

Chapter 5

Teacher Professional Development Practices

The Case of the Haringey Transformation Teachers Programme

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the need for new models of teachers' professional development in the context of established and emerging technologies and socio-constructivist theories of teacher learning within online and other communities. The authors present the current contexts affecting professional development in England and discuss the significance of the shift towards collaborative and community approaches to teachers' learning. The authors argue that transformation is a key, though troublesome, concept in considering the aims of professional development for teachers' use of technologies in their everyday practice. They explore these ideas by presenting the case of the Transformation Teachers Programme (TTP), a wide-scale teachers' development project carried out in a London borough by Haringey City Learning Centre (CLC), and they examine how this project has implemented new approaches to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and teachers' professional development, based on collaborative experimentation, enquiry and risk-taking within online and other community-based arrangements.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we discuss the need for new models of teachers' professional development in the con-

text of established and emerging technologies and socio-constructivist theories of teacher learning within online and other communities. We present the current contexts affecting professional development in England and discuss the significance of the shift towards collaborative and community approaches to

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teachers' learning. We argue that transformation is a key, though troublesome, concept in considering the aims of professional development for teachers' use of technologies in their everyday practice. We explore these ideas by presenting the case of the Transformation Teachers Programme (TTP), a wide-scale teachers' development project carried out in a London borough by Haringey City Learning Centre (CLC), and we examine how this project has implemented new approaches to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and teachers' professional development, based on collaborative experimentation, enquiry and risk-taking within online and other community-based arrangements. The initiative deals with both local and national priorities contained within a government initiative for England, Building Schools for the Future (BSF), which aims to transform teaching and learning so that the learning needs of local populations are better met. The current national focus on equipping schools with 'state of the art' buildings and technology needs to be matched, however, with providing professional development for teachers, which enables them to harness the potential of the initiative from a pedagogical perspective. Having explored the principles and pedagogy of the programme, we present vignettes of two teachers who have been affected by the programme in different, related ways. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what can be learnt from the case regarding the future development of teachers' professional learning and makes recommendations for features of effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in ICT for teachers. The term CPD is adopted here as this is the current terminology used by the majority of stakeholders to describe in-service professional development for teachers in the United Kingdom.

THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE ICT CPD

It is widely recognised that teachers require an ever greater, and ever changing range of skills and understanding, in particular with regard to the increasing proliferation of technological tools for all aspects of work, be it pedagogical or administrative. For example, recent years have seen a considerable growth in the popularity of interactive whiteboards and the use of virtual learning environments including e-portfolios in- and outside schools in the UK for teaching, learning and assessment. Increasingly schools are also considering how to harness the proliferation of sophisticated portable devices owned by the learners themselves, in particular smartphones, for teaching and learning, a phenomenon known as 'mobile learning'.

Yet, we diagnose a disappointing history in the adoption of technologies by teachers for improving their own learning and that of their students (see e.g. Preston & Cuthell, 2007). A historical focus on techno-centric aims for CPD, generic skills training, top-down frameworks for CPD and outcomes-driven CPD programmes has meant that the potential of technology to enhance the learning experiences of students remains largely unfulfilled (see for example reports on Interactive Whiteboard use in the UK by Moss et al., 2007 or Preston, 2004). Similarly, there has been relatively little focus on *how* school teachers learn with technologies within online collaborative contexts (see e.g. Fisher et al., 2006; Dede, 2006). The importance of secure subject knowledge and subject-based pedagogical understanding has been highlighted for the effective use of technologies in education (see Cox et al. 2003), but there is relatively little that examines how teachers' professional development with technologies might be enhanced, and how collaborative arrangements can be enhanced by technologies.

We argue that, with some exceptions (e.g. Pachler & Daly, 2006), teachers' professional development involving technologies has been

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