;
- technology as a change factor in the contemporary world, including education and the world of work.

(Grauberg et al. 2018a, 57–9)

These key factors influence teacher education and PLD via content and methods of learning.

As described earlier, the teachers' associations (subject-related and others), local sections, and schools are tailoring specific courses according to recent curricular changes, new methodologies, learning materials, and the latest research. The research results and recommendations are provided to schools, local and government offices or specialists and allow design/tailor needed courses for professional and organisational development. Let's look at some examples of research that had and have an impact on teachers' PLD. Since 2016, the Tallinn University Education Innovation Center (HIK) did some surveys aiming at mapping the organisational culture of Estonian schools and kindergartens, the views of teachers and students on important topics in school life and future choices.[4] In 2022, the focus is on digital learning and the e-environment. Each participating school receives comparative feedback on all measured indicators (indicators of learning skills, learning difficulties, digital addiction, etc.). Focus-groups with schools are organised (May 2022) to discuss the results and their use in school development. Every school has the opportunity for an individual consultation by the HIK relative to its results.

The 2021 issue of the survey was on students' self-managed and self-regulated learning. It involved 2,051 Estonian teachers and the results showed that more than half of them think to be ready to support student's self-regulated learning. However, this requires a good knowledge of the concept

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of self-regulated learning. This needs the establishment of a programme for teachers' and school leaders' education, clearly a priority for the Ministry of Education. It is worth mentioning that in various surveys, a tenth of the respondents answered positively to teachers' professional development in their schools and statewide but underlined the need for a more practical approach.

School level

Estonia combines a small influence of the central authorities together with a local governance of schooling; local agencies play a critical role in financing and managing the school system, including financing teachers' PD. Statewide programmes of teacher PD are jointly managed by schools, local agencies, and the Ministry of Education.

On teacher education – future perspectives

The overall development of compulsory school teacher education was guided by documents such as *The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020* or *The Strategy for Estonian Teacher Education Development 2009–2013*[5] supported by the teacher education development project EDUKO.[6] The main aims of teacher education according to these documents are: to develop proposals for further development of pre-service/initial teacher education, for teachers' CPD, for recognition of previous learning and work experience in the assessment of knowledge and professionalism, and for changes in regulations about teacher education.

Main goals for 2035:

- a "seamless" educational system that supports individual choices, that is, smooth transitions;
- valuing the Estonian culture and language and cohesive society;
- new skills and better use of existing skills;
- learning as collaboration and the teacher as a guide;
- research-based mindsets and top-level universities (Eesti – 2035).

Vision and strategy. "*Estonian Education and society 2035. Wise and active Estonia*" underlines:

- individual unhindered learning trajectories (for institutional and lifewide and lifelong personal learning);
- an open learning space/environment (for lifewide and lifelong learning; nature, classrooms, museums, libraries, etc.);
- multi-environments, the combination of face-to-face, cooperative, virtual, research, learning-teaching etc.;
- integrated, symbiotic, holistic methodology of learning-teaching (interactive, integrated methods, a lecture is "out").

The learning process focuses more on developing a personal learning path

The learner must receive adequate support for learning and career choices, discover and develop talent, and build self-management skills. The assessment provides motivational feedback to support the learner in taking further steps in a learning environment that brings together different learners and yet follows individual differences. Support specialists [social workers, special educational needs (SEN) teachers, technicians, etc.] increase their collaboration with teachers.

- Till 2035, the professions of teacher, principal, support specialist, youth worker, and lecturer will be prestigious and well-paid and will include continuous opportunities for self-improvement and feedback;
- Regional teacher shortages can be alleviated by reorganising school and education networks, creating flexible forms of work, and expanding virtual learning and rotation of teachers. This requires an infrastructure that allows for working even at relatively long distances.

On teacher competencies

Expected teacher competencies are:

Planning of learning and teaching activities;
Development of learning environment;
Supporting learning and development
Reflection and professional self-development;
Counselling;
Development, creative, and research activities.

Senior and master teacher competencies include some additional competencies about CPD:

Management;
Instruction and training of teachers;
Development of methodology and learning materials.

Because in Estonia every school has to create its school curriculum (based on the state curriculum), every teacher is a creator of the curriculum in the subject area, general competencies, etc.

As for teachers' professional and personal qualities, their self-assessments in research generally show a solid ethical attitude, but it must be under constant attention and form part of the teacher's professional development. The range of diagnostic and self-assessment materials for educators is expanding rapidly, especially in the online environments involved in various courses and by MoE. To date (2022, April), a collection of 88 e-tasks and 69 diagnostic tests in five

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areas have been published. In addition, the Institute of the Estonian Language has compiled a large number of e-tasks and diagnostic tests for learning the Estonian language. Many currently available e-collections are available in the Exam Information System (EIS). The second area of self-improvement consists of materials directly related to pedagogical work and the learning process, created by the teachers themselves. For example, thematic approaches, handouts, lesson notes, etc. Course descriptions of 50+ courses are available via Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education.[7] Many are published in e-school and e-school bag environments and are also available to other teachers across Estonia and beyond. All this means that teachers' self-led professional development is becoming increasingly important.

Regional and school levels

All schools have to adapt and co-construct state curricula to answer to local needs and the human capital resources available in schools. The school curriculum has to be developed by teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

Teacher professional development on the regional level and in every school has long traditions and has mainly three levels:

- Training and materials provided by the state related to national change and innovation, including subject-related materials;
- Activities related to local specifics (e.g. due to the age of teachers – the predominance of young or older teachers, etc., choice of study fields in schools, etc.);
- Characteristics of the school (age of teachers, directions of school, the impact of inclusive education, etc.).

Some regions and schools require teachers to state PLD in their personal development portfolio. This can be additional material or a basis for extending fixed-term contracts, applying for a position (e.g. in another school), and applying for a higher qualification level.

The COVID pandemic and Ukraine refugees: implications and innovations for PLD

The COVID pandemic (from March 2020) and the influx of refugees from Ukraine (from March 2021) posed an unexpected and significant challenge to the entire education system. Improving the professional knowledge of teachers and school leaders in facing both events was and still is extremely important. At the beginning of the pandemic period, when face-to-face learning was practically suspended and switched to online learning, initial professional learning took place situationally, based on the experiences and perceived needs of teachers and students, as well as the material (IT, etc.) capabilities of specific schools. In cooperation with the Ministry, the Health Board had completed

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web-based teaching materials for schools. The materials can be completed under the guidance of a teacher in the classroom or independently at home.[8] These materials, as well as methodical suggestions for and from teachers, were created and published in e-school-bags and other e-environments.

The Estonian state guarantees Ukrainian children the opportunity to continue their schooling. Children of war refugees can start studying in some county and city schools, and the Freedom School for Ukrainian war refugees will be open by September 2022.[9] This means broad community involvement. It became clear that the pandemic situation tested teachers' flexibility, so schools and the government had to cope with an unexpected situation. As shown by research, all parties did face effectively this event, and the situation became, in several ways, the accelerator of new, complex ways for learning and development, especially the development of new online learning skills for all. What more profound changes will follow at the institutional and personal levels is the question in the coming years.[10] The support to teacher well-being during the pandemic was given at first at the level of new skills (IT, online teaching, etc.) by specialists and colleagues. As teachers reported the sudden workload growth, together with the changed home situation (having their own children in the home, all family working in the home office, etc.), the stress was reported. So, mental well-being became an actual issue.

Conclusion

Innovation can be a relative term. From one side, current educational knowledge and practice in Western countries became during the 1990s an innovation for post-Soviet countries, like Estonia. In the meantime, some other innovations induced by the pandemic situation and remote learning–teaching needs were still used in many Estonian schools and adult learning services during the previous decades. Therefore, we can draw some conclusions from what is analysed in these pages:

- Estonian authorities were able to combine elements coming from a previous collectivist vision with a new more liberal/democratic-oriented (but not neoliberal) educational view. The result of this process is a truly innovative educational policy, looking to the future;
- This vision was integrated inside the existing Estonian culture of lifelong learning;
- The capability of the system in facing – even with difficulties, as in other countries – the issue of COVID, gaining from this experience a know-how applicable in teaching/learning school practice;
- The clear orientation of the system towards teacher PLD rather than INSET or CPD.

To sum up, we can see two main streams of change in teacher lifelong professional learning reciprocally influencing themselves in the last 30 years.

The original Estonian teacher/pedagogic lifelong professional learning model, centrally managed by the state, evolved during the 1990s into a needs- and demand-led model, based mainly on courses offered by a multitude of providers. These are partly state-financed and they are oriented to the satisfaction of needs at all levels in the school system.

The second line concerns technological developments – in particular, the wide use of computers, online environments, etc., in the teaching–learning process. This implies, amongst other things, a shift in learning materials, in the degree of freedom and choice of the parties, and in the evaluation processes (including self-evaluation). Innovation is seen here as quick creation and rooting of change, through mixing and substituting face-to-face lessons and courses with mixed, hybrid, and/or totally distance learning models.

Social innovations deserve attention as well. For example:

- The collection of unused computers, given to students and teachers for distance learning; a network of volunteers formed for this purpose;
- The collection of obsolete and older computers, for getting repository pieces. These were also given to students who need them for distance learning. Here also a network of volunteers was formed.

In Estonia, the pandemic period was a catalyst in the development of innovative models, integrated into both school life and lifelong learning. These models have today become common practice, and they show in concrete ways how the collaboration between school and educational research can lead to positive results.

Notes

1 The Estonian Human Development Report (EHDR) is a collection of articles published every two years, which reflects and makes sense of the socioeconomic situation and possible development directions of the society.

2 Look: https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/et/Standardid/exportPdf/10824233/
https://www.kutseregister.ee/en/kompetentsid/?
https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/en/Standardid/exportPdf/10824233/

3 Leppik, P. (2020). ÜPUI Just uurimistöö viib õpetaja teaduse juurde / Õpetajate Leht.
The article reveals the importance of a teacher's daily research activities and shows how it leads teachers to serious scientific research.

4 Look: https://www.tlu.ee/kooliuuring; https://www.tlu.ee/kooliuuring#kooliuuring-2022.

5 Referred as Strategy in further text.

6 2.02.2009, No 64, Ministry of Education and Science.

7 Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education: https://koolitus.edu.ee/?_locale=en
The in-service training calendar includes learning events from many organizers to many target groups. In the 21st century, we will learn all our lives – what Juhan does not know is what Juhan learns.

8 https://www.hm.ee/et/uudised/terviseameti-ning-haridus-ja-teadusministeeriumi-koostoos-valmisid-koroonaviiruse

Example for grades 1–4: https://e-koolikott.ee/et/oppematerjal/31862-Koroona viiruse-oppematerjal-eelkooliealistele-ja-1-4-klassile

https://www.hm.ee/et/tegevused/koroona/kiirtestimine-koolides

Testing was studied (survey weekly), and results were published (for instance. https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/kiirtestimise_kokkuvote_28.03-1.04.22.pdf)

9 https://jarvateataja.postimees.ee/7469155/koolid-valmistuvad-sojapogeni kest-lapsi-opetama

https://www.hm.ee/et/uudised/tanasest-algab-avalduste-vastuvott-ukraina-sojapogenikele-moeldud-vabaduse-kooli?fbclid=IwAR0L8kMrpLpdhMKt Tw5bul_g29lSC7pS-YpBwuZDtOhM8U-Ki05ck4Vl810

10 The change process of the general curriculum and the programmes have recently (2022 spring) started.

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5 Teacher Professional Learning in the Republic of Ireland

Policy development to policy enactment

Fiona King, Aoife Brennan and Alan Gorman

Introduction

This chapter analyses policy and practice related to teachers' professional learning (PL) in the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Like other European contexts, Ireland developed a national framework (called Cosán = pathway) for teachers' PL. The Teaching Council of Ireland (2016) developed the framework in consultation with teachers and other key stakeholders. While the framework acknowledges the importance of teachers as learners (Evans, 2014) and highlights the centrality of PL in teacher professionalism (Kennedy, 2014), it was also initially linked to teacher registration with the Teaching Council, as is the case with the professional update in Scotland (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2014). Only teachers registered with the Teaching Council can teach in state-recognised schools. However, the idea of mandatory engagement with PL for registration was met with resistance. While the Teaching Council argues teachers have a responsibility to engage in PL, they are questioning the value of making PL mandatory. As highlighted by the OECD (2009), there is a fine line between professional responsibility and accountability with the latter being perceived as managerialism.

While there are many terms in the literature for teachers' learning, including continuing professional development, professional development, professional learning, and in-service training, this chapter adopts the term PL to reflect that which is used more commonly in the literature in recent years. PL also reflects teachers' learning as defined within Cosán; it "comprises the full range of educational experiences designed to enrich teachers' professional knowledge, understanding and capabilities throughout their careers" (Teaching Council, 2011, p. 19). By comparison to other general education policies and teacher education policies, this has arguably been one of the most complex policies in teacher education over the past number of years reflected in the length of time it has taken to move from policy development to policy enactment.

Policy is developed centrally in the RoI and although there is no formal middle tier in this centralised system of education, there are a number of policy actors at what could be considered a middle tier, for example, Teacher Unions,

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Education and Training Boards, Higher Education Institutions (HEI), and Department of Education (DoE) support services, including Professional Development, Support for Teacher, Post Primary Languages Ireland, National Council for Special Education, Education Support Centres Ireland (ECSI), Centre for School Leadership.

This chapter will provide a historiographical overview of PL in the RoI and the rationale for the development of Cosán before tracing its journey through the unique consultative process with teachers. Challenges to enactment (Bell and Stevenson, 2015) will also be explored which include the sociopolitical environment of teacher PL, governance and strategic direction, mandatory PL, and developing a strategic approach to teachers' PL across all education stakeholders. Finally, this chapter will propose a way forward for the enactment of Cosán emphasising the importance of a common understanding of PL, contexts and considerations for PL, and leadership for PL at the macro, meso, and micro levels of the system.

PL in Ireland: a historiographical overview

The decade stemming from 1965 to 1975 was the first time Ireland witnessed a transformative reform agenda in teacher PL. Following a recommendation from the Commission of Higher Education (1967), education departments within universities expanded as did postgraduate courses for teachers. Regional Teacher Centres, now referred to as ESCI, were also established nationwide and would provide "in-service" courses to teachers. Little development occurred in the 1980s due in part to an economic downturn. In 1991, a landmark review by the OECD highlighted a concern about the voluntary nature of PL and the lack of infrastructure and investment in "in-service" for teachers. A raft of grey literature followed the OECD report, including Ireland's first Green Paper on education, *Education for a Changing World*, and the publication of the *White Paper: Charting Our Education Futur*e in April 1995, which placed value on the importance of PL for teachers. While certain developments occurred, such as the secondment of teachers to provide in-school PL, other priorities around enhancing teacher PL and the voluntary nature of PL were unattended (Coolahan, 2007).

In 2001, a landmark development occurred with a legislative agenda for the establishment of a Teaching Council. In 2006, the Teaching Council became a statutory body. The Teaching Council would consist of 37 members, including 16 registered teachers elected by teachers, and others from nominating bodies including HEIs, teacher unions, school management, parent bodies, unions, employer groups, as well as Ministerial appointees. As part of its remit to the design, review, and accreditation of teacher education, the Teaching Council launched the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* in June 2011. The overarching focus of the policy was to describe the "formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as life-long learners, during their teaching career" (p. 8). In 2014, the Teaching

Council commenced a consultation process on their Cosán policy relating to teacher PL.

The first consultation phase consisted of three approaches to enable the voice of teachers to shape the policy (Teaching Council, 2016a); an online survey for individual teachers, consultation workshops, and whole-school feedback following school-based workshops. The online survey was completed by 3349 teachers, 4% of the total population of teachers in the RoI. Teachers reported that they valued existing models of provision, including the value of ESCI and the courses offered within these centres, the extra personal vacation (EPV) allowance, available to primary teachers who complete DoE-approved courses during the school summer holiday period (20 hours duration) and the value of online PL. Concerns were raised about the removal of incentives such as the aforementioned vacation days, and the expectation that teachers would have to engage in mandatory PL to register annually with the Teaching Council. Within the second phase of consultation, teachers were invited to review and comment on the draft policy, arising from phase one, via an online form, by email, or by attending a workshop, 10 of which took place across the country. Approximately 1,600 teachers engaged in this phase. Similar concerns were expressed again, mainly based on rumour rather than consultation with the content of the draft policy (Teaching Council, 2016b). The Teaching Council had to clarify its intentions in relation to the right and responsibility of engagement in PL for registration, its expectation towards mandatory PL and registration, and the role that the Teaching Council would take in overseeing this process (Teaching Council, 2016b).

In 2016, the policy document was redrafted on the basis of the consultative phased process and the developmental phase of Cosán commenced. Since then, the Teaching Council has facilitated workshops for schools. Alongside this, a shared learning day was facilitated in May 2018, where teachers were invited to share their experience of engagement with the policy. A webinar was facilitated in November 2020, featuring a panel discussion exploring teachers' learning from different perspectives. Finally, a wider stakeholder briefing was facilitated in 2018 (Teaching Council, 2018), 2019, and 2021 (DoE, 2021). While each stakeholder event carried a specific theme, the most recent event saw how the Teaching Council and the DoE would strategically plan for the implementation of Cosán, given that PL is linked with the DoE school self-evaluation process and associated framework, Looking at our Schools (DES, 2016a, 2016b). Alongside policy alignment, a wide range of targets were put forward, which would see joint oversight by both actors (DoE, 2021). Given the development of this Action Plan, it was also signalled that the policy trajectory of Cosán would now move into its growth phase, wrapping up the five-year developmental phase. The overarching focus of the growth phase is enactment and implementation at a national level (DoE, 2021). As Cosán moves towards enactment, it is important to identify the key challenges that may hinder effective policy implementation (Bell and Stevenson, 2015).

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Sociopolitical environment of teacher PL

Increased accountability has been evident across the global teacher education policy context over the past two decades, arising from an impetus to improve teacher quality and student outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2021). What has transpired is the education policy rooted in market-based values and global competitiveness, as evidenced by the pervasive influence of transnational performance indicators such as PISA (Grek, 2009). This is perceptible in domestic policy, notably the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011) which was published during an economic downturn. The policy outlines a commitment to "high-quality continuing professional development opportunities for teachers" (p. 30) with the goal of improvement in international test rankings to achieve "economic prosperity" (p. 9) while simultaneously striving "to curtail public expenditure" (p. 5), thus reflecting a neoliberal policy rhetoric evident in global policy. Against this sociopolitical backdrop, the move towards formalising teacher PL can be viewed as a product of an accountability agenda. Arguably, Cosán reflects the concern around the voluntary nature of PL previously highlighted by the OECD (1991) and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011, p. 36) which foregrounded the requirement to engage in PL for "at least twenty hour's duration in literacy, numeracy and assessment… every five years". Focusing on conditions that support professional accountability within schools and support for inclusive and democratic dialogue among stakeholders may support more democratic professionalism (Kennedy, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2021) and democratic accountability in which the right to and responsibility of teacher PL is effectively supported by policy actors (Tonga et al., 2022). This is particularly important in the context of formalising teacher engagement in career-long PL which Cosán notes is "a right and a responsibility of all teachers" (Teaching Council, 2018, p. 8).

Governance and strategic direction

PL is a professional duty in most European countries, yet Ireland is only one of five countries in Europe (including Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Turkey) in which teachers are not obliged to undertake any PL after induction (Eryduce, 2021). Furthermore, research on PISA achiever countries, specifically Finland, Estonia, Japan, Singapore, and China, indicates that teachers are mandated to engage in formal PL throughout their careers. Of note across the five PISA achiever countries is the provision of incentives for mandated teacher PL such as additional salary benefits, financial support, and leaves of absence, all of which have been deemed crucial to achieving sustainable approaches to teacher PL (Tonga et al., 2022). In contrast, there are very few incentives for teachers in the RoI to engage in PL. Lack of time, opportunities and access, and financial support present challenges to teachers' participation in PL as acknowledged within Cosán. Of the few incentives available, the EPV allowance has proved very successful in securing high participation in

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summer courses. However, the impact of this short-term PL on teacher learning has not been evaluated in terms of impact on teacher practices and/or student outcomes. Salary benefits which were also made available to teachers who completed postgraduate education studies were subsequently abolished for new entrants to the profession after 2011 due to the economic downturn. Teachers voiced their concerns about this during the Cosán consultation process.

Lack of time poses a significant barrier to teacher engagement in PL and was another issue highlighted by teachers during the Cosán consultation phases. While school-based PL is deemed as holding the most potential for meaningful teacher change, time is rarely provided for PL within the school day. Mandated non-teaching time was introduced as a result of public sector reform negotiations during the economic downturn (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2010). However, this time has specific limits on how it can be used and while PL can be included, it competes with staff meetings and whole-school planning (DES, 2016a). Contact time in Irish schools is among the highest in the OECD, and when PL time is made available, it is generally limited to curricular reform. This type of PL is generally transmissive and centrally "provided" to schools by national support services, reflecting a "top-down" approach" to PL which has previously been noted as failing to result in significant teacher change (Murchan, Loxley, and Johnston, 2009). While there has been a recent move towards more sustained models of PL to support curricular reform in the RoI, transmissive approaches continue to dominate, as evidenced across OECD countries (OECD, 2018). Despite the challenges to accessing PL and its voluntary nature, teacher engagement rates remain positive in the RoI (Broderick, 2019), raising the issue of how formalising PL may impact teacher engagement.

Mandatory professional learning

The initial reference to mandatory PL was removed from Cosán after a second phase of consultation. However, the question remains as to how teacher engagement in PL can be recorded and encouraged if it is not mandated. In particular, a challenge lies in recording engagement in informal PL that connects with teachers' interests and needs, both personally and professionally. Such PL reflects a bottom-up approach that aligns with teachers' values and practice and more likely results in teacher change (King and Holland, 2022). Regardless of whether PL participation is voluntary or mandatory, teachers' reflection on the PL is what supports deep and meaningful learning (Dewey, 1933). Cosán highlights individual and collaborative reflection as paramount to teacher learning and examples of how reflection can take place are in the supplementary materials for Cosán. Teacher motivation for engaging in PL has been shown to be propelled by a desire to gain practical ideas that are relevant to the daily teaching environment (Timperley, 2008) and PL models that do not meet this desire are unlikely to be effective (King and Holland, 2022).

Therefore, teacher education policy must focus on supporting personalised approaches to PL that afford teacher autonomy through a choice of learning opportunities relevant to their needs (King and Holland, 2022). Herein lies the central challenge for Cosán: to ensure that it captures the PL that many teachers are already engaging in, rather than being perceived as another policy directive that creates additional workload. Cosán acknowledges the importance of relevant PL experiences and the professional autonomy of teachers, signalling the potential for a supportive framework. However, there is a danger of preserving the status quo if the challenges of access to and time and support for PL remain unaddressed. In this context, a coherent and strategic approach between all education stakeholders, in particular the DoE and the Teaching Council, is necessary.

Developing a strategic approach to teachers' professional learning across all education stakeholders

At the final stakeholder meeting in 2021, a strategic approach to enacting Cosán emerged, resulting in the publication of the Cosán Action Plan (DoE, 2021). The plan included a series of short- and medium-term targets to be achieved in collaboration with a range of education stakeholders. The final medium-term target refers to exploring possible approaches to providing time for teachers to engage in collaborative PL indicating acknowledgement of a key challenge. However, there is no reference to incentives for teacher engagement in PL. While teaching is regarded as an esteemed profession and remunerated relatively well when compared to other OECD countries, there is a lack of opportunity for career mobility and advancement, a contributing factor to gender disproportionality in the profession. Cosán presents a unique opportunity for education stakeholders to address this issue. For example, engagement in postgraduate award-bearing courses is typically self-funded by teachers, with an absence of recognition of such qualifications financially or otherwise. While this is not within the remit of the Teaching Council, the collaboration with the DoE offers an opportunity to examine ways how teachers can be appropriately incentivised to pursue a range of PL opportunities, in particular models of PL that hold the most potential for teacher change, such as professional learning communities (Brennan & King, 2021) and communities of practice (King and Holland, 2022). While the Action Plan (DoE, 2021) marked the beginning of the policy enactment phase and holds potential for moving Cosán forward, it is important to consider how the challenges above may be addressed to support democratic approaches to the policy's operational principles, practices, and procedures.

A way forward

While acknowledging the success to date with Cosán, this chapter will now explore a way forward for operationalising Cosán at scale in the daily practices

and experiences of teachers in schools. Three key themes will be explored: understanding PL; contexts and considerations; and leadership for PL.

Understanding professional learning

A key feature of supporting policy enactment involves stakeholders' "understanding of the centrality of policy and of the ideologies that shape policy" (Bell and Stevenson, 2015, p. 146) as everything that happens on the ground is shaped by what is happening at a global and national level (Bottery, 2006). Therefore, an understanding of the purpose of Cosán and the features of the policy against perspectives on professionalism (Kennedy, 2014) is recommended as a key starting point at the micro and meso levels (King, French, and Halligan, 2022). When teachers and leaders understand the need for the policy and its links with a democratic professionalism (Kennedy, 2014), they may be more open to adopting it. Commendable is the Teaching Council's commitment to teachers' voices in this policy development and enactment. Ongoing management of teachers' concerns is pivotal through the enactment phase (King, 2014). A common understanding of what constitutes PL and whether it will be mandatory continues to be of concern for some teachers.

Understanding that PL is not something that is "done" to teachers is crucial (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 233). PL is not limited to programmes or courses provided with "predetermined learning objectives" (Qanay and Frost, 2020, p. 2), rather it is conceived as something that empowers and facilitates teacher agency and autonomy to focus on what matters most in their context (King and Holland, 2022) as envisaged with Cosán and evidenced during COVID.

Contexts and considerations

Policy developed at the macro level is experienced and enacted differently at the micro level. It is typically affected by "multiple interpretations based on the specificities of local contexts, and the nature of the work of educators, of their professionalism and of the procedures deployed to lead and manage" (Bell and Stevenson, 2015, p. 149). While acknowledging the flexibility of Cosán to allow teachers and leaders to adopt and adapt approaches to PL based on their needs in their contexts, an awareness of the complexity of teacher learning (Strom and Viesca, 2021) and how it should not be isolated from teachers' contexts has to be considered (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). There are "three overlapping and recursive systems involved in teacher PL: the individual teacher, the school, and the activity" (p. 384). Policy enactment of Cosán ought to consider these systems alongside effective core design features of PL: Content focus; active learning; collective participation; coherence; and duration (Desimone, 2009); focusing on teachers' and leaders' needs (Cordingley et al., 2015); coaching and expert support, and feedback and reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Noteworthy is the consideration

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of some of these as part of the process by the DoE which is currently developing an evaluation framework for teachers' PL (Rawdon et al., 2021).

Additionally, the consideration of PL as being socially constructed through conversations, interactions, and reflections with others (King and Holland, 2022) to enhance social capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) is imperative. Collaborative PL supports the development of social capital with teachers working together towards a common goal, developing collective responsibility and collective efficacy for student learning. Examples include professional learning communities, communities of practice, collaborative inquiry, coaching, and mentoring. Enhancing teachers' social capital can support them to become leaders of PL (Osmond-Johnson, 2019).

Leadership for professional learning

Leadership has a key role to play in supporting the enactment of Cosán at the macro, meso, and micro levels. At the macro level, the Teaching Council and the DES need to continue to work together to promote and support the enactment of Cosán in schools as per the Cosán Action Plan (2021). Providing time for learning and critical reflection on PL experiences is also essential (Sugrue, 2011 and Longhurst, Jones, and Campbell, 2021), if PL is to have an impact on practice (King, 2014). While the Cosán Action Plan has a medium-term target to "commence an examination of the potential ways in which time for reflective practice and collaborating with other teachers could be provided for" (2021, p. 4), it is essential that this is given priority in the shorter term and results in a meaningful plan to provide time. This might be one way to incentivise teacher PL as recommended by Tonga et al. (2022). Supporting teachers' leadership of PL was evident at the recent Cosán Stakeholder Event where the DoE afforded teachers time off school to share their examples of enactment of Cosán in their school contexts, thus influencing policy development and enactment at the macro and meso levels of the system. Alongside time, funding for PL and leadership for PL need to be addressed (King et al., 2022). Consideration might be given to the establishment and funding of a formal course on Leadership for Professional Learning, similar to Ontario's Teacher Learning and Leadership Program, which aims to support the development of all teachers as leaders of PL within their schools and beyond. Additionally, consideration could be given to establishing a valued team in schools around leadership for PL supported by leadership from above (King and Stevenson, 2017) to mediate the Cosán policy and support the complex and contextual nature of teacher learning (King et al., 2022). This leadership team could support all teachers' learning across the continuum from initial teacher education to induction and ongoing PL. Supporting teachers to exercise leadership for PL may support their own learning and growth (Longhurst et al., 2021) and may respond to teachers' willingness and expectation to lead outside of the formal hierarchy of leadership and management in schools (King et al., 2019) while at the same time responding to the call in the Looking at

our School quality framework to build a culture of teacher leadership in schools (DES, 2016b).

Leadership for PL is also essential at the meso level. Consistency of language in documentation and PL activities/experiences alongside showing how Cosán aligns with practices in schools is important to embed Cosán in the system. Consideration might be given to embedding leadership skills into formal PL courses to support the diffusion of PL to others in schools and beyond (King, 2014). Embedding leadership into pre-service teacher education programmes to prepare teachers to be leaders in their own classrooms, schools, and beyond (King et al., 2019) is also recommended. At the micro level, principals have a key role in supporting teachers to embed Cosán into the everyday practices of schools. Principals while inundated with other policies mandated from above must choose to support voluntary engagement with Cosán to transform schools into learning organisations to enhance student learning experiences and outcomes. Principals could explore distributed leadership and/or call upon those with leadership roles to act as "boundary brokers" in supporting teachers' sustainable learning in school-based contexts (Zhang, Wong, and Wang, 2021). Empowering teachers to create collaborative cultures and providing organisational support (King, 2011) to enable individual teachers to engage in PL related to their areas of interest and need, with a view to develop their own leadership skills and influence others, is important for the enactment of Cosán (King and Stevenson, 2017; Qanay and Frost, 2020). Equally important is teachers embracing Cosán as part of their democratic professionalism to ensure that Cosán continues to be developed and enacted by and for teachers.

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6 Teacher professional development in Romania

Framing learning, responsibility, and change through crisis

Mihaela Mitescu-Manea

In this chapter, I propose looking at issues framing teachers' professional learning and development, along with the dynamics of roles and architectures of temporality shaping the meaning-making and policy-making processes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania. Conceptual and processual factors constraining innovative approaches to teachers' PLD are identified. Some of these constraints have systemic and structural roots. Others are of epistemic nature and could remain concealed, should the inquiry abide by linear models of framing the research design. The greater risk associated with linear approaches to conceptualizing learning, responsibility, and change through crisis, rests with hindering the ethical and political responsibilities conjoined with innovating teachers' professional learning and development. The pandemic crisis has provided great opportunities to see that innovating teachers' professional learning is not only about asking what or how but also by whom and towards which horizon of possibilities. These questions demand that we recognize the complex multitude of factors and agencies cutting into post-pandemic innovative approaches to PLD and that we place this recognition more in service of developing solidarity and socially just educational practices, than in serving neoliberal agendas of performativity, progress, and competitiveness.

In 2009, Webster-Wright argued that it is important to make a distinction between professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL), stressing the need to move beyond focusing on how to best provide PD activities to understand more about how professionals learn – what motivates them, what they do, and how they learn and grow (Webster-Wright, 2009). In line with this argument, Kennedy (2016) observed a tendency of scholarship in this domain to remain purely descriptive of certain PD design features and apathy to illuminate programs' underlying purposes or premises about teaching and teacher learning. Similar criticism emphasized the risk of PD assessment efforts being based on process–product logic, meaning that programs are defined by visible processes or features rather than by the functions these processes serve (Pedder and Opfer, 2011).

What is being underscored in this line of criticism goes beyond conceptually distinguishing between PD and PL, although it has been noted that such

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a distinction often stays implicit in the literature (Vermunt et al., 2019 and King et al., 2018). It emphasizes taking a more rigorous look at (a) the relationship between the conceptual frameworks of PL and the operational features of development programs and (b) the underlying epistemological framings of research designs exploring this relationship. More recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded highlighting and deepening the structural inadequacies and inequities in education, it has been argued that critically revisiting our onto-epistemologies (knowing–being) is an act of ethical and political responsibility (Strom, Mills, and Abrams, 2021).

The number of studies considering these issues has visibly increased in the past years. Nevertheless, the vast majority of this scholarship engages voices predominantly from certain parts of the world, and not so much from others. Here I present a reflection situated in Romania, where notions of professional learning and development, leadership, innovation and change in education, and the ways in which these are discursively constructed are rarely, if ever subjected to critical inquiry.

It is proposed to explore how conceptualizations of professional learning and development have been articulated in the policy debate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this analysis is to capture the issues framing the conceptualizations and positioning of teachers, learning, and change in the educational policy discourses and problematize these frames with regard to their explicit or implicit normative aspects concerning teachers' PD. It is hypothesized that in this sort of critical inquiry rest the opportunities to capture the degree of innovation/traditionalism in notions of CPD and to explore the potential points of departure in shifting towards more innovative horizons of understanding and approaching PL in education.

To this avail, a distinction is made between *continuing professional development* (CPD) and *professional learning and development* (PLD). In a manner similar to the work of Ostinelli and Crescentini (2021), I will speak of CPD if the topic is to enhance what teachers still perform and of PLD in the presence of innovative, deep forms of teachers' professional learning.

Culture and context of professional development in education: a national overview

Since the first Law of Education (*Legea Instrucțiunii*) was issued in 1864, Romanian educational reforms have been closely tied to arguments of better aligning indigenous conceptions and practices in teaching to those modelled on the European educational scene. In present days, the history of change and innovations in matters of teacher education and PD has been marked by elements of continuity and discontinuity with this principle and with its underlying European inspiration (Potolea and Toma, 2015 and Bunescu et al., 2004).

In Romania, the term "continuing professional development" (*dezvoltare profesională continuă*) accounts for the teachers' career progress through

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successive professional levels – the qualified teacher status (*definitivare)*, and teaching degrees I and II (*gradele didactice I și II)*. The concept of *perfecționare* is also used, mainly to indicate that it is expected that teachers continuously complement their initial professional education all the way through and well beyond obtaining the highest teaching degree. Participation in *perfecționare and continuing professional development* (from here on CPD) is considered dutiful and is quantifiable in professional credits. In efforts to better align the standards for professional qualification and career progress to the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the policy discourse on teachers' CPD incorporates notions of *standardization* and *professional competence*. In practice, the occupational standards for teachers have been optional, and since the promulgation of the Law of Education in 2011, it became obsolete (Romanian Presidential Administration, 2021).

Unlike many European countries, in Romania fewer than 30% of school teachers are older than 50 years of age (Eurydice, 2019) which, combined with an expected decline in the overall number of teachers in line with the student population, makes any reform of recruitment or initial teacher education impactful on only a minority of the profession (Kitchen et al., 2017). This places high stakes on working with the teachers already hired and emphasizes the importance of improving teaching quality through relevant CPD. Yet, the participation rate of Romanian teachers (ISCED 2) in CPD has lowered in recent years, falling behind the European average participation rate (Eurydice, 2021). Preferred forms of participation in CPD include attendance to courses and seminars outside the school context (Bădescu, 2019). Other forms of CPD are less present at both the normative aspects and the practices of *perfecționare*:

> *Collaborative learning between peers (highlighting clinical observations, discussion groups, and feedback on teaching practices) is insufficiently appreciated and regulated*
>
> (Romanian Presidential Administration, 2021)

The top-level authority (MoE) is the only decision-maker in teachers' promotion to a higher career level. Teachers' appraisal is highly bureaucratic, predominantly summative, and bares a significant impact on retribution, prompting more competition than collaboration between colleagues and lacking formative impact on teaching practices and teachers' professional trajectories (Kitchen et al., 2017). *Gradația de merit* is an appraisal mechanism by which the MoE awards higher pay cheques to a percentage of the top-ranking teachers in the school, based on an assessment procedure tying the quality of teachers' work to the students' performances in the national exams and in various school competitions (the specific criteria accounts for 70% of the teachers' score in the appraisal for *gradație de merit*). Apart from not being conducive to creating and maintaining collaborative practices in the schools, this appraisal mechanism has been noted to be highly inequitable, placing in a

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position of disadvantage to teachers working in challenging schools – that is, schools in socio-economically disadvantaged communities (OECD, 2009).

In sum, standardization and accreditation are generally regarded as ways into raising teachers' levels of professionalism and improving the quality of education. Quality is understood as a linear process, with well-defined and measurable results, which in most policy instantiations on teachers' CPD translates into pursuing a better alignment to the European levels of quality and professional competence. This juxtaposition often prompts visions of reform and change that are deeply rooted in a conception of deficit and lagging behind. A bureaucratic approach to teachers' PD and teacher appraisal proves constraining to teachers taking on opportunities to innovate and lead PLD that is learner-oriented, research-informed, collaborative, and communal in its approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic: implications for PLD

Method

66 policy documents and policy statements issued by government actors, NGOs, experts (local members of the academic or non-academic community), stakeholders (professional bodies, trade unions, etc.) and market actors have been sampled for analysis. Analytically, positions theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) and critical frame analysis (hereafter, CFA) (Dombos et al., 2012) have been employed to look at how issues of teachers' PLD have been articulated in the education policy debates in Romania between March 2020 and June 2021.

CFA concentrates on identifying *policy frames* which function as organizing principles that transform fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included (Verloo, 2005). Diverging from the original design of CFA, non-state actors' positions have been included in the sample, which allowed exploring their roles and strategies in agenda-setting and in proposing concrete solutions or systemic alternatives in the policy debate.

Davies and Harré's (1990) positions theory served to explore in depth the nature, formation, influence, and ways of change within local systems of rights and duties, as shared assumptions about them become visible through conventions of speech and action.

Findings

Between March 2020 and December 2021, the policy debate on the issues of teachers' PD has largely unfolded the meta-narrative of ensuring the continuity of and realization of the right to education for all, despite the many constraining circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic was resurfacing, augmenting, or

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generating in/for the national system of education. In this period of time, specifically marked by the closure of schools for almost the entire academic year of 2020/2021, the education policy debates have been thematic.

At the beginning of the pandemic crisis, throughout the first pandemic wave (between mid-March and June 2020) the *development of new online learning and teaching skills* was the dominating issue in the policy debate. State actors in Romania proposed the idea of using existing programs or policies (i.e. the CRED program in Romania) to harbour large-scale training opportunities, whereby appointed experts or teachers who were previously trained in ICT and related competences for online teaching, would provide training to teachers who were not confident users of digital methodologies for education, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, the state has reinforced a traditional, linear model of conceptualizing teachers' PD, building on a logic of top-down transfer of expertise and professional knowledge (Kraft et al., 2018). In line with this conceptualization, the government has provided online repositories of recommendations, best practice examples and curated digital teaching tools as a fast and rather short-term response to the teachers' learning needs, building on a rhetoric of immediate responses to a major crisis and on doing everything possible to contain this crisis' negative effects on health and education. Various non-governmental actors contested this strategy for both its timing (for being too long postponed after the state mandated complete school closure during lockdown and state of emergency) and conceptual framing, by proposing it was inclusive of (a) wider and deeper educational equity aspects (both structural and prospective ones), and (b) further horizons of possible innovation and development (with implications for long-term educational reforms).

A second thematic cluster in the education policy documents analyzed emerged during the second pandemic wave (September 2020–February 2021). The central topic of it was *decentralizing decision-making* in education. On this issue, the state remained focused on solely setting the descriptive and procedural parameters for this decision-making process. Occasionally, local political leaders have recognized the paradigmatic shift this opportunity for decentralized decision-making presents in the horizon of wider educational reforms. Non-governmental actors were quick to frame it as an opportunity to rethink the whole approach to teachers' and school leaders' CPD, emphasizing the lack of preparedness for schools to act on decentralized decision-making.

During the third pandemic wave (March–July 2021), setting up *remedial support* for students lagging behind was the central theme in the policy debate. The state positioned teachers' roles and responsibilities in the highest ranks of social and professional importance, yet it failed to recognize its own role in providing the necessary support for teachers to carry out these roles. The call for setting up a national program for remedial education matched similar initiatives provided internationally, more as a political communication strategy

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than as a sustainable interventionist initiative. Non-state actors in Romania pointed out that by simultaneously declaring remedial educational plans “a matter of national security”, the government had cut the budget for education to a historical low, heavily politicized attributing control and supervision roles in the program, and endlessly postponed continuing the program past its first 7 months of implementation.

The policy debate did not go very deep into discussing the emotional, social, or cultural implications of what presented itself to be a rather homogenizing understanding of the notion of remedial education. Teachers' learning how to address complex intersectional identities coming together in the remedial educational program and, further, in the school organization was an issue that went completely ignored in the policy debate.

Assigning teachers the responsibility to promote *scientific and information literacy* was also an issue framing a significant portion of the policy debate during the third pandemic wave. Teachers were given the responsibility to promote scientific and information literacy (on epidemiological matters, vaccination, and health) of students and parents, an issue framed by positioning the success of the vaccination campaign at the core of resuming life *as we know it*. However, completely missing from the debate was a thorough discussion of what the professional implications (in terms of deontology, knowledge practices etc.) of this assignment might be.

Accounting for the roles played by different categories of actors in the policy debate throughout the first three waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become apparent that Romanian state actors endorse traditional conceptualizations and approaches rather to teachers' CPD through (a) generally taking a short-term focus on containing the negative effects of the pandemic crisis and ensuring continuity of *business as usual* and (b) articulating conceptualizations of teachers' learning that build on a rhetoric of deficit and are framed by ongoing concerns for control and accountability.

The focus on medium- and long-term perspectives in the policy debate was mainly proposed by non-state actors who explicitly called for seizing the opportunity for change and development presented by the crisis. These medium- and long-term temporalities of educational reform were articulated on the calls for addressing new and old forms of educational inequities and through foregrounding conceptualizations of learning, responsibility, and change that build on partnership, community, and multiple categories of stakeholders. By this, I am arguing, non-state actors enabled more innovative visions of teachers' PD, conceptually closer to PLD than to CPD. However, neither records of recognition being given to issues of knowledge circulation and practices in digitalization and decentralization could be seen throughout the various thematic stages of the policy debate nor the professional implications of assigning new responsibilities to teachers and schools and the cultural and structural aspects cutting into the complexities of remedial education. These absences raise questions regarding potentially missed opportunities to re-conceptualize and prompt innovative practices of teachers' PLD.

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Concluding discussions

Historically, the language of teachers' PD in the Romanian policy discourse has not changed very much since its early, 19th century days. The teachers' *perfecționare* – conceptualized as a professional duty requiring teachers to participate in state-mandated PD opportunities – was, and still is, framed as:

a) a key element, central to the success of larger social, cultural, and economic reforms and
b) an integral part of a larger, European context for practices and models of PD, the most successful of which can and ought to inspire desirable innovations in the national practices of CPD.

Throughout history, however, this almost constant reference to the European argument has not been matched by habitual references to evidence-based or research-informed arguments in the education policy discourse. On rare occasions when the research-informed perspective was present in the articulation of policy discourses on teachers' CPD, the number of thematic analyses was fairly low and oftentimes, transnational comparative reports by OECD, Eurydice etc. outnumber existing national thematic reports. This could potentially explain how the European argument is being used in policies framing innovation of CPD departing more often from a *deficit* perspective over current and/or past indigenous practices of PD, than *from an exploratory* stance on innovating practices of PL.

This is generally matched by a *linear* conceptualization of the fitness between envisioned transformations to CPD, and desirable effects on classroom practices and educational outcomes. This type of thinking traditionally dominating educational reforms, policy, assessment, and research, assumes a linear, causal, sequential, and unidirectional chain of changes linking actions at any one level of decision-making (i.e. policy, teacher practice etc.) to measures of students' achievement (Strom and Martin 2017 and Margolis and Strom, 2020). Its limitations are particularly espoused in critically looking at the education policy debate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I propose exploring the implications of this linear model of conceptualizing learning, responsibility and change through the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic on two avenues:

1. *The complex turn to conceptualizing responsibility and change through crisis*

The concept of crisis regularly resonates with the image of a turning point where "systems face ruptures, radical changes or strengthening" (Rikowski, 2020, p. 12), which can result in either positive or negative change. In looking at the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, it is proposed that instead of interpreting crisis in this binary opposition of potential ends, we think of it as a "set of intersecting forces" (Sayed et al., 2021), which – whilst creating instability,

affecting individuals, groups, and societies – it also coalesces the potential(s) for change and innovations. Taking a more complex view of the multiplicity of co-evolving conditions and factors explaining the dynamics of change during a crisis is particularly relevant to examinations of COVID-19-related education policy debates, as it helps not only bring more clarity over government decisions regarding teachers' CPD during school closure and lockdown but also to question what (or whom) has been forsaken, omitted, or excluded from the decision-making processes.

As de Santos (2001) has argued, crises can bring into view a powerful narrative of silence and absence, a silencing that in the context of the education policy debate in Romania, revealed a rather narrow understanding of the educational phenomena, whereby restricting priorities in remedial education programs was an option to mandate. Examples of neglect can also be seen in the complete silence over teacher leadership issues or over collaborative and communal approaches to learning when strategizing possible responses to teachers' PL associated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Highly centralized in both functioning and structure, the system of education in Romania appears to work as a collection of organizations distributed across hierarchical levels of authority in the decision-making processes. The long tradition of schools' direct subordination to county school inspectorates acting as MoE proxies, mainly exercising control and supervision over schools, effects a culture of isolation and competition between schools. The educational reforms in the 1990s promoting standardized visions of teacher professionalism and quality in education had further lessened any permeability the system might have had to innovative practices in CPD.

Several constraining factors appear to have a significant effect on promoting and innovating practices of teachers' PLD in Romania:

a) systematically rooting policies on reforming CPD in a logic of *deficit* and *inadequacy* of teachers' professional competences, both by referencing their ill adjustment to the requirements of greater social, economic, political, and cultural changes, and by indicating that more successful European examples of practice be replicated. This adheres to a *linear logic* of cause and effect, binding teachers' CPD to straightforward improvements in classroom practices and professional knowledge. It also conjoins to generally addressing CPD as if operating *separately* from the many complex educational issues contextualizing professional practices in education – such as those highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Implicitly, it suggests a lack of trust in teachers. Explicitly, by assuming top-down decision-making, guidance, supervision, and control of CPD, it exerts a strong influence towards teachers' de-professionalization.
b) recurrent postponement of curricular reforms granting teachers and schools more freedom and responsibility in decision-making on curriculum issues. This explicitly fuses with various reform proposals enticing *centralized models* of conceiving the national system of education. It implicitly translates into

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conceptualizing CPD as an enclave in the system of education, for which the single most significant feature is its unique and direct subordination to the MoE. In this, the dynamics of top-down and bottom-up flows of conceptualizing and rendering operational innovations to teachers' PLD remain consistently unaddressed, whereas more lateral ones (collaborations between schools) are completely invisible.

c) maintaining *distinct temporalities for responsibility and change* at different levels of decision-making. The state frames responsibility on itself for stressing a short-term management of visible symptoms and constraining effects associated with crises in education. It attributes to teachers and schools the responsibility for both rendering operational short-term responses to various demands in the context of crisis and ensuring continuity of educational duties in the long run. PD responsibilities are framed as teachers' obligations, implicitly more of a duty than a professional right. Explicitly, teachers and schools are expected to articulate swift responses to the major structural, functional, technological, and methodological challenges the pandemic crisis poses for education. Despite the enormous tasks and responsibilities assigned to schools and teachers, during the COVID-19 pandemic the state did not show much interest in taking a deeper and long-term perspective on the implications some of its proposed policies have for teachers' professionalism or for capturing the potential for innovating practices of PLD, resting with understanding the knowledge circulation and the practices in digitalization and decentralization.

This sort of authoritative and unequivocal role casting exhibits an apathy to addressing the political and professional agencies in a complex manner, comprehensive of the dynamic and relational nature of responsibilities and change more innovative conceptualizations of teachers' PLD advocate for. It also assumes binary optics over the potential outcomes of the crisis in education: there is only a negative or a positive outcome of the crisis. In the analysis of education policy debate, the state acts towards avoiding/controlling the negative outcomes; non-state actors advocate that avoiding the negative is not a possibility if ignoring deeper, structural issues in education, and that positive outcomes should be envisioned and actively pursued (as a lessoned learned out of the crisis).

The striking disparity between the policy temporalities by which state and non-state actors approached the crisis highlights the importance of capturing the ways in which different architectures of temporality impact the meaning-making and policy-making processes. The state's emphasis on the immediate control of negative effects places the crisis response on a permanent footing and leads to another consequence – the blurring of the boundaries between crisis response and post-catastrophe reconstruction (through educational reform) – which can result in the most undesirable effects, such as the selective exclusion of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the deepening of rural–urban inequalities, among the most significant and poignantly highlighted in thematic analyses of education during the pandemic crisis in Romania.

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2. *Governing and governance in relation to innovation and reform in PLD*

In their comparative analysis of various European PD models, Ostinelli and Crescentini (2021) noted that an adequate balance between prescription and looseness is fundamental to effectively innovating teacher PLD. They observe that the most efficient systems achieve this balance by shifting from an orientation towards control to one towards development, which is more attainable through "inspirational material or friendly guidelines without normative power" (Simola et al., 2009, p. 15).

When the education policy debate in Romania touched the issue of decentralization as a managerial short-term response aiming at containing the negative effects of the prolonged and generalized school closure during the COVID-19 pandemic, it had not even remotely come close to the "radical decentralization and deregulation" Simola et al. (2009) speaks of. It did however result in a political communication strategy that rather alerts over revisiting Stoker's argument that a "boundary problem" arises with changing from governing to governance, where lines of responsibility become increasingly blurred (Stoker, 2004). This decision allowed the state to devolve responsibilities on effecting safety measures, decision-making and appropriate strategies for education provision to "local communities", without a thorough clarification of how information required in exercising decentralized decision-making would be available, or what the transformations in the knowledge practices associated with a decentralized approach to decision-making on schooling and curriculum making were. In doing this, it implicitly appealed to particular ideas of what the teachers should know and do, limiting room for others, more progressive ones about professional agency, learning, and development in education.

One foreseeable risk is that this reductionist view of roles, responsibilities, and change, which have discursively emerged through the pandemic crisis, will consolidate meaning-making practices in servitude of perpetuating the status quo of conceptualizing teachers' professionalism in Romania and obstructing more innovative approaches to teacher PLD. Another is that of reading in the apparent estrangement of government from defining its own responsibilities in effecting the required changes, as a leeway to exercising autonomous decision-making on educational and PD aspects that are serving more to the neoliberal narratives of individual and/or local progress and development than to a meta-narrative of building social justice praxis across schools and within classrooms (Forde and Torrance, 2021).

The critical inquiry proposed here was intended as an exploration of how conceptualizations of learning, responsibility, and change have been articulated through the pandemic crisis. Issues framing teachers' PLD, along with the dynamics of roles and architectures of temporality shaping the meaning-making and the policy-making processes were rendered visible. In discussing their normative implications for teachers' PLD, I proposed taking a more complex view of the multiplicity of the co-evolving conditions and

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factors explaining the dynamics of change during a crisis. This meant looking for historical, systemic, structural, political, and cultural connections with the context of CPD in Romania. It resulted in unpacking conceptual and processual factors constraining innovative approaches to teachers' PLD that the pandemic crisis might have harboured. Some of these constraints have systemic and structural roots. Others are of epistemic nature and could remain concealed, should the inquiry abide by linear models of framing the research design, as Kennedy (2016) warned. It also afforded understanding that the greater risk associated with linear approaches to conceptualizing learning, responsibility, and change through crisis rests with hindering the ethical and political responsibilities conjoined with innovating teachers' PLD. The pandemic crisis has provided great opportunities to see that innovating teachers' PLD is not only about asking what or how but also by whom and towards which horizon of possibilities. These questions demand that we recognize the complex multitude of factors and agencies cutting into post-pandemic innovative approaches to PLD and that we place this recognition more in service of developing solidarity and socially just educational practices, than in serving neoliberal agendas of performativity, progress, and competitiveness.

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7 Teachers' professional learning in Finland

Providers of education in key role

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Introduction

This chapter introduces how teachers' professional learning is supported through different professional development projects, programmes, training, and other types of activities in Finland. The outcomes of research on teachers' professional development and learning have been discussed actively in Finland during the last six years within the collaborative planning and implementation of a national-level teacher education development programme (Lavonen et al., 2020 and Lavonen et al., 2021). In this discussion, we have emphasised the long-term nature of the professional learning (Oliveira, 2010), teachers' active roles in their professional learning (Garet et al., 2001), connection of learning to the classrooms and practice context, and collaboration and reflection with colleagues (Desimone, 2009; Luft and Hewson, 2014; and Van den Bergh et al., 2015) because traditional in-service training has been recognised to be ineffective (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). One serious reason for this ineffectiveness is that teachers' professional learning activities fail to consider how learning is embedded in professional lives and working conditions, that is, teacher community and classrooms (Koffeman and Snoek, 2019). Teachers are considered to be active in professional learning when they control or regulate their own learning by setting aims for learning and reflecting on and self-assessing their own learning processes and products. Collaboration during reflection helps in the sharing of beliefs and/or experiences and enables learning from experiences (Hiebert et al., 2002). Garet et al. (2001) emphasise that professional learning activities should be planned according to the core aims of the programme and be part of a coherent programme. Luft and Hewson (2014) argued that coherence is the way in which training offers focused learning opportunities related to the local context.

Teachers' professional learning and how this learning is supported through various formal and informal professional development activities depends on education context and policy. Strong commitment to educational equity, good quality education for all learners at different levels of education, and a decentralised education system where teachers, schools, municipalities, and

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universities have high autonomy have been identified as the main characteristics of Finnish education policy (Laukkanen, 2008; Niemi, 2015; and Sahlberg, 2011). These education policy issues strongly influence teachers' work as well as the planning, financing, and organisation of teachers' professional learning activities.

This chapter examines the national-level setting of aims for teachers' professional learning and associated activities in Finland; in particular, it considers different forms of activity, innovations related to activities, and teachers' participation in the activities.

Finnish education context

Decentralisation and autonomy of municipalities, schools, and teachers characterise the Finnish education context (Niemi, 2015). Teachers are active participants in the design of local curricula as well as physical and digital learning environments and courses and, moreover, assess both their own teaching and students' learning outcomes. This decentralisation means that local providers of education, typically municipalities, are responsible for organising teachers' professional learning activities. It offers flexibility in decision-making and makes it possible to take into consideration the local education context, networks, and collaboration. Municipalities and teachers themselves have organised formal and informal networks which support teachers' professional learning.

Educational equality and equity have been important education-related values and aims in Finnish education since the 1970s at all levels of education. According to first PISA studies, the equality aim has been achieved well. However, the gender and area equity have lowered in Finland during the last ten years (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016). Finnish special-needs education aims to integrate all learners into the same inclusive classrooms and support their learning. Primary and secondary teachers are responsible for monitoring the individual needs of learners and preparing a pedagogical plan in the case of enhanced or intensified support, if needed. Because of equity as a value and aim in education, special-needs education, inclusive education, and multi-cultural education have been always in focus at local-level and state-level professional learning activities.

Teachers in Finland in primary, lower, and upper secondary schools are required to have a master's degree. Kindergarten teachers and teachers in vocational secondary-level education must have at least a bachelor's degree, and when teaching in universities of applied sciences, a master's degree. Primary teachers (grades 1–6) have been educated in master's-level programmes in eight traditional universities for more than 40 years, while secondary teacher (Grades 7–12) education programmes have been provided in master's-level for more than 100 years (Niemi et al., 2012). An essential characteristic of teacher education in Finland has been its emphasis on research (Eklund, 2018 and Tirri, 2014). This orientation supports teachers in the local planning and assessment processes and the organisation of inclusive classrooms. Moreover, the research

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orientation supports student teachers in developing professional teacher identity and agency in their work (Niemi, 2015). As a part of this identity, they are also competent and willing to engage in professional learning and participate in various school-level development projects, which are also supportive for professional learning.

Teacher education is a popular university degree programme. For example, at the University of Helsinki only 5–10% of applicants are accepted to the primary teacher education programme (Lavonen, 2018). There are several reasons for this popularity: teachers have been educated in five-year master's-level programmes at traditional universities over the last 40 years. Due to this, teachers are considered as academic professionals, as with other university degree holders; school site operations are supportive for professionalism of teachers and their collaboration. They are also able to influence national education policy and its implementation, a strong quality culture and teacher role in assessment for professionalism of teachers. There are no heavy teacher evaluation practices, like inspectors or use of standardised test outcomes in teacher evaluation in Finland. Teachers' performance is evaluated as a part of quality assurance procedures at municipality and school level. The evaluation is mainly based on teachers' self-evaluations, and in development discussions with the principal. However, there is no official career progression for teachers in Finland – teachers are equal. Vocational secondary-level educational institutions are typically quite large and offer more diverse leadership and developmental roles and thus career possibilities for teachers. According to the latest data related to teachers and principals in Finland, in 2016 about 98% of principals, upper secondary and primary teachers were fully qualified (National Agency of Education, 2019). The remaining 2% were in temporary positions.

According to the OECD (2019, 2020) TALIS surveys the challenges related to teachers and teachers' professional learning in Finland are the lack of mentoring, fragmentation of professional development and learning, and principals increasing administrative tasks and low commitment to the support of teachers' professional learning. In addition, attention is drawn to the low coherence of school annual or development plans and teachers' personal development plans. Other challenges were related to teachers' job satisfaction, the lack of feedback from teaching, and the stress experienced by teachers and principals. The recognised challenges are based on teachers' self-reports and should be interpreted in the local context.

National-level strategic aims for teachers' professional learning

In order to make progress in pre- and in-service teacher education and better alignment of pre- and in-service teacher education, in 2016 the Minister of Education nominated 70 experts to the *Finnish Teacher Education Forum* (Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 2016). The experts, for example, from the Finnish universities, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish Agency for Education, and representatives from the Association of Finnish

Local and Regional Authorities, The Trade Union of Education, OAJ and Teacher Student Unions in Finland, and the Principal Association were asked to analyse research outcomes related to teacher education, to identify best practices based on teacher education strategies and policy documents in other countries, organise a national brainstorming process related to the renewal of teacher education and, finally, prepare a *Development Programme for Teachers Education* in Finland for supporting teachers' professional learning in all phases of teacher career. Furthermore, the forum was asked to identify key actions to undertake to improve teacher education and support the implementation of the development programme, and to create the conditions through financing pilot projects and organising meetings for the renewal of Finnish teacher education through development projects. (Lavonen et al., 2020)

The strategic competence goals are common to all teachers and thus highlight the strategic core competences and the direction for the development of teacher education. According to the goal, a professional teacher should have: first, a broad and solid knowledge base (including knowledge of a particular subject and pedagogy) about how to accommodate diversity among learners, about collaboration and interaction, about digital and research skills, about their school's societal and business connections, and about ethics. Second, a teacher should be able to generate novel ideas and educational innovation while making the local curriculum, to plan inclusive education initiatives, and to design and adopt pedagogical innovations. Third, a teacher should have the competences required for the development of their own and their school's expertise, especially for the development of networks and partnerships with students, parents, and other stakeholders. (Lavonen et al., 2020)

In addition to strategic competence goals, the development programme introduced six strategic action guidelines, which determined the direction for the development of teacher education. After publishing the development programme in October 2016, 31 pilot projects in 2017 and 25 pilot projects in 2018 were selected and started and altogether €27 million was allocated to the projects in the state budget. In addition to the strategic aims and actions, the research outcomes relating to teachers' professional learning were taken into account. For example, collaboration between universities and providers of education was emphasised. In total, there were 129 municipalities as partners of all 456 possible municipalities.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre evaluated the implementation of the Finnish development programme for teacher education through analysing the pilot project documents, organising a survey for the pilot projects, and interviewing the stakeholders and pilot project experts. According to the evaluation, the teacher education reform model prepared at the Teacher Education Forum had several strengths, such as the networking and bringing together of different experts and stakeholders. This networking had supported the implementation of all strategic competence goals, including the emphasis on the 21st century competences. Most pilot projects were recognised to have a strong emphasis on community building and collaboration. The evaluation

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also noted challenges and further targets for implementing programme, such as creating a clear plan for supporting the achievement of the strategic competence goals. Moreover, the effectiveness of the pilot projects should be monitored and evaluated during and after its completion in 2023–2024. (Niemi et al., 2018).

Organisation of teachers' professional learning

The induction phase education of teachers is organised by the providers of education (in general education municipalities, in vocational education specific vocational education providers). Every municipality and education provider has its own model to support teachers in their induction phase. The national government has also supported the Finnish Network for Teacher Induction "Osaava Verme[1]" for many years (Heikkinen et al., 2018). Osaava Verme is a collaborative network between the Finnish teacher education institutions, including the vocational teacher education institutions and teacher education departments of universities. Almost 1000 mentors have been educated during the past decade.

Professional learning through formal in-service training

The in-service education or support for the professional learning of teachers is the responsibility of the municipalities and cities in Finland. Teachers must participate three days per year in professional learning. Therefore, municipalities have organised short in-service courses for teachers. Special centres have been established in many municipalities to coordinate teachers' professional learning. In addition to three in-service days, there is 120 hours for co-design time during the academic year for co-design, consultations, and for home-school cooperation.

Teachers' associations organise professional learning for teachers. The Finnish National Agency for Education [EDUFI] (2019) is responsible for national-level implementation of educational programmes and strategies (e.g., ICT strategies) and for financing policy-driven professional learning courses for teachers. State funding for providers of education and organisations that organise courses for teachers is annually 15 million euros.

According to Kumpulainen (2017) and National Agency of Education (2019) the Finnish teachers and principals have participated actively in voluntary professional learning, typically yearly 80%–91% of various teacher groups. The most active were teachers in general upper secondary education of whom nearly 91% had participated voluntarily in professional learning. This was because of the increase in state funded strategic professional learning courses and digitalisation of the matricular examination test. There has been progress also with the teachers' personal study plans. In 2016, 44% of teachers reported having an individual professional learning and development plan to support their professional learning (OECD, 2019, 2020).

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Professional learning through school, district, and national-level projects or activities

Teachers' professional learning is supported by various school-, district-, and national-level projects or activities. At the school level, teachers in Finland, are seen as developers of the school community and school culture (National Board for Education [NBE], 2014); Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 2018a and Niemi, 2015). This idea of teachers as developers could be interpreted as an activity of a professional learning community (PLC) of teachers. Webb et al. (2009) evaluated Finnish teachers' PLCs through analysing qualitative semi-structured interviews with primary teachers. They found the following themes affecting teachers' work, well-being, and professional learning: the school community; collaborative working; long-term professional learning trust and accountability. Accountability here does not mean control but is more like a responsibility to teachers' own community.

Some of the most important school-level projects which are supportive of teachers' professional learning are the preparation of the local curriculum, learning environments, and inclusive education. Over the past 30 years, research (Atjonen, 1993 and Holappa, 2007) has indicated that local curriculum processes have inspired and empowered teachers and principals to develop school community and culture and have supported teachers' professional learning. Examples of school-level projects that have enhanced teachers' learning are supporting the school community to cross boundaries towards multi-professional cooperation; designing an ISC; connecting pre-service and in-service research-based teacher education in science, technology, and math (STEM) teaching; and promoting induction phase learning for new teachers (Niemi, 2015). An example of this was the design of an innovative school, implemented in a school in the Helsinki Capital city area in 2012–2014 (Korhonen et al., 2014). The innovative school community (ISC) is a holistic model of a school environment that supports the learning and teaching of skills for the 21st century.

A good example of a multi-disciplinary and collaborative local-level project which has supported teachers' PL, has been OpenDigi.[2] The project aim was to form regional development communities (consisting of researchers, teacher educators, teacher students, and primary teachers) and create approaches for producing and sharing research-based digital learning material for teachers' pre- and in-service education. Another example is "Creative expertise – building bridges between teachers' pre- and in-service education"[3]. The project developed models within the contexts of phenomenon-based teaching and lifelong learning of teachers.

Professional learning in teacher networks

In addition to development projects there are several teacher networks, which support teachers' professional learning. These networks are financed either by

the National Agency for Education or by the Ministry of Education and Culture and they offer professional learning for teachers free of charge. For example, *Innokas Network*[4] is a teacher network, which encourages schools to arrange their own activity supporting the learning of 21st century competences, including digital competences. Innokas supports schools by arranging training, consulting, and events in different parts of Finland. Today, the network comprises over 600 schools all over Finland. Another example of a university-driven project is nationwide *LUMA Centre Finland*[5], which aims to inspire and motivate children and youth into mathematics, science, and technology learning through the latest methods and activities of science and technology education. All Finnish universities are members of LUMA and organise professional learning for teachers and courses for school students. LUMA centre has organised several large projects emphasising the use of digital tools in education. For example, the six-year LUMA SUOMI programme (2013–2019) (LUMA, 2018) has been responsible for increasing the level of mathematics and natural sciences learning outcomes, including creativity, and student engagement in learning. Both were financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In order to increase the level of reading and use of different sources for reading such as web pages and digital books, a National Literacy Forum (Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 2018b) was established in 2017. The forum published the guidelines for developing children's and young people's literacy and reading skills in autumn of 2018. Although, the forum developed and introduced several types of activities, supportive for the development of reading in classrooms, the forum did not continue its activities after the seed-money was used in a similar way as *LUMA Centre Finland*. Consequently, a national network can either continue or die after the active financing. In the case of LUMA, the universities took responsibility of the network and considered it as a society related responsibility. Similar development did not happen with the National Literacy Forum.

Tutor teachers support to teachers' professional learning

One important professional learning innovation has been a tutor teacher model.[6] In 2018–2020, altogether 2,500 tutor teacher positions were established with state funding and tutor teachers were educated in order to support teachers to use digital tools, organise inclusive education, and support the learning of transversal competences of students in their own classroom. A tutor teacher is a teacher, who has fewer lesson hours than other teachers but supports other teachers in their own classrooms to use digital tools in education. National Agency for Education has been responsible for the development of tutor teacher's competencies and network of tutor teachers. However, since the beginning of 2022, municipalities have been responsible for the continuing of the tutor teacher model. It looks not all the municipalities will continue this support to teachers' professional learning.

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Discussion

Providers of education, in practice municipalities, are responsible for organising compulsory and secondary education in a municipality and for developing education practices. In particular, they are responsible for the preparation of a local curriculum together with teachers. Therefore, it is natural that municipalities should take care of teachers' professional learning. However, support for teachers' professional learning is offered also by teacher networks, various development projects, teacher associations, and university training centres. The National Agency for Education is financing specific policy-driven activities, networks, forums, programmes, and education for teachers.

There are several reasons, why a decentralised and versatile approaches for planning and organising teachers' professional learning in the job are appropriate in Finland. First, Finnish teachers are educated in master's-level programmes and only a small number of applicants are selected to these programmes. Research orientation is one guiding idea in initial teacher education. This research orientation helps student teachers to build up potential for continuous professional learning and find their way of being a teacher. As a part of this research orientation and during the teaching practice student teachers learn to reflect on their teaching and gradually internalise the professional identity as a teacher who is willing and competent to engage in continuous professional learning in collaboration with other teachers. Most teachers are willing and competent to participate voluntarily to different professional learning activities (Niemi, 2015). This might best suit their individual needs, career phase, and interests. This willingness to is seen in the participation frequency. Kumpulainen (2017) describes that in 2014–2017, 80% of primary teachers, 88% of secondary teachers, and 65% of vocational teachers were participating voluntarily to the professional learning activities. However, in a decentralised system, which emphasises teachers' autonomy, a minor proportion of teachers do not participate at all to professional learning. This is a weakness of the system. On the other hand, this is a problem of all systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a test for teachers' digi-competence and their competence to learn rapidly new skills to engage in distance teaching. Although, there was and is variation in teachers' digi-competence and their participation in pre-COVID-time professional learning, Finnish teachers made the switch to distance teaching successfully according to several national surveys (Lavonen and Salmela-Aro, 2021). One of the reasons for the success in the switch was the establishment of the tutor teacher model and the support tutor teachers gave to teachers who had difficulties in changing their teaching online. Although, the switch was technically successful, Lavonen and Salmela-Aro (2021) recognised at the student level decreased engagement and well-being. One of the most serious threats to students' well-being during the Covid period was the limited possibilities for collaboration and interaction. Consequently, teachers lack professional learning related to digi-pedagogical approaches and how to engage students in collaborative learning and prevent their feeling of loneliness.

One characteristic of Finnish education policy and practice, which is supportive for teachers' PL, is the collaborative design of national and local-level strategies and programmes, such as national teacher education development programme and national and local-level curriculum. There are always resources available for the planning and implementation of the national-level strategies, including curricula, collaboratively through different development projects and programmes (Lavonen et al., 2021 and Niemi, 2015). Implementation of the national strategies are considered as teachers' professional learning (c.f., Maier and Schmidt, 2015 and Pedaste et al., 2019). Collaborative nature is, therefore, seen in professional learning, which is supported by different school or district-level development projects or by PLCs (Webb et al., 2009) and, moreover by networking. Examples of effective and long-term networks are the Innokas and LUMA networks as described above. However, not all the networks and projects are effective and long term. There are three key challenges in the "project-based approach for teachers' professional learning". First, the quality assurance of the projects: it is not easy to organise how projects support the aims of the programme and teachers' professional learning. This is normally ensured by setting up a steering group (Lavonen et al., 2021) and national follow up studies are organised (Niemi et al., 2018). Second, the "project-based" approach to teachers' professional learning is sometimes regarded as problematic from the schools' and teachers' point of view because of the changing focus of the projects and competitive nature of the funding. The Trade Union of Education in Finland (Opettajien ammattiliitto, 2021) argue that resources allocated to project type professional learning should be placed as a part of basic funding of schools. However, project-based funding provides a process to support teachers in their competence development in the areas, recognised as state priorities. Third challenge is related to the fragmented nature of teachers' professional learning. This fragmentation could be recognised at the teacher, municipality, and state levels. The state-level priorities are recognised based on the government programmes and funding of PDPs are then allocated to these priority areas. For example, the state-level funding is not any more available for tutor teachers. These changes in priorities influences to the topics of PDPs. The PDPs in Finland should be better planned according to the core education aims and should be coherent and long term by nature (Garet et al., 2001; Hiebert et al., 2002 and Luft and Hewson, 2014).

The challenges related to teachers' professional learning in Finland are well documented in TALIS surveys (OECD, 2019, 2020). One of the recognised challenges is teachers' induction-phase support. Although the mentoring process has been developed in the Verme (2018) project, there is still lack of mentoring for teachers in the beginning of their career. Another challenge, recognised in the TALIS reports, is the principals' increasing administrative tasks and low commitment to leadership type of activities, such as, the support to teachers' professional learning. Organising leadership in practice is challenging in Finnish education context because teachers

interpret their autonomous position sometimes too straightforward and forget the leading role of national education policy documents, including the framework curricula. Therefore, Finnish Teacher Education Forum (Lavonen et al., 2020, 2021) has emphasised the importance of teachers' professional learning by describing competence and willingness for professional learning as an important area of teacher competence. Moreover, the leadership competences are emphasised as an important area of teacher competences, especially the importance of teachers' participation to school-level leadership activities.

As a summary, it is possible to recognise, how several outcomes of research on teachers' professional learning and development are implemented to Finnish teachers' professional learning activities. For example, the professional learning community activities are often long term in nature (Oliveira, 2010), support teachers to take an active role in their professional learning (Garet et al., 2001), and connect their professional learning to the classrooms and practice context, (Desimone, 2009 and Van den Bergh et al., 2015). The main challenges, from the point of view of research on teachers' professional learning, in the Finnish decentralised education system are the fragmented nature of teachers' professional learning and weaknesses in school-level leadership related to professional learning. Several researchers, such as Pata et al. (2021), emphasise the role of leadership and teams in leadership and in supporting teachers in their professional learning. Moreover, for better consistency and teachers' equal possibilities, professional learning could be supported by better school-level leadership in Finland.

Notes

1 https://www.osaavaverme.fi/
2 OpenDigi https://opendigi.fi/
3 Creative expertise https://www.jyu.fi/edupsy/fi/tutkimus/tutkimushankkeet/kotisivut/ula
4 https://www.innokas.fi/en/
5 https://www.luma.fi/en/
6 https://www.oph.fi/en/statistics-and-publications/publications/facts-express-3c2018-tutor-teacher-activities-basic

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8 Career-long professional learning in Scotland

Mobilising the profession

Christine Forde, Julie Harvie, Deirdre Torrance, Alison Mitchell and Kathleen Kerrigan

Introduction

This chapter charts the advancement of key aspects of policy and practice of professional development in Scottish education and explores emerging issues. Teacher professional development has represented a major area in Scottish policy since the early 1990s (O'Brien 2011). Over recent years, a significant shift in policy focus has seen a move from the provision of professional learning as an implementation tool for policy reform to an ongoing project concerned with the mobilisation of the teaching profession, as part of a drive for system-wide improvement. A part of this drive has been to tackle an enduring 'poverty-related attainment gap' (ScotGov 2016). A concept underpinning the current reforms to educational governance structures, curriculum, and assessment is that of a teacher- and school-led system (ScotGov 2019), as a way of achieving system-wide improvement.

The provision of professional learning is long established in Scottish education, being a contractual obligation and a defining feature of what it means to be a teacher – a core concept in the construction of teacher professionalism (Forde and McMahon 2019). This chapter begins with an overview of the Scottish education system, which contextualises the following discussion of four key milestones in the evolution of policy and practice in professional learning. The chapter then details the current policy on teacher learning and leadership development, identifying the roles and responsibilities of different organisations at the national and local government levels as well as the development of career-long professional learning (CLPL) in the context of the school. The issue of innovation in professional learning in Scotland is discussed by exploring four aspects, first practice-based learning and second, professional standards in teacher professional learning are well established in practice, while the other two aspects, teacher agency and collaboration, are ideas that have yet to be fully realised. The chapter concludes by considering the future of teacher professional learning in Scotland, particularly as a means of mobilising the teaching profession as part of a system-wide improvement.

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The Scottish education system

Scottish education, one of the four education systems in the United Kingdom, is a small system serving a population of approximately 5.5 million. Education is a devolved responsibility of the Scottish Parliament where education policy is underpinned by the twofold aims of 'equity and excellence', ideas derived from the OECD (2015) review of Scottish education. Education is compulsory for young people aged 5–16 and more than 700,000 pupils attend either primary (age 5–12), secondary (age 12–18), or special school (for young people with significant additional support needs). The Scottish Government provides funding for education through the General Revenue Grant to Local Authorities (LAs) with a small amount of finance going directly to schools to support high-profile initiatives (ScotGov 2017). Education has a three-tiered administrative system: central government sets the national priorities and policy; LAs are responsible for the local provision of education and setting local priorities; and schools and headteachers have the responsibility for the performance of the school. The issue of education governance is the focus of the current reforms where, to tackle a poverty-related attainment gap and raise achievement for all, the Scottish Government has looked to bring about structural changes, especially in the relationship between local authorities and schools/headteachers (Forde et al. 2022).

Teaching as a profession is long established in Scotland and school education has a workforce of over 56,000 teachers (ScotGov 2021). The current reforms 'The Empowerment Agenda' (ScotGov 2018), looks to mobilise the teaching profession in achieving system-wide improvement. As a policy lever, the Scottish Government continues to invest in the development of the teaching profession and CLPL remains the focus for government, local authorities, and schools.

Teacher professional learning: key milestones

Teacher professional learning in Scottish education has been variously referred to as 'teacher training', 'in-service education', 'continuing professional development', 'teacher professional learning', and currently, 'career-long professional learning'. This evolution of terms signals the changing purposes of teacher professional learning and changes in the design, provision, and regulation of teacher development. Since the early 1990s, four significant milestones form the backdrop to current policy and practice, reflecting ongoing innovation in professional learning.

A first milestone was the use of course-based professional development to drive the implementation of education policies of the new right in the 1980s–1990s. These reforms saw a shift of responsibilities from LAs to schools through school development planning, devolved management of resources,

and staff development and appraisal. A school management development programme was delivered to ensure that headteachers had the necessary technical knowledge (O'Brien 2011). The introduction of teacher appraisal underlined the significance of staff development as a marker of what it means to be a teacher. In the late 1990s, the *PG Diploma in School Leadership (Scottish Qualification for Headship)* (SQH), a national preparation programme for aspirant headteachers was introduced. Up to that point, provision tended to be either through academic learning through postgraduate qualifications (only a small minority of the teaching profession undertook) or policy-oriented training. The introduction of the SQH highlighted the importance of sustained professional learning which combined academic and experiential learning in practice-based learning programmes (Forde 2011a), an approach that continues.

The second milestone was 'The McCrone Agreement' (SEED 2001), following a review of the teaching profession, from which several developments were established: a contractual obligation for all teachers to undertake annually 35 hours of professional learning; a revised appraisal system, 'Professional Review and Development'; and a professional qualification leading to Chartered Teacher status. The Chartered Teacher Programme was underpinned by a professional standard (GTCS 2004) and a programme of practice-based learning (Reeves and Fox 2008). This programme was an example of efforts in many systems to raise attainment by improving teaching through professional learning (Forde and McMahon 2019). However, uptake was low and by the next milestone, policy enthusiasm for the programme waned.

The third milestone, a review of teacher education, *Teaching Scotland's Future (TSF)* (Donaldson 2001), laid the foundations for the current policy and practice. The review covered initial teacher education, CPD, and leadership development, embedding the construct of 'career-long professional learning' (CLPL) in policy and practice, leading to a range of developments:

- the revision and extension of the suite of professional standards;
- 'Professional Update', teacher re-accreditation based on the teacher's professional learning;
- the development of masters-level provision through partnerships between schools, local authorities, Education Scotland, and universities;
- the establishment of the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) (subsequently merged with Education Scotland); and
- funding to support teachers beginning masters-level programmes.

The work following the *TSF* review (Donaldson 2001) underlined the continuing significance of professional growth and learning in understandings of what it means to be a teacher in Scotland. Through 'Professional Update', teachers are required to re-register every five years based on their record of professional learning. Provision for professional learning has been enhanced through several developments. With the establishment of SCEL and partnerships between SCEL/ES, Universities, and LAs, provisions have increased for leadership development across a continuum (Hamilton et al. 2018). Further,

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LAs, schools, and universities had to reify and extend existing partnerships for the provision of career-long teacher education including initial teacher education; award-bearing university courses, professional qualifications related to leadership; and shorter courses. Central government has also provided funding for teachers to undertake masters-level studies at the universities.

The fourth milestone concerns the current programme, the *Review of Education Governance* (ScotGov 2016). The main focus comprises reforming education governance structures as a means of raising achievement and reducing poverty-related attainment gap, with changes to the role of headteachers, the funding of education, the role of LAs through Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) (ScotGov 2017), and a review of the role and functions of national bodies (Muir 2022). While the focus of this reform programme is very much on structures and accountabilities, there are two areas which intersect with teacher professional learning: the development of the RICs and the responsibilities of headteachers for school improvement.

Over the last 30 years of significant policy development, we can identify the evolution of the purposes and processes of teacher professional learning: from CPD as a policy implementation tool, a contractual obligation, and now as the marker of teacher professionalism. This policy focus has given rise to structural developments to ensure access to and participation by teachers in high-quality professional learning experiences.

Structures: regulation and provision

Autonomy and regulation are key areas of the role and work of a profession in society, reflecting the dual role of teachers as employees and as professionals. Regulation has been used as a change strategy, where efforts were made to 'teacher-proof' (Darling-Hammond 2009, 510) externally mandated reforms to pedagogy, curriculum, and leadership. In this perspective, teachers and teacher organisations are positioned as the 'policy problem' (Rinne and Ozga 2013), reflecting the assumption that expertise lies beyond the teacher, the classroom, and the school. As a result, there has been a tendency to polarise thinking with autonomy regarded as positive and regulation, negative. With increasing international attention being paid to the issue of teacher autonomy in system-wide improvement efforts, the critical issue is finding the balance between autonomy and regulation.

International Summits on the Teaching Profession (ISTP) have included discussions about the negative impact of excessive workloads, performance management, and high stakes accountability on teaching quality. The ISTP is an annual meeting of ministers of education, teaching unions, and professional organisations from high-achieving education systems (Asia Society 2017). The OECD provides reports on key areas. Deliberations on teachers relate to professional growth and learning: 'how to improve the professional knowledge base of teaching, how to strengthen the role of professional peers, and how to increase teachers' professional autonomy' (Asia Society 2017, 8). Scotland has participated in successive summits and these discussions have

helped inform policy on teacher professional learning. There is an increasing emphasis on teacher development and school autonomy in decision-making around curriculum, assessment, improvement priorities, and professional learning. In this, we can see the regulation and autonomy of the teaching professional being held in tension through the roles and responsibilities of several organisations.

The work on *TSF* (Donaldson 2001) recognised the wide range of organisations who contributed to teacher professional learning provision, or to regulating teacher professional learning, or a combination of these roles. Within a varied landscape, partnership is regarded as a way of working. A Partnership Group of the main organisations including the Scottish Government, the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), the LAs, the Association of Directors of Education, the universities (Scottish Teacher Education Council), and Education Scotland (including the inspectorate) took forward the recommendations of *TSF* (Donaldson 2001). Subsequently, CLPL partnerships were established between Universities and LAs. This development of partnership working coincided with a policy push towards a masters-level profession and funding for teachers beginning a masters' pathway. As a consequence, several organisations are involved in the regulation of teacher professional learning (Table 8.1).

The focus on structures and regulation is partly to ensure access to and participation in high-quality professional learning. However, structural concerns are only a part of the work in regulating and providing professional learning. The emphasis on CLPL to mobilise the teaching profession towards the transformation of schools raises questions about the processes, practices, and experiences of professional learning.

Building career-long professional learning

CLPL continues to be a policy concern, the means to mobilise the teaching profession in system improvement. However, questions about how we conceive of CLPL and the provision of professional learning opportunities for all teachers has attracted scholarly attention, building a body of work around professional learning and leadership development in Scotland, highlighting several areas, which we now explore: practice-based learning, professional standards, agency, and collaboration.

Modelling practice-based learning

Desimone (2009) highlights the considerable consensus about components of effective professional learning and these ideas have influenced the design and models of 'delivery' of PL in Scotland. However, consideration needs to be given to the experiences of learning as a professional, and this has formed a significant area of research and development in Scottish education. Efforts have focused on capturing the processes of professional learning that support the transformation of practice. From research on the SQH, Reeves et al. (2002)

Table 8.1 Regulation of teacher professional learning

Organisation	*Role in Scottish education*	*Role in teacher professional learning*
Education Scotland	National education agency for inspection, curriculum development, and teacher development	• Directorate of Leadership and Professional Learning: provide programmes and build partnerships with providers to sustain access to professional learning • National model of professional learning • Inspectorate with QIs for Leadership for Learning: professional engagement and collegiate working; impact of CLPL.
GTCS	Professional regulatory body	• Accreditation of ITE and Headship preparation programme • Professional Standards including the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning • Professional Update: teacher re-accreditation • National model of professional learning
LAs	Responsible for provision of school education and employers of teachers	• Ensure professional learning is managed at school level • Provide professional learning opportunities • Work in partnerships with universities for ITE, CLPL, and leadership development • Work with other LAs in RICs
Schools/ HTS	Provision of education 5–12 and 12–18	• Professional learning policy • Annual PRD for every teacher • Provision of CLPL including collaborative activities • Professional Update
Individual teachers and leaders	Teaching and leadership in schools	• Undertake required professional learning each session • Engage in PRD annually • Self-evaluate using appropriate standard • Complete Professional Update every five years.

generated a model of practice-based learning to recognise the complex interaction of several learning processes. This model has four elements:

- *Reflection on practice:* opportunities for self-evaluation of performance and feedback to identify learning needs, assessing whether practice has changed for the better as a result of the learning processes;
- *Experiential learning:* structured opportunities for experimenting with practice as a basis for learning in the work situation;
- *Cognitive development:* knowledge-based tools and opportunities to enable the practitioner to think about their experience in ways that will enhance their understanding and create rich and meaningful conceptual frameworks to support skilled practice; and
- *Social learning processes:* context and working with others are understood as crucial in professional learning supporting cognitive development and the adoption of new practice on the part of the individual (Reeves et al. 2002, 80).

The purpose of this first model of professional learning was to identify the learning processes of professional learning. Other efforts to model professional learning in Scotland take a different approach combining processes and structures. The National Model of Professional Learning (GTCS 2019) reflects quality indicators in the QA Framework, *How Good is Our School* (ES 2015), and so includes structural elements in the management of professional learning as well as some of the processes of learning. In this model, teacher learning and the learning of pupils are connected and so professional learning is a concern of the school and its leadership – 'Leadership of and for Learning' – with professional standards considered to support professional learning. Three forms of professional learning processes are identified:

- learning as collaborative;
- learning by enquiring; and
- learning that deepens knowledge and understanding.

Modelling professional learning is a complex process and helps to surface several interdependent elements and avoids valorising specific forms of professional learning to drive change, for example, academic learning or coaching. An issue is the use of models of professional learning by teachers in planning and reflecting on their own CLPL and by providers to design CLPL. The same question concerns the use of professional standards.

The use of standards as a professional development tool

Professional standards play a critical role in the landscape of teacher professional learning in Scottish education: 'The Professional Standards support and promote partnership, leadership, enquiry and professional learning and have multiple purposes' (GTCS n.d.). While standards have been criticised internationally as reductive and behaviourist, efforts have been made to address these issues in the design of the Scottish professional standards. These standards are based on a 'model of professional action' (Reeves et al. 1998), where practice (teaching or leading) is based on educational values and knowledge, underpinned by effective personal attributes and interpersonal skills. Professional standards represent the codification of teaching or leadership, the accuracy of which is much debated. Less attention, however, has been paid to how teachers use standards in their own development (Mayer et al. 2005).

Professional learning as a core component of teacher professionalism is evident in all Scottish standards but has found particular expression in a different kind of standard (Forde et al. 2017). One of the most innovative developments has been the *Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (SfCLPL)* (GTCS 2012, 2021). This standard is underpinned by the same professional values and skills articulated in the other standards. However, instead of delineating the professional actions of a teacher/leader, this standard identifies sets of professional development actions leading to the enhancement of practice.

Thus, the *SfCLPL* codifies the processes of professional learning and shifts the focus for teachers from a 'once and for all' attainment of competences, to an ongoing engagement in professional learning (Forde et al. 2017, 31).

Practice-based learning and the use of professional standards are well established in efforts to mobilise the teaching profession through CLPL to achieve system-wide improvement. However, two dimensions of CLPL are still evolving: teacher agency and collaborative learning. We turn now to these two issues.

Teacher agency

Teacher agency is implicit in the notion of a 'teacher and school led education system' but there is little clarity about how this might be realised in and through professional learning. Buchanan (2015) identifies two forms of teacher agency performed in a context of change, stepping up or pushing back. Policy developments are premised on this binary of engagement/withdrawal and focus on building teacher engagement and confronting non-participation. Seeing teacher agentic behaviour in professional learning in terms of a readiness to engage with or withdraw is limited. Withdrawal can be an entirely professional act, where teachers make judgements about what they see as their professional learning needs. This binary does not explore the impact of context, existing power relationships, or of individual teacher's motivation in making such choices. Therefore, we need a richer model of what we mean by teacher agency to underpin and be fostered through professional learning.

There are different ways to conceptualise agency within the various theoretical domains. An emerging model in Scottish education draws from the sociocultural domain, the social networks and environments, and views these as pivotal to a person's ability to thrive and develop to their full potential (Archer 2000). Emirbayer and Mische (1998, 972) theorise the interplay between three different dimensions which they call the 'chordal triad of agency' and they categorise these as iterational factors, practical-evaluative factors and projective factors which interact continuously and simultaneously as people live out their lives from day-to-day. Priestley et al. (2015) have drawn on this theoretical perspective to present agency as phenomenon rather than a variable or capacity. Agency is conceptualised here, not as a quality or the ability a person has, but rather as something a person can achieve which is affected by the 'chordal triad'.

The arrows in Figure 8.1 indicate the interrelated nature of the different facets. Iterational factors include the experiences a person has had in their life, both personal and professional. These come to shape how they view the world in terms of the beliefs, views, and opinions that they hold and affect their conscious and subconscious actions. These are closely related to projective factors which are short-term and long-term goals. According to Emirbayer and Mische (1998), people continuously engage with memories from the past, make projections into the future, and adjust what they do in the present according to

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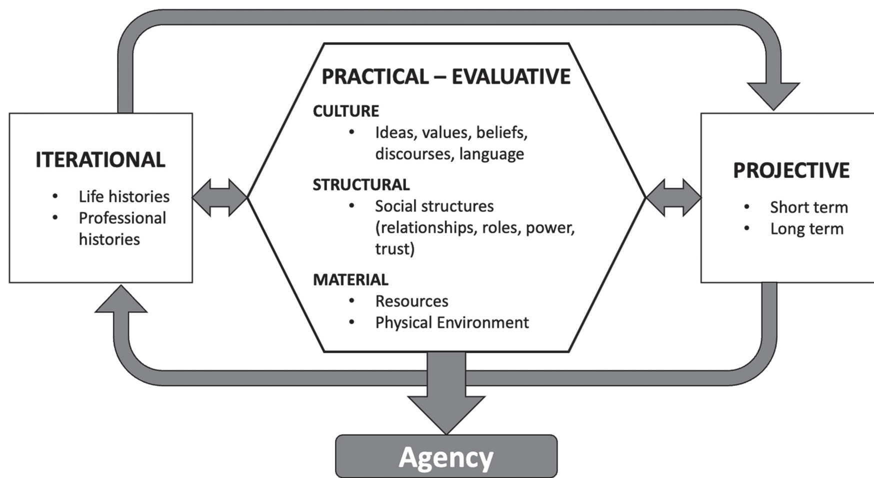

Figure 8.1 Ecological model of agency.

(adapted from Breslin et al. 2021 and reproduced with permission of the authors.)

what is happening around them at any given point in time. The equilibrium between these factors changes over time as emphasis shifts from reflecting on past experiences to planning for the future and focusing on the present, day-to-day happenings. This can be viewed as a fluid coming and going between past, future, and present which Emirbayer and Mische refer to as 'relational pragmatics' (1998, 1012), affecting how a person is able to respond and adapt to their structural environments.

Teacher agency relates to how teachers make decisions and take action, in order to address the learning needs of learners. This ecological model of agency pushes us to consider how professional learning can foster teacher agency by highlighting the interaction between: iterational factors, a teacher's experiences, assumptions, and understandings; the practical-evaluative factors, the culture, and structures as well as resources that shape teachers' experience and opportunities; and the projective factors, the motivations and goals of the teacher, immediate and long-term. These elements interact and can enhance or inhibit what someone can achieve at any given time. Therefore, professional learning should not be about providing a set of prescriptions to be applied to all classrooms but instead has to be focused on building and sustaining teacher expertise and underlines professional learning as sustained, practice-based, and theoretically rich learning opportunities to build teacher expertise across a career.

Collaborative learning

Teacher agency is an essential aspect of a 'teacher and school-led' education system and so agency of individual teachers needs to be balanced with the

collective agency of the school. The challenge of building teacher agency is the danger of fragmentation and isolation across a teaching staff. Helgøy and Homme (2007) argue that teacher agency is not absolute but is shaped by collaborative practice and the building of learner autonomy. Therefore, the developments around teacher agency need to be in the context of a collective vision and collaborative practice. Collaborative learning is about providing opportunities for teachers to engage in the development of personal and collective critically reflective practice, exercising agency in shaping their own professional learning experiences which in turn, will enable teachers to reify or reshape their practice. In Scottish education, in both policy and practice, the development of individual agency has to be balanced with the building of collaborative learning and practice.

Underpinning the 'Empowerment Agenda' is a view that system-wide improvement in Scottish education needs focused and sustained collaborative effort by all professionals and partners in the education system. The OECD (2015) review of Scottish education highlighted the importance of cultures of professional collaboration to impact on student achievement. This culture of collaboration is designed to be system-wide, between: teachers in school; schools in clusters; LAs in the RICs. The RICs are also a means of building collaboration between LAs and Education Scotland, the national organisation for curriculum and teacher development. The RICs:

- provide educational improvement support to practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals – drawing on Education Scotland staff, local authority staff, and others;
- provide focus across all partners through a regional plan and work programme – aligned to the National Improvement Framework; and
- facilitate collaborative working across the region (SG 2018, 1).

One of the challenges to system-wide collaboration is the link between system-level processes of development with practices in the school and classroom. Reeves and Forde (2004) found that fundamental to changing the practice of aspirant headteachers to bring about greater collaborative practice, was not simply about changing sets of pedagogic or leadership practices but changing expectations, identities, and cultures in the site of practice. Similarly, Datnow and Park (2018, 124) argue that: 'Moving towards purposeful professional collaboration is not a reform to be implemented. Rather, it is a long-term process of rethinking teachers' professional work that requires sustained engagement on the part of leaders and teachers'. In Scottish education some work has been undertaken around professional learning communities or teacher communities as valid forms of professional learning and these potentially have much to contribute. However, much of professional learning remains targeted at the individual practitioner through either course-based provision or individualised experiential learning, for example, mentoring (Forde 2011b). The four core elements of practice-based learning, use of

standards, building teacher agency, and collaborative practice need to be central to the use of professional learning as a means of achieving system-wide improvement.

Conclusion

In this discussion, we have looked to trace the evolution of ideas and practices from the concept of 'teacher training' to 'CLPL'. Professional learning remains a central policy concern in Scotland. The twofold aims of equity and excellence demand a system-wide engagement where the teaching profession is mobilised through CLPL to bring about transformative change. However, professional learning cannot be seen as a policy implementation tool, where through narrow forms of learning transmission and imitation, teachers replicate what is deemed to be effective practice. Instead, we need to explore the fostering of collaboration and agency as critical processes in enriched and sustained forms of career-long professional learning. Building genuine and productive collaborative learning that enhances teacher expertise and agency raises questions about the future design and provision of professional learning opportunities in Scottish education. One important step towards genuine collaborative learning is challenging the notion that professional learning is essentially about sharing good/effective practice. Premising sharing good practice as the core process of professional learning privileges a construction of professional learning as essentially imitative and transmissive, where teachers hear about the practice of others and then simply replicate this. Schaap et al. (2019) note the range of tensions teachers experience when participating in a PLC, in relation to the transfer of ideas to practice. The policy imperative to collaborate needs to be tempered by understandings that collaborative learning is itself a lengthy process of development to engender not only collaborative skills but also the skills of a facilitator but relationship trust (Carmi et al. 2022). As we look to the future of CLPL in Scottish education as a means of mobilising the teaching profession, an added dimension is the increased use of online professional learning. Further investigation would be essential particularly the development of pedagogies for teacher learning in online provision, designed to build teacher agency and collaborative learning. The challenge for a mature education system is to genuinely embrace critical processes in all forms of professional learning in order to foster innovation for sustained improvement.

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9 Co-constructing a new approach to professional learning in Wales

Implementing a national vision

Ken Jones and Gareth Evans

Context

Wales is part of the UK but, following devolution in 1999, has built and developed an education system separate from that of the other three UK nations (Woods et al., 2021). However, although Wales, with a population of just over 3 million, may be seen as a small education system, its cultural diversity, geography, economy, and social composition has produced a complex mix of policy and practice, making Wales an interesting area for study.

Much of Wales is mountainous and sparsely populated with over 50% of the population located in the south of the country. Large areas of the north, central, and western parts of Wales are rural in nature. In the past, the geography of Wales has had a significant impact on the ways in which teacher professional development has been organised, with access to higher education and other services being easier for those in urban areas. More recently, the number of internet sites serving Welsh teachers has increased significantly, and this has enabled greater access to professional learning resources, but it has also raised new and challenging problems of equitable access to new technologies for professional learning (Jones et al., 2020).

Culturally, Wales is a distinctive nation. It has its own language, which is not only part of the National Curriculum in schools but, for 20% of pupils in primary schools and 15% of pupils in secondary schools, is the language of instruction. 33.5% of teaching staff declare they are fluent, or fairly fluent, in the Welsh language, with just under 27% expressing that they are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh (Education Workforce Council, 2021). Although all official documentation is bilingual, teachers in Welsh-medium schools will still access much of their professional learning support through the medium of English, but resources in Welsh are growing.

The figures shown in the annual statistical digests published by the Education Workforce Council (EWC, 2021) have implications for the planning and take-up of professional learning opportunities in Wales. The number of teachers in local authority-maintained schools in Wales in 2011 was nearly 39,000 and it had been relatively stable for some years prior to that but by 2022 the number had fallen to just over 35,000 (EWC, 2021). 75% of these are female

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and just over 25% of teachers are over the age of 50, with 15.9% aged 30 or less – a pattern that impacts the provision of current professional learning support and future workforce planning.

The EWC data also highlight trends in the number of education support staff working in maintained schools and whether they are employed full or part-time. Particular challenges face those working on supply contracts (substitute teachers). The problem of ensuring effective professional learning support for this group has been ongoing for many years (Welsh Government, 2017a) and remains a significant challenge for a government advocating an inclusive, co-constructive approach to policy making in professional learning.

Although key policy decisions are made centrally, policy implementation is largely devolved, with responsibility being subdivided into three tiers (Welsh Government, 2017b, p. 10). Tier 1 is the Welsh Government, which oversees planning and policy making, accountability, and system improvement. Tier 2 consists of 22 local authorities, arranged into four regional consortia with the responsibility of school improvement, along with other organisations such as higher education institutions (HEIs). The role of this "middle-tier" is "to facilitate and support the sharing of best practice and collaboration to improve learner outcomes" (WG, 2017b, p. 10). Tier 3 consists of the schools, who are encouraged to work together to enhance the learning and well-being of children, young people, and professionals.

The data from the EWC's statistical bulletins show that the school workforce in Wales is by no means uniform and, given the many contextual differences between schools and their staff, it is evident that generic approaches to professional learning are unlikely to be fully effective. It is essential, therefore, that professional learning support is brought as close as possible to the classroom and to the individual professional. However, when change is occurring at every level in education, as is the case in Wales, the potential for inequity in the system becomes harder to avoid. A continuing danger for the Welsh Government is that there will be *national policies, locally interpreted, institutionally implemented, and individually applied*. This begs the question: how can policy be implemented in an equitable way, ensuring that individuals, schools, or sections of the professional community are not privileged or disadvantaged?

The professional learning policy journey – professional trust to performativity and back again?

Imperatives for system change in education at a national level frequently emerge for political reasons. Rarely do they move for professional reasons with the voices of teachers or school leaders at the forefront of system design. National attempts to drive system change are often directive and performative to ensure consistency. Sometimes, the "wrong drivers" (Fullan, 2011) are used, leading to inconsistent take-up or poor implementation of policy. Much depends on the values and goals of policy makers and system leaders. Two recent and very different attempts to transform the system in Wales have been implemented in

recent decades, and both had significant implications for the processes and practices of professional learning. The first of these in 2014 could be described as performative; the second, in 2017, could be described as co-constructive.

Wales has never been short of policy and position statements emphasising the importance of teachers' professional learning (see Thomas et al., 2021, for a useful list of reports between 2009 and 2021, and Evans (2015) for an assessment of causes and effects of changing education policy in Wales). In relation to professional learning, policy drivers have swung repeatedly in response to "political" or "professional" influences (Jones, 2011). Like many countries, Wales experienced the PISA Shock phenomenon (Mayer and Benavot, 2013), which had major ramifications for the education workforce and the way in which professional learning was manifested. Between 2009 and 2013, the then Minister for Education responded to a series of poor PISA results with a number of policy directives aimed at reforming what he saw as a failing national education system (Andrews, 2014). He took a very directive, centralised approach:

> Performance will be our driver. All other matters – curriculum, qualifications, professional development, governor support, capital programmes, will be subservient to that.
>
> (Andrews, 2011 p. 8)

This started what one union leader called a "White knuckle ride for education in Wales" (Evans, 2015), but although recent changes have been more protracted, with the PISA shock having subsided, they are not less significant. After 15 years of near-constant policy change post-devolution, the Welsh Government commissioned a series of high-level reviews from the OECD (OECD, 2014, 2017, 2020) to better inform the development of Wales' education system and its key areas for improvement. These reviews, particularly that published in 2014 which warned that "too little attention has been paid to the continuous professional development of staff" (OECD, 2014, p. 66), led to major changes in education policy and practice, including a renewed focus on professional learning.

In view of the more conciliatory tone set by subsequent ministers for education, the way forward now involves what appears, on the surface at least, to be transparent consultation and discussion with education professionals. The process of policy making is now intended to be "co-constructive" and a new model of professional learning in Wales has been put in place (Welsh Government, 2017b).

A national mission for education in Wales

Following the critical OECD report of 2014, political leaders in Wales set out to transform not only the curriculum but the ways in which the education system is defined. The response was to set new horizons in most aspects of

education, significantly through the development of a new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015), a radical review of Initial Teacher Education (Furlong, 2015) and a focus on school leadership through the establishment of a new National Academy for Educational Leadership (https://nael.cymru/).

Rather than tinker with education in a piecemeal way, wholesale changes were introduced which may be seen as transformative and radical. Statements of intent were heralded in the form of an action plan from 2017 to 2021 and published as "Education in Wales: Our National Mission" (Welsh Government, 2017b). One of its foremost objectives, which remains a cornerstone of the government's vision for education, was to build "a high-quality education profession" with "inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards" within "a self-improving system" (Welsh Government 2017b, p. 3). This would be met by the development of a teaching profession

> driven by a deep understanding of pedagogy and subject knowledge … [be] research-engaged, and [be] well led by leaders who will ensure that every teacher can improve through effective collaboration, innovation, professional learning and opportunities to provide professional leadership to others.
>
> (Welsh Government 2017b, p. 3)

The mood of education professionals at the time has been described as one of "cautious optimism" (Woods, 2021, p. 6).

The National Mission for education in Wales (Welsh Government, 2017b) is built on a consultative approach to policy making and requires a high degree of trust in the teaching profession for its effective implementation. Its components are clear, and the vision aligns well with current thinking on teacher education. Professional learning is now visibly present in the pre-service stage, building on the recommendations of the Furlong Report (2015). Beginning with the reconfiguration of Initial Teacher Education, this more national approach is intended to trigger transformation across many elements of teacher professional learning.

It is no coincidence that the first "enabling objective" in the National Mission is "Developing a high quality education profession" (Welsh Government, 2017b) – recognition that the professional learning of teachers is central to making the raft of education reforms work. Significantly the phraseology used in the National Mission does not fall into the directive trap of a government actively "developing" a passive teaching profession. Instead, the tone is one of support, collaboration, and partnership – and of co-construction. Teachers and leading professionals are encouraged to work *with* the national government, and to lead and take responsibility for their own development:

> Teachers should be the most dedicated students in the classroom. We will support them to be lifelong professional learners to help raise standards for all our young people.
>
> (Welsh Government, 2017b, p. 27)

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The collaborative mood, prevalent in all related policy documents, is summed up by the Tweet from Welsh Government (2019):

> Education in Wales is changing. From 2022 there'll be a new curriculum.
> Designed by teachers. Built for children. Made for a fast-changing world
>
> (https://gov.wales/education-changing)

The difference between the current National Mission and previous reform has been to allow the professional voice to be heard more strongly and for leading professionals to become more visible. It remains to be seen whether this will lead to consistent and coherent progress or to patchy and inconsistent implementation.

Curriculum for Wales

The new *Curriculum for Wales*, part of what Priestley and Biesta (2013) coin the "curriculum turn", is underpinned by four purposes that provide a vision of the Welsh learner and drive classroom practice (Donaldson, 2015). A rowing back from prescription and the "tick-box" culture of old, means that teaching and learning is more contextualised, and the professionalism of teachers respected. Inherent within all of this is the need for educators in Wales to become curriculum designers, competent in the art of mapping and assessing individual learner journeys. Fundamentally, the bedrock of subsidiarity on which the new curriculum is built demands new skills of the education workforce and requires teachers to transition from "passive consumers" to "proactive producers" of curriculum content (Evans, 2021). Writing in *Successful Futures*, the blueprint for curriculum reform in Wales, Donaldson (2015, p. 10) noted that the high degree of prescription intrinsic to the existing national curriculum, together with powerful accountability mechanisms, had created a culture "within which the creative role of the school has become diminished and the professional contribution of the workforce underdeveloped".

The current approach to education reform places teachers at the heart of the reform process, but the professional learning implications arising from such a shift are significant.

A national approach to professional learning

The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) (Welsh Government, 2021b) was launched in 2018, "creating a professional learning vision fit for the evolving education system in Wales". An early visible sign of intent was a change in terminology from "professional development" to "professional learning" (Jones, 2015) and the new approach contains eight elements grouped into three contexts – school, regional, and national.

The national approach brings together a number of existing initiatives along with some new or proposed professional learning opportunities. These include (Welsh Government, 2019):

- An evaluation of the impact of existing professional standards for teaching and leadership "to address whether they are being used in the way in which they were planned";
- Talk Pedagogy – the facilitation of new forms of conversation about practice;
- A package of support for induction and early career development;
- Development of a blended approach to professional learning through investment in digital resources;
- A new national approach to coaching and mentoring;
- The development of a new all-Wales Masters in Education, and;
- A new multi-agency, collaborative approach to building research capacity within the teaching profession.

At a strategic level, the elements are becoming more aligned. The key challenge moving forward is to achieve consistent implementation of change at school and classroom levels and to avoid the occurrence of pockets of excellent practice alongside pockets of slow or little change (Milton et al., 2020).

The conundrum facing leaders at all levels in Wales will be to gauge the amount of intervention required. The renewed focus on professional learning, growing resource base and engagement of the National Academy for Educational Leadership in Wales are all positive signs that collaboration and leadership development are beginning to bear fruit, but the challenge of extending involvement beyond leaders and schools who would normally be at the forefront of change remains.

How does policy and practice in Wales align with international thinking on professional learning?

Professional learning is most effective in collaborative cultures (Woods and Roberts, 2018), but the learning process is **individual** (requiring active rather than passive engagement), often **informal** (Evans, 2019), and **always complex** (Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Strom and Viesca, 2021).

Opfer and Pedder (2011) comment that "despite a seeming consensus on the characteristics that lead to teacher learning and change … we are still unable to predict teacher learning based on these characteristics" (p. 377). The reasons for this are associated more with the complexities of system operation than with failure or success of government policy.

Policies themselves will have only a limited effect on changing the practice of pedagogy and the variety of elements within the NAPL makes it difficult to evaluate the impact of any specific part of the process. Nevertheless, there is a temptation for policy makers to apply linear/logic models to move from professional learning to change in classroom practice. This is increasingly being questioned (Boylan et al., 2018; Margolis and Strom, 2020; McChesney and

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Aldridge, 2019) and the need to acknowledge complexity is becoming stronger (Strom and Viesca, 2021), but there is still a tendency for policy makers uncritically to put in place programmes of training and development and to expect direct and tangible classroom change.

In recognition of this, "values and dispositions" are intended to lie at the heart of the NAPL and the terms "pedagogy", "collaboration", "leadership", "innovation", and "professional learning" are accentuated (Welsh Government, 2021b). In the same way as the National Mission attempts a transformative approach to education in Wales, the new approach to professional learning is aiming to transform professional practice and support for teachers – and crucially, there appears acknowledgement within government that both should happen in lockstep.

Identifying and overcoming potential obstacles to implementation

It may be more helpful to look at what is ***not*** working rather than celebrate only what ***is*** working.

McChesney and Aldridge (2019) provide an interesting perspective on reasons for perceived low impact of professional learning, examining "what gets in the way". They analyse seven "sequential models" of professional learning and argue that

> none of the existing models explains how progression occurs from one stage to the next … This means that we lack the kind of insights that could inform strategic efforts to increase the likelihood that what should happen actually does happen … Although we might hope that teacher professional development activities will result in key forms of impact, we know little about how to facilitate those outcomes or what barriers might hinder their realisation.
>
> (McChesney and Aldridge, 2019)

The Welsh Government itself identified key obstacles to implementing a national approach to professional learning in a presentation to support its launch in 2018 (bold text in the original):

> It is clear as we develop the NAPL that **there is variation** across Wales in professional learning **provision and experiences**. From the current Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme, through regions' support for newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction, to professional learning provision for serving practitioners and leaders and the research and learning that practitioners engage in, there is **too much variation** in **access and entitlement**, in the **quality of professional learning experiences** and in the **impact of professional learning on practice and outcomes** for schools and learners.
>
> (Welsh Government, 2021b NAPL presentation slide 3)

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The NAPL is designed to address the related issues of variation and inequity by giving the system a model of interconnected elements, but the most difficult element for leaders and policy makers to influence is the culture of professional learning in individual schools. Evans' (2019) cognitive learning model recognises the importance of the professional as an individual, and the development of a national Professional Learning Passport (EWC, 2017), which encourages and values reflection, is part of this approach.

Similarly, the National Professional Enquiry Project (Welsh Government, 2021a; Evans et al., 2022) aims to enhance collaborative approaches to practitioner enquiry and impact on school outcomes. If the co-construction of the new approach, involving schools, HEIs, and the regional consortia, is to prove effective it will need to be understood and applied in every school and classroom, by teachers and other adults involved in the learning process.

Some time after the launch of NAPL, a Senedd (Welsh Parliament) research report asked the question: "What might prevent the reforms being delivered successfully?" (Dauncey, 2021). The report identified two key potential obstacles: **the insufficiency and complexity of school funding** and the need to generate "a **culture change** among a profession used to teaching a prescribed national curriculum for over thirty years".

At the heart of system reform are the agents of change at school level – the teachers and school leaders who implement the reforms. Without a clearly coordinated approach to professional learning, teachers' understanding of key changes is likely to be incoherent and the application of educational change inconsistent. This is an issue particularly pertinent to the Welsh context.

The fact that Wales is a "small system" does not make it easier to achieve coherent buy-in or take-up in practice. The need to increase fidelity of implementation (by reducing local interpretations of national policy) is still not fully realised. Challenges to the take-up and sustainability of the NAPL include:

- Achieving coherence and reducing re-interpretation of policy without becoming overly prescriptive and directive;
- Measurement of impact – more-sophisticated forms of accountability will be needed to demonstrate the "value" of non-linear forms of professional learning. This will likely require a revisiting of the purpose of accountability;
- Enacting transformative proposals through professional subsidiarity – the extent to which there is take-up at individual and school level may not be left to chance;
- Sustainability of the vision through potential political and educational turbulence in the coming years, and;
- Acknowledging complexity (Strom and Viesca, 2021) and stimulating local energy to drive through policy changes.

The policy rhetoric may be good, but success lies in the way the elements are linked and merged with one another. The role of education leaders is essential

in enabling this coherence and the process must be underpinned by sustainable professional learning for school leaders as well as teachers at the macro, meso, and micro levels (Jones, 2022).

By undertaking such a fundamental review of the education system in Wales, the approach to change, and to professional learning, could be said to be "innovative" in its intent. However, the modification of so many moving parts in the system has made equitable implementation a major challenge. Aspects of reform have been successful and celebrated, but there appears to be significant lag in the system between policy intent and implementation. This has been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid pandemic which changed many plans for the implementation of the new curriculum and its associated professional learning (Thomas, 2021).

Many aspects of the professional learning agenda continued by virtual means and teachers were faced with a remarkably steep professional learning curve, including quickly coming to terms with new technologies to enable remote learning when schools were closed. Out of necessity, we may have seen a real shift from traditional professional *development* to a greater professional *learning* approach, with individuals accessing a global online resource base and blending their learning in ways that were not previously accessible or explored.

Conclusions

The Welsh Government's NAPL, built on co-construction and newfound confidence in the profession, may go some way to easing the transition between the old and new curricula and highlight new approaches to teaching and learning. However, the transition is not straightforward and changes to the current infrastructure are likely to be needed.

For example, a report on professional learning in Wales by the OECD (2021a) found that "…the different bodies that form the 'middle-tier' of support for professional learning … are not always clearly differentiated and complementary" and that "inter-school cooperation in professional learning is … reaching its limits in places" (p. 3). They state:

> Variability in school-level leadership and evaluation capacity may lead to some schools being left behind, as Wales places increased responsibility on schools and teachers to shape their own professional learning journeys.
> (p. 3)

Similarly, a report by Estyn, the education inspection service in Wales, argues that the "middle-tier" will have an important role to play in readying the teaching profession, given its responsibility for facilitating professional learning, but noted that there remains "considerable variation" in how prepared schools are for implementation (Estyn, 2021, p. 2).

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Wales faces a challenge that has tested many of the world's education systems (e.g., Scotland, New Zealand, and British Columbia) –ensuring a level of consistency and coherence in curriculum and professional learning, while at the same time respecting and celebrating local difference.

Sinnema et al. (2020, p. 6) describe the high level of flexibility in emerging international curricula, such as that being developed in Wales, as being "both a gift (for some) and a burden (for others)". This, they argue, can lead to "groundbreaking and thoroughly impressive teaching and learning experiences" or, on the other hand, "troubling" educational inequities (ibid, p. 6). Getting this balance right will likely determine the extent to which Wales' raft of education reforms are successful and work for both teachers and learners.

In its latest review of Wales' curriculum development, the OECD (2020) warned that "professional learning of high quality and precision is required" and a large number of stakeholders thought "there was need for more time and more targeted professional learning in order for teachers in Wales to be ready for implementation".

More recently, a survey commissioned by the Welsh Government (Duggan et al. 2022) itself found that of 567 teachers and leaders who responded, more than two-thirds believed that their school was in need of additional support to be ready for curriculum launch in September 2022.

Most respondents to this survey reported that insufficient time had been made available to prepare for roll-out and "concerns were raised that practitioners lack the expertise to be able to design their own curriculum" (ibid, p. 28).

All of this suggests there is still much to do as Wales seeks to build on two decades of policy change and ensure that its workforce is properly equipped to deliver the nation's transformative reform agenda. There is certainly a perception, widely held amongst teachers, that regional difference and the disparity in professional support on offer across the country has hampered the capacity of schools to confidently design their curricula. NAPL has not yet managed to pull together in a consistent and orderly way the professional learning provision available.

There is, however, cause for cautious optimism. Wales' sitting education minister has responded to teachers' concerns about a lack of preparedness by promising a new "National Entitlement" – a genuine *national* package for professional learning support "that everyone will be entitled to and benefit from" (Welsh Government, 2022a, par??). In his first major address to the nation's headteachers, the minister said he was "not yet convinced our professional learning offer is as accessible and useful as it could be' and 'there is too much variation and despite the volume of material, too many gaps" (ibid).

The new entitlement, to be co-constructed by the profession and other key stakeholders, is designed principally to level the playing field and guarantee the availability of a suite of curriculum support that is well signposted and readily available to practitioners, the length and breadth of Wales. The implication is that no teacher will be left behind, regardless of where they teach or in what language. As the minister himself was keen to note: "This is the Curriculum for *Wales*, after all" (Welsh Government, 2022a. Italics in original).

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According to the Welsh Government (2022b), the National Entitlement will support the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning, by enabling the education profession to:

- Support the system's priorities, specifically delivering curriculum and wider education reform;
- Enjoy equity of access to professional learning, regardless of language, location, contract or role;
- Enjoy the highest quality of provision and support;
- Easily access the provision and support available to them locally, regionally and nationally, and;
- Engage in enquiry and be supported by coaching and mentoring.

(Welsh Government, 2022b)

Scotland's "Curriculum for Excellence" (Scottish Executive, 2004), which bears a number of similarities to the curriculum outline published in Wales (Evans, 2021), offers a useful yardstick for the relative health of Welsh education reforms. In its recent review of Scottish curriculum progress, the OECD (2021a) warned that the complexity of "documents, tools and instruments" introduced to accompany the new approach had overwhelmed the very people they were supposed to support. This concern could easily be associated with the approach taken in Wales.

Wales is entering a crucial stage in its education reform journey. Nevertheless, the question of whether or not it can ensure consistency and coherence, while honouring the principles of subsidiarity, remains a live one. We will know in time if the forthcoming National Entitlement, and the promise of new professional support for teachers, provides a strong enough answer.

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10 Teachers' learning and development in England

Complexity and challenges

Sara Bubb and Amanda Ince

Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the English context and then discusses key issues influencing the professional development landscape currently in England of learning versus development, professionalism through which themes of attrition, workload, standards, inspection, and well-being run. These issues are illustrated with examples of innovative reforms and practices.

While England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are all part of the United Kingdom, each has its own education system and governance arrangements (Woods et al., 2021). The result is complexity at every level and in every way. In England, there are different types of schools, routes into teaching, providers of professional development, and interpretations of professional development and learning. A confusing variety of terms are in use: professional development, CPD (continuing professional development), inset, training; professional learning and development, professional learning. Although there is similarity, there are subtle and sometimes significant differences between how people use these terms and this is significant because it can influence teachers' attitude, agency, and understanding of its purpose. Some see it as activities that teachers do or which are "delivered" to them in a transmissive model from expert to teacher and others see it as learning on the part of teachers with varying degrees of agency and others focus on the impact on pupils (Ovenden-Hope et al., 2018; Sims et al., 2021).

Complex context

There is a complex context for professional development in England. Maintained schools are those funded through taxes and under local government control, usually through local authorities, who used to provide many professional development opportunities. However, 44% of schools have become "academies" which means that although government-funded they are independent from local control, and 87% of these are in multi-academy trusts (MATs) which have become providers of professional development opportunities. Academies were set up in England in 2000, initially as a means of

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improving failing schools (sponsored by business). The model was adopted voluntarily by other schools, including some strong and successful ones (converter academies), that saw it as a means to increase their autonomy, including in professional development. As the sector has grown, the DfE has encouraged academies to form MATs, to bring economies of scale but they have developed with little strategic thought and most only have a few schools (Greany & McGinity, 2021). This has made professional development opportunities more disparate.

The inspection regime is another important issue in England. Led by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), it is seen as top-down, technical, and managerial in its pupil progress and achievement-led approaches and high stakes grading of schools (Roberts-Holmes, 2020), which affects reputation and recruitment of both pupils and staff and therefore has an impact on funding. What is inspected thus has high status. The fear of inspection creates in some a reductionist approach with a focus on compliance and what is required to avoid an unfavourable outcome (Munoz Chereau et al., 2022). Part of the judgement on leadership and management refers to ensuring staff develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge and practice which might encourage creative approaches to professional learning.

The variety in types of school is indicative of the resulting complexity at every level and in every aspect with schools operating on a continuum from completely autonomous to highly controlled and this is also influenced by the lines of accountability, with schools deemed successful allowed more freedoms. Schools inspected and graded by Ofsted as Outstanding can apply to become "Teaching Schools": providing school-to-school support, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and professional development. There is a national network of Teaching School Hubs, which have taken over responsibilities from local authorities in many areas.

Professional learning and ITE have been moved away from traditional providers such as local authorities and universities. The result has been greater variability, an increase in competition and a neoliberal approach to the marketisation of professional development for teachers with schools offering courses and competing with universities and other private providers, all contributing to further complexity (Armstrong & Ainscow, 2018).

England has a recruitment and retention crisis in education influenced by workload, wellbeing, status, and an accountability and inspection agenda. One in five new teachers leave the profession after their first two years, while two in five leave after five years. Of great concern is that high exit rates are increasing for each successive teaching cohort of new teachers (Sibieta, 2020). The government response has been influenced by the conceptualisation of teaching as technical and craft-oriented and focused on raising standards and pupil outcomes. One of its solutions is the introduction of a national teacher development framework and roll out of standardised programmes: "Our vision is that a golden thread of evidence-informed training, support and professional development will run through each phase of every teacher's career" (DfE, 2022a, p. 5).

There has been a greater emphasis on the changes that take place as a result of teachers' learnings. Ensuring that professional development has a positive impact on pupils is a key feature in England. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), an independent charity, is influential in evaluating teacher development initiatives strictly on their impact on pupils. Their guidance (EEF, 2021) recommends professional development activities that focus on the following mechanisms.

A. Build knowledge – Managing cognitive load – Revisiting prior learning
B. Motivate staff – Setting and agreeing on goals – Presenting information from a credible source – Providing affirmation and reinforcement after progress
C. Develop teaching techniques – Instruction – Social support – Modelling – Monitoring and feedback – Rehearsal
D. Embed practice – Providing prompts and cues – Prompting action planning – Encouraging monitoring – Prompting context specific repetition.

Understanding what makes professional development activities effective is critical but complex: "exposure to and participation in staff development activities may or may not bring about change to individuals" beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours. These changes to individuals may or may not lead to changes in the classroom and school practice. And these changes may or may not lead to improvement in pupil outcomes' (Bubb & Earley, 2010, p. 3). Within this complexity, both EEF and DfE are directing schools towards a "what works" framework with an emphasis on the impact of staff development activities on pupil outcomes based upon a perceived consensus on features of effective PD (DfE, 2016). This approach is critiqued by Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2020) who argue that careful consideration is required in identifying the effectiveness of professional development and learning approaches. Bubb & Earley (2010) and Margolis & Strom (2020) also critique linear models of PLD, emphasising the complexity.

Teacher development framework

The National Institute of Teaching run by the School-Led Development Trust, a charity, oversees the teacher development system, as shown in Figure 10.1, to provide teachers and school leaders with training and development throughout their career.

ITE in England is complex and beset by changes. Teaching is a graduate entry profession, with entrants required to have a bachelor's degree, but not master's like some other countries. There are multiple routes into teaching and the award of "qualified teacher status" (QTS), which is required for those teaching in most schools. The independent sector does not necessarily require this, although it is preferred and is often used to assess the quality of the candidate. Since the development of academies, which can set their own terms

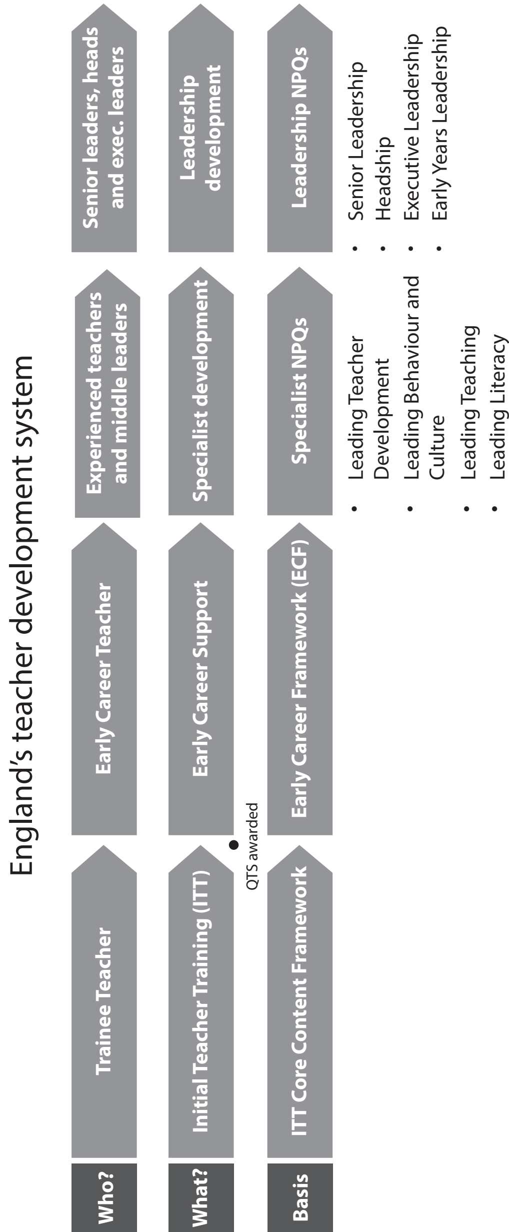

Figure 10.1 England's teacher development system (DfE, 2022a, p. 11).

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and conditions the national pay scales and qualifications have lost some of their dominance. The official position is that: "Qualified teacher status (QTS) is a legal requirement to teach in many English schools and is considered desirable for teachers in the majority of schools in England" (DfE, 2022b).

The routes into teaching include undergraduate degrees with QTS offered by universities such as three-year BA or BEd or four years with honours and the one year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Schools also provide qualification often via consortia of schools running training and placements for ITE or using the Schools Direct route (Ellis et al., 2019). The schools provide an apprenticeship type approach to training, and usually work in partnership with a university that provides more theoretical input. There are 240 ITE providers accredited by DfE. Three-quarters of new teachers come through universities and a quarter through school-based providers (DfE, 2021). The PGCE with a designation for age phase was seen as the preferred qualification and remains widely accepted abroad but remains under pressure since the 2015 Carter Independent review of initial teacher training which sought to resolve some of the issues in recruitment and quality of initial teacher training (Mutton et al., 2017). It investigated what the various routes into teaching offered and access to courses. It also highlighted the importance of partnership between schools and universities and communities. Its findings supported a government preference for shifting ITE away from universities and into schools: "As centres of excellence for teacher development covering every region of the country, teaching school hubs are critical to our ambition of providing teachers with high-quality professional development at all stages of their career" (DfE, 2021, 20). This included alternative school-based routes, including Teach First, which recruits top graduates. The Teach First participants undertake an intensive five-week training period before being placed as teachers in schools in deprived areas or challenging circumstances. These different routes into teaching add to the complexity of the English education landscape and influence the subsequent provision for CPD, the term which remains used by many teachers and government.

Early career framework

The early career framework (ECF) was introduced in January 2019. It has statutory status and was rolled out nationally in September 2022. The ECF is part of the government's "golden thread" to address the variety in quality of experience for new teachers in their first two years, and to aid the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

The ECF is an example of the complexity and tensions within the English education system in relation to professional development and learning. Since 1999 all newly qualified teachers (NQT) regardless of qualification or route, have had an induction year with a 10% reduced teaching workload and support from a mentor in their school. Accompanying this period were locally

organised professional development sessions linked to local priorities and the individual needs of NQT. The ECF renames NQTs as Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and is a standardised framework rolled out as a programme through delivery partners across the country. It aims to ensure that all ECTs receive the same quality of support and mentoring in their first two years of teaching.

It provides a blended learning approach for all ECTs, irrespective of their age phase or subject taught. The content and assessments are organised under a series of *Learn that…* and *Learn how to…* statements (DfE, 2019) that form the curriculum for all ECTs. The programme is supported by a teacher within schools with a slightly reduced timetable to provide mentoring for a two-year period. The framework aligns with and builds upon the government-published Standards for Teachers, and for Teachers' Professional Development. These two documents set out a series of expectations that teachers are assessed against. The initial award of QTS is predicated upon successful sign off a year later against the Teacher's Standards linked to the ECF.

Underpinning expectations and forming the bedrock of the subsequent initiatives for professional development is the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (DfE, 2016). This sets out advice about what effective PD looks like and the actions to be taken by those organisations involved in professional development and learning, school leaders, and teachers to ensure that there is a benefit for pupils' education. It is structured around five pillars of effective professional development:

1. Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
2. Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
3. Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.
4. Professional development programmes should be sustained over time.
5. Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership.

(DfE, 2016)

These standards are in evidence throughout the government approach to teaching and their centrally designed and implemented programmes.

National professional qualifications

As a continuation of the "golden thread" of teacher development, there are government organised National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Originally set up to support new headteachers, they have been expanded and there are now many specialist and leadership NPQs. These provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice to those leading multiple schools (see Figure 10.1). The most recent additions to the NPQs are those in

Leading Literacy and Early Years Leadership. The Early Years Leadership NPQ expands the opportunity for professional development of this type to those working the Early years sector which traditionally has had a lower status and a lower minimum qualification requirement than for teachers in schools (Social Mobility Commission, 2020) There is also a NPQ in leading professional development. This leads to a further issue this chapter discusses – development or learning?

Professional development or professional learning

The term "Professional learning and development" has been adopted (Alexandrou, 2021; Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021) and in many ways this is a helpful solution to the tensions and debates between development and learning. Kennedy (2014) provides a framework of types and purposes of professional development and we have added a mapping of the situation in England against this in Table 10.1.

In England, much professional learning and development is conceived of as being training oriented. This aligns with the Kennedy model in that it is seen as transactional in nature, as opposed to professional development and learning which is transitional moving, in the best scenarios, to transformative. There are five days of in-service training for all schools but these are often used as compliance training opportunities to fulfil legal and Ofsted requirements (Ince & Kitto, 2020). They are often in addition to weekly hour-long staff

Table 10.1 Kennedy's (2014) model of purposes and types of CPD adapted to include examples from England

Model of CPD	*Purpose of model*	*English examples*
Training	Transactional	Usually mandatory and legally required, e.g.: health and safety
Award-bearing		Certificated courses, e.g.: First aid
Deficit		Staff performance review/appraisal identifies area for development
Cascade		External training, one member of staff attends and then returns to share the content through a staff meeting or briefing
Standards based	Transitional	Teachers Standards, national professional qualifications, e.g. NPQH
Coaching and Mentoring		Included in new ECF
Community of Practice (CoP)		CoP, AR, and Transformative professional learning are being adopted by research schools and seen as requiring more active engagement by participants and perceived as more valuable
Action Research (AR)	Transformative	
Transformative		

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meetings which usually occur after school. These meetings may focus on school development priorities and management issues. For example, staff meetings might provide training on a new marking policy which is then monitored through book scrutiny or provide cascade training from an external course. This aligns with the more managerialist and technical approach to education (Ball, 2009). Teaching Schools have exacerbated this in some ways as their funding is set up as pump-priming with an expectation that they become self-funding and profit making from their endeavours across these performance indicators, including professional development (Mutton et al., 2017). The result has been a reduction in local authority funded professional development and an increase in competition with a neoliberal approach to the marketisation of professional development for teachers (Armstrong & Ainscow, 2018). Schools act as private training providers competing for participants with organisations including universities and this has implications for school-to-school support.

Professional learning

Some schools have moved away from traditional professional development courses and instead have formed professional learning communities or professional learning networks (Stoll, 2020). In doing so they recognise their knowledge of their context and professional expertise in mediating research-informed and evidence-informed approaches for sustained change and improvement. Linked to policies for school improvement and system change, funding has been available in some places, and this has allowed schools and universities to research together in partnership. Building on such initiatives and their popularity with experienced teachers in creating development opportunities without necessarily following the traditional senior management routes of promotion. Schools have become research hubs, linked to another teaching school key performance indicator, Research and Development. An added benefit has been the attraction for teachers of working in schools with research opportunities and this has been adopted as a recruitment and retention strategy with senior roles advertised with a specific space for research as well as the more usual teaching responsibilities. The next sections discuss two examples of professional learning networks and communities leading research for sustained improvement as examples of professional learning. These are offered as alternatives to the centrally designed and implemented offer, which is often presented as scripted and prescriptive, which may be seen as a backwards step (Ovenden-Hope, 2022).

Example 1: Science project

A model of professional development was used in an eight-month project, funded and evaluated by the London Schools Excellence Fund that aimed to enhance primary school teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge of the

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science curriculum and practice. It used an impact cycle with ten stages organised into three sections – preparation, learning, and improvement (Bubb, 2018).

A. Preparation: identify needs, baseline picture, set a goal and plan how to achieve it;
B. Learning: the development activity and the new learning (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that result;
C. Improvement: putting learning into practice, with impact on pupil learning and improved staff self-efficacy.

Preparation

Baseline data showed that few of the teachers studied science beyond the age of 16 and that there were particular insecurities around teaching certain topics such as electricity. The participants were given a science test paper aimed at 14-year olds to evaluate their knowledge at the beginning and end of the project. This gave clear benchmarking and showed how deep gaps in knowledge were, which enabled sessions to be tailored to meet areas of misunderstanding. All participants wrote a few points about their baseline starting point, which allowed them to set realistic goals for their understanding and the impact they wanted for their pupils and as leaders of science in their school. Thus, the focus on impact was clear from the start and participants monitored their own progress.

Learning

There were 11 three-hour practical sessions every three weeks with an expectation of putting things into practice in between and reporting back. Participants discussed and were focused on their learning, whether it was knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes, networks, confidence, or enthusiasm. Each session was evaluated after the day and asked what ideas they would try out or share with colleagues at school. Evaluations fed into the planning of the subsequent sessions.

Improvement

Teachers put their new learning into practice in the weeks between sessions and each session started with a sharing of what people had tried out. Visits from the trainer helped them improve their practice through team-teaching and addressing any problems, such as with resources. Participants audited the science resources in the school to identify whether there were enough to teach all aspects and topics in the national curriculum.

The improvement in the teachers' confidence and self-efficacy was clear: all said they were more confident as a result of the project and half said they were

"much more". The impact on pupils was clear, as judged by questionnaires, book scrutiny, and focus groups. There was much more science work in their books, covering more topics and being responded to with more enthusiasm. There was school-wide impact because the teachers shared ideas with colleagues; one headteacher said, "Science has been reenergised in the school".

Example 2: Facilitated Action Research (FAR)

Action research (AR) is an established research tradition and in England it also forms part of most ITE programmes, where trainee teachers undertake small scale projects in schools and settings under the guidance of tutors and these feed into their overall assessment. It is usually seen as a positive and rewarding part of the ITE process with students able to take a personal area of interest and develop it in a school for mutual benefit. It also supports the ambition of many teachers for making a difference. As a response to a need for professional development for teachers and linked to the needs of the school rather than externally driven, AR has been adopted as a strategy by research schools and professional learning networks (Godfrey, 2020). However, the reality of teaching means that for many, once qualified and working, the opportunities for AR seem to slip away under workload and lack of confidence without support from a tutor to scaffold the process can make undertaking such projects daunting. This lack of confidence may be further exacerbated by a frequent critique of AR as carried out in schools, that it lacks rigour and is project work rather than research and therefore not worth doing (Wyse et al., 2018). To address these concerns, FAR is designed to support individual professionals and schools or settings to carry a version of AR independently and rigorously. Originally devised in response to a request for tailored professional learning for a teaching school in a deprived area (Ince & Kitto 2020), FAR is research underpinned and based on key principles of professional learning. It provides a modified AR cycle based on the work of Carr and Kemmis (2003) to create a scaffolded approach with an emphasis on devising a robust research question as the focus (Ince & Kitto, 2020; Ince, 2018) and meets the British Education Research Association (BERA) definition of high quality close to practice research (Wyse et al., 2018). It also adopts an impact evaluation framework (Earley & Porritt, 2010) which focuses attention and prompts critical reflection at every stage. The outcomes appear consistently positive with schools reporting benefits through addressing school issues through FAR, with sustained benefits in building capacity of teachers and motivating them to be agents of change through the outcomes from their research. These play into the wider agenda of well-being, attrition, and workload. Teachers are reluctant to take on additional commitments as they feel under pressure, have heavy workloads and risk burn out (Bingham & Bubb, 2021). An advantage of FAR is that it is linked very closely to teachers' normal responsibilities and in being focused on their area of interest linked to a concern or issue they have already identified, validates their professional

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judgement, and offers a possible solution which can act as a powerful PLD opportunity. Successful FAR projects cover a range of topics from literacy and numeracy to well-being, transition, yoga, policy making and were voluntarily continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They engage a range of education professionals including play workers, speech and language therapists and local authority advisers as well as teachers and support staff. Participants commented on its benefits:

> It has had a great impact to actually be more reflective on our practice and exchange ideas with the team. We have been more co-operative and ultimately effective.
>
> When you do something like that, it makes you think how you can just change and make changes, self-reflection on how you can improve, where do you go from here…. how fun it was.

FAR is now being adopted by an increasing number of teaching school hubs as an effective professional learning approach which creates sustained change and benefits for children and teachers.

Summary

The complex context in England creates specific challenges in professional learning but it is reassuring to note that there are creative and innovative approaches being taken. These are both at the government level through the adoption of a "golden thread" to teacher professional development and at more local levels. At the local level, it is through professional learning communities and research hubs actively exploring and implementing how professional learning can enhance and develop teachers and teaching to benefit children. This offers opportunities for optimism for professional learning in England.

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11 Learning leaders

Teacher learning in Northern Ireland

Margery McMahon and Claire Woods

Introduction

Teacher learning in Northern Ireland occurs in the unique context of an education system where the historical and political legacies of the past continue to manifest in a denominationally divided school system (Gallagher, 2021: p. 13) though with a growing "integrated" school system. A small state within the United Kingdom (UK)[1] and sharing a land border with the Republic of Ireland (RoI), it has been described as having "the smallest school population in the UK but with a structural design that is amongst the most complex" (Gallagher, 2021: p. 147).

As one of the three devolved administrations of the United Kingdom (Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) its Department of Education (DE) has the responsibility of education and teachers in Northern Ireland. However, the development of the teaching profession, and teachers' professional learning, has been impacted by many factors relating to its unique political context and the legacy of the circumstances in which the Northern Ireland state was established.

The historic Good Friday/Belfast Agreement of 1998 restored self-government to Northern Ireland after almost 30 years, eventually bringing an end to the "Troubles", though disagreements among the dominant political parties have resulted in several periods of suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly and "direct rule" by the UK/Westminster government since 1998. After a three-year period of suspension from 2017 to 2020, efforts to restore the devolved government following the Assembly Elections in May 2022 failed and so the Assembly and the devolved administration continues to be in abeyance. Invariably, in such circumstances, policy-making and decision-making are impacted and slowed, falling behind the pace of change and response in other parts of the UK and beyond.

This "stop-start" approach to the devolved government has impacted the ways in which innovation in teacher professional learning has evolved. There have been a series of reviews of education in Northern Ireland and the inability to progress the outcomes of these is perhaps indicative of the complexities associated with introducing change in education in the Northern Ireland

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context. It would be easy to presume a stalemate; however, this is not the case, and despite these challenges, there are opportunities for teachers at all career stages to avail of and engage with career development and professional learning opportunities. The cross-border dimension of this reveals the opportunities that exist beyond jurisdictional boundaries, questioning sites of professional learning in the context of not just Northern Ireland and Ireland but also continental Europe.

It is within this context, and against this backdrop, that this chapter explores teacher learning in Northern Ireland. The chapter begins by setting out provision for teacher preparation and teacher learning, outlining the main organisations and stakeholders involved. Conceptual models of the teacher and teaching, which are key pillars in the teacher learning strategy as it has evolved since the early 2000s, are considered, looking closely at *Teaching: the Reflective Profession* (GTCNI, 2007) and *Learning Leaders* (DENI, 2016b), as well as arrangements for early professional development (EPD). The chapter then goes on to consider the ways in which teacher learning has evolved and some of the challenges in its wider implementation and teachers' engagement with it. Despite these challenges, and throughout the period since 1998, there has been growing cross-border cooperation amongst students, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. Some of these are considered in the final section of the chapter which presents opportunities and challenges associated with progressing innovation in teacher professional learning in Northern Ireland.

Teacher learning in Northern Ireland

Most schools in Northern Ireland are state or "grant aided" schools and the number of private or fee-paying schools is less. The majority of teachers (approximately 20,936) are employed in "grant aided schools" (NISRA, 2021a). While the number of integrated and interdominational schools has increased, denominational schools (i.e., schools associated with either the Catholic or Protestant religions) form the majority of schools. Selection of pupils at the age of eleven, in the form of the 11+ examination, was retained in Northern Ireland, long after it has been ended in other parts of the United Kingdom and was only finally abolished in 2002. However, while the 11+ examination was abolished, selection for admission into grammar schools remains, through a de facto, unregulated "transfer test" driven by two consortia: the Post Primary Test Consortium (PPTC) and the Association for Quality Education (AQE). The PPTC tests are generally favoured by Catholic maintained schools and AQE by non-denominational schools. In 2023, the two tests will be reduced to a single test managed by the School Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG).

Teacher preparation programmes are provided by higher education institutions including Northern Ireland's two universities, Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University, and two university colleges, St Mary's University College and Stranmillis College, both affiliated colleges of QUB. Teacher

preparation occurs through four-year undergraduate programmes or one-year postgraduate programmes (PGCE). Milliken and Roulston (2022), citing Mark Langhammer, the NI Secretary of the National Education Union, remind us that the education system in Northern Ireland "isn't just the most socially segregated in the UK-[but] the most socially segregated education system in the developed world" (p. 1). Indeed, they go on to argue that the teacher education programmes serve to perpetuate such segregation as early career teachers will often study, and then return to employment, in the same community sector where they grew up (p. 3). The 2014 review of initial teacher education also commented on the "fragmentation and duplication" of teacher preparation programmes (Sahlberg, 2014: p.16). Such a system is not only divisive but illogical and expensive too, as Milliken (2020) shows.

Teacher preparation programmes are accredited by the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland (GTCNI) and subject to inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). While alternative routes for teacher preparation are not available in Northern Ireland, many teachers receive their teacher preparation in other parts of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland. All teachers, wherever they have undertaken their initial preparation programme, must be registered with GTCNI to be eligible to teach in Northern Ireland's grant-aided schools.

Since the devolved government in Northern Ireland took responsibility for education in 1999, there have been a series of reviews commissioned to provide advice and guidance to the government on education reform which, according to Clarke and McFlynn (2021) have only brought about relatively minor changes to policy and practice (pp. 131–2). The most recent review, initiated in October 2021, was tasked with undertaking a "fundamental review" focusing on quality, equity, and sustainability of the system with the potential to radically re-shape education design, delivery, and provision (DE, 2022, online). The scope of the review is broad, "including Sectoral Bodies, ETI, curriculum, area planning, 14–19 Strategy, Entitlement Framework, teacher training and the interface between Higher Education and Further Education" (Independent Review of Education, 2020: p. 7).

In its interim report the Independent Review panel emphasised support for the education workforce, recognising that "excellent training, support and continuing professional development should be pre-requisites for educational improvement" with a commitment to consider options to ensure there is high-quality initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers and school leaders (Independent Review of Education, 2022: p. 18).

The interim report signalled what this may involve: promoting and enabling a culture of self-improvement; collaboration and mutual support among schools; the operation of professional networks and potentially measures to support wider career progression routes, including opportunities for mentorship, career breaks, and secondments (Independent Review of Education, 2022: p. 18). With this, there is some resonance with reform programmes

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implemented by other devolved administrations in the United Kingdom such as Scotland and Wales, where system-level reforms have included a focus on teacher learning, in and through a professional continuum, and which may address the standstill in teacher education and teacher learning that Clarke and McFlynn (2021: p. 131) suggest is not reflective of dominant trends globally, of, on the one hand, postgraduate, master's level, research-based/led/informed course provision, led by universities, and on the other, increasing deregulation and diversification of provision. Northern Ireland, they observe, has not moved in either of these directions (ibid).

This is also reflected in the nomenclature for post qualification teacher learning, where terms such as "inset" or professional development days (PDD) prevail rather than continuous or continuing professional learning (CPD) or career-long professional learning (CLPL). There has been some attempt for more precise definition in relation to new teachers, as set out by the Education Authority:

> Early Career Teachers is a new term for beginning teachers. It is now used as this best reflects the profile of the teaching professional in the 21st century and the wide level of experiences they bring to their schools.
> (Education Authority, 2022)

In Northern Ireland teachers are employed by the local education authority (EA) and as part of their terms and conditions are required to "review from time to time his [sic] methods of teaching and programmes of work and participate in arrangements for his [sic] further training and development as a teacher" (HMSO, 1987). Principals are required to ensure that staff have access to advice and training appropriate to their needs in accordance with the policies of the employing authority for the development of staff (HMSO, 1987). Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) will, in many cases, be the only form of professional development with which teachers engage. Teachers are asked to select three objectives per year. These should "combine those which are personal to the teacher with those that are shared with others, cover the areas of professional practice, pupil and curriculum development and the teacher's personal and professional development, be related to the school development plan" (RTU, PRSD Handbook, 2004). The PRSD meetings between the Reviewer and the Reviewee may identify training needs (RTU, 2004) but schools will not necessarily facilitate such professional development.

There are a number of organisations and stakeholders with a role in teacher learning in Northern Ireland, as well as a wider range of other interest groups. The main organisations, their role in the education system and more specifically their role in teacher learning, is set out in Table 11.1.

The emerging reform agenda, emanating from the Independent Review of Education may address concerns that, while there have been positive advancements in relation to initial teacher education, policy, and strategy in relation to

Table 11.1 Regulation of Teacher Professional Learning

Organisation	*Role in Northern Ireland education*	*Role in teacher professional learning*
Department of Education Northern Ireland (DE)	Overall responsibility for the education of the people of Northern Ireland and for effectively implementing educational policy Accountable to the devolved administration known as the NI Assembly	Responsible for teacher workforce pay and conditions and for workforce development
General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI)	Professional regulatory and accrediting body	Registering all teachers in grant-aided schools Approving qualifications for the purposes of registration Providing advice to the Department and employing authorities on all matters relating to teaching Developed *Teaching: The Reflective Profession* which lists teacher competences for all phases of teacher education
Education Authority (EA)	Responsible for provision of school education and employer of teachers	Acting as the employing authority for all staff in controlled schools and for non-teaching staff in Catholic maintained schools Ensuring professional learning is managed at school level Providing professional learning opportunities
Catholic Council for Maintained Schools	Employing all teachers at Catholic maintained schools Advising the Department of Education on Catholic maintained schools Promoting the effective planning, management, and control of Catholic maintained schools; and Providing advice and information to the trustees, Boards of Governors, principals, and staff of Catholic maintained schools	Improving and well-being of children and young people Raising standards for all Delivering high-quality education services Improving the learning environment Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality; and Development of the education workforce

(*Continued*)

Table 11.1 (Continued)

Organisation	*Role in Northern Ireland education*	*Role in teacher professional learning*
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Coordinating efforts to develop integrated education Supporting parents through the process of opening new schools; and Influencing and informing the public	Provide training to integrated schools to strengthen and deepen their integrated ethos, designed to support the range of stakeholders within the school with courses developed for whole staff, teachers, leaders, governors, and parents
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Promote, facilitate, and encourage all aspects of Irish-medium education	Provision of Irish-medium resources and some online short courses
Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)	Inspects a range of providers, including pre-schools; primary and post-primary schools; the youth service; institutes of further and higher education; and educational provision within the prison service. It is part of the Department of Education.	Promotion of good practice and school inspection
Professional Associations / Trade Unions	Representation and advocacy for teachers, individually and collectively	Advice on professional learning and development. Provision, where appropriate of professional learning resources and opportunities
Schools / Principals / Boards of Government	Lead and manage the school	Ensure that staff have access to advice and training, appropriate to their needs in accordance with the policies of the employing authority for the development of staff Participate in any scheme of staff development and performance review of teachers who teach in the school (PRSD)
Individual teachers and leaders	Teaching and leadership in schools	Self-regulationUpdate professional practice through engagement in PRSD and relevant professional learning

teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) has been, as Hagan and Eaton (2020) note "less well defined" (p. 261). They attribute this, in part, to a systemic realignment which occurred in Northern Ireland in 2011, with the replacement of five local education authorities by a singular, Education and

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Skills Authority and subsequently in 2015 by an EA. Prior to this the five authorities had a statutory responsibility for CPD provision and it was envisaged that the new body would retain the responsibility for in-service provision (Hagan and Eaton, 2020: p. 262). This turned out not to be the case and so Hagan and Eaton (2020) argue, poor implementation and lack of specification with regards to expectations and obligations in relation to CPD has resulted in a vacuum where there is "no agreed definition;… no single coordinating body; and no systematic approach to its implementation and development" (p. 262). They concluded that "there has been no system-wide debate leading to agreement on its overall nature, purpose, and execution. CPD remains without any potential resolution to the shortcomings identified as far back as 2010" (Hagan and Eaton, 2020: p. 262).

Hagan and Eaton (2020) raise concerns about responsibility and implementation, that also highlights the challenges of the translation of policy into practice (Hagan, 2022). The flagship policy of *Learning Leaders* (DENI, 2016b) is illustrative of this and which we explore later in the paper.

Conceptualising the teacher and teacher learning

In Northern Ireland teaching is seen as a high status, highly esteemed profession (Clarke and O'Doherty, 2021: p. 69). It is an all-graduate profession with registration with the General Teaching Council a requirement to be eligible to teach in most schools (with the exception of the small, independent school sector).

GTCNI's *Teaching: the Reflective Profession* published in 2007, set out the vision for, and expectations of teachers, encompassed in (i) a Code of Values and Professional Practice, (ii) a Charter for Education, and (iii) a Competence Framework (consisting of 27 competences). The ongoing nature of teacher learning was reinforced from the outset, with recognition that "professional knowledge is by its very nature organic, and to an extent evolutionary, reflecting a synthesis of research, experiences gained and expertise shared in communities of practice (GTCNI, 2007: p. 6) and so, the Council explained, it had consistently rejected any attempt to adopt a reductionist approach to professional development (ibid). The underpinning conceptualisation of the teacher is that of the reflective and activist practitioner, a moral agent and an informed, knowledgeable practitioner (p. 10), drawing from the work of Day (2004); Dalmau and Gudjonsdottir (2002); Hargreaves (2003); Sharpe (2004) and Sockett (1993). Rejecting 'a restricted view of teaching competence' in *Teaching: the Reflective Profession*, competence is seen as a 'developmental continuum', "predicated upon the notion that the achievement of competence is a developmental process which, of necessity, transcends early teacher education and continues throughout a teacher's career" (p. 11). The developmental phases, mapped to growing of competence and deepening of expertise are set out as Initial Teacher Education; Induction; Early Professional Development (EPD) and CPD, Collaborative Practice and School Improvement (p. 16).

As the teacher advances in the profession and becomes more accomplished in their practice, they should also develop:

> a pronounced capacity for self-criticism and self-improvement; the ability to impact on colleagues through mentoring and coaching, modelling good practice, contributing to the literature on teaching and learning and the public discussion of professional issues, leading staff development, all based on the capacity to theorise about policy and practice.
> (p. 12)

Teachers as leaders of learning was implicit within this and it was to be another ten years before a restated conceptualisation of teaching and teacher learning was articulated in "Learning Leaders" strategy.

Early career teachers' induction and early professional development (EPD)

In the initial phase of a teacher's career, support and development for "early career teachers" is provided through the EA. The typical duration for this is three years. Following completion of initial preparation (phase one) teachers progress to induction (phase two) and then advance to EPD (phase three). These phases represent "career-long professional development" and early career teachers are reminded that "throughout your career you are responsible for your continued professional development and learning" (EA online).

According to the EA, in the EPD phase the focus of reflection shifts from thinking about teaching to thinking about learning and is designed to ensure that new teachers continue to receive the support from within the teaching profession which is characteristic of the best practice of professional development (EA online). As part of their EPD, early career teachers must complete two professional development activities (PDAs). These can come from a variety of sources, and suggestions from the EA include utilising online sources such Open University, Futurelearn.org, Coursera.org; social media channels such as Twitter, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, the CCEA website, and the Eventbrite site where they are advised to check out education-related free courses in Northern Ireland (EA online). Extra mural courses are also popular. While autonomy and choice are important for teacher learning, guidance, and discernment are also needed in selecting sources and courses for PDAs. The role of the teacher tutor and other experienced teachers is important for this (Education Authority, 2010).

Beyond the EPD phase, which is mandatory, there is no contractual obligation for teachers in Northern Ireland to engage in professional learning and development, unlike other systems, such as Scotland, where there is a requirement to undertake the equivalent of 35 hours of CLPL annually and to evidence and document this through a professional update scheme every five years. The introduction of a new strategy for teacher learning, *Learning*

Leaders (2016), therefore marked an important milestone in seeking to define and systematise career-long teacher learning.

Learning leaders – advancing teacher learning in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) is responsible for teacher workforce pay and conditions and for workforce development. In 2016, a new Teacher Professional Learning Strategy, *Learning Leaders*, was launched which set out a strategic vision for teacher professional learning, an agreed Teacher Professional Learning Framework and an action plan (DENI, 2016b). Three key strategic objectives underpinned this: the development of an agreed Teacher Professional Learning Framework; the promotion of collaborative working and sharing of best practice through professional learning communities and networks; and the strengthening of leadership capacity in schools (ibid). The teacher professional learning framework was intended to offer a coherent career-long tool "to support teachers and schools to identify and, where possible, lead their own development" (ibid).

At the core of *Learning Leaders (2016)* was a reconceptualised model of the teacher where "[e]very teacher is a learning leader, accomplished in working collaboratively with all partners in the interests of children and young people." A report commissioned to provide research to support policy translation and implementation sought to:

- identify current models of professional learning frameworks at national and international level;
- identify alternative models of professional learning frameworks in other professions;
- identify options for the design and development of a teacher professional learning framework in NI, including how the development can be aligned to key elements of the Strategy; and
- inform future policy making in this area.

(Clarke and Galanouli, 2019: p. 5)

The recommendations from the report are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 11.1) (Clarke and Galanouli, 2019: p. 40).[2]

Progress towards implementation of *Learning Leaders* has been slower than had been hoped for when the strategy was first introduced. There are varied reasons for this, including austerity measures, industrial action by teachers, public sector reform, impact of the power sharing disagreements in the devolved administration at the Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont and, in recent years, the impact of the global pandemic (Clarke and O'Doherty, 2021: p. 71). Its potential for transformative change however has been recognised and Clarke and O'Doherty (2021) suggest that

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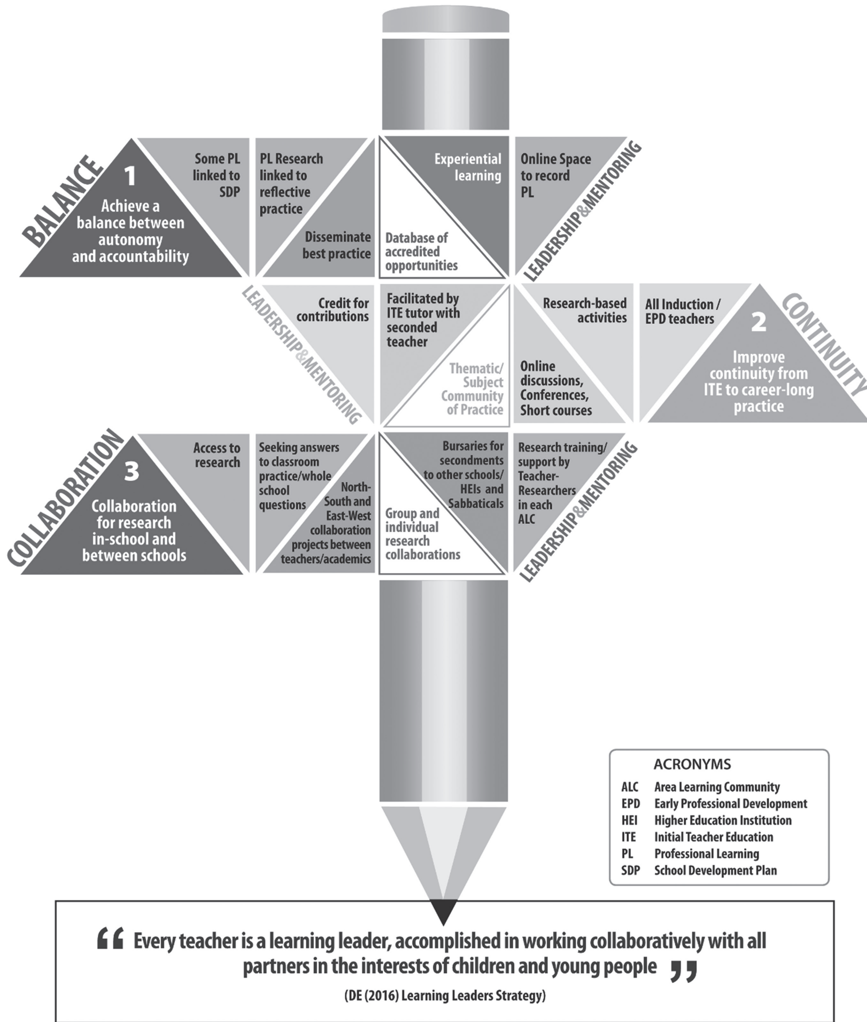

Figure 11.1 Recommendations of the report Learning Leaders.

“If funding, infrastructure and professional practice can be harnessed to implement the Learning Leaders Strategy there is very considerable potential to enhance professional learning for teachers in Northern Ireland, from ITE onwards” (ibid).

The implementation of a key strategy for teachers’ professional learning and development relies on collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders

across an education system. Hagan and Eaton (2020) have highlighted challenges associated with the transition from multiple education authorities to a singular authority, with a sweeping away of traditional areas of responsibility as a consequence.

In a number of education systems, regulatory bodies such as teaching or workforce councils have a key role in advancing strategies for development, providing infrastructure and resources to support this. The potential for the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland to take a lead role in advancing teacher learning and professional development has not been fully realised and a recent report on GTCNI offered scant hope for this in the future. In relation to teacher development in particular, the report found that:

> There is limited evidence of an effective approach to the development of the profession, albeit recent attempts have been made in the guise of GTCNI's contribution to the new draft Proposals for Teacher Professional Learning within NI. However, the Council has done little to effectively promote or put in place measures to support teacher professional development.
>
> (Baker, Tilly, Mooney, Moore, 2021: p. 7)

The high level of dysfunction reported made the recommendation for dissolution of the GTCNI inevitable as the review found "an inadequate governance framework and that the organisation is not delivering its statutory functions" (Baker, Tilly, Mooney, Moore, 2021: p. 10). However the Council's initial role and contribution to articulating a reconceptualised model of the teacher and teacher learning was seen in the early work of the Council and the articulation of a competence framework where "the importance of career-long, appropriate, purposeful and connected CPD is implicit in, and necessary for, the full implementation of the GTCNI Competence Framework (GTCNI 2007) and more widely recognised as being integral to a fully developed and mature system of teacher education" (Hagan and Eaton, 2020: p. 262).

Teacher engagement with career-long professional learning

Given the challenges and contextual conditions explored above, particularly ongoing industrial disputes since 2006, the extent of teacher engagement with CLPL after completion of the EPD phase is hard to gauge, particularly in the absence of systematic evaluation of it. Renewed "action short of strike" where teachers are advised to be available to attend only "one formal school meeting per week of no more than one hour duration outside of the normal pupil day" (NASUWT, 2022; INTO, 2022) means the scope for collective in-school teacher learning opportunities, or participation in externally organised professional learning is severely curtailed.

At an individual level however, teachers continue to be involved in their own learning and development, which for some entails completion of postgraduate

study offered by one of Northern Ireland's teacher education providers. At Ulster University, where one of the co-authors is based, the portfolio of courses available to teachers is online, flexible, and part-time. M.Ed. students can choose a specialism in ICT, Inclusive and Special Education, Education Management, or International and Comparative Education. Alternatively, students may select the Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership which is also part-time and online. Uptake varies but approximately 100 teachers from Northern Ireland avail of these courses every year. Elsewhere, teachers can pursue accredited studies such as the PGCE: Autism Studies offered by Stranmillis University College, the M.Ed in Educational Studies offered by QUB, or the M.Sc in Physical Education and Sport for Young People offered by St Mary's University College. Many teachers will also engage with unaccredited short courses in Special Educational Needs (SEN) testing, Blended Learning and Equality Diversity and Inclusion. Professional development at this level is largely self-motivated and self-funded. Indeed, many teachers take a postgraduate student loan to further their learning.

Teachers also continue to connect, collaborate, and network through informal fora, such as NI Teachers Collaborate which was established online "seeking to improve collaboration and sharing of best practices in Nursery, (early years), Primary, Post Primary, F.E, Special and Irish medium schools" (NI Teachers Collaborate, online, n.d.).

Teacher learning and research

Research by teachers is seen as an important element of teachers' ongoing development and the teacher as a researcher is complementary to the reflective practitioner set out in *Teaching: the Reflective Profession* (2007) which specifies that teachers should engage in action research within their own classroom, school or institution and, in addition, they should take cognisance of research within the broader education community (p. 12).

There is recognition also of the need for more research overall on education and teacher learning in Northern Ireland, particularly as, according to Clarke and O'Doherty (2021) "the light of education research has arguably shone much too narrowly for much too long in Northern Ireland, leaving some fundamental educational priorities relatively unilluminated by research in Northern Ireland" (p. 73).

Teacher learning across boundaries and borders

Although jurisdictionally part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland shares a border with the RoI, a European Union (EU) member state. For a number of years, cross-border cooperation in relation to teacher learning has been supported and strengthened, through, for example, shared provision, course delivery in RoI, and an NI-RoI for teacher education, examples of which we now explore.

As part of its leadership programmes, Ulster University provides postgraduate courses such as the Masters in Education (with specialisms) and Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership in centres in the RoI including Athlone, Carrick-on-Shannon, and Monaghan. Ulster University has been in partnership with the Monaghan Education Centre for over 25 years, facilitating cross-border research and professional dialogue.

The Middletown Centre for Autism is located in Armagh, NI. It was established in 2002 by the North South Ministerial Council to set up an all-island centre for children with autism spectrum disorders and became operational in 2007. It provides an extensive training programme for parents and school staff in both jurisdictions; specialist autism support services throughout Northern Ireland, including school- and home-based support; and carries out and disseminates studies on educational developments in autism (Perry, 2016). It receives joint funding from the Department of Education (NI) and the Department of Education and Skills (RoI) and operates as a company limited by guarantee with its work overseen by a ten-member board consisting of five members from the Department of Education and five from the Department of Education and Skills. In 2021, its chief executive reported on the development and delivery of a comprehensive programme of specialist programmes for some 11,458 parents and professionals from the education and health sectors in Ireland, both North and South and outlined plans for the development of third level pathways and a new PG certificate in Autism Studies with HEI providers in both jurisdictions (Centre for Autism, 2021: p. 8).

The Standing Conference on Teacher Education North South (SCoTENS, 2022) is another example of cross-border cooperation, with a specific focus on research in teacher education. The 34-member network is made up of HEI providers, teaching councils, curriculum councils, education trade unions and education centres from the North and South of Ireland, all with a responsibility for and interest in teacher education (SCoTENS, online). SCoTENS is seen as a "a unique scholarly, professional organisation and believed to be the only network of its kind operating across a contested border in the world" (SCoTENS, online; Clarke et al., 2020: p. 1). One of its key initiatives (in addition to an annual conference and cross-border student–teacher exchange) is to provide funding for cross-border research projects for which involvement of a partner from both jurisdictions is essential. More recently this has also involved partners from other jurisdictions in the UK such as Scotland. Originally funded jointly by both governments, in addition to a member fee, the sudden withdrawal of funding from Northern Ireland in 2017 presented an unexpected, and, as yet, unresolved challenge.

However, SCoTENS' distinctive contribution and impact for teacher learning and teacher education should not be underestimated, since, as Clarke et al. (2020) argue,

> "there has not been a tradition of formal academic and professional engagement across teacher education on this island … there was no

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> state/official support mechanism that enabled the two parts of the island to engage around teacher education, and there was no official mechanism for bringing teachers, teacher educators and student teachers into dialogue together".
>
> (p. 15)

Clarke et al.'s (2020) conclusions in relation to SCoTENS' unique contribution and value is relevant for all teacher learning within both systems, as well as cross-border, and the creation of spaces for "the opening-up of conversation among 'the geographically close' if 'culturally different'" is generating awareness of both difference and commonality, but, most importantly, fostering trust, familiarity, and mutual understanding (p. 16). The challenge is to sustain and grow this in a period of ongoing turbulence in wider society, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing industrial disputes within the teaching profession.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to provide a critical overview of teacher learning in Northern Ireland and the complexities which have impacted upon policy and practice. A series of reviews of education over a number of years, including the current independent review of education, all recognise the need for change and reform, to move away from a system which replicates itself.

The scope for innovation and progress, and the mandate for bolder decisions, is however stymied by political deadlock. In relation to teacher learning, these range from a need to remove segregation/duplication in ITE provision, as recommended in the Sahlberg Review, to return to quality, centrally funded CPD courses (as formerly hosted by the Education and Library Boards). Beyond the EPD phase, CLPL is largely left to individual motivation, leading to serious equity concerns. It is laudable that teachers will fund their own CPD but not all can do so and not all CPD is of good quality/relevance.

In a largely feminised profession, there are further questions of access and opportunity, particularly given caring responsibilities. As we have noted above, since most accredited CPD is largely self-funded, some teachers rely on postgraduate student loans to be able to engage in further study. Given that the median age of teachers is 42.3 years (NISRA, 2021: p. 3), the ability for most to be able to commit to this is likely to be limited due to other personal and financial commitments. To ensure equity for all teachers, an option could be to link the annual performance review and staff development (PRSD) to a small fund per capita to contribute to CPD/accredited learning.

An effective and impactful strategy for teacher learning requires an integrated approach, coordinated and driven by a lead organisation. GTCNI has not been able to fulfil this role, and if its demise is likely, there is an urgent need for a new professional body to uphold professionalism in teaching.

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The Independent Review of Education has been tasked with setting out "a clear vision of what high quality, innovative, and inclusive education in Northern Ireland should look like in the 21st century" (Independent Review of Education, 2022: p. 11). An effective teacher learning strategy, supporting teacher development across all career stages, is essential to this and to realising the vision for a high-quality, innovative, and inclusive teaching profession.

Notes

1 The population of Northern Ireland recorded in the census of 2021 was 1.9 million (NISRA, 2021b).
2 Used with the permission of the authors.

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12 Teachers' professional development

The potential of teacher collaboration in Flemish (Belgian) schools

Jasja Valckx, Laura Thomas and Ruben Vanderlinde

The Flemish education system

Belgium is a federal state consisting of three regions (the Flemish, Walloon, and Brussels-Capital Regions) and three communities (the Flemish-, French-, and German-speaking Communities). Some matters fall under federal jurisdiction; others are the communities' responsibility. In Belgium, educational matters lie with the communities, meaning that the Flemish-, French-, and German-speaking Communities each have their own education system. Only three educational issues are federal matters: the decisions on when children must enter and can exit compulsory education, the minimum requirements for graduation, and the retirement regulations for personnel employed in the education system. Next to these three federal matters, all communities must also operate under the Belgian constitutional right to "freedom of education", which refers to the claim of any natural or legal entity to regulate education and of parents to choose a school of their choice and close to their home. Further, the education systems in the three communities show similarities (e.g., the Flemish- and French-speaking Communities have similar stream and grade systems), but also clear differences (e.g., the German-speaking Community only has a limited possibility of completing higher education studies) (Eurydice, 2020). As the chapter's authors live and work in the Flemish-speaking Community, the chapter reports exclusively on the Flemish region.

In the Flemish-speaking Community, the Minister of Education and Training is responsible for almost every aspect of education policy, from nursery to university education (Eurydice, 2020). The Flemish education system, however, is strongly characterised by school autonomy, which is linked to the Belgian constitutional right to "freedom of education". In particular, school boards have control over a wide range of decisions, such as school timetables and teaching methods (OECD, 2015a). Although Flemish education is highly decentralised, the education system is structured and organised into three levels of education: primary, secondary, and higher education. The Flemish education system starts with nursery school (2.5–5y). From 6y to 12y old, pupils

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attend primary education, after which they move on to secondary education from 12- to 18-year-old (with the possibility of part-time education from 15-year old). After obtaining their secondary education diploma, students can enter higher education. Higher education in Flanders consists of five universities and 13 university colleges that offer degrees in line with the Bologna process.

Focusing on the trajectory of students aiming to become teachers, much has changed in recent years. Since September 2019, there are six types of teacher education programmes, which are all offered exclusively by higher education institutions (Eurydice, 2020), and grant diplomas on different levels of the Flemish Qualification Framework (FQF). The FQF categorises all officially approved qualifications into eight levels based on knowledge, skills, context, autonomy, and responsibility (https://vlaamsekwalificatiestructuur.be/en/). The educational graduate programme for vocational education and training courses at the secondary level is classified on FQF level 5. The three educational bachelor's programmes for (1) pre-school education, (2) primary education, and (3) (lower) secondary education are classified on FQF level 6. Finally, the educational master's programme for (higher) secondary education, and the educational master's programme in arts subjects are classified on FQF level 7. At the end of these teacher education programmes, teachers are expected to exhibit a set of skills and attitudes defined by teachers' basic competences. In particular, these basic competences serve as a reference for the curriculum and assessment framework for all students in the aforementioned teacher education programmes. The competences entail a broad view on the teaching profession with attention to cooperation, responsibility, and professional growth (Rots and Ruys, 2013). They also emphasise the need for teachers' lifelong Continuous professional development (CPD), which is made even more apparent by complementing the basic competences by a professional profile to guide teachers in lifelong CPD (Minea-Pic et al., 2021).

A short insight into teachers' CPD in Flanders

In Flanders, teachers' CPD is offered by several actors (e.g., schools, pedagogical guidance services, researchers) (see Department of Education and Training, 2021). Schools and teachers, however, are by far the most important actors in CPD, not only because they are its subject, but also because of the aforementioned tradition of school autonomy. Yearly, schools have the autonomy to co-construct a professionalisation plan with the entire school team, supported by the pedagogical guidance service of the educational umbrella organisation the school is part of[1], and financed by the government. This professionalisation plan is based on a shared vision and priority themes of the school (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022a). In this sense, schools (together with the pedagogical guidance service) make their own decisions regarding professionalisation, all within the boundaries of government regulations regarding educational quality (OECD, 2015a). Apart from the task of

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the pedagogical guidance service to strengthen and support the CPD of teachers (by offering supply and demand driven courses), teachers' CPD is secured in various ways, such as by (1) the basic competences and professional profile for teachers, (2) the Reference Framework for Quality in Education, and (3) the set-up of policy priorities for CPD.

First, in Flanders there is a competence framework for experienced teachers – the so-called "professional profile". This is the description of knowledge, skills, and attitudes teachers should strive toward during their professional practice. More specifically, it consists of responsibilities teachers have towards (1) pupils (e.g., the teacher as a facilitator of learning and development processes), (2) school and educational community (e.g., the teacher as a member of a school team), and (3) society (e.g., the teacher as a cultural participant) (Aelterman et al., 2008). Required competences discussed in the set-up of these responsibilities are, for example, being able to create a positive learning climate, dealing with pupils who experience difficulties, and critically reflecting on one's own teaching practice. The professional profile helps teachers be aware of, and continuously develop, their capabilities (VELOV, 2012).

Second, even though schools are accountable for developing their own CPD policy, the Flemish Government has put forward the so-called Reference Framework for Quality in Education (Flemish Inspectorate of Education, 2016) which, besides specific expectations toward high-quality education, also entails guidelines for setting up an effective CPD policy. With respect to the CPD policy of schools, they explicitly state:

> The school develops a systematic professionalisation policy. In this regard, the professionalisation needs of the team members and the priority objectives of the school are of central importance. The school promotes professional dialogue and reflection on learning and teaching and offers the necessary support for this. Internal and external sharing of expertise is stimulated. The school encourages the implementation of professionalisation initiatives and monitors their effects. Novice team members are given appropriate guidance.
>
> (p. 17)

The Flemish Education Inspectorate – the body that audits schools' educational quality – can also focus on this CPD policy of schools. In this respect, schools must ensure a rigorous plan that meets high-quality standards (Flemish Inspectorate of Education, 2022). Additionally, the Flemish Government created a guide to help teachers in their quest for valuable professionalisation initiatives. In this guide, teachers should (1) map their expectations, (2) critically reflect on the (school's) needs regarding this topic, (3) focus on the content of the initiative and, for example, check whether this content is based on scientific research, (4) consider the methods of the initiative (e.g., collaborative character), and (5) think ahead about how they can check if the initiative will lead to the desired results (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022b).

Third, although the Flemish Government respects the autonomy of schools and allows them to adapt their professionalisation policy to their own context and needs, they do set some specific CPD goals that are contingent on policy priorities through the priority in-service education and training (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). Organisations that offer CPD on these priority topics and get funded by the Flemish Government can provide these programs to schools free of charge. In 2022, for example, the policy priority is reading comprehension for primary school teams (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022c).

Besides the professional profile, the Reference Framework for Quality in Education, and the policy priorities for CPD, the government also organises CPD initiatives themselves and sets up communication platforms to support teachers in sharing materials (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). Regarding the latter, there is – for example – KLASSE, an (online) magazine and website with practice-oriented articles by and for educational professionals (i.e. teachers, principals, researchers) (see www.klasse.be), and KLASCEMENT, a Flemish teaching aid network in which teachers can share and consult learning materials (see www.klascement.net).

The above shows how teachers' CPD is organised in Flanders: with much input from schools and support from pedagogical guidance services, but with quality control organised by the Inspectorate and the government. CPD in Flanders, however, is subject to many critiques, some of which are discussed below.

Critiques on CPD in Flanders

The positive effects of teachers' CPD are widely recognised (Desimone, 2009). Teachers' CPD improves schools, teacher quality, teacher behaviour, and in the longer term, student learning as well as the quality of education (Desimone, 2009). Desimone (2009) and Merchie et al. (2018), describe the process of CPD and its effects through the following steps: (1) teachers experience effective CPD, (2) CPD improves teachers' knowledge and skills and/or changes their attitudes and beliefs, (3) teachers use their new knowledge and skills, attitudes and beliefs to change their teaching behaviour, and (4) these changes promote student learning. These steps do not necessarily follow each other in the abovementioned order, meaning that, for example, a change in teachers' teaching behaviour and instructional practices can also trigger changes in teachers' beliefs (Merchie et al., 2018). With this critical note, the authors of the framework show that these steps should not be seen as a strict process to be followed, but rather as a dynamic and interactive way to effectively professionalise teachers (Merchie et al., 2018). Furthermore, these authors also recognise that CPD does not take place in a vacuum, meaning that it has a complex character, rather than it being linear. Each of the aforementioned steps is embedded in a context that includes teacher and student characteristics, the curriculum, principal leadership, and the policy environment (Desimone, 2009; Merchie et al., 2018; and Strom & Viesca, 2020).

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Even though the potential positive effects of CPD are by no means put into question, there are some major suggestions and critiques on the formats in which CPD is often offered. Merchie et al.'s (2018) framework, for example, lists suggestions with respect to nine features (i.e. content, didactics, coherence and evidence-based, ownership, duration, collective participation, location, active learning, and trainer quality) of CPD initiatives. The major critiques on CPD initiatives are focused on the duration (short-term versus long-term CPD initiatives) and location of CPD (off-site versus on-site CPD initiatives) on the one hand and the character of CPD (an individual versus collective character) on the other hand (e.g., Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008; Merchie et al., 2018).

First, several sources (e.g., Merchie et al., 2018) formulate that worldwide teachers often professionalise fairly traditionally, namely by participating in short-term off-site professionalisation initiatives, such as study days, lectures, or teacher fairs. In Flanders, this is also the case, although occasionally Flemish teachers do participate in short-term on-site professionalisation initiatives such as pedagogical study days for teachers on school grounds. Few teachers, however, participate in more long-term professionalisation initiatives, such as a series of workshops or a coaching trajectory on-site (Merchie et al., 2018). In line with this finding, there are now clear voices for embedding teachers' CPD in long-term initiatives at schools (Cochran-Smith, 2016) instead of offering short courses outside the school. Moreover, in the OECD's recent "Teachers' Professional Learning Study" on Flanders (see Minea-Pic et al., 2021), the author experts state that an important weakness of the Flemish education system is that continuous CPD is not widely recognised as an integral part of teachers' daily practice and that the time teachers spend on professionalisation is critically low. In this respect, we should not only put forward the suggestion for long-term on-site initiatives, but generally plead for more time spent on professionalisation in general.

Second, research states that CPD should not only be seen as merely an individual activity, but also as having a social character (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008). In particular, Desimone (2009) reports that teachers' complex interpretation of their CPD stems from a situated and cognitive view of learning as social and interactive. The latter is also reflected in the definition of CPD by Kelchtermans (2001), in which CPD is described as "*the lifelong learning and development process that results from the meaningful interaction between the learner (=the teacher) and the context in which he/she continues to gain a number of experiences*". Therefore, teachers must regularly share their experiences and practices with their team by exchanging ideas about the curriculum or students and discussing experiments in their classrooms (Meirink et al., 2010). Despite the effort of many school leaders to promote such collegial cultures, successive TALIS studies show that Flemish teachers fall behind on collaborative CPD (Deneire et al., 2014) and primarily work in isolation from their colleagues (OECD, 2019). For example, 31% of primary school teachers have never team taught before (compared to a rate of 20% internationally) and 75%

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of the same group of teachers have never observed their colleagues' classes (compared to a rate of 49% internationally) (Deneire et al., 2014). This shows that Flemish teachers are more likely to participate in traditional activities that are less effective than more collaborative forms of CPD, such as teacher networks and peer learning (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). In this regard, a recent OECD report (Minea-Pic et al., 2021) has shown that strengthening collaborative professional learning practices is one of the key challenges facing Flemish CPD.

Innovative projects: informal professional networks and PLCs

Summing up the previous paragraphs reveals that educational research and practice have shown that the traditional view of teachers' CPD as participation in short-term external activities, and this in an individual format, and disconnected from daily reality (e.g., study days, lectures), is no longer valid (Desimone, 2009; Merchie et al., 2018). Several studies (e.g., Vanderlinde and Kelchtermans, 2013; Van Waes, 2017) therefore plead for teaching cultures in which collaboration and collegial relationships lead to instructional improvement and professionalisation of the entire team. More recently, Daly, Milton and Langdon (2020) even stipulate professionalisation to be predicated on the web of relationships surrounding actors, and state that teachers' practice is not only affected by within-school ties but also by wider ecologies such as digital environments.

As there is an international growing belief in the importance of more collaborative CPD, two recent doctoral research projects are presented in response to this challenge. Concretely, in the two research projects, the existing social sources in a school are used for the professionalisation of teachers. In particular, one research project focuses on informal professional teacher networks in the induction phase of beginning teachers in primary education, while the other focuses on professional learning communities (PLCs) in secondary education. Both of these initiatives provide an environment to work and learn together with colleagues (Van Meeuwen et al., 2020). In the reference list of this chapter, the doctoral theses – in which detailed results of these projects can be consulted – are included for interested readers.

Informal professional teacher networks in primary education

In Flanders, school boards receive fundings from the government to provide quality induction to beginning teachers. However, as mentioned above, school boards have control over a wide range of decisions, including how they organise and implement induction for beginning teachers, and as such how they use the funding in practice. The absence of formal, structural induction initiatives for beginning teachers stipulates the major value of daily collegial support (Marable and Raimondi, 2007) in Flanders. Subsequently, there is a call for perceiving induction as a schoolwide responsibility, in which the entire team is

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held accountable for supporting and guiding the beginning teachers through the challenges they encounter (Struyve et al., 2016).

This idea of induction support as a schoolwide responsibility was the starting point of the first innovative project discussed in this chapter. The main objective of the project was to unravel beginning teachers' collegial support network and gain insight into its role in beginning teachers' job satisfaction, commitment to the school, intrinsic motivation to teach, and self-efficacy – as important precursors of retention. The results clearly showed the importance of receiving support from professionals in the team. A closed-door policy in which exchange between teachers in a team is non-existent is not feasible if the goal is for beginning teachers to develop professionally (Little, 1990). Interestingly, the support from colleagues even showed the potential to serve as a mitigating factor in cases where beginning teachers experienced difficult situations and were confronted with challenges. In particular, when beginning teachers had a hard time, the (professional) support from colleagues prevented their job satisfaction and motivation to teach from declining substantially. Creating a supportive professional network, however, is no mean feat. Beginning teachers themselves have to actively approach their colleagues (Fox and Wilson, 2015), their colleagues have to be willing to answer these calls for help and offer professional support (Fox and Wilson, 2015), and the school has to provide opportunities for beginning teachers and their colleagues to connect (Kelchtermans, 2017). To realise the latter, the project showed that several factors are important, such as realising physical proximity between school team members (e.g., providing beginning teachers with a classroom in the centre of the school, creating an inviting staffroom where teachers can meet) and granting staff with scheduled time to professionally connect and have discussions about one another's teaching practices (Thomas, 2019). Collegial support to professionalise as a beginning teacher is important but thus requires several preconditions if one wants to realise this fully.

In this respect, the project stipulates several recommendations towards policy and practice. With regard to policymakers, the project advises reducing beginning teachers' teaching load to make room for them to interact with their mentor and colleagues. To clear up even more time and space for beginning teachers to forge relationships with team members, creating fulltime assignments in a school could also be of great support. With respect to practice, the project encourages all involved actors to be open to support – whether they are on the giving end or receiving end of the support. This entails among other things investing in a collaborative school culture, and creating and making use of time and space to interact by, for example, organising (in)formal regular meetings.

PLCs of teachers in secondary education

PLCs are presented as promising to overcome teachers working in isolation (Stoll et al., 2006; Vanblaere, 2016). A PLC is defined as a group of teachers

who share and question their teaching practice critically in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, and inclusive way and in which professional growth and an orientation on learning, is considered (Stoll et al., 2006). Within PLCs, three interpersonal characteristics are central: learning from and with colleagues through reflective dialogue, taking collective responsibility for the learning of every student at the school, and deprivatised practice, which means that teachers openly share their teaching practice intending to improve it (Stoll et al., 2006). In this project, departmental PLCs in secondary schools were investigated (Valckx, 2021). Departmental PLCs are described as learning environments that offer teachers valuable opportunities to collaborate and learn with colleagues (Stoll et al., 2006; Verbiest, 2016). Notwithstanding the well-known value of departmental PLCs, many questions remain unanswered regarding the contribution of departmental PLCs to teachers' CPD. The aim of the project was to gain insight into (1) teachers' perceptions of interpersonal PLC characteristics in their departmental PLC and (2) the role of departmental PLCs for teachers' CPD.

With respect to the interpersonal PLC characteristics, the results showed that teachers experience a high degree of collective responsibility in their departmental PLC and regularly engage in reflective dialogue with their department colleagues. In contrast, the mean score for deprivatised practice is very low, showing that it is not common for teachers to open their classroom doors to one another. Previous studies too (e.g., Vanblaere and Devos, 2018) reported that secondary school teachers rarely observe each other 's teaching practice or give each other feedback. Teachers do compensate for this, however, by talking about their classroom experiences or other educational matters in between or after teaching hours (Zwart et al., 2009).

Relating to the role of departmental PLCs for teachers' CPD, the results revealed that teachers in effective departmental PLCs learn more with and from their colleagues. They find dialogue, participation, and collaboration in their departmental PLC more valuable for their CPD. These teachers also acknowledge that colleagues can be a resource for their professionalisation (e.g., they motivate each other to increase their expertise and participate in CPD initiatives together). Most teachers in the effective departmental PLCs report multiple learning outcomes due to collaboration occurring in their departmental PLC (e.g., they receive new ideas, insights, and instructional strategies from their colleagues and apply them in their teaching practice). This leads to collective changes in their teaching practice (such as trying out innovations). Compared to teachers in non-effective departmental PLCs, they also report more subject-specific CPD, in addition to learning about general pedagogical and educational matters (e.g., learning disabilities).

The aforementioned findings are interesting as they show that teachers who experience more collective responsibility for their subject(s) are more likely to engage in an in-depth dialogue with department colleagues. As a result, they learn more about their subject and develop their teaching practice in accordance with what they have learned. In particular, the results of this project show

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that participation in a departmental PLC with a high presence of collective responsibility and reflective dialogue can support teachers' CPD. With respect to policy, the project recommends explicitly stipulating the importance of effective PLCs for teachers' CPD. Minor steps have already been taken, by mentioning PLCs in the professional profile of Flemish secondary school teachers, but further efforts for this remain. At the school level, schools and departments are recommended to partly formalise collaboration between teachers, but also not to lose sight of the importance of individual collaborative initiatives by teachers. Furthermore, it is recommended to establish partnerships between teacher education institutes and schools/departments. To prepare teachers for the future, they need to be aware of the value of collaboration within schools and departmental PLCs from the start of teacher education. Teacher education institutes can play a role in creating this awareness (Vangrieken, 2018).

Some concluding remarks about the COVID-19 pandemic: implications for CPD

The two aforementioned initiatives sketched are examples of the value of collaborative formats of CPD for teachers. However, another rather unexpected event has also contributed to the growing attention on learning from and with each other: the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and teachers swiftly had to move to online or hybrid learning and teaching (Howard et al., 2021), which led teachers to quickly adapt and expand their (digital) knowledge and skills. In this sense, the pandemic has not only shown that having a set of digital competences and tools is much needed, but also stipulated the necessity of teachers to continuously retrain (Vanderlinde et al., 2020). As training could not be organised in a face-to-face manner, attention for online and hybrid forms of CPD such as webinars, self-paced courses, and online teacher communities grew (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). These online CPD formats led to more collaborative forms of learning (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). Not only were teachers able to connect more easily with their peers online but the pandemic also led to a greater willingness to collaborate among teachers (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). This trend is promising, as these online CPD initiatives can go beyond the short-term individual initiatives which are often used, and instead are more flexible regarding duration as well as being more collaborative (Boeskens et al., 2020; Minea-Pic, 2020).

The above shows that digitalisation can break down some of the barriers associated with teachers' CPD (e.g., duration, location, and collaboration) and can also enable the stakeholders involved in teachers' CPD to reach schools and teachers more easily and establish direct contact (Minea-Pic et al., 2021). However, a critical note is in order. Online opportunities to professionalise create more flexibility but they cannot fully replace face-to-face contact and collaboration. In a recent work by De Coninck (2019), online as well as face-to-face clinical simulations to increase student–teachers' and parent–teacher communication competences were tested. Students who were recipients of the

face-to-face clinical simulations were, in comparison to the students who got offered the online simulations, more positive about their learning experiences, in the sense that their experiences were more realistic and authentic. The face-to-face clinical simulations were considered effective tools to prepare them for the teaching practice. They considered the online simulations primarily as a strategy to stimulate reflections concerning the topic of parent–teacher conversations. A combination of both – online and face-to-face simulations – were recommended by many as the golden standard for becoming more competent in the matter. Parallel to this research, our recommendation would be to put continued attention to online formats for the professionalisation of teachers, but as an addition to and extension of face-to-face formats rather than as a replacement. The two innovative projects discussed in this chapter – focusing on informal networks on the one hand and PLCs on the other hand – are two interesting strategies to stimulate teachers' CPD in a (face-to-face manner and this) on a daily basis.

Note

1 Officially recognised schools (school boards) are represented by one of three educational networks (or 'umbrella organisations'): the Flemish Community education network (also known as GO!), the publicly funded and publicly managed education network, or the publicly funded and privately managed education network (for more information, see OECD, 2015b).

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13 Professional learning and development in Denmark

From formal competence development and professional learning communities to an emergence approach

Mathias Thorborg and Lars Qvortrup

Introduction

In this chapter, we contribute with an insight into the Danish approach to professional learning and development (PLD) since the last major school reform of 2014. As McMillan and Jess point out, there is an international political tendency to view school improvement in a straightforward way, often resulting in a simplistic view of teacher PLD (McMillan and Jess, 2021). Previous studies have pointed to Denmark as an apparent exception to the trend (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) and school development efforts in the country have focused on both formal learning and development of subject competence as well as on-the-job learning. A central lever in the Danish development has been to increase teacher collaboration often within the framework of professional learning communities (PLCs) (Stoll *et al.*, 2006; DuFour and Marzano, 2011; Timperley, 2011; and Qvortrup, 2016b). De Jong, Meiring, and Admiraal point out that this type of teacher collaboration is most often characterized by teachers sharing experiences, discussing student learning and/or exchanging instructional strategies (2022). As such, the underlying assumption seems to be that by increasing their knowledge through shared reflections, teachers can improve their teaching, which will ultimately lead to increased student outcomes. However, recent national evaluations of the development efforts indicate that there have been no significant improvements in students' performance.

In this chapter, we zoom in on teacher collaboration as part of the effort for PLD in Denmark. By including a complexity-oriented theoretical perspective, we wish to contribute an understanding of collaboration that can enable new ways of thinking about the connection between collaboration and PLD.

The Danish framework for PLD

In Denmark, in 2013, a majority of the Danish Parliament decided upon a new national legal framework for primary and lower secondary schools. The main

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points of the framework were that by going from a curriculum focus to a learning focus and by strengthening the professional competence development of teachers, pedagogues, and school leaders, the following objectives should be achieved:

- all students will be challenged to become as accomplished as possible;
- the effect of students' social backgrounds with respect to academic results will be reduced; and
- the trust in teacher professionalism and the well-being within Danish public schools will be strengthened (Cited from Qvortrup, 2016a).

In 2013, there were approximately 1,300 primary and lower secondary public schools in the 98 municipalities in Denmark, with roughly 560,000 students. Adding private schools, schools for students with special needs and so on, in 2013, there were around 2,500 primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark with approximately 700,000 students. In Denmark, the municipalities, with reference to the national education act, manage all public primary and lower secondary schools (classes 1–9), representing 85% of all schools.

Professional capital and competence development

Inspired by Hargreaves' and Fullan's concept of professional capital (2012), emphasis has been placed on strengthening the professional capital of schools. Consequently, in the period 2014–2020, one billion Danish Kroner (approximately 130 million Euro) was allocated to raise the human and social capitals of schools by supporting the competence development of teachers, pedagogues, and school leaders, primarily within the framework of PLCs. Also, an agreement was reached that 95% of the teaching hours had to be taught by teachers, who have achieved subject-oriented competencies. In addition to the public support, the A. P. Moller Foundation donated one billion Danish Kroner as an extraordinary grant to strengthen the Danish public school system.

In parallel with the implementation of the school reform, an extensive evaluation program was completed in order to examine the outcomes of the reform (Thorborg, Qvortrup, and Rasmussen, 2019). As part of the program, a project led by the National Centre for Welfare Research, KORA, analyzed the outcomes of the competence development program. They published their evaluation in 2017 (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

Following the reform, the Danish municipalities in collaboration with the individual schools handled competence development. Generally, the municipalities' management of competence efforts in the school area was relatively systematic and supported by a strategy for competence development (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017, p. 7). The majority of municipalities drew up formal policy plans with explicit principles and plans for competence development in the education system. A large majority of municipal school directors considered

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the competence development plans to be an important instrument for the management and leadership of public schools (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

In order to put the competence development plans into practice, most municipalities cooperated with the Danish university colleges, which are responsible for national teacher education. As part of this cooperation, both parties define the curriculum for PLD. In many cases, the university colleges provide input for the municipal competence development schemes. In other cases, the university colleges develop courses and professional learning programs in accordance with the demands of the municipalities (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

According to the analysis that KORA published in 2017, that is, three years after the start of the school reform and its PLD activities, the development of subject-oriented teaching competences has a positive effect on students' performance in 6th grade compared with teachers that do not have the same formal subject-oriented teaching competencies. However, the effect is modest, and it can only be documented for sixth grade, and not for ninth grade (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

The study suggests that teaching subject competence, especially in mathematics, equips teachers with academic and didactic competencies that spread to the students, whereas teacher competencies in the subject Danish can to a greater extent be achieved in other ways. The effect analysis generally does not indicate that teaching competence has a different effect on students' learning achievements depending on their socio-economic background (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

The study also documents that there is no overall correlation between whether teachers have developed their teaching competencies through the competence development program and their general teaching practice (Bjørnholt *et al.*, 2017).

In conclusion, the general outcome of the more formal professional development programs has been quite disappointing, questioning the relevance of the format of these programs.

Professional learning communities

Overlapping the formal PLD activities, many resources were used to support the development of teachers' professional collaboration.

Several of the A. P. Moller supported school development programs had a focus on developing professional competencies through PLCs (e.g., Pedersen and Iversen, 2018 and Larsen, 2020). As an example, on 1 January 2015 a consortium consisting of 13 Danish municipalities, the Laboratory for Research-based School Development (LSP) at Aalborg University, and the National Centre for Public Competence Development (COK) launched

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the school development program "Programme for Learning Leadership – Evidence-Informed, Achievement-Oriented Development of Schools and Professional Competencies". With its 13 municipalities, the program included a total of 242 schools (land registers), almost 80,000 students and 10,000 professionals, which corresponded to approximately 10% of all Danish primary and lower secondary schools and students. The total budget was 30 million Danish Krone (approximately 4 million Euro), and the program ran from 2015 to the end of 2019 (Qvortrup, 2016a).

Again, however, the general outcome was quite disappointing. At the end of the four-year program, the evaluation analyzed the correlation between teachers' collaboration and a number of output factors. There was a small, positive correlation between, on the one hand, teachers' collaboration and, on the other hand, teachers' self-assessed competencies, the experience of developing as teachers and teachers' job satisfaction. However, there was no positive correlation and even sometimes a slightly negative correlation between teachers' collaboration and students' academic performance and their expectation of self-efficacy (Jensen *et al.*, 2020, p. 87).

These rather disappointing experiences suggest that there is a need to reassess the idea that increasing and reforming collaboration through top-down initiated projects and restructuring will straightforwardly lead to teacher PLD and eventually student achievement. This idea has also been questioned in recent studies (e.g., McMillan and Jess, 2021). Following this has led to the hypothesis informing this article: that teacher collaboration and PLD should be observed as a result of emerging processes rather than the result of top-down decisions, and that in order to develop successful PLD programs, they should be organized with an understanding of the importance of supporting PLD processes that emerge from practice rather than from top-down management decisions. In the rest of this chapter, we will present this paradigm and empirical studies based on this paradigm.

A complexity-oriented theoretical perspective on teacher collaboration and PLD

Hypothesizing teacher collaboration as an emergent part of school life, we draw on a complexity-oriented process perspective.[1] Central to this perspective is the basic assumption of a world in motion (Hernes, 2014). What is ontologically prior is dynamism and process, from which things or entities emerge as relatively stable (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). From such a perspective, (school) reality is highly complex and contingent, and school organization – and organization of any kind – can be understood as the process of making reality known, predictable, and stable (Hernes, 2014). At the centre of this stabilizing process are events. Events are demarcations in the continuous flow of reality and building blocks of social reality (Hernes, 2008, 2014). In the event, the undifferentiated – and thus unknowable – reality is made known through the inscription of distinctions (Hernes, 2008). These distinctions

draw boundaries as to what the world "is" based on prior distinctions and work as a basis for subsequent distinctions (Hernes, 2008). In organizations, decisions among organizational actors inscribe these distinctions.

Acknowledging the immensely complex nature of reality also implicates abandoning the belief in unlimited rationality. In every moment of the organizational process, the number of possible decisions exceeds the capability to know the consequences of the decisions (Qvortrup, 2003). This is reflected in the concept of "bounded rationality" (Simon, 1997). When deciding on an action, the decision is always marked with uncertainty as to the consequences of alternative decisions (Seidl and Mormann, 2015). In order to decide, then one has to establish a sense of certainty that that decision will lead to a preferred outcome. This is done by connecting the decision to former decisions (Luhmann, 2006). The process of connection between former decisions and subsequent decisions is a continuous process of "uncertainty absorption" (Luhmann, 2006), in which the ongoing decision-making takes the former decisions as given. This process of "uncertainty absorption" is how the organization distinguishes itself, makes itself recognizable and stabilizes in relation to the complexity of reality (Seidl and Mormann, 2015).

Applying this theoretical perspective, teacher collaboration can be observed as an immanent process of continuous events that relate to the general process of school organization. As such, collaboration emerges through the decisions made by organizational actors in their inter-subjective encounters. These decisions are based on the dynamic relationship between "bounded rationality" and "uncertainty absorption". We unfold this view on collaboration through an analysis of a series of collaborative events, and in the final part of the chapter, we will turn to the implications of this view for teacher PLD. First, we will introduce the empirical material used for our analysis.

Empirical material

The material comes from the Danish research project SAMFO (collaboration in compulsory schools in Denmark). Through a multiple qualitative case study (Stake, 1995) involving three public schools, we have sought to get detailed information about collaboration as it unfolds in a Danish school context. For this chapter, we analyze observational material from one case study school.[2]

Since 2014, the school has been part of a municipal project, which places teacher collaboration in the centre of ambitions for school improvement. Thus, in the last seven years the school has focused heavily on PLCs, reflecting the national approach to PLD. The effort to increase and change the collaborative practice among the teachers has from a school leadership perspective centred on two aspects: (1) changing the school's organizational structure and (2) influencing the content of the collaboration. Structurally, extra time has been allocated to meetings and teacher schedules have been aligned in order to make shared preparation time possible. Furthermore, the school has formally changed the traditional model of responsibility, in which a single teacher

has the responsibility as a class teacher. Now two teachers formally share this responsibility. In addition, teachers are required to stay at the school during their workday. In order to accommodate this requirement, workstations in shared office spaces have been set up. To influence the content of the collaboration among the teachers, the school leadership encourages teachers to prepare their teaching together and emphasizes that team meetings should revolve around shared reflections on teaching and preparation and to a lesser degree practical coordination. Moreover, the effort to influence the content of collaboration overlaps a general effort to change the teacher's practice through participation in formal learning opportunities such as workshops and education.

Teacher collaboration in a Danish school observed through a complexity-oriented lens

Our analysis centres on a series of collaborative events within the school that revolve around the teachers Jacob[3] and Carla meeting to plan a lesson, the unfolding of the lesson, and the talks and encounters that follow the lesson. Against the backdrop of the theoretical perspective outlined in the above section, we analyze how the collaboration forms in relation to the general process of organization.

> Jacob and Carla have scheduled a meeting this morning to plan today's gym lesson in seventh grade. They have just found that midterms are being set up in the gym hall today, which means they cannot use it for sports. It does not seem likely that they will be able to do, what they planned given the circumstances. "Maybe we should just have a Danish lesson instead and continue with the newspaper project?" Jacob suggests. Carla agrees and ironically says that the students will be thrilled. However, after a minute of silently glancing through their year plan, Carla suggests, that they could do some in-class activities related to a different part of the curriculum. Jacob checks that Carla's idea fits the curricula goals, and they agree that it could work even though it seems a bit improvised. Not completely settled, both search their computers for material that can be used in the context of what they have been talking about. Jacob apparently has an old power point presentation, which relates to the activities they are now planning. Carla looks at his screen, and they agree that with minor adjustments, the presentation can be used as a starting point.

The preparatory meeting between the two teachers is part of the school's ongoing engagement to strengthen its collaborative structure as described in the beginning. The alignment of the teachers' schedules – which allow the teachers to plan their teaching together and the predesigned year plan – which function as a shared reference point, constitute formal structures of this specific lesson-planning event and work as potential decision premises. By connecting

their decisions to these premises, the teachers make the event recognizable and uphold continuity and stability in the complex every day. However, the surprising inaccessibility of the gym hall because of midterm exams changes the recognizability of the situation. The teachers now have to deal with an increased level of uncertainty as it becomes clear that they cannot prepare the lesson according to plan. They deal with this uncertainty in different ways, and the collaborative event now centres on this.

First, Jacob suggests having a Danish lesson instead and spending some more time working on a student newspaper project. The students are apparently struggling with the project, and the impossibility of using the gym might present itself as an opportunity to minimize some of the challenges that the Danish teachers experience. This suggestion would let the teachers absorb the uncertainty of the situation by "transforming" it into a means to manage another challenging situation (the newspaper project). Taking a moment to look at the year plan – perhaps including their seeming expectation of the students' negative reaction to the changed plan – they decide instead to try to design a gym lesson, which can work even without the certainty that the hall provides. Carla has a suggestion, but it has to fit the curricula goals. As such, they adapt the suggested exercises by connecting them to the goals, supporting each other in the adaptation. Having established connections between the suggested exercises and the course goals a second adaptation occurs: the adaptation of an old PowerPoint presentation to the given situation. Again, the interaction between the teachers mainly revolves around supporting the decisions made. In the adaptive process, recognizability and complexity management are once more at stake. Using exercises and presentations, which the teachers can recognize as something that has worked before, brings about a promise that it will work again and thereby reestablishes a degree of certainty in an otherwise uncertain situation. As such, both the content of the event as well as the character of the interaction seems to be formed in relation to the unforeseen circumstances of the situation and the following process of uncertainty absorption.

It is important to note that the formal structure and intent of the situation does not have a direct impact on what happens; it does not cause the teachers to make certain decisions. From a process view, human actors, as described, make decisions based on their experiences of the past and hopes for the future (Hernes, 2014). At the same time, decisions are acts of differentiation, which make the unknown world known and as such, open up a specific space for later decisions (Luhmann, 2006). In this sense, the formal structure more likely works as a reference point or a grounding to which decisions and actions can be connected in order to produce recognizability and stability. When the teachers decide to design a gym lesson for a different physical setting than usual, they do not seem certain that what they do will work. By adjusting the exercises to fit the course goals, they absorb this uncertainty into the well-known and legitimate. At the same time, by establishing these connections

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they enact the formal structure of the school, which contributes to the constitution of a continuously recognizable school reality.

> In the following moments of Jacob and Carla's planning, they both make different suggestions as to how structure the lesson. While Jacob would like to begin with a teacher led introduction, Carla suggests that the students themselves ought to begin with an exploratory exercise. They end up with an agreement to begin with a shorter introduction and then let the students work on their own.

Jacob and Carla have different opinions on ways to structure the lesson and what activities to include. However, they do not initiate a discussion of these disagreements. Instead, it becomes a matter of "making things work" by reconciling the difference in personal preferences. This management of disagreements is another part of the general management of complexity and uncertainty absorption, which the process of organization pivots around (Luhmann, 2006). What this situation mainly produces is consensus. Possible conflict is thus avoided, which minimizes uncertainty both in the given moment and in expectations of what is to come. As such, the consensus production works to create continuity in the organization by maintaining predictability in collegial interaction to come.

> The gym lesson does not go as Jacob has hoped and there are many disturbances throughout. Speaking with Carla the next morning the teachers apparently had similar experiences. Carla tells Jacob that she got so annoyed during the lesson that she ended up leaving the class for ten minutes before regaining her composure: "I just didn't want to be there anymore", as she says. Jacob seems a little surprised but does not delve deeper into it. When I later ask about the situation, Jacob tells me that he would not leave class as Carla did, but it just seemed inappropriate to react differently to Carla's story or give advice since it happened in an informal setting as it did.

This collaborative event following the lesson centres on the exchange of experiences. Seen as part of the process of organization, which as we have argued is a process of continuous stabilization, exchange of experience among colleagues is often "reduced to verbal support of that, which others do or have done" (Luhmann, 2002, p. 122 [Our translation]). This seems definitely true in the above observation. Even though Carla shares a rather controversial experience that potentially opens up a critic of her professionalism, Jacob does not question her actions.

According to Jacob, it is the informality of the situation, which makes it inappropriate to confront Carla. By recognizing the situation as informal, the situation is made comprehensible and a degree of certainty can be ascribed to

the present. Simultaneously, expectations attached to the informality – for example, that problematic experiences will not be met by critical questions – creates certainty of what will come. Had Jacob responded differently to Carla's story, the situation would lose its recognizability, thus producing a higher degree of uncertainty and a lesser degree of stability.

Just as the formality of the lesson-planning event did not cause Carla and Jacob to act in certain ways, the informality of this situation does not directly cause Jacob's actions. Rather, the situation recognized as informal, acts as a decision premise, and through a reciprocal dynamism, both Jacob's action of support is recognized as appropriate and the situation is enacted as informal, creating continuity, recurrence, and stability.

Collaboration as emerging and implications for PLD

In the case school introduced in this chapter, reflecting the Danish national effort, teacher collaboration is in the centre of an ambition to strengthen teacher PLD. One of the assumptions underlying this effort is the assumption that collaboration will lead to increased on-the-job learning through feedback and reflection. Thus, in order to increase the amount of collaboration and to focus the collaboration, school leadership has implemented changes to the school's organizational structure and sought to influence the content of the teacher collaboration.

The teachers in the school are obliged to prepare their teaching together and in line with de Jong, Meirink, and Admiraal (2019). We see that potential learning opportunities arise in different ways in the analyzed collaborative events. However, our analysis shows that the events mainly revolve around the production of consensus, legitimization of, and adaptation to current practices and mutual support. Little and Horn (2007) as well as Horn *et al.* (2017) have made similar observations in connection to teachers' conversational patterns in which opportunities for generative or restructuring dialogues are closed off instead of being opened.

We relate this apparent closing-off of possible learning opportunities to a general orientation towards the management of a fundamental excess of complexity. This management is a process of absorbing the uncertainty of future events into former events by connecting decisions to former experiences, organizational rules, and procedures or expectations of social interactions. From this understanding, even though the point of preparing their teaching together is to qualify teaching by sharing ideas, the exchanges between the teachers mainly revolve around ways to adapt the lesson to the curricular goals and former lessons. Furthermore, as we see, the teachers' experiences of informality and expectations of social interaction also work as important premises for decisions and in this case close off potential shared reflection.

A central part of the top-down process to increase teacher collaboration in the school has been to create possible opportunities for on-the-job learning. However, observing the form and content of collaboration as emerging as part

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of a process of complexity management that mainly centres on creating recognizability and stability, the potential learning opportunities opened through collaboration do not necessarily actualize. As such, this leads us to believe, that merely providing more time or reforming organizational structures to facilitate increased collaboration does not necessarily lead to collaboration, which enables teacher PLD. However, in line with de Jong, Meirink, and Admiraal (2022), it must be added that less top-down control does not necessarily either contribute to constructive collaboration given that the collaboration might then simply revolve around reproducing that, which already is.

A central point we take from our analysis is that teacher collaboration is not a separate activity *in* the organization, but something that emerges as part *of* the organization. Through the process of uncertainty absorption, the teachers make the collaborative event recognizable as part of the organization and simultaneously make the organization recognizable through the connections made in the event. Against this background, we agree with Hargreaves when he writes that collaboration can be a way for learning to permeate the whole organization (Hargreaves, 2019). Adding to that, the organization can permeate the learning of collaborative events. As such, decisions in collaborative events that could open up learning opportunities can be connected to organizational "ways of doing things" as decision premises, thereby reducing the uncertainty of potentially disturbing reflections.

As to implications for an approach to PLD based on the observation of teacher collaboration as emerging, we are in line with the findings and suggestions by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018). In their book *Collaborative Professionalism* they suggest a three-phase development of teacher collaboration from first- and second-generation PLCs to a third-generation changing structure from top-down to bottom-up activities and changing focus from specific short-term strategies oriented towards narrow student achievement objectives to "third-generation patterns of more sustained and systemic cultures of collaborative inquiry (…) focused on genuine and deep interest in students' learning and whole development" (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018, p. 91).

Conclusion

The Danish approach to teacher PLD following the national school reform of 2014 initially centred on teachers' formal learning and competence development and was supplemented by a focus on on-the-job learning through a top-down structured approach to teacher collaboration. However, according to recent evaluations, the approaches to PLD have not resulted in increased student results. By analyzing empirical examples of teacher collaboration in a Danish school from a complexity-oriented theoretical perspective, the chapter suggests that teacher collaboration and PLD should be observed as emerging through processes of organization and complexity management rather than solely as a result of top-down decisions. As such, PLD programs that take this observation into account should be structured around an understanding of

the importance of supporting and sustaining PLD processes that emerge as part of the school organization.

Notes

1 Here, we draw in particular on Hernes (2008, 2014), who in turn built his theory with inspiration from process philosophy as well as approaches such as Luhmann's systems theory.
2 We have filtered and modified our more detailed observational notes for the purposes of our analysis and constraints of this chapter.
3 All names in the empirical examples have been assigned pseudonyms.

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14 Initial education overestimated – continuing education neglected

Status and perspectives of continuing professional development of teachers in Germany

Ewald Terhart

Teacher education in Germany: a brief overview

Teacher education in Germany has some special features which are described briefly, because it is only against this background that the situation of in-service teacher education, that is, the continuous learning of teachers in the profession, becomes understandable.[1]

According to the differentiated structure of the school system in Germany, there exist five different types of teachers (teachers for primary schools, for secondary schools – lower track, for secondary schools – higher track, for vocational schools, and for students with special needs). For each type of teacher, a special teacher education program is offered. Germany is a federal state; all school matters and teacher education also fall in the competence of each of the 16 *Länder*. The federal government in Berlin has no competency concerning schools, teachers, and teacher education. For the 16 *Länder*, their school ministries organize themselves and their consensus via the "Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany" (KMK).[2] However, the *basic* elements and structures of the school system and teacher education are the same everywhere in Germany, but it has to be kept in mind that each *Land* to a certain degree has its own system, legislation, administration, and – last but not least – "wording" of schooling and teacher education (Tulowitzki, Krüger, and Roller, 2018). So, in a way, it is a decentralized system consisting of 16 "centers", but in each of the 16 "centers" the administrative structure of schools, curriculum, teaching, and teacher education is centralized and hierarchical.

Teacher education (for all types of teachers) is structured in three phases:

- The *first phase* is based at the university and includes the study of two or three school subjects, general pedagogical knowledge, and two or three school internships. After a bachelor's degree, this phase ends with a master's degree (Master of Education);

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- The *second phase* is state-driven, run by the school administration, and takes place in teacher training institutes (these have different names in the 16 *Länder*) with qualified teacher educators/trainers for the different school subjects and in cooperation with a training school and its experienced mentors (1, 5, or 2 Years). This phase ends with a state-driven examination;
- The term *third phase* is related to continuous learning during the professional life of a teacher, be it informal or formal. Participation in in-service teacher education is mandatory for all teachers; however, non-participation is not sanctioned. Further examinations or evaluations during the professional life cycle are not foreseen – unless one aspires to a career (e.g., as a school principal or as a teacher trainer in the second phase).

Compared to other teacher education systems in the world, teacher education in Germany, or more precisely, initial teacher education in Germany, is demanding, costly, and life-time-consuming. The curricular flexibility between the different teacher education programs leading to the different types of teachers (primary, secondary, vocational, etc.) is rather low. "Germany is considered to have one of the longest, most rigorous and, in some respects, least flexible programs of teacher preparation in the world" (Craig, 2016, p. 95; see also Ostinelli, 2009, p. 295 f.). There are a lot of curricular frictions between the first university and the second practical phase of initial teacher education. After having entered teaching, there are only formal career schemes, and there is no accordance between the development of professional competence and career development; in fact, there is no "career" at all for most of the teachers. This traditional asymmetry between very intense pre-service- and rather underdeveloped if not neglected in-service or continuing teacher education in Germany has been lamented for a long time. But a restructuring of the established structures by shifting time, effort, resources, and personnel from initial teacher education (first and second phase) to an enriched and strengthened third phase of continuous professional development of teachers meets with fierce resistance from all groups and "stakeholders" concerned.

The state of in-service teacher education: do we have a clear picture?

An important step in the history of the in-service and continuing education of teachers in Germany was the report of the *Mixed Commission Teacher Education* (*Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung)*, an expert commission with members from both educational research and educational administration installed by the KMK. This expert group's report "Perspectives for teacher education in Germany" (Terhart, 2000) strengthened the position of continuing teacher education in educational policy, administration, and research and led to the clear political will to expand and strengthen the "third phase" of continuous teacher learning and development. Thus, the position of continuous education of teachers changed from a small and rather unknown topic to one of the

central elements of raising the quality of schooling, teaching, and learning in Germany. The principle of continuous professional learning of teachers in service also was integrated into the "Standards for Teacher Education" (originally released in 2004; current version KMK, 2019b). School ministries and educational administrations of the *Länder* established special "Institutes" or "Agencies" to offer continuous professional learning for teachers, and the school regulations-by law of the *Länder fixed* the duty to take part in teacher development processes – although rather weakly.

There is also progress on another level: at the beginning of the 2000s, neither school administration(s) nor empirical research on teacher learning in Germany were able to give a clear picture of the realities of in-service teacher education or of the continuing professional development of teachers. There was a lack of transparency in many respects, including the cost of teacher training. Some *Länder* did not know exactly what was happening in their continuing teacher education; the situation in the different *Länder* was not comparable. So, efforts to describe the realities of in-service teacher education or continuing professional development started and meanwhile presented results. Most important, empirical educational research on the structures, processes, personnel, participants, and the effects of taking part in the continuing professional development of teachers led to new insights. What do we know today about the realities of the third phase?[3]

- Teachers have the duty to keep up and develop their professional capacities, but this duty is not precisely defined. It depends on the motivation and decision of teachers – which courses they attend and how much working time they devote to further professional development. There is no defined time quantum as part of the official work time which has to be devoted to this duty. In fact, it is extra work time, and – strange enough – if a teacher wants to attend courses in continuous professional development he/she has to write an application to the school leader and he/she decides on it. Traditionally, there is a time conflict between the duty of teaching at school and attending learning opportunities in further education. In general, "(t) he prerequisites for a systemic and continuous development of the entire teaching staff in Germany are therefore only implemented to a very limited extent" (Richter and Richter 2020, S. 346).[4] In some *Länder* teachers have to document their activities concerning professional development and some *Länder* define a minimum number of hours per year that each teacher has to devote to professional development (e.g., in Hamburg, 30 for teachers in schools and 45 for teachers in vocational education; in Bremen 30; Bavaria 20 hours per year). But empirical evaluations also show that it makes no difference if the formal regulations are strict or loose: they do not "reach" reality on "the ground". Due to a lack of governance, it is difficult to organize the hyper-complex German system of continuous teacher learning "from above".

- Concerning the format and the contents of activities in the continuous professional development of teachers, the supply and the demand side can be distinguished: school administration (on different levels), foundations, private agencies, etc., organize opportunities for teachers and school staff to learn – and hope that these opportunities meet the demands and necessities of the teachers. On the other side teachers, teacher groups, schools, etc., articulate certain thematic demands for their own professional and institutional learning. In this very complex and non-transparent "marketplace", both sides come together – or they may not. Empirical research has shown that, on the supply side, courses on different school subjects and subject-didactical problems are dominant and are broadly accepted by teachers, followed by themes concerning more general teaching problems (heterogeneity of students and their learning abilities and styles, problems of integrating students with special needs, digitalization of school teaching and learning, etc.). Obviously, teaching (in the two subjects of each teacher) and the support for better teaching and classroom organization are the focus of both the supply and demand sides.
- About 80% of all teachers regularly take part in different formats of in-service teacher education for professional development. But below this general indicator, the realities are extremely diverse and different. For example, 28% of all teachers have participated in teacher training once or twice in two years, and 23% have participated five times in two years. "Thus, the average number of hours that teachers invest annually in CPD is vanishingly small. It is therefore questionable what contribution such sparsely used learning opportunities can make at all to the further development of professional competence and professional action" (Richter and Richter, 2020, p. 351). The activity level in continuing teacher education is low during the beginning of the career, but in the following years it rises and reaches a peak in the mid of the professional life cycle, and then sinks again. Elder, experienced teachers do not engage in continuing professional development (CPD) as much as the younger ones. Remarkable and expectable at the same time, those teachers with an already high level of competence and engagement join CPD activities more than those with a lower level! Arguably, this is one of the paradoxes of continuous, lifelong learning in *all* spheres of professions: the already enriched strive for enrichment – and get enriched. This leads to the hypothesis that differences in professional competence between teachers grow over time – with consequences of the question of the equity of educational opportunities on the side of the students.
- Besides and somehow "below" the official, institutionalized forms of continuing teacher education there is a lot of teacher communication going on in the internet, in social-media groups of teachers working in the same or another school, working at the same projects, struggling with the same problems, being interested in the same topics, etc. Heise (2017) reported that German teachers – compared to other academic professions – use

informal opportunities for professional development to a high extent. In the last decade, internet platforms for teachers run by teacher organizations, teacher groups, state agencies, text-book publishers, and (semi-)private foundations were established that support such self-organized digital forms of continuous teacher development. According to Schiefner-Rohs (2020, p. 128), in Germany, research on the digitalization in/of teacher education concentrates on initial teacher education (first and second phase) and nearly neglects continuous teacher learning in the "third phase". This is a severe blind spot: according to Wermke (2011) for Swedish and German teachers "the internet" and "cooperation with colleagues" are by far the most important resources for getting new information and support for their work. Wermke's survey was conducted in 2008. Since that time the importance of this form of self-driven, self-organized teacher development must be more important and intensive today, 15 years later (for teacher collaboration in social media, chat groups, etc., see Prestridge, 2010; Bergviken-Rensfeld, Hillman, and Selwyn 2018; and Bratton, 2019).

Like everywhere else in the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has also hit the school system and teachers in Germany hard. Due to the very poor state of digitalization in schools in Germany compared to other countries, the simplest technical and equipment requirements had to be created first in order to set up online lessons, blended learning, etc. In the meantime, educational research is heavily involved in analyzing the consequences of COVID-19 for schools, teachers' work and students' learning.[5] In a way, COVID-19 became the trigger for a forced, mainly informal emergency in-service training program on the practice of digitalization for teachers – and this while school was still running and work was highly stressful. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of schools, teaching, and continuing teacher education (cf. Reintjes, Porsch, and im Brahm, 2021 and Schmidt, 2021).

"Standards" for teachers' professional development?

Already in the 1990s, and after a long period of non-reform, different stakeholders in the field of teacher education saw the growing necessity for a reform of teacher education and developed ideas of reform and reorganization of this important part of the education system. The rather low results of Germany in the first PISA Study in 2001 (the so-called "PISA-*Schock*") supported this already ongoing process of reform in teacher education (Sälzer and Prenzel, 2017). The already mentioned "Perspectives for Teacher Education in Germany" (Terhart, 2000) were followed by the "Standards for Teacher Education", including all elements (content knowledge in the subjects, pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, school internships) and all three phases of teacher education were developed and continuously actualized (KMK, 2019b, 2019c). Although these "Standards" were related to all three phases of teacher education in Germany, the perspective on the first

Table 14.1 Continuous Professional Learning in the Teacher Standards (Germany)

Competence 10: Teachers understand their profession as a continuous learning task and develop their competences further	
Standards for the theoretical sections/ elements of teacher education	*Standards for the practical sections/elements of teacher education*
The graduates of teacher education programs … • know methods of self-evaluation and evaluation by others in the context of the developing and assuring the quality of teaching and school. • receive and evaluate results of educational and school research. • know the organizational conditions at schools as well as cooperation structures in schools and outside of schools. • reflect on the professional requirements of dealing with diversity and heterogeneity. • know digital technologies for collegial cooperation and for one's own professionalization including their advantages and disadvantages. • know basic principles of digital technologies and the legal regulations concerning the used tools means for teaching a school organization.	The graduates of teacher education programs … • reflect on their own professional attitudes, experiences, and competences as well as their development and can draw conclusions from this. • use findings of educational and school research for their own work. • document their own work and its results for themselves and others. • give feedback and use the feedback of others to optimize their pedagogical work. • take advantage of opportunities to participate in work-related decision processes. • know and use opportunities for professional support. • make use of individual and cooperative in-service and further training opportunities. • use the possibilities of digital technologies for collaboration and professionalization.

two phases (i.e. pre-service teacher education) dominated. Continuous professional development and learning was also an element of the "Standards", but to a rather small extent. Table 14.1 shows those "Standards" related to continuous professional learning.

Standards are important, but they themselves do nothing. From the perspective of the imagined or desired reality, they shed light on the given reality. Therefore, it is important to bring them into life, to build up the conditions and capacities of actors to move reality step by step in the direction of formulated standards. The level of concretion and the manner of evaluating the steps to bring standards into practice are of importance. The KMK underpinned the "Standards" (Table 14.1) with the release of "Cornerstones for Continuing Professional Learning of Teachers in the Third Phase of Teacher Education" (KMK, 2020) which include quality criteria for teaching and learning processes in in-service teacher education on the didactical level. These are all in line with research into effective and sustainable continuing teacher education:

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> (…) (T)he design of in-service courses for teachers should meet quality criteria in order to support desired effects and sustainability, such as:
>
> - interweaving input, testing, and reflection phases
> - ensure a professional focus and depth of content in the courses offered
> - focus on pupils' learning/understanding
> - align the content of the courses with the characteristics of effective teaching and the results of teaching/learning research
> - enable and provide feedback to teachers on their professional practice and model effective practice
> - create opportunities to experience effectiveness and relevance as teacher
> - focus on core teacher practices that are learnable and evidence-based
> - promote teacher collaboration and focus on systematic instructional development
>
> To assess the quality of the opportunities-to-learn, providers of continuous professional development can refer to the above quality criteria.
>
> (KMK, 2020, p. 5)

Although the standards movement in education and teacher education was and is not without problems (Caena, 2014 and Page, 2015), the definition of standards is broadly accepted in the education scene in universities and teacher education and has become a basis for further developments in reforming teacher education and trying to raise the quality of its processes, personnel, and results. In this way the "Standards" worked on the level of educational research, in agencies of educational reform, in institutes of in-service education, etc. These standards were helpful and accepted – but this does not mean that the processes and results of in-service teacher education automatically changed in an adequate way. The most changes in fact took place in the first two phases, their curricula, their processes, and also their rhetoric. Again, the third phase, the continuous professional development of practicing teachers, remained the overseen or neglected, underestimated phase – although it is the longest phase in a teacher's professional life.

A central precondition for the successful implementation of an effective system *and* a new culture of continuing professional development in a broader sense is to pluralize and personalize the institutional and curricular paths *to* and *in* the teaching profession (recruiting, educating and training, licensing, inducting into workplace and -life, and continuing further education). In Germany, the whole process of becoming and staying a teacher, and developing as a professional so far is strongly standardized and inflexible. Individual early decisions lead to long-term and rigid consequences in terms of career

trajectories and professional biographies. In particular, while working as a teacher, during the whole course of the professional biography, the possibilities *and* necessities to constantly stabilize and develop one's own professional capacities further should be opened up and underlined. On the one side, the necessary institutional preconditions and arrangements must be established, but on the other side all teachers should be held accountable to live this system and culture of continuing professional development and learning.

Instead of a standardized and formalized, pre-defined career system insensible for individual conditions, life-course events, and trajectories, a new form of teacher career system should be established that is sensible to the development of competencies and capacities and weaknesses and strengths. This includes opening up and expanding the possibilities of changing – via additional qualification – to another teaching profession (e.g., from primary school to secondary school), possibilities of expanding (subject) qualifications through further education, qualifying oneself as an expert for school development, for the further learning of other teachers. The topic of teacher diversification relating to (forced) migration is very slowly reaching the educational scene in Germany; meanwhile, programs for the (re)qualification of international trained teachers are offered (H. Terhart, 2021b). In general, this flexibilization of professional access *to* and career paths *in* teaching (in Korthagens (2017) words, the "personalization" of teacher education and professional learning), corresponds to the long-running processes of individualization and pluralization in society, which leads or should lead to greater diversity and mobility in professional biographies. The traditionally rigid career system of the German public sector, and schools and the teaching profession are part of it and must adapt to these developments.

Who are the (teacher) educators in in-service teacher education?

What do we know about the personnel supporting teachers in their continuing and further professional development during the years and decades of their professional life cycle? While there is *some* empirical knowledge about the personnel in *initial* teacher education (in universities, teacher training colleges, etc.) on an international and national level, there is a lack of knowledge concerning the experts supporting the continuing teacher education phase. As the 16 *Länder* have different regulations, the group of experts actively providing and running continuing teacher education and development is very heterogeneous. Most of them are qualified and in a way licensed. Richter and Richter (2020, S. 347) present the following description relating to experienced teachers who additionally work in in-service teacher education:

> The experts for continuing teacher education who organize the courses within the framework of the state programs are usually teachers who have been specially qualified and trained for this task. For their work, these teachers receive a reduction in their teaching load to be able to

> offer in-service education for other teachers to the same extent. The qualification programs for teacher educators in continuing teacher education are usually carried out by the *Länder*- institutes responsible for in-service teacher education; so content and requirements vary from *Land* to *Land*.

To my knowledge, there is no comprehensive and detailed overview of the personnel in in-service teacher education in Germany. The research on this group of experts for continuing teacher education is concentrated on certain aspects and connected to the situation in a *Land*. For example, the research group around Richter at the University of Potsdam presented an analysis of the career choice motives and task perception of teacher developers (Richter, Brunner, and Richter 2021 and Richter, Lazarides, and Richter 2021). The basis was a survey of 145 experts working (part-time) in the in-service teacher education *Land* Brandenburg. The study shows that the two main motives for regular teachers to become experts for education and developing other teachers are "career leap" and "contribution to school quality". The two motives "moving away from the previous field of work" (as a regular teacher) and "coincidence" were regarded as of low or no importance. With regard to the didactic orientation of these experts for teacher development, the type "facilitator" could be distinguished from the type "transmitter". The respective didactic orientation also shaped their practical work as teacher developers.

Concluding remarks

To sum it all up, in Germany, the asymmetry between an intense, demanding, and long pre-service teacher education and an underdeveloped, underestimated, and under-researched continuing teacher education is still prevailing in principle. But the times they are changing as they always are: in small steps, the attention of the public, of politicians, and of experts on educational administration and research devoted to continuing teacher education has grown and will grow further. In the last two decades, there have been persistent efforts in educational administration and research, and last but not least, on the part of teacher organizations and teachers themselves, to raise the level of continuing teacher education in Germany in terms of quantity and quality. With this, there is reason to hope that in 20 years, in the comparative overviews of continuing teacher education, Germany will no longer bring up the rear.

Notes

1 Because this chapter is aimed at an international audience, English-language sources are used as much as possible. For an overview of teacher education in Germany, see Cortina and Thames (2013) and Terhart (2019, 2021a). For an official description of in-service teacher education in Germany, see KMK (2019a, p. 215–218). For information and analyses about in-service teacher education and

the continuous professional development of teachers in Germany, see Wermke (2011) and Ostinelli and Crescentini (2021, pp. 5f).

2 The German name (short form) is "Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK)".

3 The following four sections are based on Fussangel, Rürup and Gräsel (2016), Priebe et al. (2019), Daschner and Hanisch (2019); Daschner (2020), and Haenisch and Steffens (2022).

4 All citations from German sources were translated by the author of this chapter.

5 One of the leading scientific journals for school, teaching, and teachers, *Die Deutsche Schule*, meanwhile has devoted three Supplements (*Beihefte*) to the topic "Corona & Schools".

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15 Teacher education policies in Italy

In search of professional learning indicators

Maurizio Gentile

Introduction

The current debate on how a national or local institution can implement teacher professional learning (PL) and development has resulted in significant shifts in the conceptualization, design, and delivery of *continuing professional development* (CPD) programs. Despite the specific policies and models adopted at the national or school level, CPD is one of the critical issues of the European Education Area (EEA) strategic framework (Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01). The European Commission and Member States cooperate to achieve a shared vision on five priorities for 2021–2030,[1] the third being focused on pedagogical professions at every level and type of education and training. CPD is at the heart of this priority. It implies issues, actions, and tools for providing and fostering:

a) opportunities and guidance for teacher career progression;
b) initial education, induction, and CPD at all levels, primarily to deal with the diversity of learners;
c) teachers' competences to teach in digital environments;
d) communities of practice that support innovation and inform teacher education policies;
e) processes and infrastructures that encourage a research-based teacher education;
f) new ways to assess the quality of teacher training (Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01).

The EEA framework gives a platform for shared European initiatives, which underlie the need to promote CPD opportunities for good quality teaching and learning (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021). High-quality CPD and initial teacher education are critical to ensure that learners have the appropriate competencies and well-being to live, work, and act in today's complex environments (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021). Therefore, European teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and attitude play a critical role. Their professional quality directly impacts the educational

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outcomes of all students; consequently, there is a relevant demand for continuous development.

Given the complexity of this policy and research scenario, we can assume that a CPD plan, at the school or system level, can help in understanding how students' educational outcomes relate to teachers' PL (Earle & Bianchi, 2021; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008) or professional cognition systems (Bakkenes, Vermunt & Wubbels, 2010). In this perspective, PL can include all activities of CPD for and by in-service teachers inside or outside a systemic policy (Earle & Bianchi, 2021).

This chapter's primary focus is to carry out the concept of teacher professional learning (PL) as an outcome through the definition of a system of literature-based indicators. Therefore, summing up, my purpose is to figure out which indicators, literature-based categories, and criteria of professional learning were considered during the design, implementation, and evaluation of teacher PL in Italy.

Some basic information can be helpful for the reader.

First, CPD is not the current label for teacher PL in Italy, where it is called "continuing teacher education" (CTE). I will use this term in further text.

Second, the national policy is implemented through a three-year plan that combines the following aspects:

a) school and teachers' needs with
b) national priorities concerning the development of organizational competencies (e.g., school autonomy, evaluation, and innovation); 21st-century skills (e.g., foreign languages, digital skills, and new learning environment); and competencies for inclusive teaching.

(MIUR, 2016, 2017)

Third, the coordination functions have been split between the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (INDIRE)[2] and Ministry (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021). On the digital platform S.O.F.I.A., there is a comprehensive catalogue of the CTE offer and course evaluation and certification. At the same time, INDIRE monitors the quality of the CTE programs at the national level (Pettenati, 2021).

Teacher Education National Plan

In Italy, CTE is one of the weakest points of the educational system. It represents both an educational policy challenge (Foschi, 2021; MIUR, 2016) and a need expressed by teachers themselves (OECD, 2019a), who also consider it a spending priority of significant weight (OECD, 2019a). This demand comes from specific circumstances (Eurostat, 2019; OECD, 2019a, 2014). Italian teachers have a higher-than-average age compared with other European and OECD countries. Many teachers do not possess any kind of initial professional

education: this condition has been compulsory only since 1998. There is a misalignment between initial education and the teachers' perception of their teaching capabilities. Most are not participating in mentoring activities, either as mentors or mentees. A considerable percentage of teachers declare that they do not receive any feedback in their school; if they receive it, it seems unintentional and comes from a few sources. There is a misalignment between the attitude toward innovation and what happens in practice. The participation of Italian teachers in CTE activities has always been relatively low.

To overcome these issues, in 2015, the Italian Parliament approved the law "La Buona Scuola", making CTE compulsory, structural, and permanent (Parlamento & Presidenza della Repubblica, 2015). Consequently, the Ministry of Education created the Teacher Education National Plan (TENP) with the scope to potentially reach the whole population of 750,000 teachers serving in the schools (MIUR, 2016). The Ministry designed the plan around some key elements:

a) levels of governance;
b) delegate or leader schools with coordination and administrative functions; and
c) national priorities and rules for participation.

Governance, priorities, participation

TENP has three levels of governance:

a) a national level (setting of the priorities and funding);
b) a regional level (distribution of the financing to network areas and delegated schools); and
c) a school or local level in which each delegated school or each school in its autonomy designs initiatives for CTE.

Schools were organized in 319 network areas with a min/max number of institutes for each network, with between 7 and 70 institutions. The delegated schools are local leader institutions with coordination functions and administrative and design tasks. At the local level, administrative tasks imply managing the funding received from the *Regional School Office*.

The delegated schools must design each CTE activity following national priorities and teachers' needs. They decide the duration of CTE initiatives, recruit external and internal experts, disseminate the initiatives in the network, collect data about teachers' attendance, etc. National priorities are topics that the Ministry of Education and the Government judge as relevant for improving the school system. Each priority has a title and three sub-topics (Figure 15.1). In brief, the professional development activities – designed at the local level by each delegated school or individual school – must be coherent with national priorities (MIUR, 2016).

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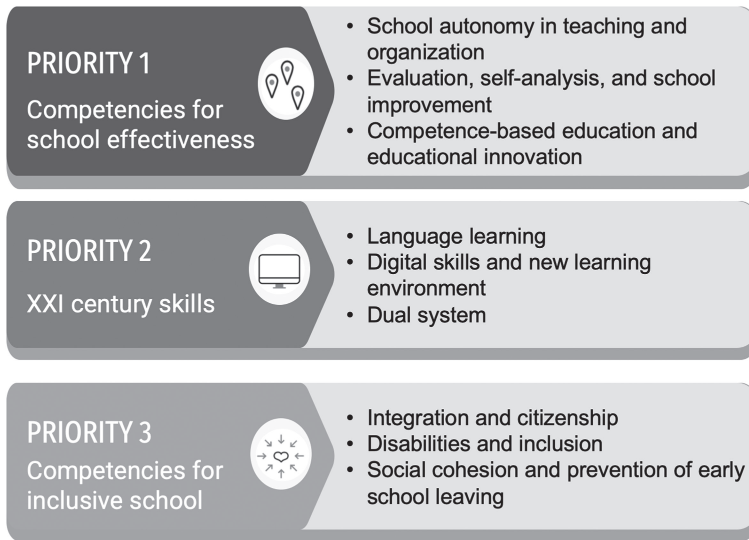

Figure 15.1 TENP national priorities – Period 2016–2019.

There are five rules for teachers' participation in professional development activities and for designing the activities: coherence, standard training unit, autonomy, typologies, and certification.

- *coherence*. Local teacher education activities must comply with national priorities and teachers' needs. The leader schools collect data on teachers' individual needs to tune them with local conditions (network area level) and national priorities (system level) (D'Amico et al., 2021);
- *standard training unit*. The delegated schools set the CTE initiatives in *training units* of 25 hours, and this benchmark is the minimum *standard* for participating in a professional development initiative;
- *autonomy and certification*. Teachers can choose their training activities (i.e., workshops, seminars, conferences, academic courses, research-group, twinning, professional exchanges, online courses, etc.) and obtain a participation certificate from the provider that organized the CTE initiative (i.e., school, delegated school, school network, Ministry, or public/private provider acknowledged formally by the Ministry).

Breaking points

Since 2016, the Italian Ministry of Education has implemented three versions of TENP (Table 15.1). For the first three years (2015–2019), the Government invested 1.4 billion €: 1.1 billion in a yearly individual card worth 500 € for buying books, technologies, and unique courses; 325 million for funding local teacher education activities and programs (MIUR, 2016; Parlamento e

Table 15.1 Versions of the Teacher Education National Plan (TENP)

	TENP 2016–2019	*TENP 2019–2020*	*TENP 2020–2021*
Funding Priorities	325 million € • School Effectiveness • 21st-century skills • Inclusive school	24 million € • Civic education and sustainability • STEM • VET system • ECEC • Early school leaving	32 million € • Online learning during COVID-19 • Civic education and sustainability • STEM • New norms and educational policies
Governance	3. Ministry of Education 4. Regional Office 5. Delegated school	Confirmed	Confirmed
Regulation	Government and Ministry of Education	Teacher National Contract	Teacher National Contract
Typologies	Workshops, seminars, conferences, academic courses, research-group, etc.	Confirmed	Confirmed
Training units	25 hours 1 unit x year for each teacher	Not confirmed	Not confirmed

Presidenza della Repubblica, 2015). After the first three-year period, there was a cut in funding, from 325 to 32 million Euros. In the second and third versions, there was a shift in priorities, and in TENP 2020–2021, the Ministry proposed professional development activities connected with the COVID-19 emergency. The rule of 25 hours for each teacher education unit was not confirmed, and therefore a teacher has today more freedom to decide the length of her/his participation in CTE. The Ministry confirmed the basic governance model, together with the educational activities (see Table 15.1).

The first TENP version was based on a strong and centralized governance model, while relevant changes are observable in the second and third versions. The most significant breaking points are the amount of financing, a change in the content of national priorities and a shift in funding management. In brief, the new versions of TENP contain revised funding schemes: 40% of the total funding is to be spent on national priorities, while 60% of the total budget must finance local initiatives (MIUR, 2019; MI, 2020).

The revised models confirm the three levels of governance and typology of CTE activities. A unique feature is introduced, namely the term and standard of educational units: the plan length decreases from three years to one year, with no limit of hours. Finally, schools design their CTE activities coherently with national priorities, self-evaluation processes, and school improvement plans.

However, the most essential change concerned the regulation of the plan, where a shift from Government to *Teacher National Collective Contract* was

observed. This change means that teacher unions and Ministry realize a technical consultation to reach an agreement on the total funding per year, the local funding governance, and the contents of national priorities, the rules of teachers' participation (MI, 2020; MIUR, 2019). The Ministry of Education maintains the task to define the national priorities, while the regulation of teachers' participation in CTE activities and other technical aspects of the plan depends on rules established inside the *Teacher National Collective Contract.* It can observe the restoration of the "quo ante" condition based on the principle of consultation between the Ministry and the trade union parties (Cerini, 2021). Further analytical elements would be necessary to discuss in depth this change; moreover, the lack of impact data hinders the evaluation of the effects on teachers' PL and educational system of the new version of the plan.

In search of professional learning indicators

The *National Educational Research Institute* (INDIRE) realized an evaluation study on the first version of TENP (INDIRE, 2019). The researchers selected 64 network areas in the northern, central, and southern regions. The sample was unpacked in three layers: small network (9–19 schools), medium network (20–30 schools), and large network (31–61 schools). The selected network represented 20% of the total national network areas. The sample observed included 63.249[3] teachers enrolled in CTE activities, but only 50% (31.426) completed them.

It is interesting to try to understand why 50% of Italian teachers enrolled by TENP leave CTE early. The INDIRE study does not provide any analytical information about the reasons for this phenomenon. However, it is helpful to advance some hypotheses using data from OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS). Here, 54% of interviewed teachers refer that involvement in professional development is limited by "schedule conflict", along with "lack of incentives" and "participation costs" (OECD, 2019a, p. 44). Unfortunately, today teachers' participation in CPD activities is mainly motivated by discharging them from "teaching duties for activities during regular working hours, providing them with materials needed for activities and reimbursing them for participation costs" (OECD, 2019a, p. 44). Another incentive for participation is the "accumulation of credits counts for career advancement" (OECD, 2019a, p. 177).

Figure 15.2 plots the percentage of teachers reporting barriers to participation in CPD; it compares the Italian data on average with European Union countries and OECD country partners' responses. On average, the two most essential barriers are lack of incentives (47.6%[4]) and work schedule conflicts (54.4%), while the highest reported barrier for Italian teachers is that "there are no incentives for participating in professional development" (70.2% of Italian teachers).

In the INDIRE evaluation study (INDIRE, 2019), findings suggest a cluster of PL and development indicators. Table 15.2 shows five indicators, their

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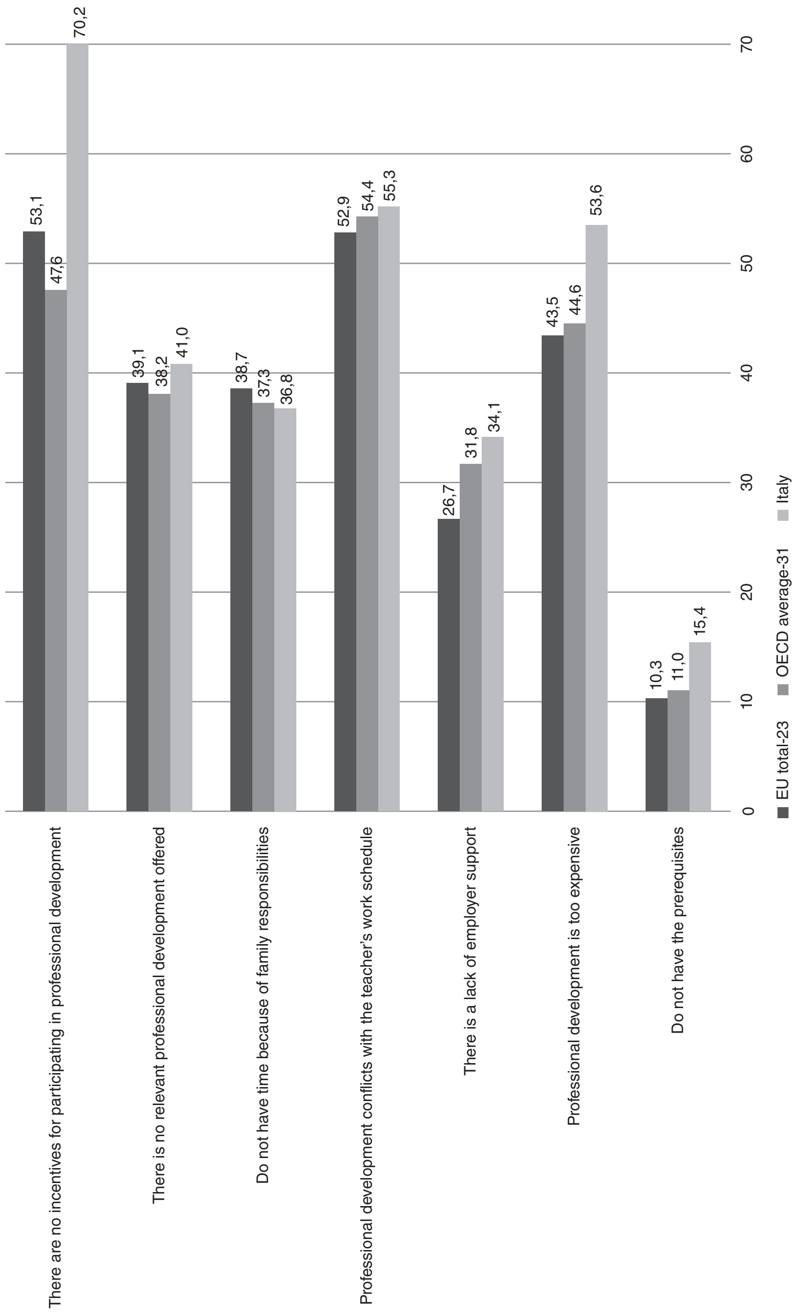

Figure 15.2 Percentage of teachers reporting the following barriers to their participation in CPD.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table 1.5.36

Table 15.2 Professional learning indicators based on INDIRE evaluation study

Indicator	*Definition*	*Question/Instrument*
Indicator 1 *Typology of professional learning experience*	*Refers to a community of practice (conversations and collaboration about teaching) and active learning (small groups task, Q&A sessions, microteaching, etc.)*	**Instrument** *Respondents checked the options from a list of professional learning experience*
Indicator 2 *Autonomy*	*Refers to what extent teachers have autonomy in choosing their CPD activities*	**Question**: *How have teachers chosen training activities?*
Indicator 3 *Transfer into the classroom*	*Refers to what extent teachers apply the ideas learned during the training in their classrooms*	**Question**: *Have the training activities provided for a transfer into classrooms of the knowledge and skills proposed?*
Indicator 4 *Impact on teaching*	*Refers to what extent the training activities transform teachers' teaching*	**Question**: *Have knowledge and skills proposed during training activities transformed teachers' teaching?*
Indicator 5 *Sharing with colleagues*	*Refers if the school organize meetings to share the ideas learned during the training*	**Question**: *Have schools organized meetings to share with colleagues the knowledge and skills proposed during training activities?*

definitions, and the question/instrument researchers used to obtain the specific information from network areas. Likewise, Figure 15.3 shows the percentage of network areas reporting information about each indicator. 90% of network areas say the *community of practice* and *active learning* are the two main types of the PL experience (Indicator 1). The *impact of teaching* (Indicator 4) is the second highest indicator with a percentage of 67.1, while *autonomy* (Indicator 2) and *transfer into the classroom* (Indicator 3) have values above 40%. *Sharing with colleagues* (Indicator 5) has the lowest weight: only 29.5% of network areas report having meetings to share the PL acquired from training activities inside schools.

The evidence from TALIS 2018 suggests that teacher motivation for participating in teacher learning activities can be improved. For instance, a way to cope with scheduling conflicts is to embed professional development activities in teachers' daily work (OECD, 2019a). A possible solution is the creation of *professional learning communities*, where teachers can collaborate to collect evidence on students' outcomes, to understand their needs, and to pursue their PL to address the educational issues raised from teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

In this line of reasoning, teacher education activities can be means for professional improvement: many teachers need to participate in programs able to help them in facing the daily issues of school life. Consequently, the capacity to provide content aligned with teachers' needs (*professional learning incentives)*

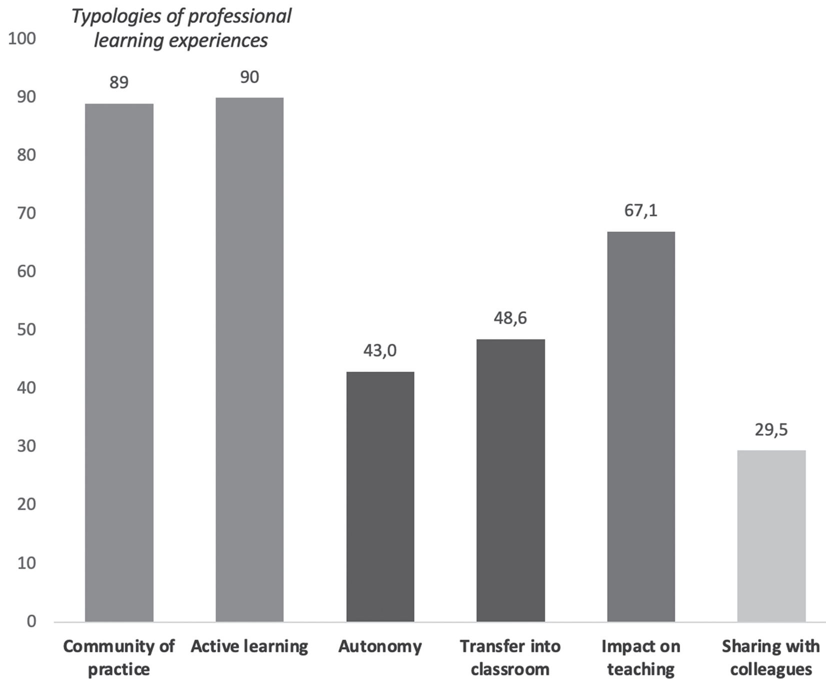

Figure 15.3 Percentage of network areas reporting information about five indicators of professional learning – N = 64.

or to offer positive consequences on teachers' careers *(career incentives)* are good quality indicators of CPD. Incentives foster the motivation to participate in further professional development opportunities (OECD, 2019a). Some of the most important of them consist in programs that provide teachers with opportunities that fit their professional needs, foster their autonomy, and promote a collaborative approach to coping with educational issues.

In the evaluation study realized by INDIRE (2019), the low percentage associated with Indicator 5 (*Sharing with colleagues*) appears inconsistent with the high rate of PL based on a *community of practice* (89%) and *active learning* (90%). These two practices imply the use of a constructivist approach. According to this view, teacher education activities should attempt to fit PL context to the classroom situations in which the knowledge and skills acquired will be later applied (Greeno, 1989; Resnick, 1991). Methods of CPD aligned with this principle are based on *authentic situations* (Collins et al., 1989) and *social cognition* (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Real problems are educationally complex, and social cognition implies educational practices where teachers work collaboratively facing complex issues. In other words, in a community, PL is a social process.

Therefore, if authentic situations and social cognition are critical elements of *Indicator 1*, how can we explain the low percentage resulting from

Indicator 5? Why does it appear so difficult to share the ideas learned during PL using methods that should allow participants to work together and inquire into their educational practice (Kennedy, 2014)? This aspect deserves further investigation. Therefore, one of the priorities for the next version of TENP should be to investigate the weakness of the professional community approach. This could be a way to improve the quality of PL at the individual, school, and system levels (Stoll et al., 2006). Teaching will not improve by attending courses, workshops, conferences, and seminars but through several PL opportunities such as situated peer collaboration, observation, practice, and feedback. The Italian teacher education policies need to acknowledge the ecological condition in which teacher work and learn (OECD, 2019b). Teachers grow in their profession when they work in supportive contexts, where colleagues pursue to tackle similar issues, realize mutual purposes, entail shared discussion on what to improve, and build up trust and social capital (OECD, 2019b).

Categories to explain short- and long-run effects of teacher professional development policies and activities

The analysis so far has not intended to evaluate the effectiveness of Italy's policy on teachers' PL and development but rather to use evidence and theoretical categories to understand more deeply the intertwining between the complexity of teaching and professional development.

Italy should design its teacher professional development policies, models, and events taking into account research findings, theoretical categories, evidence that inform practice, large-scale studies, meta-analyses, and systematic reviews (Kennedy, 2014). Frequently, researchers and national or school-level experts use different conceptual frameworks to design and assess CTE policies and models (Schleicher, 2016). In attempting to take a coherent picture, Table 15.3 quotes four literature-based categories to understand the short and long-run effects of CTE policies, models, and PL experiences.

The first category quoted in Table 15.3 is based on Guskey's seminal articles on teacher change through professional development opportunities (1986, 2002). According to the author, significant changes in teachers' beliefs system occur after teachers obtain direct proof of students' improvements. These improvements usually can result from changes in classroom practices based on "new instructional approach, new materials or curricula, modification in teaching procedures, or classroom format" (Guskey, 2002, p. 383).

The second category considers professionalizing policies and their impacts on teachers' engagement in professional development activities (Burstow & Winch, 2014). Supposing that teachers are true "professionals", the developing of expertise implies to be able to apply and adapt theory to the situation at the workplace. On the other hand, if we consider the teacher as a "craft practitioner", this implies that pedagogical and content knowledge cannot be learned through formal participation in professional development activities

Table 15.3 Literature-based categories explaining the short and long-run effects of CPD policy and model

Literature source	*Category*	
Guskey (1986, 2002)	Change in	• Teacher's classroom practice • Student learning outcomes • Teachers' beliefs and attitudes
Burstow and Winch (2014)	Tension between the view of teachers as a professional workforce *versus* the view of the teacher as a craft practitioner	
Kennedy (2014) Earle and Bianchi (2021) Hilal et al. (2022)	Increasing capacity for professional autonomy and agency	
Kennedy (2016, 2019)	Effect sustained over time	• *Upward level* = Continuing to find new ways to incorporate professional development ideas in their practice; therefore, students benefit during the follow-up years • *Stable level* = Sustaining own knowledge and skills learned during PD activities • *Downward level* = Forgetting or purposefully leaving the professional development ideas

but must be directly experienced at the workplace. The tension produced by these two lines of thinking seems to bring to the following consideration: a PL process always implies a good balance between a formal plan designed at the system or school level and the "necessary space" in which teachers may explore their practice.

The third category refers to increasing professional autonomy and agency (Earle & Bianchi, 2021; Kennedy, 2014). Agency may be conceptualized as a personal ability to make intentional decisions and finalize these decisions and overcome environmental barriers to reshape the professional context (Hilal et al., 2022). Teachers can live autonomy as an individual or professional group and feel responsible for personal and student changes (Datnow, 2020). If teachers have power, they can affect their autonomy and agency. In this view, autonomy is a subjective construct that contributes to own agency (Ryan & Deci, 2017) but is also a key element that outlines a professional group. This suggests the importance of promoting teacher agency as a subjective and environmental condition to facilitate PL (Hilal et al., 2022).

The last category concerns the connection between the changes in student learning across multiple years and different patterns of teachers' PL (Kennedy, 2016, 2019). We observe three effects over time. First, teachers at the *upward level* continue to find new ways to incorporate professional development ideas in their practice, and students improve their learning also during the following years. Second, teachers at the *stable level* sustain their knowledge learned

during professional development, but there is no added value for students. Third, teachers located at the *downward level* forget or purposefully leave the knowledge and skills provided through CPD activities.

The literature-based categories shown in Table 15.3 suggest some researched issues that could help in understanding PL at a large-scale policy level and local professional development initiatives: how much time is needed to foster teachers' professional changes? How to learn about teachers' learning? How to design our studies and CPD policies to promote teachers' PL? How can we provide guidance to improve teachers' practice and enrich their thinking about teaching? How to understand the changes in student learning due to teachers' participation in CPD activities?

Conclusion

A large-scale CPD policy implies coherence between local initiatives and centralized regulation. Defining clear rules for teachers' participation in CPD and fixing funding schemes are ways to safeguard the public interest regarding education. However, this approach must also fit with the need to build capacity at the school level (Fullan, 2010), providing support and infrastructure, and removing barriers that hinder the teachers' participation in professional development (OECD, 2019a). One of the crucial elements to motivate involvement in PL is to design professional development initiatives that match teachers' needs.

The Italian CPD policy should meaningfully mark the passage toward a PL paradigm (Earle & Bianchi, 2021). If the country adopts the concept of PL, it is necessary to examine those policies, organizational models, and teacher education practices which have put teachers' learning needs at the core of school improvement (Kennedy, 2016; Korthagen, 2017; Cirkony et al., 2021).

One CPD model could fail if poorly informed by current literature on teacher education and professional development: "what teachers need to learn, how they learn, and how we will know whether they have learned enough" (Kennedy, 2019, p. 139). Teaching requires in-depth knowledge in various areas and the competence to apply pedagogical ideas under different conditions while working with diverse students (Hollins, 2011, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020).

Both at the system and school level (Daly et al., 2020), CPD initiatives should focus on how to help teachers to shape their learning, before, during, and after participation in professional development activities. The primary concern should be to provide teachers with opportunities to individually and cooperatively explore their practice. They should also, for a good understanding of students' needs, collect evidence on students' outcomes as well as on material and immaterial conditions influencing them (Strom & Viesca, 2021). In conclusion, teachers should pursue PL to address specific issues of their work and for improving schooling and pupils' quality of school life.

Notes

1 The five priorities are: 1) quality, equity, inclusion, and success in education and training; 2) lifelong learning and mobility; 3) teachers and trainers; 4) higher education; and 5) green and digital transitions.
2 INDIRE is a public agency whose mission is to develop actions to support educational improvement processes. Together with INVALSI (National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training system) and the Inspectorate of the Italian Ministry of Education, INDIRE is a part of the *National Evaluation System for Education and Training*. For more details, see: https://www.indire.it/en/home/about-us/.
3 The dot specifies the thousands.
4 The comma specifies the decimals.

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16 Teachers' continuing professional development in France

A systemic transformation in progress

Régis Malet

Introduction

Numerous comparative evaluations and international reports (OECD, 2013, 2015, 2019; CEDEFOP, 2016; and European Commission, 2018) emphasise the importance of a human resource management policy on the teaching profession to improve the performance of educational systems. In terms of European policies, this movement is part of the promotion of lifelong learning, one of the priority areas of today's human resource management policies. The promotion of the concept of continuing professional development (CPD) also contributes to aspects like the revitalisation of continuing education, the attractiveness of the teaching profession, and the possibility of a vertical career or professional mobility during the course of one's activity (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Guerriero, 2017).

Participation in CPD is currently an indicator of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting the growing importance of investment in in-service teacher training and the development and quality of education systems (UN, 2015). This promotion is not limited to developed countries. Both the World Bank and UNESCO have identified CPD as a key resource for achieving the goal of "increasing the number of qualified teachers by 2030, including through international cooperation for teacher education in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states" (UN, 2015, p. 17). In France, CPD is at the core of contemporary policies aimed at teaching professionalisation. In the next pages, the state-of-the art of teacher professional development in France is drawn up from the perspective of international experiences.

From continuing education to continuing professional development: a problematic situation in the light of international comparisons

In France, teachers' continuous in-service education (*formation continue*) has been the subject of a number of national and international studies, research

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and reports, regularly agreeing on its deficits (Cour des Comptes, 2015, 2017; IGEN, 2017; OECD, 2014, 2015 2019). On average, French secondary school teachers attend just over 3.5 days of in-service training per year, slightly less than other categories of public servants (Cour des Comptes, 2015). French teachers usually receive fewer days of training than teachers in other OECD countries, where the average number of training days is eight, more than twice than French teachers do. In various European countries, in-service training is a compulsory component of the teaching profession or a necessary route to promotion. In France, this holds only for primary school teachers.

The most recent studies, such as the Talis 2018 survey (OECD, 2018a), confirm that the gap in participation rate between primary and secondary French school teachers – the highest in the sample of countries participating in the survey – is linked to the compulsory status of CPD only for primary school teachers. Actually, this is an aspect of the difference between primary and secondary school culture in France, the former being more oriented to "teaching expertise" and the latter more to "disciplinary knowledge". France has the lowest percentage of lower secondary school teachers engaged in CPD (83%) of all the countries participating in Talis, where the participation rate is usually over 90% (Figure 16.1).

Internationally (European Commission, 2013; OECD, 2015), France has been identified as being significantly out of step with many other countries in

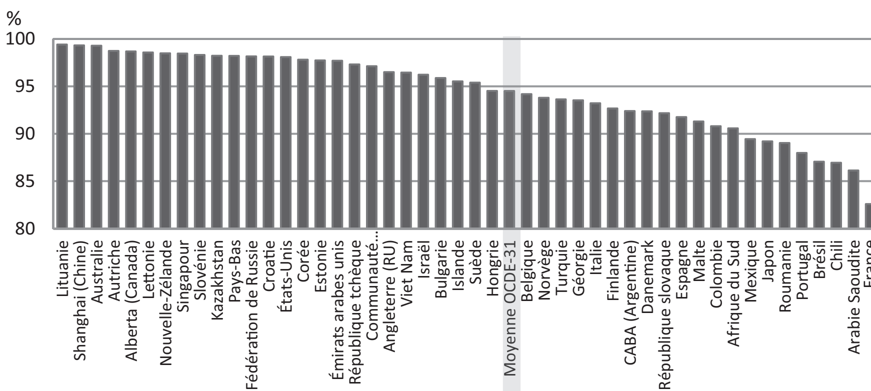

Figure 16.1 Percentage of secondary school teachers who participated in professional development activities.

It refers to professional development activities in which teachers participated in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of teachers who participated in professional development activities in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Source: OECD, TALIS Database 2018, Table I.5.1. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933944502

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terms of in-service training for its teachers. This view is based on a number of criteria:

- the low volume of time devoted to CPD;
- its partly non-compulsory status and the fact that it has no measurable effect on the careers of teachers who take part in CPD activities;
- the lack of coherence and continuity between initial training and teachers' in-service training;
- the low impact of training activities on professional practice.

Fewer French teachers therefore participate in CPD compared with their colleagues in other countries and they engage in CPD for shorter periods (OECD, 2014, 2018). This is not due to a lack of opportunities to participate in CPD, but mainly to a growing feeling among French teachers that CPD, as at present practised shows some incongruences. Firstly, it is far too disconnected from their professional needs, then, is poorly linked to practical teaching in the classroom, and thirdly it does not contribute sufficiently to enhancing teaching experience or to the consolidation of teachers' expertise and career (DEPP, 2019; OECD, 2018).

Teacher CPD in France is regulated by the general framework of civil service law resulting from Act No. 2007-148 of 2 February 2007 on the modernisation of the civil service. This recognises the right to lifelong professional training for civil servants, but the weakly binding nature of CPD tends to weaken the commitment of teachers, as emphasised by the Court of Auditors of the French Republic (Cour des Comptes, 2015, 2017).

OECD studies (OECD, 2005, 2013, 2015) have repeatedly shown that French teachers consider themselves inadequately prepared in terms of pedagogical skills and daily classroom management. French secondary teachers are among the least effective teachers in European countries in improving the understanding of pupils with difficulties in science (45% compared to 68% on average) and mathematics (61% compared to 79%) (TIMSS, see Cour des Comptes report, 2017). Finally, French teachers are among those in OECD countries whose active participation in continuing education is hampered by a lack of clarity, support, and incentives for their involvement, whereas the support and incentives to engage in CPD in many OECD countries is correlated with a high rate of participation and positive assessment of its contents (Talis, 2018). 83% of French teachers and 94% of French principals report having participated in at least one CPD activity in the year preceding the TALIS 2018 survey. Although a majority of secondary teachers (71%) reporting at least one CPD activity in the last 12 months reported also a positive impact on their teaching practices, this proportion is lower than the OECD average (82%) and the EU average (79%).

The feeling of unpreparedness among secondary school teachers concerns both professional learning, particularly in terms of managing student diversity,

individualised teaching (24% of teachers, compared with 19% in 2013 and 13% for the European average in 2018), and special educational needs (one-third of French teachers report a high level of professional support, compared with 27% in 2013 and 21% for the European average in 2018). The content of CPD is perceived as unsuitable and too far removed from the needs expressed above. Talis 2018 confirms the results of the 2013 survey by revealing that teachers' stated expectations in terms of CPD are not met, particularly those related to dealing with pupils with special needs and advising on pupils' career orientation. 72% of French teachers answering to the TALIS 2018 survey indicate that the inputs and their transferability are insufficient. 83% say they have never been consulted on the CPD offer (OECD, 2018).

For France, which took part in this survey for the second time, the deterioration in middle school teachers' sense of self-efficacy increased significantly when compared with the 2013 survey, and more strongly than in the average European country (OECD, 2014, 2018; MENJ-DEPP, 2019). What yesterday was in-service training and today is CPD in France has long been characterised by a top-down, distributive, and prescriptive conception of content, most often more functional to the accompaniment of curricular reforms or specific national and/or academic priorities (IGEN, 2017, 2018). In fact, teachers do not perceive pre-determined CPD, which happens in a context where teaching and educational settings have their own specificities. As a resource for their own professional development.

This classic top-down conception of in-service teacher training is part of a uniform vision of an education system that has long neglected a genuine diagnosis of needs and an engineering approach that would enable the implementation of training activities that are well thought out and geared to specific educational contexts.

CPD in France, top-down in its conception, fragmented in its form, combining without any reasoned articulation conferences, workshops, and one-off interventions far removed from the professional field, is not a coherent and structured system for overall teacher education, development, and professional learning policy (IGEN, 2017). For decades, it has not been part of an informed approach to promoting existing professional practice and the professional development of educational and management staff in schools. Yet, changes are in progress and they are promising (Malet, 2021).

Progressive but insufficient integration of continuing professional development actions

The notion of professional learning and development is often identified as the best way to promote the professional fulfilment of teachers, the academic success of pupils and, ultimately, the effectiveness and performance of the French education system. The aim is to replace in-service education, which, as currently performed, does not appear to be in phase with the terms of current approaches due to a lack of support for, and the effectiveness of, existing

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systems (IGEN, 2017, 2018). In the process of change from In-service training (INSET) to CPD, in-service training policies in France have thus begun a shift from a top-down and subject-centred conception to a more endogenous approach, aligned to professional learning and development and focused on the difficulties of everyday work and on the professional and personal development issues of teachers in educational settings.

In 2013, the competency framework for teaching and education professions (MEN, 2013) introduced the concept of professional development as a feature of all the teaching staff. However, for the time being, the systems have not yet fully integrated these ambitions. For several years now, ministerial and general inspection reports have been calling for a profound renewal in the design and management of in-service training. As a corollary, they asked also for professional development and support for teachers' careers within the framework of human resource management (MEN, 2015; IGEN, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018).

Several reports produced by the Igen on in-service training, based on international experience in this field, encourage a rethinking of the provision of CPD by developing actions based on the fulfilment of individual and collective needs. The professional and personal development of teachers becomes the main point in ministerial and academic policies aiming at the development of teacher professionalism. This calls for giving due consideration to the specificity of teaching and training contexts, and to individual and collective needs expressed by teaching staff (Depp, 2019; IGEN, 2010, 2013, 2017).

The main objective is to shift from in-service teacher training to CPD during the coming years. This should happen by actually bringing professional development closer to the place where teachers work, by integrating CPD time into staff working hours and by developing more differentiated and coherent educational approaches helpful also in transferring skills within teaching teams (open classes, class visits, cross-observations, exchanges of practices between peers, lesson studies…) (IGEN, 2017). The implementation of this programme aiming at the evolution of In-service teacher training is still partial, despite notable developments in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education, and in the introduction of hybrid learning models, combining face-to-face and online education schemes (Dgesco, 2017).

Moreover, the local education authorities ("Académies") are increasingly locating the reform of in-service training at the heart of their projects, developing visions oriented to long-term professional development of teachers, instead of only providing content or one-off training modules. The Écoles supérieures du professorat et de l'éducation (ÉSPÉ) – which have become the Instituts supérieurs du professorat et de l'éducation (INSPÉ) since the 2019 Orientation Law "*Pour une école de la confiance*" (literally: For a school of trust) – have, in conjunction with the academic rectorates, an expanded mission, calling to build CPD for staff in education. However, their efforts are mainly concentrated on initial training, and the results in terms of in-service teacher professional development vary greatly depending on the institute.

In France, the process of transition from INSET to CPD is inspired, often explicitly, by foreign examples. It is driven by a concern to implement a genuine human resources management policy, which is at present lacking in the French education system. This should increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession and give more opportunities for career and professional mobility in the course of employment, restoring the image of the profession, together with the motivation and commitment to lifelong learning.

Promises and obstacles to the flourishing of teachers' professional development actions in France

The promotion of professional development in French teacher education leads to the vision of teachers' development as a continuum of professional learning, which should allow for a better articulation of the phases of initial teacher education, entry into the profession and CPD (Malet, 2021). This view also makes it possible to encompass teachers' formal and informal learning, whereas a traditional conception of in-service education often misses the informal aspects of teaching in their day-to-day practice. The notion of professional development refers to day-to-day teaching practices; it can give a decisive function to communities of practice. This approach is based on antithetical visions if compared with what is usually practised in French schools. Within this framework of teacher professional development, cooperative learning is a key element for professional success and well-being at work (Brisard and Malet, 2003, 2005).

Aspects like cooperative conceptions of educational and teaching activity, attention to social integration and the professional group, and strong participation in an educational community are forms that break with the traditional way of projecting the teaching profession and continuing education in France. For this to be more than rhetoric, the promotion of CPD calls for a renewed link between developing professionalism on the field and at a distance. More and more countries are *de facto* bringing training closer to ordinary work in schools, however, without forgetting the support and reflexivity that are obviously necessary. Today, it is becoming gradually possible to forge fruitful links between school groups, training institutes, and research. This needs to rely on the professional communities in situ to determine needs, while developing investigative approaches involving more or less experienced and expert teachers, trainers, and researchers.

However, this cooperative approach to CPD cannot be developed by magic. In France over the past years, teachers' expertise and work have been built up with reference to curricula and the classroom more than to the school community; the collective dimension of teachers' activity does not appear as decisive or even important in teachers' learning and professional success. However, something is changing: this co-training dimension is no longer absent in France; though it must be stressed that it does not currently occupy the same place as in other countries in Northern Europe, Asia, and North America,

where professional development is a central and significant part in cooperative professional learning and development processes.

A break with essentially individual and distributive conceptions of in-service training is underway in France, but the evolution towards CPD through the development of collectives, placing deliberation and cooperation in a logic of professional, individual, and collective development, has yet to be achieved. The challenge is also to encourage this cooperative movement by preserving the pedagogical freedom of teachers and by actively involving them more in issues of leadership and school life, which is the only way to forge links between professional cultures with little synergy and to encourage creativity and the success of school groups. That being said, we are aware of the many pitfalls of some policies of empowerment (Malet, 2008, 2019).

In France, the CARDIE network (local units for research, development, innovation, and experimentation in education), in conjunction with schools and the coaches and researchers of Inspé (*Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Education* – National institutes for teacher education), is implementing actions that go some way towards this goal and are quite promising. However, such a dynamic change in the professional development of teachers and schools cannot be set in motion without taking into account recurrent obstacles, starting with the most precious commodity for training at all stages of a teacher's life: time. Making time available is the key to any proactive policy of professional development for teachers, both individually and collectively. In the best case, the school climate, organization, and ethos, will prepare for it. Education requires a certain capacity to project oneself into the activity, first of all, in time; and it should be also rooted in some form of deep learning. A dense and long initial education is certainly a strong condition for teachers and groups to seize their capacity for development. In this context, it is possible to search, question, doubt, grope, and explore the possibilities, because this is what creates the conditions for alternative solutions in one's daily activity. The existence of what Merton (1988) qualified as the *Matthew effect* (staff already well trained are more likely to seek further training) is noticeable in all professions, and teaching is no exception.

It should be emphasised that the various French school personnel – teachers, principals, main education and guidance advisers (CPE), inspectors – are increasingly convinced of the virtues of cooperation, co-training, consultation, and project work. Most of them see these as decisive factors in professional development, in the meaning of the teaching-learning process and, ultimately, in the well-being of pupils and teachers. It is therefore necessary to get away from the idea that in France a certain inertia is linked to what is rather easily called the individualism of staff, and of teachers in particular. The real issues are systemic, both organisational and curricular. The lack of resources in terms of time sometimes leads to a blunting of the energies of individual and collective actors, whether they are teachers, principals or inspectors. Resources – in terms of time and organisation of school space and time – dedicated to

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bringing to life what is identified as a thirst for cooperation in the workplace are necessary, even if sometimes administrative constraints can hamper them.

Conclusion

The legitimacy of the teaching profession and the professional development of its members only makes sense if the society gives them credit and confidence, within the framework of a moral contract that underpins educational and school institutions. This activity should also be recognised by all its members and society in its aims. However, both the moral contract between nations and teachers and the coincidence between an inherited social identity and a lived professional activity seem to be failing here and there. We know that this fragility is strongly dependent on contexts and political choices (Dutercq & Maroy, 2017; Dupriez & Malet, 2013; Levasseur & Tardif, 2010).

To enable professionals to develop, there must be both trust and genuine attention to the needs of staff. Finally, a cooperative and reflective capacity can only be built on the basis of a strong social contract: a long initial education, a more processual and reflective conception of CPD, and shared pathways between school staff, at least on common professional issues. The massive increase in the number of teachers over the last half-century, as a result of the school explosion that has affected many developed countries, could have encouraged the affirmation of the collective voice of teachers. But this was not the case, and the weight of the professional group in activating the process of professionalisation of their activity was and is weak (Lessard and Tardif, 1999; Malet, 2016, 2019; Novoa, 2007; Prairat, 2009). This is a problem not to be forgotten in the implementation of CPD actions, which are supposed to be designed and implemented in close cooperation with the representatives of the professional group, if professional autonomy is the primary motivation and objective of these actions.

How can one be surprised that teachers, advisers, and leaders will cooperate easily when they have been separated from the time of their initial education and recruitment, by dividing up their missions and roles, which are more often thought of as compensation than as professional synergy (Malet, 2022). In any human organisation, the recognition of the contribution of each individual to the meaning of collective action has a strong influence on the output of each member. It is not certain that French schooling was designed for this. When this collective sense of commitment is lacking, then the capacity to collectively mobilise individual energies suffers. Research indicates that a need for both professional recognition and inter-knowledge conditions personal commitment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Maulini, 2021; Malet, 2021). This depends also on the perception of self-efficacy in one's teaching, together with the knowledge of being supported and heard by the employing institution and, last but not least, the management and leadership of professional development. These conditions can be decisive in mobilising staff more inclined to

share and commit themselves to demanding professional development throughout their working lives.

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17 Professional development and in-service teacher education in the Portuguese system

Views from outside and inside*

Ana Isabel Andrade, Betina da Silva-Lopes and Maria de Lurdes Gonçalves

Introduction

The present study analyses in-service teacher education programmes (TEP) provided by the Portuguese Education System, both in the national territory and abroad. It aims at updating teachers' professional knowledge (PK) and seeks to understand the importance of these programmes including the satisfaction of teachers' perceptions about the(ir) professional learning after having attended teaching education offers (TEO) of different nature and duration. TEP is conceptualised and organised by Teacher Education Centres (TEC), which are composed of school clusters. Each TEP is made up of different TEO, which usually cover all school subjects of the Portuguese Education System and professional teaching competencies and includes a very wide range of strategies and formats.

The study refers to 2017 and 2018, and was carried out in two different contexts, constituting two distinct cases: the context of TEC in the Central Region of Portugal (an outside view); and the context of Portuguese teachers in Switzerland (an inside view). In both contexts, the TEP was analysed, as well as the teachers' answers to questionnaires evaluating the TEO that make up those TEP. In order to suggest sustained recommendations to in-service teacher education, we analysed what is valued, why it is valued, and how contents are approached in those TEP.

We start by systematising the challenges in-service teacher education faces in the specialised literature. Then the normative and contextual framework of the case studies is presented, as well as the methodology used in data collection and data analysis and then the results of the study are presented and discussed. Finally, reflecting on the results of the study, the aim is to identify other in-service teacher education possibilities that more satisfactorily respond to the needs and expectations of those who attend TEO organised by the TEC

* The teacher education programmes analysed take place in the areas of intervention of the authors of this study: case 1, in the central region of Portugal where the University of Aveiro exerts influence; and case 2 in Switzerland, the area of intervention of the third author of the study.

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in order to promote their continuous professional development (CPD) and, consequently, their capacity to renew the teaching practices and, consequently, increase the quality of students' learning.

Teachers' professional development – why does it matter?

Teachers are one of the most important resources for the educational success of students, therefore a quality education cannot neglect teacher education. Today, we clearly understand that education requires teachers to be professionals in a process of continuous learning, which emphasises the importance of the learning opportunities that are created for them throughout their professional life (European Commission, 2007; Caena, 2014; UNESCO, 2016). In fact, teachers should be able to develop professionally and promote the quality of educational environments (Andrade et al., 2020; Formosinho, Machado, & Mesquita 2014; Lopes, Costa, & Matias, 2016; Merchie, Tuytens, Devos, & Vanderlinde, 2018; King, 2014), though research shows that it is a very long and complex process, as Sancar, Atal, & Deryakulu state,

> Professional development is generally defined as a process that begins with teachers' college; continues throughout a teacher's professional life; and is affected by a teacher's characteristics, teaching contents (what they teach), and teaching strategies/methods/approaches (how they teach). Notably, we found that the literature suggests that the professional development process directly influences student outcomes, and that related reforms, school contexts, curricula, collaborations, and formal/informal supporting activities are integral parts of the professional development process.
>
> (2021, p. 8)

Moreover, this need for teacher development is highlighted by the complexity of society's demands for new teacher competences and professionalism (UNESCO, 2021). Teachers' professional knowledge (PK) is increasingly more diversified and complex not only because of the amount of information available to us today but also because of the assessment we have to make of this amount of information, without losing sight of its pertinence for the education of global, critical, and active citizens, responsible and committed to building a better world. It is crucial that teachers are prepared towards solving problems raised by educational practice. This implies the ability to analyse and interpret the reality and the pedagogical-didactic events they face. In this sense, teachers need to be reflective in order to be able to "generate positive processes of change" (Leite, 2005, p. 373), questioning theories and practices (their own and others'), so that they can do better in the contexts in which they work, taking responsibility for their students' learning and development, as well as for their own professional learning and that of their peers (Andrade et al., 2020).

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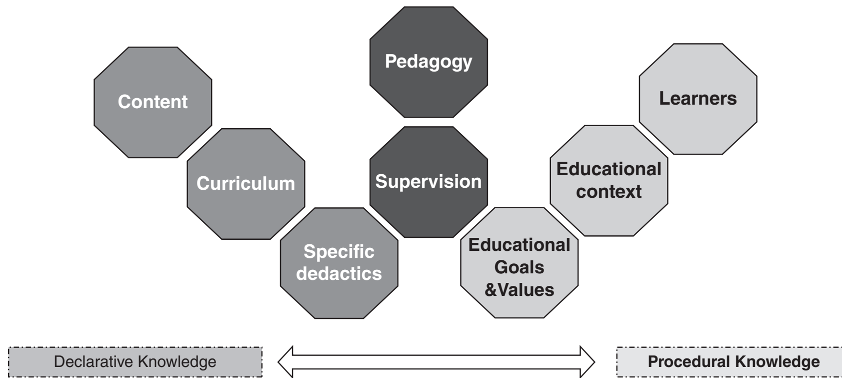

Figure 17.1 Dimensions of professional knowledge: articulating declarative and procedural knowledge.

Thus, it is important that teacher educators and teachers know how to establish priorities for teachers' CPD according to the changes they would like to achieve in the educational contexts. It is also crucial that TEP not only facilitate the (re)construction of the aimed teachers' profile but also the understanding of the mission they should pursue in their contexts and of the purposes set as priorities. To achieve all these different aims, we consider three dimensions of educational activity, based on Rios (2003), namely:

> i) a technical-scientific dimension, understood as a set of knowledge and ways of know-how which are relevant to the teaching process;
> ii) an ethical-political dimension, understood as a set of values and educational purposes, aiming through education the promotion of the common good and the improvement of society;
> iii) an aesthetic dimension, which implies the development of human sensibility and artistic skills embedded in the educational process.
>
> (Andrade et al., 2020)

Moreover, the pursuit of the defined aims for the teacher education paths should allow teachers to learn and develop professionally in different dimensions according to the explored content and/or the learning activities carried out.

Teacher CPD has different dimensions (Sancar, Atal, & Deryakulu, 2021; Shulman, 1987/2004; King, 2014). From our perspective and a synthesis of several authors, PK comprises a total of eight interwoven dimensions interacting in a complex relationship within the scope of two axes: declarative and procedural knowledge (Figure 17.1), namely:

1. content knowledge, i.e., the teacher's knowledge and critical understanding of the content;
2. knowledge of the curriculum, i.e., knowledge of the programmes and teaching materials designed for education, as well as of the curricular organisation of teaching;

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3. pedagogical knowledge, which includes knowledge of pedagogical theories and ways of putting them into practice in interactions with learners;
4. knowledge of specific didactics, which includes knowledge of different teaching strategies;
5. knowledge of educational goals and values;
6. knowledge of learners, their characteristics, needs, and learning styles;
7. knowledge of educational contexts, their qualities and conditions, spaces, equipment, and/or modes of organisation; and finally;
8. supervision knowledge, which includes the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow reflection on the pedagogical-didactic action, covering knowledge of oneself, of one's capabilities, knowledge of one's knowledge of the teacher's functions and knowledge of how this knowledge can be used to regulate teaching practice.

We take the concept of PK here in a broad sense, seeking to cover "toutes les transformations individuelles et collectives de compétences et de composantes identitaires mobilisées ou susceptibles d'être mobilisées dans des situations professionnelles" (Barbier, Chaix, & Demailly, 1994, p. 7) and, consequently, to promote teacher CPD.

Due to the complexity of the knowledge required from teachers (specialised or content knowledge, pedagogical and didactic knowledge, knowledge about the context, but also know-how, know how to act, how to learn, and how to be a teacher), it is important that the conditions in which teacher education is provided are supportive, allowing teachers to really learn by integrating new knowledge into their pedagogical and didactic repertoire. This means that TEP offered in formal contexts and attended by teachers satisfy their needs, create enthusiasm for new educational approaches, make them establish a dialogue between theory and practice, examine what they do, what they know, and what they wish to do and know deep in the future. According to the most recent evidence, every year, 46% of Portuguese teachers attend TEP (Ministério da Educação, 2020). It is also important to put into practice strategies that will assist CPD, such as collaborative and individual work and that stimulate reflection skills. Interestingly, collaborative work among teachers seems to have been increasing with the use of online tools, stimulated by the need of its use during the pandemic in both analysed contexts.

The conditions to promote teacher CPD, in this case through TEP, in order to create opportunities for the construction of diversified PK, centred on the teachers and on the challenges raised by schools and educational communities in general (Nóvoa, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2017), must be monitored and evaluated (Fernandes, 2018). Despite recognising the methodological challenge in establishing a cause-effect relationship, as far as the impact of teacher education on CPD is concerned (King, 2014), the authors of this chapter consider that evaluation strategies create opportunities for the emergence of deeper and renewed understandings. Therefore, these results must be shared and discussed both by teacher educators, teachers, and responsible for designing TEO.

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Regulatory framework for the in-service teacher education of Portuguese teachers in Portugal and abroad

According to the Basic Law of the Portuguese Education System (Law n° 46/86, of October 14, as amended by Law n° 115/2007, of September 19), teacher CPD should be a priority in Portugal as well as in the Portuguese Teaching Abroad (PTA) network. In 2014, through Law No. 22/2014, in-service teacher education has become conceptualised both as teacher's right and duty. This decree law defines its principles, purposes, and objectives. As a consequence of this framework, there was a widespread investment in teacher education, mobilizing different institutions both across the country and the Lusophone world: higher education institutions, TEC of school associations and professional, scientific, and/or pedagogical associations. According to the most recent national data, there are 255 in-service teacher education entities with valid accreditation in Portugal, with more than half being School Associations (84) and Teacher Associations (47).[1]

In Portugal, the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for In-service Teacher Education is responsible for the accreditation of teacher education providers and for monitoring their evaluation process. It is also responsible for the accreditation of specialised teacher education courses.

On what concerns the PTA network, is it falls under the responsibility of the Portuguese Government, namely *Camões, Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua* (Camões, I.P.). PTA is present in many countries where there is a large Portuguese emigrant community, being the case in many European countries. Switzerland, the field of our case study 2, is one of them. Portuguese teachers are hired by Camões, I.P. and are placed in different countries, according to their choices. They are qualified teachers from Portuguese universities. They teach Portuguese Heritage Language (PHL) as displaced public workers and the Portuguese regulations for the teaching career also apply to them. However, due to the particular characteristics of their working context (being abroad and teaching PHL), TEP falls under the responsibility of the Director of PTA in Switzerland.

Methodology

As previously mentioned, this chapter reports on two studies focused on describing the professional learning covered by the teacher education offers (TEO) proposed in the Teacher Education Programmes (TEP) of Teacher Education Centres (TEC) located in Portugal (Case 1) and of the Director of PTA in Switzerland (Case 2).

While Case 1 reports on an *external* evaluation study focused on five TEC of School Associations from the Central Region of Portugal involving a total of 35 schools and nearly 6000 teachers, Case 2 corresponds to an internal evaluation of one TEC located in Switzerland, whose action aimed at a total of 78 teachers, within the time frame under study.

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In both cases, content analysis of credited in-service TEP, as well as the answers to the evaluation questionnaires of the sessions was conducted. The corpus involves a total of 162 credited in-service TEO (Case 1 – 160 and Case 2 – 12). The TEP documentation was analysed according to the PK dimensions covered, the main educational aims underpinning the TEP, as well as the main methodology and strategy followed. In order to complement the characterisation of the TEP, the degree of satisfaction of the teachers who attended the TEP was also considered.

On what concerns the specificity of Case 2, is it is worth highlighting that the TEP plan for 2017 and 2018 contained 12 TEOs, six per year. However, the programme for 2018 only included three accredited TEOs. Therefore, only these were analysed, namely, a workshop, a two-day conference, and a seminar. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the TEP included an action-research project, in which teachers could voluntarily participate (Gonçalves, 2021).

Finally, in order to get a glimpse of the professional learning representations of the involved teachers, their global satisfaction considering the TEP was analysed.

Results and discussion

In order to access the professional learning experienced in Portuguese TEP, both in national and abroad contexts, the PK dimensions are mapped (what is valued?), as well as the global aims (why is it valued?). The main methodologies and strategies for approaching PK are also mapped (how is it implemented?).

On what concerns the PK dimensions covered by the TEO, the first result of content analysis points out to the richness of the TEP, as many of them cover more than one dimension, thus signalling their complexity. This is the reason why the sum of the professional dimensions is higher than the total number of analysed documents. Comparing Case 1 and Case 2 (Figure 17.2), and focusing on each dimension *per se*, the following aspects must be highlighted:

- Supervision knowledge: not covered at all in Case 2 and covered, even though with a reduced expression in Case 1;
- Knowledge of learners: covered in both cases, but with a much higher expression in Case 2 (25.0%), than in Case 1 (3.7%).

Focusing on the systemic perspective of PK, all dimensions together clustered around declarative and procedural knowledge (Cf. Figure 17.1). However, it emerges a higher focus on the declarative knowledge axe than on the procedural knowledge axe, which may indicate the space given to teachers to actively intervene in the creation of a balanced articulation of both axes along the implementation of the TEO. In other words, it allows teachers to (re)construct

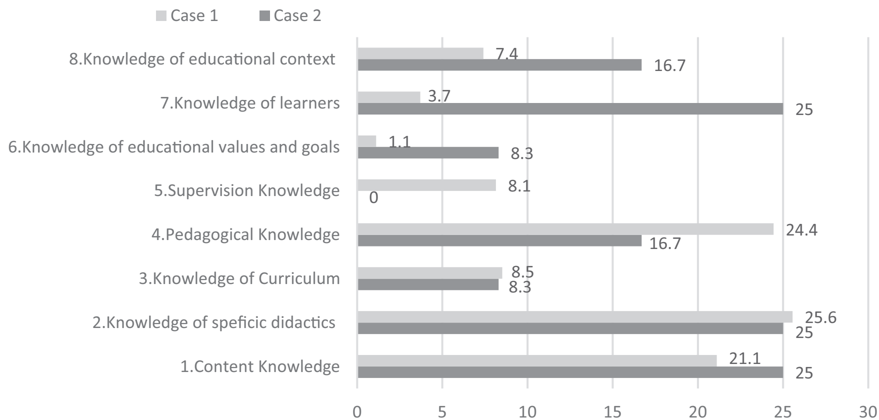

Figure 17.2 Professional knowledge dimensions of CTA.

their own PK in the interplay of the different dimensions, according to their special needs and prior PK and experiences.

The analysis further indicates that the design of each TEO reveals awareness of the complexity of PK development, as it is a process that always involves more than one dimension, even if a specific topic, content, or dimension is on the foreground (King, 2014, about the difficulty of evaluating professional teaching development).

Looking at the results, as a whole, in both cases there is a kind of "void" as far as the *supervisive knowledge* and *knowledge of educational values and goals* are concerned. This may refer to a lack of attention towards professional identity, the attention dedicated to the teacher as an individual, and to the work s/he does to accomplish and succeed in the mission of educating children and youngsters as autonomous, critical, and responsible citizens, in other words, in attaining the values and goals of education. Furthermore, this "void" may relate to an underdeveloped competence in professional learning self-evaluation, which would allow teachers to regulate and monitor their teaching practice.

When analysing the results of Case 2, it must be said that the TEP is aimed at a specific context and a specific and limited group of teachers. Therefore, not surprisingly the *knowledge of learners* and *Knowledge of educational context* display high values, as in this particular context, these dimensions acquire a special importance, because classes are attended by students on a voluntary basis and this is an issue which requires systematic attention.

Also striking is the difference in *pedagogical knowledge dimension* between Cases 1 and 2 and this may be again context related, as in Case 2 teachers teach PHL, a recent field of pedagogical knowledge within language education still emerging and under construction, mainly based on knowledge of context and heritage language learners' characteristics.

In order to assess why these professional dimensions are being covered by the TEP, the global aims were analysed as mentioned above. Aligned with the

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dimensions of PK, more than one dimension is present in each analysed TEP. Again, the complexity and richness emerge, reflecting the need to create opportunities and spaces for professional learning experiences, in order to allow CPD to unfold to the fullest. Focusing on each dimension, in both cases, the scientific-technical dimensions stand out (being in Case 2 all the TEP). Within Case 1 the scientific-technical dimension is present in 82.2%, the ethical-political in 30.1% and the aesthetic dimension in 8%.

This predominance of the scientific-technical dimensions, clustering on the declarative axe of the PK (content knowledge and specific didactic knowledge), may be connected to two different concerns: on the one hand, the concern teachers always express to address and link TEO directly to practice and, on the other hand, the concern with practice renewal, being knowledge of specific didactic addressed. And, taking into account Case 2, this concern is even more striking as teachers deal with a very specific emerging didactic knowledge (Heritage Language Teaching), as referred above, which recently started to be addressed to (Gonçalves & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020).

These main concerns could help to understand the scarce presence of the ethical-political dimension and the absence of the aesthetic dimension within TEP. However, they seem to be aligned with the results of the knowledge of educational values and goals dimension. This result may express the fact that TEP addresses short-term effects in practice and that they are not designed under a long-term strategy, which considers and aims at a (re)construction of beliefs and representations. Teachers should also reflect on their commitment to attain "through education the promotion of the common good and the improvement of society" (Juuti et al., 2021; https://teds.web.ua.pt/).

On what concerns teacher education processes involved in TEP, within Case 1 two main methodologies are offered with a duration that varies from 25 to 50 hours, namely courses (the majority being 25 hours), and workshops (the majority being 50 hours). Courses tend to be the most adopted modality, since it allows them to be attended by a higher number of teachers, as it was explained by the Directors of the Centres (Andrade et al., 2020). Within Case 2, besides workshops, a two-day conference, as well as seminars were organised. Within these broad approaches of both cases, the diversity of adopted strategies stands out. A total of eight different strategies were identified, being some of individual and others of collaborative nature (Figure 17.3). The minimum of adopted strategies in the TEP was three and the maximum seven.

Globally, the theoretical input by the teacher educator stands out, being the most adopted strategy in Case 1 (82.5%) and also in Case 2, along with consulting information (both strategies 25%). The promotion of teacher reflection is also a common ingredient in both cases under study. However, while in Case 1 collaborative reflections overcome individual reflections (73.8% vs. 31.3%), in Case 2, it is the other way around (8.3% vs. 25.0%). Striking in both cases is also the reduced presence of investigation (9.4% in Case 1 and 8.3% in Case 2). These results may indicate the concern already identified with short-term

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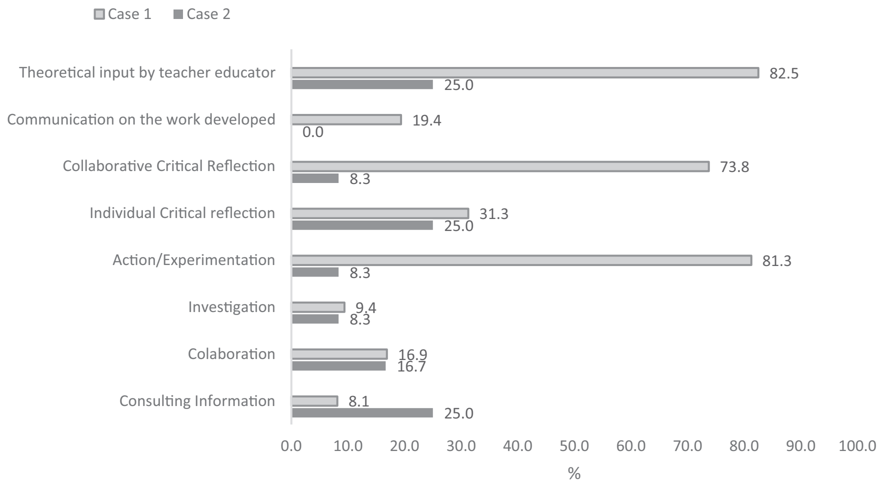

Figure 17.3 Teacher Education processes and assessment: adopted strategies.

results in practice, addressing teachers' needs without really acknowledging and making it clear to teachers that CPD is a long-term endeavour, and it is directly linked with the degree of reflection and innovation teachers are able to produce about their own practices. Action-research projects take time, need monitoring, and need to involve both individual and collaborative work and reflection processes, which are not present in "courses" or "workshops", the most offered modalities of TEO. It is also to question if TEC has the staff and the skills to provide for TEO which imply action-research projects, designed with the teachers and monitored by teacher educators.

Focusing on the specificity of the cases under analysis, in Case 1 the less present strategy is "consulting information" (8.1%) while with Case 2 collaborative critical reflection and action experimentation are scarce (both with 8.3%) and Communication on the work developed is not present at all. To understand these results, it is important to highlight that in Case 2 teachers are scattered all over the country and the TEO mostly concentrates on one whole day, leaving little time to dedicate to these above-mentioned strategies. However, when looking at the percentage of attendance of the TEO (workshop: 83.3%; two-day conference: 92.3%; seminar 28.2%) it may be read as a preference for modalities which include the teachers' interaction covered by those strategies. In this context, it is important to mention that during the academic year 2017–2018 53.84% of the teaching staff voluntarily engaged in a non-accredited action-research project to foster collaborative work and innovative practices (Gonçalves, 2021).

Finally, in order to access, even in a limited way, the teachers' opinion and/or representation about the in-service TEO attended by them, the responses to the evaluation questionnaires applied by the teaching centres were considered. In Case 1, teachers evaluate the implementation of the TEP by positioning

themselves considering specific statements using a four-item Likert scale, which varies from *totally disagree* to *totally agree*. According to the analysed responses, teachers of Case 1 seem to be satisfied regarding the interpersonal relationships established during the TEP, since 91.80% *totally agree* and 7.73% *agree* that they are good. Moreover, it is worth to highlight that 72.30% of the respondents totally agree with the adequacy of the facilities, equipment, and materials to the demands of the TEP. As a less-positive aspect, emerges the organisation and functioning of the TEP. More than a quarter of the teachers (35.90%) "disagree" or "totally disagree" with the statement that the TEO was adjusted to the stated objectives and contents.

Within Case 2, 5 aspects were considered for the level of teachers' satisfaction, namely quality of their engagement, organisation and logistics, teacher educator's performance, strategies, and formal aspects of the TEP. These were rated using a five-item Likert scale, 1 being considered *very bad* and 5 *excellent*. According to the analysed answers, participants considered all aspects mostly "excellent" and "good" (quality of participants' engagement *excellent* 61.53%, organisation and logistics *excellent* 68.82%, teacher educator's performance *excellent* 64.42%, strategies *excellent* 53.73%, and formal aspects of the TEO *excellent* 44.57% and *good* 31.84%).

Though teachers expressed being satisfied with the attended TEO, we acknowledge the difficulty in evaluating teacher CPD and its impact on professional learning, student outcomes and school improvement, stressing "the importance of systematically exploring the depth and quality of use and understanding of new and improved knowledge and skills" (King, 2014, p. 107). These are important aspects for the sustainability of innovative teaching practices.

Final considerations

The present chapter intended to map the professional learning of Portuguese in-service teacher education in distinct, but interconnected contexts, namely two teacher centres located in different macro-contexts (Portugal and Switzerland). In order to achieve this, the TEP were analysed and the evaluation questionnaires on the TEP were consulted. While the analytical steps were the same in both cases, the relationships within the object of study are distinctive: Case 1 is mostly a description from the outside (external evaluation), while Case 2 is mostly an internal look. Within this deliberate interplay of perspectives (inside and outside) it was aimed to identify what is most valued and why by the Portuguese TEP, and also what brings closer and what differentiates Case 1 from Case 2, in order to make specific recommendations for Portuguese in-service teacher education. This reflective exercise of combining views from inside and outside will open the possibility to support TEO that more satisfactorily respond to the needs and expectations of those who attend them, and also consider the recommendations made by publications on the field of teacher education.

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In fact, Case 2 allows an internal look at TEP, as it responsibly knows the specific context and teachers whom the TEO are addressed to and also has the possibility of planning other CPD spaces for teachers to engage in, as referred above, namely an action-research project (Gonçalves, 2021).

Being a teacher, CPD is a complex process and the analysed cases illustrate the complementarity between the singularity of each one, encompassing all the different dimensions of PK, suggesting different TEOs, different methodologies, using different types of work strategies, and different ways of evaluating professional learning.

To conclude, five recommendations could be made to the ones who are responsible to design and evaluate TEP:

- the need for a strategic vision (and management) of teacher CPD combining an external view – from the outside, of a team with broad knowledge of education – to an internal view, from the inside – of a team who knows the context and the teachers' profile, and can have a clearer perception of the professional needs, of the path to be done, of the best strategies to follow –, in order to achieve the mission and goals of a certain school context;
- the need to give more space to ethical-political and aesthetic dimensions of education, in order to construct more shared and diversified perspectives of education, with inside and outside views (national and international) about teaching PK (experiences, models of development, strategies, content).
- the need to include research, namely action-research developed in a collaborative way in TEP, in order to promote different ways of constructing teaching PK, namely, by consulting information, conducting action/experimentation, and developing collaborative critical reflection. These different types of strategies for professional learning should be more balanced;
- the need of having a stable pool of teacher educators with diversified profiles, whom teacher education centres can address to, when designing their TEP. These teacher educators, in interaction with teachers, must not only be able to design and implement TEO but also be able to monitor and evaluate them and share and discuss results with stakeholders, teachers, and teacher educators, in order to find other ways of promoting teaching PK;
- the need of having time is also a topic to pay attention to: i) time to design TEP over longer periods, with a clear trajectory towards the broader mission of education and their specific education goals; ii) time to implement and monitor TEP, in order to adjust them to the broader goals and to contexts, and iii) time to evaluate teaching CPD and to evaluate the results and discuss those results with the teachers, in order to become aware of the CPD trajectories recognising the value of the TEO they have attended to.

Finally, we think that the Portuguese system of in-service teacher education needs to rethink conditions to promote and reflect on teacher CPD, in order to create opportunities for the construction of diversified (declarative and

procedural knowledge) and contextualised PK, centred on the teachers, on the challenges raised by the school communities and by the mission and aims of education in our societies. As Fiona King writes in her study about evaluating the impact of teacher CPD, we also think that the Portuguese system would profit much in "helping teachers and schools fulfil the need for CPD to be adequately evaluated and to move from looking at teacher satisfaction to exploring impact on teacher practices, which in turn aim to enhance pupils' outcomes and school improvement" (King, 2014, p. 108).

Note

1 http://www.ccpfc.uminho.pt/

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18 Practitioner enquiry

Exploring method for understanding teacher learning

Kate Wall and Elaine Hall

Introduction – practitioner enquiry as one of the many forms of teacher professional learning

Practitioner enquiry is a cyclical model of research targeting professional learning. It has become increasingly popular both as a grassroots movement of professional development (Wyse, 2020) and as a mode of building or directing professional cultures by political, training, and management actors in education (Day, 2011; Peleman et al., 2018; and Mintrop et al., 2018). These personal and cultural aspects are sometimes complementary and sometimes in tension (Imants and Van der Wal, 2020 and Holligan, 2020), and we will not attempt to taxonomise versions of practitioner enquiry in different European contexts of training and governance. Rather we trust that readers will draw their own conclusions about the spaces for enquiry in their own contexts and, for the purposes of this chapter, we consider practitioner enquiry as one mode of professional learning that is subject to context, governance, and intent as any other, while arguably offering particular degrees of freedom and responsibility to the individual practitioner.

As Cordingley (2015, inter alia) has emphasised, the numerous forms of teacher professional learning have a wide variety of Aristotelian *accidents* while sharing certain *essences*. There are significant differences in the experience of learning specialist curriculum knowledge; of exploring overarching principles of pedagogy and incorporating the specifics of inclusion support or behaviour management into practice or of the mastery of technological aids to teaching and learning. Moreover, these learning experiences may be highly structured, centralised, and "rolled out"; they may be individually driven by teachers' curiosity; they may be single events of delivery or iterative journeys. However, the *essences* of professional learning are the ethical commitment to the learners and their experience; the professional identity of the teacher as someone with a commitment to maintaining fluid expertise as both a subject and process learner (Blomeke et al., 2022) and the important – yet often overlooked in learning design – role of synthesising learning through discussion, curious reflective practices, and integration (Osman and Warner, 2020).

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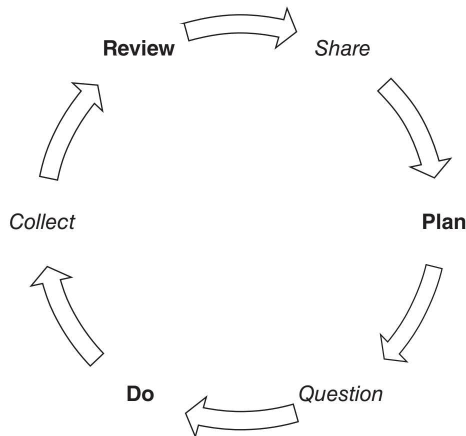

Figure 18.1 The cyclical model of enquiry.
(adapted from Hall and Wall 2019: 11)

The teacher engages in and with research (Figure 18.1) (Hall, 2009; Cordingley, 2013) to deepen the understanding of their practice. Each cycle has a structure loosely aligned to the plan-do-review process used for teaching more broadly, but with the added requirement for the "do" element to include some systematic evidence collection and the "review" element to be made public (Baumfield et al., 2012). This aligns with Stenhouse's (1981) definition of quality teacher research as "systematic enquiry made public"; although how systematic and how public is a matter of researcher choice in the internal and external debate about quality.

Starting with key questions the teacher-researcher prioritises an issue of importance to them which, given the professional and ethical bent of this praxis, is also strongly related to learner needs in their context, relevance, and usefulness being fundamental criteria (Timperley, 2008). Our observations suggest that these questions are likely to fall into two broad categories of "what's going on" and "what happens if" (Hall and Wall, 2019). "What happens if" questions are often associated with more quasi-experimental techniques and tend to be centred on making a change, doing an intervention, and exploring the impact, falling recognisably in the "action research", and "small scale trial" paradigms. There is a tendency for these questions to be more common across practitioner enquiry projects due to prevailing cultures and language of education and education research (Wall, 2017). Practitioner enquirers often start with "what happens if" and it is a good way to build up procedural autonomy in using research language and tools and introduce the new identities and roles of researchers to colleagues and learners. The reflective element of practitioner enquiry means that this kind of question produces (at least) two kinds of evidence: directly relating to evidence for/against the hypothesis and, perhaps more significantly for the professional enquiry, evidence relating to the

expression and scope of the hypothesis. The practitioner enquirer finds out whether the anticipated consequences of the "if I" occur and also whether she has framed the question satisfactorily, which mostly, reality and practice being what they are, she has not or not to her satisfaction (Knorr-Cetina, 2001).

This is where the "what's going on" questions can be seen – not just as equally important, whereby the teacher-researcher takes a step back and finds out a bit more about the context in which the problem is nested but complementary to the "what happens if I" questions. The "what's going on" research seeks to understand the complex relationships and individual experiences of learning spaces, drawing on paradigmatic approaches that privilege rich, deep data: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and participatory research. These more qualitative approaches have arguably less "science currency", both within the academy and in popular representations of research such that practitioner enquirers and their audiences can relegate this type of enquiry to a secondary status. However, we would argue that placing these approaches in opposition or competition is a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between them, the synergy of inquiry/enquiry which is at the core of professional learning (and education research). Rather than these two types of questions working in synergy, whereby the findings of a "what happens if" spark more questions and reveal greater areas of doubt and uncertainty, prompting a "what's going on" question which in turn gives a new insight on which a more targeted "what happens if" question can be explored. This process enables us to consider what we mean by success, who is included/excluded from that definition and how to ensure that our enquiries reflect our values and priorities. Our central tenet is that practitioner enquiry is cumulative and this complementary nature of enquiry cycles becomes more practicable and has a better fit with learning and practice.

Once a question has been identified, then evidence can be chosen to answer it. One of the key considerations of practitioner enquiry is a reflection on which kinds of evidence are privileged and which are ignored (deliberately or as part of a culture): this relates to hierarchies in our understanding of "proper" science and to the cultural markers of our learning spaces and broader societies. As is probably already evident, we are instinctively pluralist and consider that we live in a mixed-methods universe. Ensuring there is a clear line of enquiry between the question and the evidence is important, but that line does not exist until it is constructed by the enquirer; so, it is vital that this is a conscious and recursive act. As meta-analysis and its critiques remind us, so much of what we rely on as markers in education are in fact "proxy indicators" (Hattie and Yates, 2013) of success, linked to race, class, and gender rather than actual learning or progress. However, advantageously, the teacher-researcher embedded within the setting has an embarrassment of riches: a broader range of evidence can be considered and multiple cycles can be enacted.

Teachers collect evidence all the time using the structural reporting of their context in combination with pedagogically appropriate techniques (Wall, 2019). Using this naturally occurring data makes the enquiry more manageable

but it requires the teacher to see their practice-generated information as ***data***. Dominant research discourse can mean that certain research techniques are seen as the "proper" way to collect evidence, but questionnaires and interviews may not have a good fit with the maturity of learners in the setting under scrutiny. It can also mean the teacher-researcher needs to find time outside of normal teaching and learning for these research activities to be undertaken. This is difficult in a busy job like teaching. So, creative definitions of evidence (Kara, 2015) can be useful in facilitating permission to be flexible. It is essential for the teacher-researcher to tap into their normal pedagogic repertoire of techniques, with assessment strategies (formative and summative; formal and informal) being a particularly rich category of evidence sources. The more evidence for answering practitioner enquiry questions is embedded in the context the more authentic the potential answers to enquiry questions become and this connectedness into real-life practice means that the outcomes, the learning arising, are more likely to be useful.

Within the practice of practitioner enquiry two predominant traditions can be seen: project and stance (Wall, 2017). Both emphasise the cyclical nature of enquiry highlighted above and can be considered as a way into the activity of practitioner enquiry. However, in order to understand the effects of project/stance we need a third element: intent (Baumfield, Hall, and Wall, 2012). The initiating agent – whether government, partner organisation, school, management, or individual – aligns (consciously or not) with the practitioner enquiry as a project or stance, privileging the immediacy of the presenting problem (project) or the ongoing personal/organisational learning (stance). While it is not intended to place one as better than the other, they can feel quite different to the participant and have different affordances and constraints. Practitioner enquiry by project tends to be instigated by a strategic group, an outside agency or programme. As a result, the research focus (e.g. outdoor learning or, language learning) can be pre-determined by the powerful which can make it difficult for the individual to tie into their own priorities. The model of research tends to be more traditional and aligned with the way research is taught in the university, with the privileging of certain kinds of knowledge and evidence and the exclusion of anything not already recognised. This "project" kind of practitioner enquiry often has a finite length ending with a celebratory public sharing of the outcome, which makes it attractive, manageable, and a great way to engage in research and build confidence. Simultaneously, however, this can mean that once the sharing has concluded, then the practitioner enquiry is seen to be finished and a "been there, done that" attitude can prevail.

With enquiry as a stance, the specific research project is less important since the dominant agenda is the ongoing professional learning in practice (Schön, 1987) over multiple projects in dialogue with each other. Where there are multiple projects, uniformity, and central control become less important, the practitioners can have (some) ownership of their enquiries, creatively engage with the gathering of evidence, and reflect against internal personal success criteria as well as the external. It is epistemologically orientated: part of the

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professional world view of the practitioner (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009) and her ongoing learning and development as supported by cumulative cycles of enquiry. Without the security of the "project" however, there can be a disconnect to strategic organisation or community where learning can be shared. This can make practitioner enquiry by stance quite a lonely activity and as a result can mean dissonance between the ongoing learning and the system in which it is located.

To reconcile these different approaches to enquiry and to facilitate their co-existence then the community to which the individual belongs and with whom they share their ongoing learning, whether through project or stance, is essential. Practitioner enquiry as a solitary activity can be problematic and isolating and so a productive, inclusive culture of practitioner enquiry can help ensure productive mingling of those working in different ways. To achieve this, we have suggested four principles of a practitioner enquiry community (Hall and Wall, 2019; Wall and Hall, 2017):

- autonomy (to own the process and ensure the outcomes are addressing questions of need within participants' practice);
- dialogue (the commitment to make public the process and the outcomes undertaken as part of a community of learners);
- disturbance (the willingness to challenge and to be challenged by your own process and outcomes as well as others'); and
- connected (how well the process and the outcomes connect into practice).

All four of these principles emphasise the process as (at least) equivalent to the outcome of enquiry. Tidy narratives retrofitted to research serve no one: they mask moments of learning and exclude new researchers who cannot see their mistakes and doubts in the work of others. Sharing at only the end point encourages this shiny "no problem" orientation, whereas sharing as an integral part of the process at all stages encourages researchers to embrace professional learning about research and about pedagogy as complex and full of ups and downs. The community needs to be supportive of teacher voice and create inclusive spaces where individuals can be tentative and speculative as they make sense of different aspects of their enquiry (Wall, 2021). For this to happen, senior and experienced figures need to "show their working", crossings out and coffee stains not redacted. We all need to put our ideas and our status as experts in harm's way or we have stopped participating in enquiry learning, our expertise will ossify, and we are asking of practitioners in the field something we no longer ask of ourselves. The community around the practitioner enquiry therefore becomes as important as the process undertaken.

Within such a community then there are multiple, parallel learning trajectories that are useful to consider as influenced by practitioner enquiry (Figure 18.2). The teacher-researcher will likely end up thinking about and being informed by complex, complementary learnings, including the thing we are interested in (the classroom practice), and the learners' experience of learning in our context

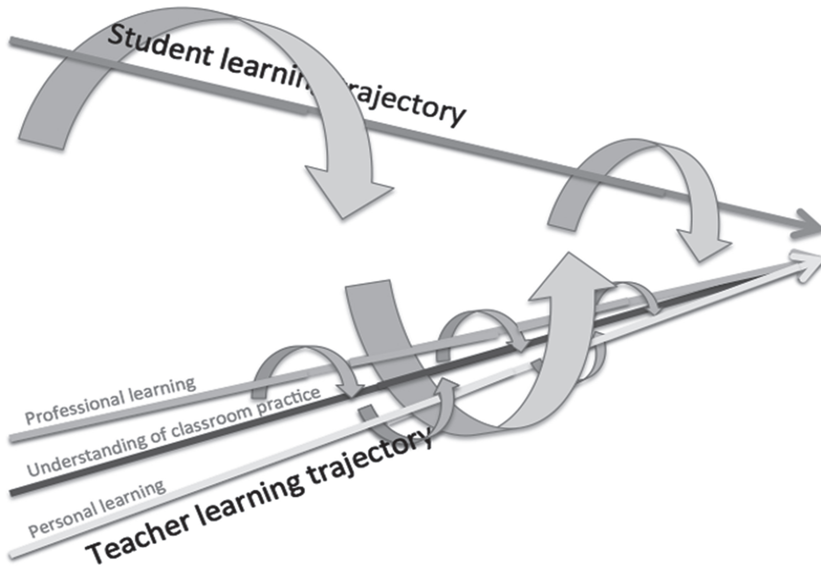

Figure 18.2 Catalytic tools for learning tighten the links across the different dimensions of teacher learning and between student and teacher learning trajectories.

(progression, achievement, and affective elements). However, it will also involve learning about ourselves, as learners (in regards to professional progression, achievement, and affective elements) and learning about the research process and outcomes including how we strategically find out answers to our questions, share them effectively and why we do (or do not) feel confident in our own and others' research practices. This ecology (Kemmis, 2012) of learning and influence is dynamic and inter-related, with learning in one aspect informing and impacting about learning in other areas. We would suggest that greater the awareness of these different trajectories and how different elements of the ecology might interact brings about tighter, catalytic feedback loops between the different elements. Frequent instances of feedback tend to lead to greater empathy and identification in learning space, to dismantle unhelpful binaries (us/them; teacher/learner) and this leads us to suggest there is a mirror effect in the practice of enquiry that is productive to make explicit.

Mirror effect

The enquiry cycles and their emphasis on reflection (what happened) and strategic action (what to do next) can be seen to encourage teacher-researchers to be metacognitive in relation to their practice: to think about their thinking (Flavell, 1979). Indeed, in Moseley et al.'s (2005) framework for thinking, the metacognitive realm is called *reflective and strategic thinking* and this has a neat fit with the way that we are talking about practitioner enquiry process. In the literature, metacognition is mostly considered in regard to children's

learning where there is strong agreement around potential impact on outcomes (Hattie, 2008, Higgins et al., 2016), however, the relevance of the concept for teacher's learning is becoming more influential, whether teacher's knowledge about the concept (Wilson and Bai, 2010), how it enables them to act as learning role models for children (Zepeda et al., 2019) or, and this is more emergent, whether it can be considered as a methodology for professional learning (Portilho and Medina, 2016). We believe that the way cycles of enquiry support professional learning mirrors effective metacognitive learning: in looking back at previous work without defensiveness or paralysing shame; being reflective about success and failure both as outcomes and as ideas to be challenged; taking informed action with the primary goal of learning more in a continuous process rather than a closed loop of problem solving; and being strategic by setting priorities that are manageable for everyone and in line with values. All these facilitate a liminal space where there is a greater likelihood of a metacognitive turn for the teacher and as the feedback loops between their own learning and the learners tightens. We see a mirror effect that is mutually reinforcing.

This connection, between learners' and teacher's metacognition when considered within a practitioner enquiry frame, enhances the parallels and as a result is catalytic of the applied nature of the research process as well as enhancing the likely usefulness of the process and outcomes (Wall and Hall, 2016). As awareness of these parallels is shared and reinforced within practitioner enquiry communities then this mirror effect can be seen to be repeated in many ways. For learners to be metacognitive then it helps for teachers to be metacognitive; for learners to have a voice then it helps if teachers feel they have a voice; when teachers are active enquirers then they tend to encourage active enquiry in their pedagogic practice; teachers who conceive of themselves as activists are likely to encourage similar dispositions in their learners, and so on.

This mirror effect adds a level of complexity to practitioner enquiry practice. Being aware of the multiple parallels and how they are connected can be challenging to keep track of and can lead to an organic fast-paced affirmative spiral of radical change. This can be particularly powerful when the professional learning community builds capacity through a conscious sharing and explicit engagement with the mirror effect. This is no small thing as it leads to a resilience in the professional body and a multifaceted, often political engagement with pedagogy and its development for all learners. Key here then is how we think about the quality of the process behind the change to ensure there is accountability, authenticity, and clarity in the decisions being made.

Thinking about quality

When we begin to discuss research quality, practitioners are understandably concerned that, as researchers, they are not sufficiently specialist to produce evidence that is robust enough, by which they seem to mean *veridical*, which

produces the strongest kind of evidential support for a hypothesis (Kvernbekk, 2011, p. 519). In this construction, the evidence must be objective and the hypothesis true, a final and conclusive position which ought to be daunting to everyone – rather, Kvernbekk argues, we should focus on *potential* evidence, where evidence remains objective but the hypothesis remains potentially falsifiable, as new evidence comes in. To assuage this discomfort and operationalise this fallibilistic position, therefore, practitioner enquiry makes use of the concept of "warrantable assertibility" (Dewey, 1938). Each piece of evidence is treated as part of a process of argumentation (Toulmin, 2003) and professional learning (Hall and Wall, 2019) that produces not a "final truth" but something that is recognised by the community as justification for action (or inaction) in an identified site of enquiry. In practitioner enquiry potential evidence is used to endorse action, without shutting down discourse; to enable variation in practice justified by local conditions; to encourage caution when "rollout" is mandated.

Discussions about quality in the research literature are useful and we do not want to dismiss them or discourage the teacher-researcher from incorporating them as they consider their approach. It is simultaneously important and difficult for the practitioner to juxtapose their enquiry process against the research literature. The literature is huge, with the onus on the practitioner to search to find the terms that fit with the dynamic we've outlined so far (Lewthwaite and Nind, 2016), so we recommend some of the work that has shaped our thinking and allowed us to explain and defend our stance. It is particularly important to us that we do not have a hard boundary between "research standards" and "professional standards" or indeed the standards that we use to make important decisions in our daily lives. Reflecting on the kinds of evidence we choose (and reject) when selecting a new bed enables our natural evidentiary preferences to themselves become a site of enquiry. This produces space to tweak the combination of different kinds of evidence chosen – more reviews or more price comparisons or more information about sustainable materials? – to produce enough warrant to make that decision. This analogy is not intended to make study of research intent, field decisions and quality considerations more everyday in the sense of less rigorous but to emphasise that the everyday patterns of our decision making are replicated in our research designs, so this pattern recognition is a way to break down assumptions about the underlying epistemologies of research praxis, particularly that they are in any way neutral.

Judgements of quality taken from a research perspective can feel a murky realm for practitioner researchers to navigate, particularly if they are setting unachievable benchmarks for adequacy. Yet in the practitioner or professional community, we come upon the same issue: evidence does not always come with the transparent account of the values, intents, and success criteria of the instigators. The "what works" and evidence-based policy field (e.g. Hattie, 2008; Biesta, 2010; Kvernbekk, 2013) gives some perspective on one way of framing quality in teaching and learning. Yet, "what works" is problematic for many: sometimes because of an over-reliance on certain kinds of

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research – positivist approaches and meta-analyses/systematic reviews – and sometimes because of the strong political and/or centralising influence, both of which tend to minimise the importance of context and relationships. Despite these issues of application, this field gives us useful vocabulary, since it encourages specificity when discussing impact (when, how much, to whom, with what degree of variation) which builds a foundation for talking about *confidence* in research results. While this is a term with very specific meaning in positivist and statistical studies, we can, in our mixed methods universe, translate the underlying concept of strength to practitioner enquiry reflection. How confident are you that the evidence answers your question, that the process and the evidence combine to find a solution that is strong enough to warrant action? This could be considered from a solely personal perspective (how useful are the answers to you for moving your practice forward), or from a more system wide, strategic lens (how useful are the answers to move this agenda forward, to scale up?). This is not to say of course that making these judgements on your own is unproblematic. Here, we return to our principle of dialogue (Wall and Hall, 2017), we have an ethical duty to think out loud, expose our inevitably somewhat flawed uncodified thinking within our collaborative community.

As this becomes more alien and confusing, we suggest turning around the direction of conceptual travel and returning to the expertise of the teacher. Teachers are assessing children's learning all the time (formally and informally; formatively and summatively), for many, progression in learning is what they are looking for within their enquiry, so rather than substituting all this useful knowledge that fits with the context and what fits with the learners within it, we should value the expertise that is already there. This has led us to suggest a practitioner enquiry orientated quality judgement that tries to do this: pedagogically appropriateness (Wall, 2019). By doing so we are encouraging the teacher-researcher to see their research as contextualised within teaching and learning, while also providing a mechanism with which to draw on their pedagogic expertise about the appropriateness of both evidence and approach to answering their questions about practice. This does not exclude or dismiss some of the other concerns about quality but enhances that consideration from a position of power – a teacher that is tapped into their experience about summative assessment is likely to understand concepts such as reliability and validity much more effectively than to meet those concepts uncontextualised (***Is** this a credible measure of Jo's reading ability? What does it capture, what does it miss? Is it fair and useful in helping Jo?).*

We return to a consideration of how useful you and colleagues find your outcomes (in terms of answering questions and developing practice: for professional learning). A more collaborative community-based approach to thinking about quality is strongly influenced by Stenhouse's (1981) conceptualisation of practitioner research. Of course, how useful depends on complex networks of politics, dissemination process and relevancy which are not necessarily objective (Kvernbekk, 2011). The absence of or limits to objectivity are

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not an obstacle but rather something that should be openly recognised and embraced, in line with the spirit of reflexivity within a community. This conception of quality, developed as part of a public forum, requires an ongoing dialogue with other professionals engaged in all forms of learning where language and understandings are developed as a shared understanding of practice and research in dynamic relationship. This can be especially impactful if sharing is not left to the end of the enquiry or learning process and therefore a scary summative ordeal, but rather is formative and inherent at all stages of the enquiry. If this reflexive thinking or, to continue the bridge into pedagogy, this metacognitive thinking about research (Wall and Hall, 2020), is considered as fundamental to the process, then not only is the individual enquirer required to talk through their thinking and listen to peer feedback at regularly points in the process, but the community also builds capacity and develops a shared, complex, and nuanced understanding of what quality means to them in their shared context.

Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, we have engaged with practitioner research in two ways. First, as a productive contribution to the repertoire of professional learning techniques, a modality for encouraging the cognitive, affective, and ongoing developments of professional fluid expertise. Second, – and we believe, dovetailing – as a methodologic lens contributing a useful and complementary perspective of education. We have argued for a bridge between pedagogy and methodology on which the practitioner enquirer is positioned. There is strength and value in this positioning for the individual, but also the respective fields if commonality in the connections can be found and enhanced. The issue of quality is key and we have suggested a number of productive avenues that can be used to develop a shared language of pedagogy and research. However, there are many examples where competing demands can pull against each other, and this can be hard to navigate, especially for a novice. The cycles of cumulative enquiry, their complementary commitment to review and action, and the parallels that can be drawn to both research and teaching practices recognise the expertise of the insight provided by the teacher-researcher as well as codify the processes and outcomes into social science more generally.

Resolving the issue – or rather, coming to a temporary pragmatic understanding – of how quality judgements are made is crucial in facilitating legitimacy as well as authenticity. The windows of opportunity can be found in both the research and professional communities and as such we have suggested several different kinds of quality criteria that can be used. The way that we talk about the enquiry process and the associations made and their alignment to pedagogy and methodology make the most of this positioning and hopefully accentuate the potential for a mirror effect in both thinking and practice. Finding a middle ground is possible, but a curiosity about language and intent is

needed to get beyond and behind the taken for granted. Indeed, when done thoughtfully in a critically friendly community, the connections between different learning trajectories, theory and practice, and practitioners and learners makes for a robust, complex engagement within an ecology of practice. We can and should use the quality and ethical criteria of teaching and research as mutually critical friends: if a practice from either tradition does not meet the standard, then this is an area of inquiry. The nuanced viewpoint that arises should be useful to practitioners and researchers alike, feeding a useful dialogue supportive of the learning in context and also, through a procedural autonomy in research language and concepts of quality, productive engagement with wider debates. There is no doubt that teachers are good at talking about *what* they do, but this practitioner enquiry intends to support them in articulating *why* they do it and then – because we are never finished learning – to launch them with into the next set of learning experiences.

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19 Conclusion

A reflection on the different routes towards innovation in teacher professional learning

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In the Foreword to this book, we raised a number of questions for contributing authors to consider regarding the policies and practices of professional learning and development in their countries. The diversity of responses illustrates that the terms "professional learning" and "professional development" are complex, contested concepts. The chapters in this book provide an indication of the multidimensional approaches to PLD, influenced by cultural interpretations of the nature of teaching as a profession and often driven by the political and ideological forces that reduce professional judgements to instrumental actions. To consider teacher professional learning in Europe in general terms may be counterproductive, since the disparities among different countries and different subsystems within these countries are significant. Every national system has its own history, social variables, and cultural implications that often emerge only marginally in a comparative analysis.

The chapters of this book deal with 14 different nations. The dimensions of some of them are substantial (for example, Germany has around 83 million inhabitants), while others are smaller (Wales has just over 3 million). Every one of them shows a long and complex pedagogical history together with particular policies in teacher PLD, but in bigger countries, this tradition can have a heavier weight, resulting in some cases in stronger inertia towards change.

We are aware of these difficulties, and for this reason, we think it important to define a direction for our own reflection. It is possible to see the development of professional learning policy and practice as a series of steps or stages that can be applied at the individual, institutional, regional, and national levels. In its simplest form, at the national/system level, we see a series of five stages (Figure 19.1). In the first stage, professional learning is uncoordinated. Educators learn in ways that best suit them. There is little evaluation or formal provision. Support is fortuitous rather than planned, and resource provision is rare. Although education may be a priority at the national level, teacher professional learning is not.

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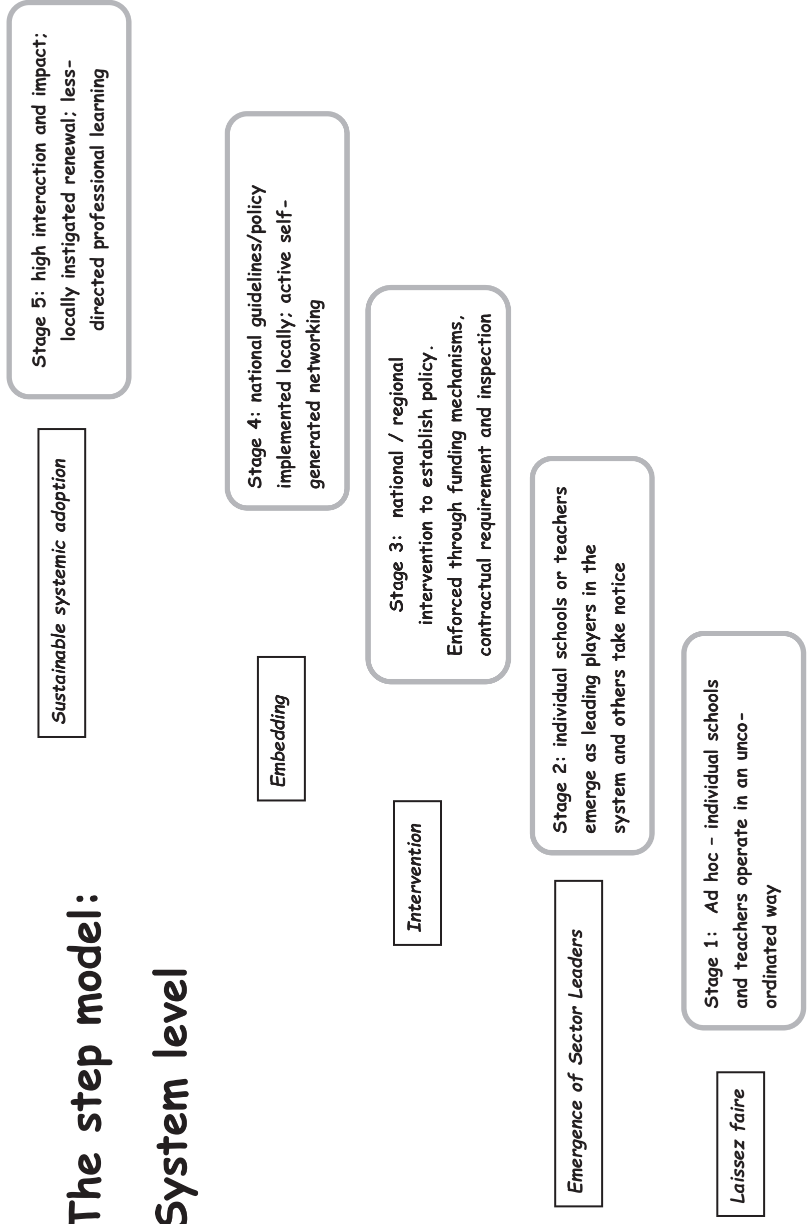

Figure 19.1 The step model: system level.

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In stage two, individual schools or teachers emerge as leading players in the system and others take notice. These become sector leaders, but, as a whole, these examples of excellent practice are islands in the national system, and there is little equity of opportunity to engage in professional learning. In stage three, at the system level, there is greater awareness of the importance of professional learning, and this results in national or regional intervention to establish policy which may be enforced through funding mechanisms, contractual requirement, and inspection. Stage four sees professional learning practice becoming embedded locally across the system. Leaders are familiar with the ways in which professional learning impacts on pedagogy and student learning and draw on research findings to inform their practice and that of their colleagues. The school becomes ready to address change. All educators are able to access mentoring support and to become mentors themselves. The fifth stage is one of sustainable systemic adoption. There is high interaction and impact and locally instigated renewal. Significantly, professional learning is less directed and oriented more towards individuals as professionals. Professional educators see learning as their own responsibility and leaders support them in achieving their goals. All partners in the professional learning community engage and interact close to practice.

All models may be accused of oversimplifying highly complex situations, and this is no exception. However, in classifying the accounts of the national systems within Europe, it is possible to identify groups of countries (as indicated in Chapters 2 and 3) and characteristics which align with positions outlined in each of these steps.

A number of general tendencies emerge from the national perspectives provided in this book. Our analysis is based on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Some national systems choose to take a radical approach to PLD. Finland, Scotland, Estonia, and Wales are at present following an innovative route. Usually, they show a human/ecological educational paradigm together with a professional learning and development approach to teacher PL. The sharing and negotiation of aims and practices between the various actors (teachers, school, state, and unions) appear also to be a common feature of these systems, together with an orientation towards lifelong and lifewide learning. It seems that in these cases, innovation is part of the systems as a strategic drive.

In Finland, for instance, the issue of PL was and is the object of extended discussions and reflections based on research findings and is actually conceived as part of a lifelong learning process. Teachers play an active role, expressing their leadership in self-managing their learning processes and their outcomes within a reference framework. Equity, good quality of education, and a decentralised school system are all factors that accompany a strong orientation towards innovation of the whole educational system and, in particular, of teacher PL. Even if in Finland, teacher PL is well-organized, the presence of mentors in schools could be improved, and the recent cuts in funding and the need to improve quality management are emerging concerns.

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Teacher PL in Estonia also shows some interesting features. The policies enacted in this country aim at creating a learning society through the development of learning organisations, learning communities, and lifelong learning citizens. Teacher PLD happens inside this context and has the features of a broad educational process that cannot be simply reduced to training. Estonia was able to combine the valuable elements inherited from the previous Soviet period with innovative views coming from current educational research. A problem to be solved by the Estonian educational system is how to maintain the good level of its teacher PLD in a situation where more than 50% of teachers are aged 50+ and there is an insufficient number of younger ones to replace retiring teachers. Other aspects can be improved, like classroom management, support for students with special needs, as well as skills in coping with bullying.

In Scotland, during recent years, there has been an evolution from the concept of "teacher training" to "career-long professional learning" (CLPL), based on the evidence that teacher professional learning cannot be reduced simply to the implementation of pre-defined policies but should be a key element in transformative change processes. This approach challenges the idea that the development of teacher professionalism happens through the mere replication of best practices. Particular attention is reserved for the use of online professional learning; integrating various forms of PL through critical approaches is a main objective of the Scottish educational system. Purposeful teacher professional collaboration is the result of long-term processes, requiring changes in school expectations and culture, and the development of professional learning communities is one of the key elements in the path that Scotland has undertaken. Combining this kind of approach with the existing, more individually oriented practices will be one of the more stimulating challenges for Scottish CLPL. Moreover, the influence of teachers on PL can be improved, and both time and economic resources could be enhanced.

In Wales, there is a clear subdivision of responsibilities between state, regional bodies, and schools. One of the main issues in a small, but quite diversified country is how to guarantee the due flexibility to the system, while simultaneously avoiding strict standardisation or excessive looseness, in particular relating to equity. At present, teacher PL is conceived as a form of collaboration and partnership between the various actors in the system, where teachers can take responsibility and lead their professional development. Clearly, to be achieved, these objectives need to become daily practice in the classroom. At present, there is the need to improve the differentiation and the complementarity of the regional consortia in particular and, whenever possible, inter-school collaboration. The new "National Entitlement" (an approach to sustaining teachers in their professional learning and development) will play a big part here if it can be enacted consistently at school and teacher levels.

While this first group of nations is transforming their approaches to professional learning, a second group is beginning to generate change. The route is not completely clear, but some evidence shows the emergency of a more defined path. In this group, we can find Denmark, Flanders, and Portugal.

In Denmark, major reform took place in 2014 which established a framework for primary and lower secondary schools. Its main points were the development of sustainable and equitable student learning, teacher professionalism, and well-being in school. Various aspects of the reform were the object of evaluation. Municipalities and schools started working on competence development, most of them collaborating with the Danish university colleges. The results coming from the evaluations are somewhat disappointing, since there is no correlation between the introduced activities and students' performance. As stated in the chapter, it can be hypothesised that the prevailing linear top-down approach of the reform can have an important role in this outcome. In fact, as argued also for other situations, PLD should result from emerging processes, possibly inside a human/ecological paradigm.

The Flemish part of Belgium enjoys an autonomous educational system, similar to the French- and the German-speaking areas of this country. However, aspects such as the age of beginning and the end of compulsory education, the minimum requirements for graduation, and the retirement regulations for education personnel are determined nationally. The Flemish system is strongly characterised by school autonomy. School boards exert their control over a wide range of aspects, such as timetables and teaching methods. There are several inputs for PLD from schools and support from pedagogical guidance services. However, quality control is organised by the inspectorate and the government. One of the important aspects resulting from the Flemish chapter is the fact that teachers' collaboration within workgroups or communities of practice is far from optimal. Some recent projects show that it is possible to improve teacher networking by fostering informal collaboration during the induction phase and through the development of professional learning communities. The aspect of socialisation between teachers is an issue deserving further inquiry as it is in other countries.

In the Portuguese educational system, CPD is identified as a priority. In-service training is defined as both a right and a duty for teachers. As stated in Chapter 17 of this book, the Portuguese school system should operate to create more contextualised opportunities of teacher education, centred on teachers' needs, and on the challenges that grow up from school communities. The state has recently made a widespread investment in teacher education, and 255 formative institutions (including academic, school, and teacher associations) have been accredited. Further inquiries on this process could help in gaining a better understanding on how multilevel forms of teacher professional learning can be effective (or not). Moreover, other aspects stressed in the conclusions of the chapter appear to be important for the evolution of teacher PLD in Portugal: combining inside and outside views, considering ethical and aesthetic aspects, widespread use of action-research, having a stable pool of teacher educators with diversified profiles and expertise, medium- to long-term perspectives. All these aspects could be further investigated, in the framework of changes happening in teacher PLD in Portugal.

The third group of countries is beginning to move towards more consistent support for PLD. There is discussion on the direction to take, but there are still issues that prevent policy and practice from becoming fully and consistently embedded. This group of countries includes the Republic of Ireland, England, Germany, Romania, and Northern Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland (RoI) has developed a framework named Cosán (pathway). It perceives teachers as learners and fosters the centrality of PL in teacher professionalism. In 2011, the Teacher Council issued the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*, inspired by a lifelong and lifewide learning vision. In the RoI, PLD is mainly centrally organised, taking school and teacher needs only partly into account. In 2021, a strategic approach to enacting Cosán began, including a series of short- and medium-term targets to be achieved in collaboration with a range of education stakeholders. Challenges facing the RoI include the lack of incentive for teachers to participate in PLD activities and the extent to which engagement in PLD should be a contractual requirement. This question remains of relevance for all the national systems.

Like Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, England has its own education system. The English system is extremely complex, partly due to political and ideological interventions at the national level during recent decades. Currently, the system has areas (mainly with managerial functions) where practice inspired by neoliberal principles is prevailing, combined with domains (principally linked to curriculum and teaching) where the state exerts its firm control through the inspection agency Ofsted. In the English school system, performance is a mantra, even if (or possibly because) actual PISA results are not entirely satisfying. In this context, teachers are considered key players, and therefore great importance is accorded to teacher PL, though paradoxically, entry to the profession is becoming significantly easier in recent years. In the spaces created by the present freedom-oriented policies, some schools have been able to form professional learning communities or professional learning networks, where interesting innovation and change are practised. It could perhaps be argued that current English educational policies – in particular, those relating to the adoption of a "golden thread" to teacher professional development – provide an opportunity for teachers at the local level to create professional learning communities and research hubs based on the practice of action-research. However, this is by no means embedded consistently across the system.

Germany is a federal entity where each state (Land) has its own educational policy. However, even if differentiated between themselves, the basic features of the school systems and of teacher education are common between all the *Länder*. The management of the school system in every one of them (and by consequence of teacher PLD) is centralised and hierarchical. Teacher education is distributed on three stages: initial education, the professional introduction to teaching, and continuous professional development. The main attention and resources are reserved for the first two phases. Even if professional

development is a requirement for German teachers, how this is performed is not well defined. In Germany, it is difficult to get a national picture of teacher PLD, but recent research has improved the knowledge of this aspect. It is clear that there is a gap between the activities performed autonomously and informally by teachers and those proposed by the system or that more capable and motivated teachers join PLD activities more than teachers with a lower level of professionalism or motivation. Perhaps a more extended use of professional learning communities could help in solving these problems. In conclusion, the German school system (and therefore teacher PLD), even if hampered by a well-consolidated tradition, is starting to move towards more innovative forms of teacher professional learning, and research plays an important role in this process. Time will tell.

Since 1964, the Romanian education system has appeared to be under a strong influence from Europe, in particular, in terms of standardisation and teacher professional competence. Even if PLD is important for Romanian teachers, in particular for career progress, in recent years, teachers' participation rates have fallen. The Romanian school system is highly centralised and appears to work like a collection of organisations enjoying different levels of authority in decision-making processes. Basically, the changes are introduced in a top-down fashion, with a short-term perspective looking more to immediate results than to medium- or long-term objectives inside a sustainable framework. In this context, teacher professional learning is perceived as filling voids in teacher professional competencies, suggesting a need for a change of paradigm in Romanian teacher PLD, towards more lifelong and lifewide visions.

Northern Ireland is one of the three devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. Its school system and teacher PLD are both strongly influenced by its particular political context, where devolved government has been a continuous stop-and-go process, causing delays in the introduction of innovation. However, even with these difficult conditions, the orientation of teacher PLD is towards the development of reflective practitioners capable of being effective leaders. Most of the Northern Ireland schools are state or grant aided, and denominational (associated with the Catholic or Protestant religions). Moreover, Northern Ireland is one of the most socially segregated educational systems in the world, making networking and collaboration across sectors much more challenging. However, teacher initial education is provided by higher education institutions following similar programmes. A recent review has stressed that Northern Ireland teacher PLD should promote a culture of self-improvement and collaboration, fostering mentoring and creating career progression routes. The professional life of teachers is subdivided into four stages: initial preparation, induction, early professional development and continuing professional development, and collaborative practice and school improvement. One of the main problems in Northern Ireland is the gap between teacher professional learning intent and actual practice. One example is the implementation of the *Learning Leaders* reform which, despite a valid

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global theoretical framework, resulted in a practical failure, leading to the dissolution of the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland (GTCNI), author of the reform. At present, teacher PLD is left to the individual choice of teachers, who pay for participating in various courses offered by universities. There seems to be a clear need for innovative and more effective organisation of teacher PLD in Northern Ireland, overcoming particularities and conflicts that until today have slowed down whatever has been attempted.

Finally, there is a fourth group of countries seeking some decision on the direction to take. In this group, we find France and Italy, two countries characterised by a strong centralist institutional culture in education and teacher professional learning.

France has a long-standing tradition of state centralist management – a culture that in short could be defined as "Napoleonic" – and teacher PLD is a clear example of this. Alternative views on education are also present in the French school system, as testified, for instance, by the innovative Mapfen experience during the 1980s (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). Today, changing from a centralistic, institutional vision of education to a more systemic and human/ecological perspective implies – between other things – a change in the consideration and role of teachers, at present in-between professionals and functionaries (Ostinelli, 2009). Teachers need to become full-fledged professionals, but for achieving this status, a strong social contract is necessary, including a long initial and practice-oriented education, followed by appropriate induction, professional learning, and development processes, all inside schools that are true professional learning communities, in a medium- to long-term perspective of lifelong learning. The French approach to teacher PLD is slowly starting to orientate itself towards this direction, even if the strong cultural and structural inertia of the school system is hampering this process. In fact, the effectiveness of the present French practice of teacher PLD appears to be very low and far away from real teacher needs. However, this can be a strong stimulus towards change during the coming years.

The case of Italy is somewhat similar to France (at least for its centralist tradition), but in some aspects is very different. In fact, the Italian school system swings between central bureaucratic rigidity and absolute teaching freedom inside the classroom (Ostinelli and Crescentini, 2021). Not all the teachers have the appropriate initial teacher education (required only after 1998) and the working condition of various teachers is temporary, due to the lack of public concourses during recent years. This mix of bureaucracy, temporariness, low salaries – only to cite some factors – evidently exerts a negative influx on the development of teacher professionalism. In Italy, PLD is designated as CTE (continuing teacher education) and tries (in its present form through the Teacher Education National Plan, TENP) to combine state, school, and teacher needs. This approach, however, is still mainly top-down, asking schools and teachers to collaborate – if they agree to – in pre-defined ways, instead of trying to introduce some form of co-construction. Teachers' participation in the proposed activities is low and the rate of resignation is around 50%.

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Motivation for participating [resulting from the match between needs and corresponding goal-objects present in the environment (Atkinson, 1964)] appears generally low, indicating a mismatch between what is proposed by the ministry and what is actually needed. This fact is indirectly confirmed by a study of INDIRE, where 70.2% of Italian teachers state that "there are no incentives for participating in professional development" (INDIRE, 2019). Moreover, the Italian state strongly reduced the funding of TEMP in recent years. In sum, it appears that innovative trends in Italy are heavily impeded by structural and cultural conditions.

In conclusion, from what results from the previous chapters of this book, we can find some countries in the European panorama that are developing and introducing innovative approaches in teacher PLD (Finland, Scotland, Estonia, and Wales), performing activities more oriented towards PLD, inside human/ecological paradigms. Not so far from them, we find Denmark, Flanders, and Portugal, needing to introduce further changes to their teacher PL system. All these nations are rather small. From the opposite side, the heavyweights (France, Italy, and to some extent Germany) are facing difficulties in overcoming the cultural and structural inertia of their educational systems. Some change is starting to appear, but these innovative trends are still too insulated or too timid. In-between innovative and more traditionalist nations, we find a group of countries that have partially developed some kind of innovation, but still need to introduce more significant changes in their teacher PLD systems. This group includes Romania, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland. A particular case is England, where various changes in teacher PLD and the national education system were introduced during recent decades, with the aim of improving the performance of the system. Even if the complexity of this approach cannot be explained in a few lines, its main mechanical/standard-oriented focus is evident, even if some changes are starting to emerge at various points in the system and not all the schools share the neoliberal governmental policies.

Teacher professional learning is a complex but essential feature of education systems, and this book has tried to offer the reader a perspective on policy and practice in a group of European countries. The collected information can give a good background for future consideration of policy and practice, and there are opportunities for more research to be undertaken. Questions of relevance for all the countries include the incentives for participating in teacher professional learning and development (including leadership development) and how these may be aligned with the needs, conditions, and resources, or the issue of compulsoriness, in particular, the balance between prescription and option. Another important issue is how to balance and integrate in a lifewide-oriented organised approach what should be performed autonomously and informally by teachers (as professionals who take responsibility for their own learning).

One feature which, at the time of writing, authors have not had the opportunity to examine in depth, has been the impact of the COVID pandemic on pedagogy and professional learning. The pandemic, with its associated school

closures, changed practice and can be considered as one of the more evident examples of how unexpected changes can affect schools. It generated an urgent need to understand and implement alternative forms of teaching and learning using new technologies, and the individual and collective professionalism of teachers and their colleagues in schools was brought to the fore during this period.

In the same way that the pandemic did not respect national borders, it could be argued that approaches to professional learning should not be confined to, and defined by, national policies. This is stage five of the step model in Figure 19.1. Many education systems have evolved from educators engaging in transmissive forms of in-service training, evolving through more interactive and collaborative professional development and then to well-led, well-supported, and individually focused professional learning. With the universal resource of the Internet at their disposal, educators are not confined to formal professional development programmes provided locally. This global knowledge transcends borders. Professional learning communities can be international as well as local. All these issues deserve further investigation, and a follow-up of this present study would prove useful for a better and deeper understanding of the dynamics of contemporary teacher professional learning in Europe and beyond.

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