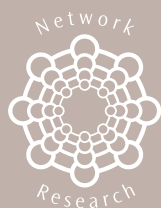


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Leading continuing professional development in school networks: adding value, securing impact





Leading continuing professional development in school networks: adding value, securing impact

Some key messages for network leaders from a collaborative enquiry into the challenges of leading effective continuing professional development (CPD) in networked contexts, led by the National College for School Leadership, the Teacher Development Agency and the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education.

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Introduction

A recent systematic review of the impact of networks for student learning, for teaching, for schools and for the communities they serve has shown that continuing professional development (CPD) is central to networks in two ways¹. First, CPD provides a way of drawing a large number of people into helping to achieve network goals. Second, it is a means of harnessing the benefits of greater access to specialists and a wide range of perspectives to the work of enhancing teaching and learning. At the same time, government departments and agencies are all promoting networks as a means of:

- counteracting the negative effects of competition
- enabling innovations that work to go to scale
- providing professional and collegial support and challenge within a self-directing and evaluating school system

At the time of writing, over half the schools in England are participating in networks endorsed and supported by national agencies.

This summary draws together and reflects on evidence about the leadership of CPD in networks. It explores the perspectives of the national agencies about the leadership of CPD in networks and its role in informing practice and policy. It starts with a question: how networked does CPD in networks have to be? This in turn suggests further key questions: is pooling resources to enable occasional joint INSET or joint conferences, all that is required of the network, with most CPD carrying on inside each school? Or is something more integrated needed?

All activity in networks is more complicated to organise and requires more consultation than activity within a single school. It demands longer timescales too. So these are important questions.

We hope that the identification of the core challenges, the underpinning issues and the responses identified here, will help you to find positive ways forward for your network or your policy initiative.

Five propositions

Evidence from research, interviews and discussions with policy makers and from investigations into network-based approaches to CPD help to identify five propositions that leaders of school networks should consider in developing an effective CPD strategy. The evidence suggests that network leaders should:

- 1 align the learning focuses and processes for CPD of leaders and other adults in the network with a shared, high leverage pupil learning focus
- 2 provide a rich mix of learning opportunities to enable personalisation and choice and to add value to what would happen in school anyway
- 3 negotiate clear, explicit and appropriate frameworks for accountability that are linked to pupil outcomes, and develop ways of evaluating success within them
- 4 recognise that leading CPD in a network is itself a form of CPD that should be made explicit, resourced and distributed
- 5 identify and harness internal professional skills for CPD purposes and invite critical friendship and specialist input for challenge and support

These propositions are explored in greater depth throughout this summary.

¹ Cordingley, P, Bell, M, & Jopling, M, 2006, *The impact of networks on pupils, practitioners, organisations and the communities they serve*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership & Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education

Using this summary

This summary has been designed to be useful to network leaders and policy makers. The five propositions are the organising frame around which we have arranged relevant evidence and some heuristics² to support discussion and planning.

- 1 On page 3 you will find an heuristic which introduces the five propositions. This layout is designed to enable you to break down the propositions into their logical 'building blocks', which become less abstract and more operational as you read across from left to right. You can use this as a tool to structure group discussions or create a matching activity for participants to explore the propositions and their implications in some depth.
- 2 On pages 4–8 there follows a synthesis of the different kinds of evidence that the researchers encountered and an opportunity for you to reflect on the implications for leadership practice and policy. On each page you will find:
 - an explanation of one of the propositions.
 - an example of the kinds of evidence found in the literature review and the way in which that relates to the propositions
 - examples of the kinds of evidence that emerged from interviews with policy makers and the investigation of networks' CPD practice
 - some challenging questions that arise from the evidence
- 3 On page 9 you will find two examples of CPD in networks. These have been designed as stimuli to discussion rather than as examples of best practice, although they do have much to recommend them.
- 4 On pages 10–13 we have summarised a range of policy initiatives which, at the time of writing (autumn 2005), were representative of the various approaches to CPD in networks promoted by the national agencies. Because policy changes are frequent, these should be viewed as examples of the kinds of current approaches rather than a comprehensive review.
- 5 On pages 14–15 there is a short explanation of the sources of evidence used in the summary, and an exploration of the underpinning evidence about what makes CPD effective in schools.
- 6 On page 16 you will find a glossary of useful terms, and on page 17 there is some suggested further reading: the bibliography for this study.

² 'Heuristics', as it is referred to in this summary, is taken to mean a procedure which helps to explore and learn for oneself.

Leading CPD in networked contexts: five propositions suggested by evidence from research and practice

Leadership of continuing professional development in networks self-evidently makes demands over and above those of leading CPD in schools. It demands additional time and additional psychological, practical, organisational and emotional openness to others' starting points. It also extends the range over which communication and co-ordination has to take

place. So the benefits have to outweigh the demands. This framework is geared to enabling school leaders not only to lead CPD in networked contexts more effectively; it also tries to help them weigh up when leading CPD in a networked rather than single school context makes sense.

	If (problem)...	Then (analysis)...	This means...
Proposition 1 Alignment	Networks need to have a clear and compelling purpose around which ownership can be built, sponsorship and support secured, and action undertaken.	Leading CPD in networks means linking both the content and the processes of CPD with the learning focus for the network. The content of CPD should self-evidently relate to the learning focus – and so should the professional learning processes.	Network leaders need to choose a learning focus with a strong evidence base, eg Assessment for Learning (AfL). Leaders need to prioritise CPD opportunities that are explicitly linked but which build participants' capacity to further refine that focus for their own context, for example, by learning to analyse and interpret pupil data or experimenting with AfL in peer coaching arrangements etc.
Proposition 2 Diversity	Schools need be convinced that the amount of additional effort that it takes to participate in a network is worth it to them.	Network leaders need to provide a rich mix of learning opportunities to enable personalisation and choice and to add value to what would happen in school anyway.	Network leaders need to use the network to create more and different CPD opportunities in relation to <i>content</i> (eg access to specialist knowledge), to <i>process</i> (eg modelling, coaching, enquiry) and to specific <i>programmes</i> (eg Networked Learning Walks) than could be achieved in a single school.
Proposition 3 Accountability	Maintaining commitment to a network depends on participants seeing evidence that it is making a difference for adults and especially for young people.	Network leaders need to focus CPD activity on processes that can be linked to outcomes, especially student outcomes, and negotiate explicit and appropriate frameworks for accountability and for evaluating success.	Network leaders need to harness colleagues' commitment to each other, to their students' learning and to more formal accountability frameworks to ensure effectiveness. For individuals, this means relating target outcomes to their concerns about the learning of specific groups of students. At departmental or initiative level this will mean agreeing expectations about outcomes for CPD at the outset and supporting participants in demonstrating them. At a strategic level this will connect with performance management or school development plan (SDP) targets.
Proposition 4 Modelling	Networks require people who can work and solve problems collaboratively and who can act through influence rather than through control.	Network leaders should recognise that leading CPD in a network is itself a form of CPD that should be made explicit, resourced and distributed.	They should model this by leading visibly and explicitly through enquiry-based models such as collaborative leadership learning or action learning sets. They should develop programmes for participants that induct them into the network and help them to make explicit and to practise the challenge of collaborative working and learning (eg in supported collaborative enquiry groups, or through coaching). They should also recognise and celebrate the distinctive contribution of explicit, in-context leadership learning to the knowledge base of the education system.
Proposition 5 Sustainability	To be sustainable, networks need to build internal capacity and remain permeable to external knowledge and expertise.	Network leaders need to identify and harness professional skills for CPD purposes and invite critical friendship and specialist input for challenge and support.	They should locate and co-ordinate existing experts such as Advanced Skills Teachers, experienced practitioner enquirers or coaches. They should also identify others, for example, local authority advisers, HEI mentors or specialists from subject associations, who can bring an external, critical perspective to the network.

Proposition 1: Alignment

Networks need to have a clear and compelling purpose around which ownership can be built, sponsorship and support secured and action undertaken.

Leading CPD in networks means linking both the content and the processes of CPD with the learning focus for the network. The content of CPD should self-evidently relate to the learning focus – and so should the professional learning processes.

Network leaders need to choose a learning focus with a strong evidence base (eg Assessment for Learning). Leaders need to prioritise CPD opportunities that are explicitly linked but which build participants' capacity to further refine that focus for their own context, for example by learning to analyse and interpret pupil data or experimenting with AfL in peer coaching arrangements etc.

Reference from research

Research has exposed the ineffectiveness of 'one-shot workshops' in changing teachers' classroom practices. What is needed to develop and sustain schools as professional learning communities includes:

- A proper sequencing of knowledge acquisition by teachers – investigating why new practices are needed, looking at examples of new practice, having opportunity to learn from those examples and then supporting interpretation and application within their own classroom.
- Opportunities for participatory learning.
- Connection with the wider understanding of the purpose of the expertise to be learned.
- Relevance to the individual teacher need.
- School-based professional development which is relevant to the needs of the school and to the teachers.

Pause for thought...

What is the network's pupil learning focus? What is the network's adult learning focus? What is the network's leadership learning focus? How are they connected?

What processes could they share?

What will practitioners learn that will make a difference for pupil learning outcomes?

Messages from policy and practice

"The heads in the network schools identified AfL as our pupil learning focus because money was available and the local authority had a coaching programme for staff. I was one of two teachers who learned about coaching in the network and we brought that back into school. So not only did we have the AfL advisers doing their thing across schools, we also had a coaching system inside school with two of us coaching other members of staff from any department who'd expressed an interest. It was interesting the way that the AfL focus became the coaching focus in the network. We started off looking at generic coaching skills but quickly decided that we needed a focus for the coaching and we made the connection with AfL. I've now coached four members of staff and I've done two training days with the whole school. I show colleagues how they can use AfL and coaching to empower pupils to see their own progression and at the same time they can learn to coach each other too. We will have about nine more staff involved in coaching this year."

Secondary school teacher

Reference:

Cibulka, J, Coursey, S, Nakayama, M, Price, J & Stewart, S, 2000, *Schools as Learning Organisations: A Review of the Literature; The Creation of High-performance Schools Through Organizational and Individual Learning*, Washington, National Partnership of Excellence and Accountability in Teaching

Proposition 2: Diversity

Schools need be convinced that the amount of additional effort that it takes to participate in a network is worth it to them.

Network leaders need to provide a rich mix of learning opportunities to enable personalisation and choice and to add value to what would happen in school anyway.

Network leaders need to use the network to create more and different CPD opportunities in relation to *content* (eg access to specialist knowledge), to *process* (eg modelling, coaching, enquiry) and to specific *programmes* (eg Networked Learning Walks) than could be achieved in a single school.

Reference from research

Research provides some evidence that networks may help individuals and schools accomplish what they cannot accomplish on their own. They expand the pool of ideas, materials and assistance on which individual schools can draw; they engage participants in mutual problem-solving; and they inspire and recognise accomplishment.

Messages from policy and practice

"I think there is a real danger in schools that you go into your own little room, you shut your door and you have no idea of what is going on in the world around you. You have no idea of new initiatives, no idea of new ways of thinking. When you become involved in a network, you get to see what's going on in other people's spaces.

As part of a network we get to go and visit lots of different places and hear lots of different people talking, and think about what would work for us. Very often we'll try things, and sometimes, yes, things fall flat on their faces, but mostly they don't, and at least we're always striving to improve performance, and that's why we try...But if we didn't go and we didn't see and we didn't know about these other things, we'd never try them, would we?"

Early Years teacher

Pause for thought...?

What has seemed unthinkable in the past that might be achieved in the network now?



To what extent do the CPD activities that network schools offer replicate or complement one another? Are they all doing the same things? What are the gaps?

How will you discover what expertise lies in each school in the network? Could you use Advanced Skills Teachers more strategically together – or recruit to fill in gaps?

What economies of scale would be achieved if all schools pooled their CPD budget and developed a joint approach to CPD? How would this increase your negotiating power with external agencies?

Reference:

Warren Little, J, 2005, *Nodes and Nets: Investigating Resources for Professional Learning in Schools and Networks*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

Proposition 3: Accountability

Maintaining commitment to a network depends on participants seeing evidence that it is making a difference for adults and especially for young people.

Network leaders need to focus CPD activity on processes that can be linked to outcomes, especially student outcomes, and negotiate explicit and appropriate frameworks for accountability and for evaluating success.

Network leaders need to harness colleagues' commitment to each other and to their students, to professional learning

and to more formal accountability frameworks to ensure effectiveness. For individuals, this means relating target outcomes to their concerns about the learning of specific groups of students. At departmental or initiative level this will mean agreeing expectations about outcomes for CPD at the outset and supporting participants in demonstrating them. At a strategic level, this will connect with performance management or school development planning targets.

Reference from research

Mullen & Cooper (1994) in Huberman (1995) conclude from a set of integrated studies that what distinguishes groups that perform well is not necessarily that their members interact with smooth co-ordination, nor that they like each other that much, nor that they are proud of their group, but that 'they are committed to successful task performance and regulate their behaviour toward that end'.

Messages from policy and practice

"People's perception of what is in it for them and their schools in exchange for their time is always a barrier in primary schools. To evaluate impact is a challenge. Schools are not going to commit to doing something unless you can see an impact, so it will help if we can actually show that teaching improves learning, and people believe and feel that they are getting somewhere."

Primary National Strategy

"We are trying to bring about more effective CPD by linking it with performance management and embedding it in better and coherent standards for the profession, but not stipulating from government what the content should be. We want to create the conditions in which CPD can be driven by teachers within performance management processes and to promote greater collaboration between teachers. We want to see greater freedom and flexibility for schools so they determine their own priorities within the national framework."

DfES

Pause for thought...

How can you encourage the schools in your network to link coherently and appropriate their support for CPD and for performance management? Who would need to be a part of that negotiation?

What role might accreditation play in helping you to quality assure and to align development priorities? Do teachers in your network connect with the GTCE Teacher Learning Academy?

How could the link between learning gains for those who participate in CPD and learning gains for their pupils be expressed?

Reference:

Huberman, M, 1995, Networks that Alter Teaching: Conceptualizations, Exchanges and Experiments, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, Vol 1, 2, pp193–211

Proposition 4: Modelling

Networks require people who can work and solve problems collaboratively and who can act through influence rather than through control.

Network leaders should recognise that leading CPD in a network is itself a form of CPD that should be made explicit, resourced and distributed.

They should model this by leading visibly and explicitly through enquiry-based models such as collaborative leadership learning or action learning sets. They should develop programmes for participants that induct them

into the network and help them to make explicit and to practice the challenge of collaborative working and learning (eg in supported collaborative enquiry groups or through coaching). They should also recognise and celebrate the distinctive contribution of explicit, in-context leadership learning to the knowledge base of the education system.

Pause for thought...?

What assumptions are you making about how adults work and learn together?



What opportunities can you create for colleagues to practise the skills of collaboration?

What is the relationship between collaborative learning for children and for adults?

Reference from research

"When you learn in context two things happen. One is that, by definition, the learning is specific to the contexts which you are experiencing. The other is that because you are learning in context, you are doing so with others. Shared ideas and commitment are simultaneously being cultivated. Pfeffer & Sutton make a similar point when they propose embedding 'more of the process of acquiring new knowledge in the actual doing of these tasks and less in formal training programmes that are frequently ineffective' nothing beats learning in context." Fullan, 2004

Messages from policy and practice

"I have had to develop much better interpersonal skills. Working in a network means you are dealing with people who have got different kinds of headteachers, and people who are working in schools that are in different circumstances to mine. So I have learnt to listen carefully when I'm hearing from them and how they have done things and what barriers there are. It's being able to compare that with your own school that means that you can evaluate what is really going on."

CPD co-ordinator, secondary school

Reference:

Fullan, M, 2004, *Systems Thinkers in Action: Moving Beyond the Standards Plateau*, London, Department for Education and Skills

Proposition 5: Sustainability

To be sustainable, networks need to build internal capacity *and* remain permeable to external knowledge and expertise.

Network leaders need to identify and harness professional skills for CPD purposes and invite critical friendship and specialist input for challenge and support.

They should locate and co-ordinate existing experts such as Advanced Skills Teachers, experienced practitioner enquirers or coaches. They should also identify others, for example local authority advisers, HEI mentors or specialists from subject associations, who can bring an external, critical perspective to the network.

Reference from research

"The strength of Huberman's illustration of an open collective cycle, which he describes modestly as 'a plausible scenario for the professional development of teachers' (1995), is that it emphasises that if processes of learning and change are to be successful, there is a need for collaborative work over time which is not restricted to one homogenous group or groups of teachers, but which admits 'outsiders' to its membership."

Day, 1999

Messages from policy and practice

"Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) partnerships are appointed via a selection process to offer award-bearing CPD in regions. To be successful, PPD partnerships must demonstrate a commitment to research and to evaluation of the impact of their programmes in classrooms. PPD programmes are co-designed by all the partners in order to have maximum appeal to teachers."

Partnerships usually comprise schools, local authorities and HEIs. Some also involve subject associations. Fifty-seven partnerships were announced during 2004/5 and subsequent application rounds will address regional imbalances. Of those teachers on PPD partnership programmes, 99.8% study part-time.

PPD partnerships are designed to optimise the impact of accredited CPD in classrooms. Previous approaches have produced excellent results for individual teachers, but with low uptake, little overall impact in schools. By increasing the uptake of accredited programmes, TDA hopes to increase the general level of qualification of the profession."

Teacher Development Agency (TDA)

Pause for thought...

What is your network's relationship with your local university or FE college? What resources exist there that could inform professional learning in the network?



What resources could you access and adapt to network purposes through the local authority? What roles do primary and secondary National Strategy consultants play?

How do you identify internal specialists and support them to expand their role in the network? When they replace external contributors, how do you identify new needs and recruit new contributors who will continue to secure an outsider perspective for the network's CPD?

What do initial teacher training (ITT) students and NQTs contribute to the network?

Reference:

Day, C, 1999, Networks for Learning: Teacher Development, School Improvement. *In Developing Teachers; The Challenges of Lifelong Learning*, London, Routledge

Accounts of practice

These accounts of practice are designed as a stimulus for discussion. You can use these accounts to generate questions for discussion or to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. What can you learn from these examples?

Learning in networks: working with other professionals

The *Every Child Matters* agenda and the rollout of Extended Schools create new demands for teachers and schools and require that professional development also includes learning how to work with other professionals who are supporting the development of children and young people. This network was set up by a social worker funded by an initiative that aims to secure, among other things, better educational outcomes for children. The network was neighbourhood based, involved practitioners receiving funding from the initiative ie primary school teachers, play leaders, art therapists, play workers, children and families workers, specialists in working with refugees and asylum seeking families, and EAL specialists. The group met monthly for two hours. In the meetings their discussions were task focused, for example in the first meetings they talked about the needs of specific groups of children, although they did not always agree with each other.

As the meetings progressed and people got to know each other better, the focus of the discussions became more future-oriented, for example:

- What each of them had done when working on the topics they had discussed last time.
- How they could help each other.
- What other resources were available in the neighbourhood, for example, activities which were not funded by the initiative, but of use to the groups they were working with.

The network developed beyond these valuable face-to-face sessions where people learnt to build a more complex picture of the needs of different groups of children as the participants' knowledge of the children's needs coalesced and expanded. They evolved into a range of networks that operated between meetings and supported the work of the practitioners. This also expanded the range of resources on which participants could draw to meet children's needs.

At first, the networks were quite tentative, a kind of hacking out of a trail, for example, between a teacher, an art therapist and a refugee worker to support a child who had recently arrived in the UK. Over time, the trails became more robust – new networks that were walked by other practitioners from the different settings. The monthly meetings then became places where people reflected on what they had done as well as what they would like to do next.

Learning in networks: collaboration and leadership

After a year of funding action research projects for individual teachers in a networked learning community, headteachers were growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of impact that their facilitated, well-funded and persuasive teacher research group was able to have on practice and outcomes in the nine secondary schools that comprised the network.

In the following year each headteacher took responsibility for a study group of teachers drawn from all the schools apart from their own – they were the representative for their school – and participated in a year-long enquiry linked to the pupil learning focus for the network. Each study group met once every half term in a twilight session after school. At these meetings they shared data and developed resources, planned lessons for different subjects and year groups and arranged times when they could team-teach or observe each other in action. Having a headteacher in the group ensured access to the necessary resources and the ability to protect these opportunities amidst all the conflicting priorities in busy schools.

Wider ownership, testing resources and approaches to teaching and learning in diverse contexts and the general buzz that the study groups created in each of the nine schools helped to raise their profile and the new resources and approaches were quickly in circulation. Colleagues started to notice the positive effects for teachers and for pupils.

But it was the headteachers' group that was changed most of all. Linking their development work for their individual schools and for the network so closely to enquiry work in classrooms brought into focus for them just how easy it was to pay no attention to outcomes for pupils in some of the decision-making processes in school. They also came face-to-face with the challenges of leading work in another school and in accommodating leadership from outside their own school into their view of how their organisation could work and learn differently.

When they reviewed the way the network was operating against the experience of the previous year, they were astounded by the progress they were making. *"It's the point at which we stopped messing around and really became a network,"* said one headteacher.

Summary of policy initiatives: approaches to CPD in networks

What		
Capita: The National Strategies	Intensifying Support Schools	A school improvement programme designed to raise standards and improve teaching and learning in the context of the school as a professional learning community. The programme works in partnership with the local authority and the school. It is based on a cycle of audit and setting targets, action and review. ISP consultants use a solutions-based model, working to build in-school and cross-school collaboration by developing leading teacher clusters and other networks. ISP is time and resource limited (two days and £2,500 per school) and support is withdrawn after one year.
	Learning Networks	A school improvement programme designed to incentivise school-to-school collaboration. Groups of schools (recommended five to six schools) are supported to develop plans for establishing a network around an agreed and shared focus for improving pupil learning outcomes. £5,000 and consultancy support is made available for this process. If successful, networks receive £12,000 for one year, or £14,000 if their learning focus centres around maths.
DfES Innovation Unit	The LEArning Project	The Innovation Unit (IU) is working in partnership with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and a group of local authorities in England to develop their capacity and understanding of networking and collaboration as a strategy for tackling regional challenges, specifically to include <i>Every Child Matters</i> . A series of regional events and publications has been developed in partnership with these local authorities and rolled out nationally.
	Leading Edge Partnerships	Leading Edge Partnerships are led by Leading Edge schools which are funded to spread innovation and collaboration between schools.
Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Advanced Skills Teachers	Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) are seen as key in the transfer of good practice within and between schools. New funding and support arrangements encourage schools, groups of schools and local authorities to think strategically about how ASTs can be deployed in collaborative working arrangements. DfES is working with Primary National Strategy to explore what contribution ASTs might make to Primary National Strategy Learning Networks.
	New Professionalism	Connecting and making explicit the connection between whole school improvement, performance management and the individual learning needs of teachers. Linking opportunities for career progression and enhancement of pay, to active contribution to the professional development of one teacher by another.

Who	Why
<p>In 2002-2004 piloted in 13 local authorities with schools in challenging circumstances. 2004-2005 extended to 76 local authorities where at least 15 schools or 15 per cent of schools achieve below the floor target of 65 per cent for KS2 English and maths (855 schools). Each local authority is supported to work with 10 schools. Many local authorities cluster their ISP schools together or in combination with other schools in the authority.</p>	<p>ISP is designed to complement the Primary Leadership Programme and actively promotes the CPD materials in Excellence and Enjoyment. The intention is to support underachieving schools to build their own capacity to improve, principally through collaborative staff development.</p>
<p>Networks are brokered through local authorities, ie funding, equivalent to a number of networks is allocated to the local authority for them to manage. Suggested criteria include schools that have completed the Primary Leadership or Intensifying Support Programme and schools that are in disadvantaged areas. Nursery, middle and special schools with primary aged pupils are eligible. Secondary schools can be involved but may not receive funding.</p>	<p>The Primary National Strategy Learning Network (PNSLN) initiative is based on the belief that networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broaden the teacher expertise and learning opportunities available to pupils • provide a direct mechanism for sharing expert teacher practice • provide the diversity, flexibility and range of opportunities that no single school can offer • nurture creativity, risk-taking and innovation to improve learning and teaching • lead to improvement in pupils' attainment • lead to improved teaching <p>An overarching aim is to give schools autonomy to create local solutions to the challenge of delivering equity and excellence in a system, which responds to the diverse needs of learners.</p>
<p>Fourteen Leading Edge authorities were identified – not Beacons necessarily, but sites where interesting and promising practice was developing. CEOs and core contacts (usually deputies, heads of school improvement or strategy managers) have been involved in co-facilitating events and contributing to publications. Sixty-plus authorities have been included in the roll-out seminars.</p>	<p>Responding to the needs of networks of schools in their region challenges local authorities to review their own structures and procedures. The specific challenges of <i>Every Child Matters</i> make this an urgent issue.</p>
<p>Schools must be performing in the upper quartile in average point scores at GCSE in terms of schools in similar circumstances for 2003, or be in the upper quartile in terms of value added for Key Stages 2–3 and 3–4 in 2003 where appropriate.</p>	<p>Leading Edge Partnerships provide capacity for practitioners to work together to tackle some of the more intractable challenges facing education. Partnerships are committed to working collaboratively to raise standards of teaching and learning where improvement is most urgently needed. There is a particular focus on partnering with schools struggling to raise standards and partnering in order to raise pupil achievement by addressing issues of under-achievement among pupils from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and from particular minority ethnic groups.</p>
<p>Excellent teachers who achieve the very highest standards of classroom practice and who are resourced to share their skills and experience with other teachers.</p>	<p>In its New Relationship with Schools, DfES is seeking to reorientate from a directive approach around ASTs to, instead, encouraging groups of schools who want to create AST posts to do so as a solution to locally defined need. There is also a perceived need to make more explicit the generic or pedagogic teaching skills that ASTs can and do share with colleagues as well as their subject expertise.</p>
<p>On completion of the review of standards, this will apply to all teachers. Teachers in networks of schools will have access to more opportunities to offer and to benefit from this kind of CPD.</p>	<p>Responding to the learning needs of the institution in order to improve outcomes for children through the individual learning needs of teachers and scaffolded by accountability frameworks to make CPD purposeful and to make explicit the connection between learning gains for teachers and for pupils.</p>

Summary of policy initiatives: approaches to CPD in networks

What		
National College for School Leadership (NCSL)	Networked Learning Communities	Networked learning communities (NLCs) are groups of schools working in partnership to enhance the quality of pupil, adult and leadership learning. A minimum of six schools (the average is ten) were invited to design network structures and processes, and leadership and development activities around a locally identified pupil learning focus. Networks are funded £50,000pa for three years subject to match funding and satisfactory completion of a review process after two years as a network.
	Post Graduate Professional Development Partnerships	PPD partnerships are appointed via a selection process to offer award-bearing CPD in regions. PPD partnerships must demonstrate a commitment to research and to evaluation of the impact of their programmes in classrooms. PPD programmes are co-designed by all the partners in order to have maximum appeal to teachers.
Teacher Development Agency (TDA)	Local Authority Networks	Link advisers, seconded by the GTCe from local authorities act as facilitators in partnership with DfES, TDA regional advisers, teachers and other school staff. Activities vary across the authorities, but typically involve developing a regional strategy for CPD, represented as a framework or entitlement for teachers.
	Professional Networks	GTCE facilitates three networks through regular e-newsletters and occasional face-to-face events.
General Teaching Council for England (GTCE)	iNet Development and Research Hubs	Through its work with David Hargreaves to identify 'Gateways to Personalised Learning' SSAT has established development and research hubs – nine development networks which it supports to develop and share leading practice around each of the 'gateways'.
	School Networks	SSAT facilitates school networks centred around the specialisms of member schools by providing regional facilitation, resources, online discussion forums and related CPD (subject and specialism leadership).
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)		

Who	Why
<p>There are 135 networked learning communities, comprising 1,533 schools distributed across 90 local authorities in England. All networks were required to work in partnership with local authorities or HEIs. NLCs have been working in partnership with the Primary National Strategy (PNS) to support and inform the development of PNSLNs. A field team of researchers and facilitators engages in collaborative enquiry and reviews activities alongside leaders of the networks to gather data and evidence about what works for what purpose in what context.</p>	<p>NLCs is a development and research project which was designed to create and to interrogate operational models of school networks in context. In doing so, the programme team also models enquiry-oriented approaches in an attempt to build capacity in the networks and in the wider system.</p>
<p>Partnerships usually comprise schools, local authorities and HEIs. Some also involve subject associations. To date 57 partnerships have been announced and further application rounds are planned to address regional imbalances. Of the teachers on PPD partnership programmes, 99.8 per cent are studying part-time.</p>	<p>PPD partnerships are designed to optimise the impact of accredited CPD in classrooms. Previous approaches have produced excellent results for individual teachers, but with low uptake, little overall impact in schools. By increasing the uptake of accredited programmes, TDA hopes to increase the general level of qualification of the profession.</p>
<p>There were 9 local authorities involved in the design and piloting and a further 26 were involved in phase 2. This was a bespoke programme which supported a range of regional CPD policy actors, such as school leaders and local authority officers, to take steps to enable the profession to take a lead in setting their regional CPD agenda.</p>	<p>Through its partnership programme, GTCe is working to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form or strengthen relationships and partnerships with participating local authorities, schools and teachers • improve access and support for teachers' CPD • improve local authorities' and schools' engagement with CPD research, effective practice and policy • enable schools to recognise and build on existing local, regional and national capacity, and to engage with new initiatives.
<p>Achieve is for teachers interested in issues relating to diversity and ethnic minority achievement, Connect is for CPD co-ordinators and those who support them and Engage is for teachers in the first five years of their careers.</p>	<p>Professional networks are designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide an opportunity for teachers to network around shared issues and interests • act as a two-way communications strategy between the GTCe and the profession
<p>Nine schools will be appointed to each of the nine gateways on a regional basis. The gateways are Student Voice, Assessment for Learning, Learning to Learn, New Technologies, Workforce Development, School Organisation and Design, Mentoring, Curriculum, and Advice and Guidance.</p>	<p>iNet (international networking for educational transformation) is the international arm of the SSAT. Its mission is to create powerful and innovative networks of schools that have committed themselves to achieving systematic, significant and sustained change that ensures outstanding outcomes for students in all settings.</p>
<p>Outstanding teachers in member schools' specialisms (also known as Lead Practitioners and numbering 140) each receive funding for ten days to lead seminars and other activities in their region. SSAT also employs nine regional co-ordinators and facilitates expert panels of lead practitioners and headteacher steering groups.</p>	<p>The most successful schools are those that use the networks and integrate them for their own context. A characteristic of most successful schools is that they have the most complex relationships. Education policy is a fundamentally top-down model which is flawed. There is learning in the tension between bottom-up and top-down.</p>

What is the evidence base?

Evidence from research about CPD in school networks

The principal source of research evidence about CPD for this study was the outcomes of three systematic literature reviews. The researchers also looked at literature concerning the leadership of CPD and the role of CPD in school networks. A full bibliography is provided at the end of this summary.

Evidence from practice about CPD in school networks

In spring 2004, researchers in NCSL's Networked Learning Communities programme visited 80 school networks to find out how network leaders were dealing with this challenge. They investigated the different kinds of CPD that were emerging as solutions to the problem of finding ways for practitioners to work and learn together within and beyond their own institution. They also looked at the benefits that can be gained when leaders do find ways to develop a strategic approach to CPD in their network.

Evidence from policy about CPD in school networks

In summer 2005, ten interviews were conducted with senior representatives from the national agencies. The interviews covered policy makers' approaches to promoting and supporting school networks and their insights into the role of CPD in networks and in the implementation of their particular policy responsibility. An analysis of policy documents, guidance materials and information for practitioners, for instance on agency websites, was also carried out. The outcomes of the interviews and document analysis were tested at a seminar in July 2005, which included all the national agencies and a range of practitioners.

Understanding effective CPD

During 2003 and 2004, three systematic reviews of international research into the impact of CPD for teachers and their pupils were carried out as part of the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information Centre (EPPI-Centre) project. EPPI systematic reviews work by consistently applying rigorous quality criteria to a wide range of research studies – over 13,000 in the first review alone – to identify those that offer the best available evidence to answer a specific question. For the first review the question was: “how does collaborative continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers of the 5–16 age range affect teaching and learning?”

What was unique about this review was that, for the first time, practitioners and policy makers were able to share access to a secure evidence base about the characteristics of effective CPD – CPD that had an impact for teacher learning and, crucially, for pupil learning. Of the 13,000 original studies, only 17 met the criteria for in-depth review and synthesis. So powerful and useful were the findings of this review that a second was commissioned to test the outcomes by comparing the findings about collaborative CPD (where practitioners learn together) with findings about individual CPD (where practitioners learn alone).

A third review was commissioned to learn from CPD that had impact for teachers, but where the researchers had not set out to test for impact for pupils. The reason for including this last review was because the reviewers had found that the approaches to research that were likely to reveal pupil impact, ie that focused on CPD *outcomes*, were unlikely to include much detail about the CPD *processes*. So while a great deal was learned about the effects of CPD in the first review, the third review offered far more texture and detail on how to achieve those outcomes.

All three reviews were carried out by the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE), www.curee.co.uk, and are published in full and in summary at www.eppi.ioe.ac.uk

A subsequent systematic review by NCSL's Networked Learning Group and CUREE in 2006 found CPD to be at the heart of the effective networks identified by the research. Although the aims and purposes of the networked CPD extended beyond the mainly pedagogical focuses of the EPPI CPD reviews, the characteristics and processes involved were consistent with those of the effective CPD in those reviews.

What are the characteristics of effective CPD?

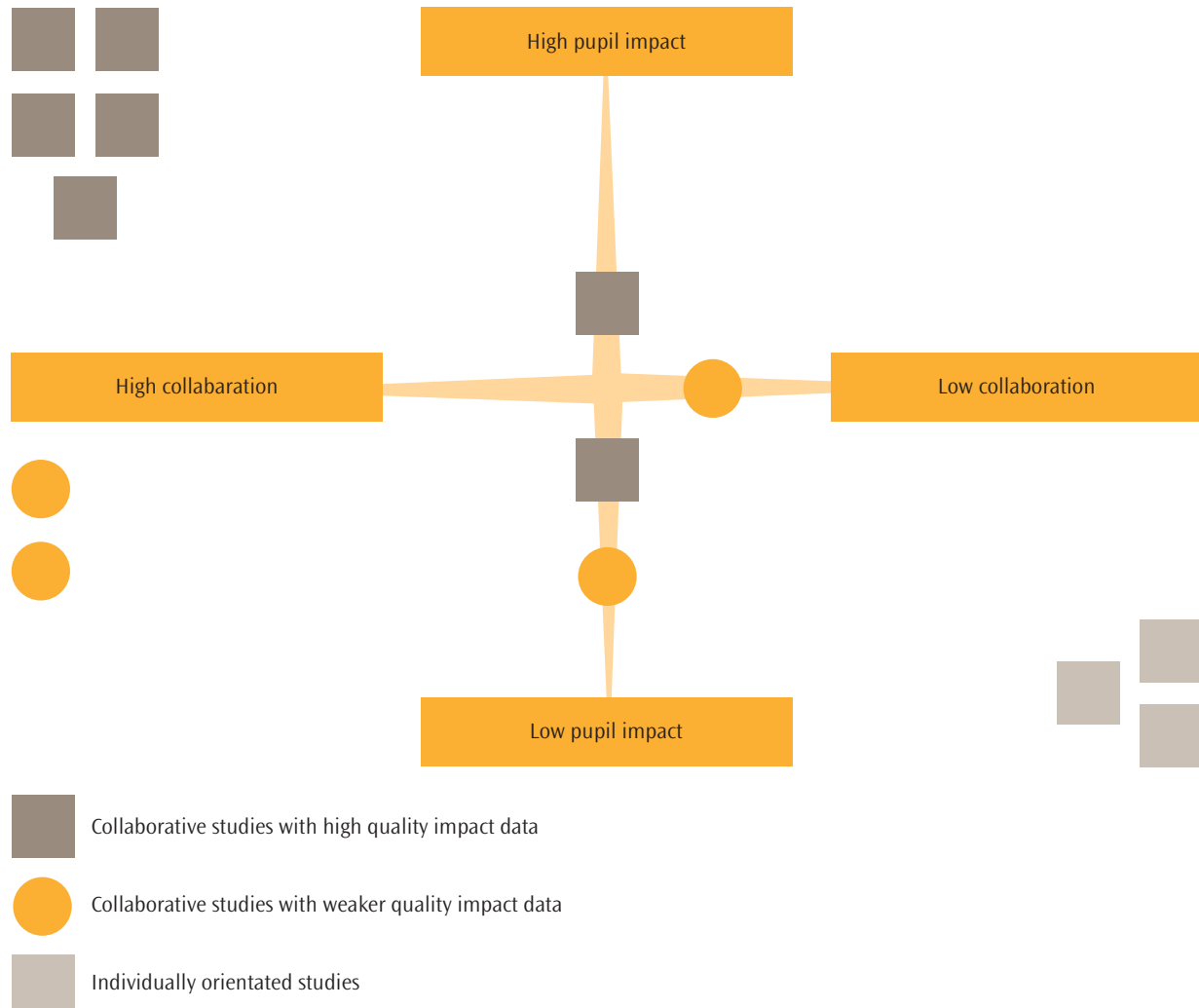
The second review, comparing collaborative and individually oriented CPD, synthesised the evidence from 14 research studies. What emerges from the findings of this review is that collaborative CPD is *more likely* than individual CPD to result in learning gains for pupils as well as for teachers, but that collaborative CPD *does not necessarily* secure such benefits. Other factors identified elsewhere in the review are important too. Individually oriented CPD, on the other hand, holds out little promise of learning gains for pupils.

For network leaders this is good news. CPD in school networks is more likely to be collaborative than individual and, therefore, more likely to offer learning gains for pupils as well as teachers. However, to be more certain of success, network leaders should also take on board the cumulative findings of all three reviews about the characteristics of effective CPD.

The aspects of CPD that the systematic reviews found to be effective in improving teaching and learning were:

- emphasis on peer support rather than leadership by supervisors
- use of outside 'experts' to support school-based activities
- observation and shared interpretation (with some feedback) to support teachers implementing new strategies
- scope for teachers to identify their own starting points and to refine school objectives to identify and specify the CPD focus
- processes to structure, facilitate and encourage professional dialogue
- processes for sustaining the CPD over time to enable teachers to embed new practices in their own classroom settings

figure 1: What are the characteristics of effective CPD?



Glossary

Capacity building	A process in which a community provides activities, resources and support to build up the skills of people and groups. This lays the foundations for effective work.	Mentoring	Mentoring is a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions. Mentoring involves activities which promote and enhance effective transitions between professional roles.
Coaching	Facilitating active and largely self-directed learning of a colleague who is seeking to enhance established practice or develop new practice.	Modelling	Modelling is where one professional demonstrates desired behaviours. It is especially effective when the situation in which the modelling takes place is designed to be like the one in which the learner will use the skill or knowledge.
Collaboration	An interactive process that enables teachers to work together as equals and engage in shared decision-making towards mutually defined goals.	Network	A network is an extended group of people or organisations with shared interests or concerns who interact and remain in formal or informal contact for mutual assistance and support.
Continuing professional development	Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. ³	Ownership	To achieve ownership, staff need to understand the recommended practices, the thinking behind them and the reasons why they work. They must feel that they own them. Only then will the practices become a part of that deep professional understanding that underpins everyday teaching.
Enquiry	A systematic or scientific process for answering questions and solving problems based on gathering evidence through observation, analysis and reflection.	Partnership	A relationship between individuals or groups that is characterised by mutual co-operation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal.
Leadership	Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.	Specialist expertise	Individuals or groups with deep or extensive knowledge of a given area, including: aspects of teaching, learning or the curriculum or skills in being explored, working on a consultancy basis with teachers, and supporting professional learning.

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