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# Potency in Professional Development for Teachers

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## Abstract

There has been significant research into the impact of professional development (PD) on professional organisation and behaviour. PD has emerged in a diversity of forms in schools. Programs range from one hit seminars provided by an external consultant, through to a broad range of programmed development plans that integrate seminars; school based planning groups, action research, collaborative projects across schools, clusters and with critical friends, and mentoring. PD has been delivered to prompt school and teacher professional transformation or to support an ongoing development plan. PD is not uni-lateral and exists to support a very wide range of school and teacher development needs. The relevance and effectiveness of PD design and delivery is tied to the nature of the PD need and the context of provision. This paper reports an investigation into efficacy of various approaches to PD in Queensland schools. The research drew on responses to an online survey tool, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with PD coordinators, teachers, and school and district administrators to develop a model for effective PD planning that considers strategies for addressing current and future PD need and amelioration of barriers to PD effectiveness.

## Introduction

The Professional Development Agenda for the Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts through funding from the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) has targeted the elevation of teacher professionalism through the provision of support to a variety of Professional Development (PD) plans and programs. Efficacy of the various approaches to PD, and specific alignment against school and teacher professional needs has not yet been clearly established. As such, the Queensland Department of Education, training and the Arts commissioned a research tender (2006-2007) into PD practices in Queensland. The primary objectives of this research as outlined by DETA were:

1. identify differences in the PD needs of schools
2. identify PD barriers and enablers and
3. suggest strategies for meeting identified needs and addressing barriers.

Although this asserts complexity on an investigation into PD efficacy, this diversity of need and experience with PD could be conceptualised within a comprehensive model for strategic PD planning, development and evaluation.

## Background

The research report provided a platform for improving and maximising organisational and individual professional performance. It aimed to inform the development of the profession through effective identification of PD need, design and delivery of appropriate and transformative PD, and strategic planning for PD into the future.

The definition of PD itself is one of blurred contention and no single definition is universally supported by all authors and education jurisdictions. This in part results from the fact that PD is often seen to include a broad spectrum of seemingly different activities as noted by McKenzie and Santiago (2005).

The discussion of professional development often lacks clarity because a potentially large number of quite different activities are grouped together (p. 122).

Another complicating factor is that PD is distinct and yet shares common ground with other approaches such as training and professional learning and spans trainee teachers from the pre-service period through to established careerists and professionals.

Given PD is distinct, spans a broad spectrum of activities from pre-service to in-service and may mean different things to the different people involved (for example teachers, principals, and training providers), it is important that a working definition for the literature review is established.

To this end, the authors will use the definition of PD adopted by Education Queensland as outlined in the *Standards for the Development and Delivery of Professional Development and Training*, The State of Queensland (1998).

Professional Development refers to those activities that individuals engage in to enhance their expertise so that they grow professionally beyond core competency levels required to perform key roles (p.2).

This definition by Education Queensland corresponds with McKenzie and Santiago's (2005) definition of professional development and other writers on the topic. (Guskey, 2000; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). The definition points to the nature of professional development being focused on the improvement of not only students' achievement outcomes but also teachers' practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

The report detailed an approach to establishing mechanisms for effectively identifying and evaluating PD through the following questions:

- How can PD needs be identified and met?
- How can pervasive influences on the effectiveness of PD in its broad range of formats and contexts be identified?
- How can barriers to PD effectiveness be ameliorated?
- How can success of PD initiatives now and into the future be best gauged? and
- What are the PD needs of Queensland state schools?

These questions were aimed to be answered via a number of data corpuses including: 1. comprehensive literature review; 2. semi-structured focus groups and interviews; and 3. online survey tool.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

A number of major themes were identified in the literature review. These included: 1. the nature and extent of professional development needs; 2. developing and delivering effective professional development and 3. teacher professional growth from induction, beginning and early career to mentoring and leadership development

### ***Professional Development Needs***

Despite the plethora of views and perspectives on the constituency of effective PD practice offered in the literature, it is clear that unless these approaches fulfil the particular PD needs of participants, then such approaches cannot be considered successful or effective (Raynor et.al. 2002). This is particularly apparent if we apply the definition of professional development noted above with its focus on supporting teachers to “...*grow professionally beyond core competency levels required to perform key roles*” (*PD Agenda 2006-2007*, State of Queensland).

It is acknowledged however, that determining PD needs is difficult (Ingvarson, 1998; Reid, 2004). There is no definitive list of PD needs since they are dynamic and tend to change over time as well as across contexts. Attempting to match these needs with an appropriate form of PD can be even more challenging as participants needs tend to differ from one another along with their prior learning, transferable knowledge and experience, and preferred styles of learning (Lee, 2004-2005). Ultimately, not all participants will benefit to the same degree as their peers given exposure to the same type of professional development experience (Lieberman & Wilkins, 2006). More importantly, it is argued that as much care and forethought needs to be applied to teacher PD as is directed to student learning in the classroom.

To this end, *The Standards for the development and delivery of PD and training* – State of Queensland (1998) provide some useful guiding questions to consider when planning PD for schools and school staff (refer Box A). Further to this, there may be significant benefit in developing a comprehensive, consistent and coherent method of assessing PD needs at the individual, school and system level. This will ensure greater levels of alignment between the various levels of professional development needs, that needs are not the result of best guesses or other influences and that the resulting professional development is timely, relevant and potent and gives a better return on the PD investment.

**Box A: Useful questions to consider for professional development**

*Standards for the development and delivery of PD and training – State of Queensland*

PD needs of participants to be catered for

- How are prior learning experiences acknowledged? Can access to PD be ensured at different points of delivery?
- How does it take into account workload of teachers?
- How does it cater to different learning styles?
- Is there flexibility of delivery?
- How do processes and interactions create an environment of support and professional trust – encourages problem solving, risk taking, innovation and creativity?
- What mechanisms are included to support learning over time?

From what has been gathered through the literature review it can be concluded that PD needs are wide ranging and varied from one context to another and are difficult to assess. There are a number of influences affecting which PD needs are considered important and are ultimately addressed. When PD is delivered it is clear that it won't fulfil the needs of every participant equally. A more systematic approach to assessing PD needs is called for and will assist in better choices over the PD models and approaches used to address PD needs. The next section of the review will examine literature on developing and delivering effective professional development.

***Developing and delivering effective professional development***

Though the evidence base in the literature on effective models and approaches to PD is seemingly thin, there is no shortage of opinion and views on what represents effective practices for the development and delivery of PD (Guskey, 2000). The lack of research evidence results from a tendency for the research to focus on specific PD practices and interventions rather than the frameworks, models and approaches in which such practices are developed and delivered.

Just as views in the literature regarding PD needs are contested, discussions in the literature of effective PD also show significant differences of opinion. Despite these differences, the approaches/models of professional development can be broadly grouped into four categories:

- Locally based and driven PD
- Systemically based and driven PD
- Combinations of local and systemic PD
- Locally based and driven PD facilitated and supported from the system

Each of these perspectives has validity under certain conditions but not all. That is, different approaches will be more or less appropriate than others depending on the context, purpose and intended outcome of the PD. Beyond models and approaches to PD, the way PD programs are

developed and delivered and the context in which this takes place is often seen as important to their effectiveness. The PD policy agenda is a central influencing force in this process.

#### *National Professional Development Policy*

The national PD agenda is led by the flagship Australian Government Quality Teacher Program – (AGQTP). The AGQTP has attempted to drive a national focus towards professional development for teachers. Through Australian government funding the program has seen an increase in PD programs targeted to areas of perceived need such as literacy and numeracy. Its main goal is to assist teachers in attending professional learning activities and support quality teaching and school leadership.

#### *PD in Queensland*

In the Queensland context the Minister for Education, Training, and the Arts, Rod Welford contends that the state's *PD Agenda 2006-2007* will provide "high quality educational services to our students" and it also ensures "students have the best chance of success in the twenty-first century" (p.1). Further to acknowledging the aims of the agenda for Queensland students it also highlights the phases that educators and support staff experience across the life of their career:

- aspiring
- beginning
- consolidation and growth
- high achieving
- transitions

These stages are important to consider in the development of PD programs and practices as each stage will present a different set of challenges and PD needs for staff. PD will also be an important tool to assist as many staff as possible to transition from one stage to the next so that throughout a career there is ongoing development and increasing competency.

Many researchers believe that the purpose of PD is to assist in the improvement of student learning and as such increase the results that they have in the classroom (Grootenboer, 1999; Kubitskey & Fishman, 2004). Others however, believe that this depends on whether or not there are clear outcomes in mind. PD may be about improving particular learning outcomes of students or could be about improving management skills such as planning or research. It seems then that the purpose of PD can change between one context to another.

Therefore, it seems that whatever the purpose of the PD is determines in fact, the strategies by which to deliver the program effectively. Glover and Law (1996) ultimately say that the participants should have some sense of ownership and schools are "potentially fertile ground for improvement"

(p. 5). This being so, much of the literature comments on the need for PD to act as a catalyst for teacher growth.

### ***Teacher Professional Growth from beginning and early career to mentoring and leadership development***

One of the major outcomes of PD is to extend teachers' knowledge base and understandings in a particular targeted area. As previously discussed PD can focus on wide strata of topics: whether it is curriculum, planning, strategic policy, management or student learning. There are certain aspects acknowledged in the literature that should be taken into account for PD to be successful. The notion of professional growth of teachers is one concept highly prevalent in the literature.

*“The dynamic nature of teaching today reflects an ever-changing world. For today’s teachers, professional growth is more than just absorbing information, facts and theories, and acquiring skills. Growth involves critical thinking to deal with the super-abundance of information and the ambiguity and complexity of that information. More and more, teachers must face the prospect of teaching in ways in which they have not been taught themselves to capitalise on opportunities offered by change as they move schooling forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” (Standards for the Development and Delivery of Professional Development and Training, The State of Queensland, 1998, p.1)*

This sentiment focuses on the notion of change and the ongoing expectations of teachers and other educators to constantly keep up to date and take on board the many and varied concepts that are presented to them throughout their career. It is clear and critical that PD must consider the development of the teacher not only as a vehicle by which students learning outcomes improve but as an individual. It is argued that if the individual personal needs of teachers are addressed this will then in turn affect their student learning outcomes.

It is also noted however, that the development of teachers own professional growth needs more insight.

*“Teachers professional knowledge is of crucial importance to the whole society but is seldom discussed or articulated beyond specialty and professional or academic circles.” (Skilbeck and Connell, 2004).*

Lloyd et.al. (2005) highlight other more distinct aspects that they see as overarching guidelines for effective PD developed were that:

1. it must support teachers' lifelong learning through reflection (practice to theory)
2. it must improve teaching practice through action (theory to practice) and
3. it should foster active membership and collegiate relationships within professional communities
4. it should consider the need for timeliness and reflection over time for practising teachers

These suggestions highlight the importance of the teaching profession as being a 'lifelong journey', one where teachers are constantly learning and reflecting. It also calls for stronger networking and connection between teachers that are more experienced and those that are novices.

### *PD for beginning and early-career teachers*

An area of PD that needs considerable support and funding is one that focuses on beginning and early-career teachers. This involves aspects associated with pre-service training, induction and ongoing support through mentoring.

Much writing on beginning and early-career teachers focuses on teacher retention. In the United States for example, a national commission on teaching and America's future (NCTAF) was initiated to address recommendations from the *No Child Left Behind* policy. The commission investigated the "teacher shortage problem" (2002). More specifically, the inquiry stated that:

*"In general, the turnover rate among teachers is significantly higher than for other occupations. The fact is, an alarming and unsustainable number of teachers [estimated at almost a third] are leaving teaching during their first few years of teaching." (p. 3-4).*

This is confirmed in an Australian government inquiry – *Top of the Class* (2006), where it was found that up to 25% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The American inquiry notes that "high teacher turnover also severely undermines our ability to build and sustain professional teaching communities in our schools" (p. 8) and "undercuts the ability to implement school reforms" (p. 9).

Suggestions for moving forward are recommended in the report. These include:

1. provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to consolidate and build on what they have learned
2. allocating beginning teachers a mentor
3. giving beginning teachers a reduced teaching load
4. provide a better approach to induction into the profession

A major part of this would be to increase PD opportunities aimed specifically at beginning teachers. This has been addressed in the literature. For example, Zavala (2001) believes that the "persistent problem of teacher shortages and pessimistic views of the quality of teachers has led to a continuous demand to improve recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers" (p. 1).

Much education research in Australia has focused on teacher education preparation and the adequacy of undergraduate courses. A result of this is the development of National Standards for teachers as well as much education discourse focusing on 'quality teaching' and 'best practice'. In this sense, PD for beginning and early career teachers is a significant area to consider in overall planning and development.

*"When teacher preparation is based on a transmission model of learning, a central dilemma for teachers becomes how to teach in ways one has seldom or never experienced." (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin 1995; Little, 1993).*



The literature review explored a number of issues pertaining to the PD practices in the education sector. Of significance to these arguments is that programs and approaches to PD can be as diverse as the PD purpose itself. Consequently, it is difficult to pin down exactly what effective PD might look like as what works in one context may not work in another. Further, if PD programs are to be effective the consensus in the literature is that PD must meet the needs of the participants. PD needs are diverse, vary from teacher to teacher and present challenges for individuals, schools and systems in assessing which needs are most pressing. PD varies in its impact on participants and a more systematic approach may be required to inform decision making over which needs are addressed and what approaches and specific interventions employed. What's more participants themselves can be from varied levels of educational jurisdiction such as principals, managers, teachers and cleaners. It has therefore been argued that effective PD can be different things for different people. However, it is clear from the literature that a number of aspects can contribute to what effective PD may be and that current PD practices require improvement for a number of reasons.

Effective PD should be meaningful and relate to those that are present and be seen to be something that can be used to make a difference in the educational practice of the participants. PD needs to be ongoing and sustained over a period of time. It also needs to present practical applications to real-life situations. What is being offered now is mainly transmissive. It aims to address policy change or initiative. It is about people being informed and it can be skills based. In this sense it is a 'fill up the empty vessel' approach.

PD practice however, needs to be different and transformative. It needs to change the way an individual sees themselves by addressing an individual's sense of inquiry. In this sense, it needs to assist individuals to find ways to transform themselves and address valuable issues in the classroom.

## **Methodology**

A number of data corpuses comprised the research. These included:

1. A comprehensive literature review canvassing key themes and understandings
2. Focus group and semi-structured interview methodology and protocols
3. An on-line survey tool
4. A model for effective PD planning that considers strategies for addressing current and future PD need and amelioration of barriers to PD effectiveness

## ***Focus Groups***

Two focus groups were conducted representing different perspectives on the efficacy of PD for teachers, schools, regions, and districts. Membership of the focus groups was determined through

liaison with Department of Education and the Arts and was restricted to those who had experience particularly with the AGQTP and grants.

Focus Group 1 involved ten participants who were PD coordinators from across the Queensland state. These individuals were responsible for the implementation of Education Queensland's *Professional Development Agenda (2006-2007)* across their regions. All regional representatives were present in the focus group. Participants of this focus group were drawn from a cross-section of school types including regional, remote and rural, large and small schools, primary and secondary, special and P-12 schools. Their focus is on building capacity within school communities and encompasses all members of a school staff (inclusive of teachers, administration, and ancillary staff). Focus Group 2 involved 6 participants who were middle to senior managers of Education Queensland. This included Principals, Educational Advisers, and Educational Director-Schools within the one regional non-metropolitan district.

**Box B:** Focus group questions

Question 1: *Background* Please introduce yourselves in turn, and for our benefit outline your role.

Question 2: What responsibilities do you have with respect to PD?

Question 3: What modes of PD have you used or experienced and what form of PD has worked best? Why?

Question 4: What form of PD has worked least effectively? Why?

Question 5: Have there been any barriers to the conduct of effective PD? (systemic, attitudes, local internal, local external)

Focus groups were conducted by researchers from the project team and followed a semi structured format using a series of prompt questions (refer Box B). Members were reassured that comments would remain confidential (de-identified) and formal signed consent was obtained from each participant. Focus groups commenced with all members introducing themselves and their role, and then proceeded with a general discussion by participants around the prompts suggested by the interviewer. Each focus group was held in a seminar/discussion room setting and were each of around 60 to 90 minutes in duration. Focus group discussion was audio taped and transcribed using general qualitative convention (Silverman, 1999). Content data analysis (as opposed to discourse analysis) was undertaken identifying key themes and sub-themes, and threads of common opinion.

### ***Interviews***

Interviews were conducted by researchers from the project team and participants were reassured that comments would remain confidential (de-identified) and formal signed consent was obtained from each participant. There were eight semi-structured interviews which followed a series of prompt questions (refer Box C). The interviews involved middle managers and/or teachers (5) and regional coordinators and/or directors (3). Participants were asked to elucidate their perspectives

on the effectiveness of PD to meet their job role, school contexts' need, the barriers, and enablers for effective PD. It also included their views on strategic planning for PD. Participants were also selected on their ability to provide insight to several dimensions of school type and size or job role.

Each interview was around 30 minutes in duration. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed using general qualitative convention (Silverman, 1999). Content data analysis (as opposed to discourse analysis) was undertaken aligning comments with key themes and sub-themes which emerged from the Focus Groups.

**Box C:** Interview questions

Question 1: *Background* Please outline your role.

Question 2: What responsibilities do you have with respect to PD?

Question 3: How many PD sessions have you attended in 2006? Last 3 years?

Question 4: What form of PD has worked best? Why?

Question 5: What form of PD has worked least effectively? Why?

Question 6: Have you delivered PD? If so, what?

Question 7: Have there been any barriers to the conduct of effective PD? (systemic, attitudes, local internal, local external)

Question 8: Have there been any aspects that have supported/helped success in PD in your context?

**Survey**

The survey was disseminated across Queensland along with an information sheet about the project and a consent form. Two methods of engaging participants were employed. Principals were contacted via email asking for them to select three teachers within their own school that represented a range of approaches to teaching who were then contacted by email and provided with the details of the online survey submission tool. Additionally, where principals were supportive, hard copies of the same survey and supporting materials were provided to them for dissemination to all the staff of their school.

Survey participants were asked to provide details regarding their demographic, professional experience, and PD involvement, as well as asking about their opinions regarding PD effectiveness. Evaluative Likert scale items drew detail regarding the impact of PD involvement across the five dimensions identified by Guskey (2000). The items were adapted from the suite of evaluative tools designed by Horizon Research (2001) and according to insights gained from the extensive literature review.

**Findings**

### ***Focus groups and interview findings***

One outcome from these data corpuses was that PD itself can be conceived as a multitude of things. PD has formally or traditionally comprised on stand alone seminars, workshops or events that are often delivered on-masse to teachers. Both grant programs and compliance reports have tacitly promoted these types of formats.

*“There’s been a tendency to think that to have PD, you had to go and sit at a workshop by an expert...” (Focus 1)*

Also highlighted from the focus groups and interviews was that satisfaction with PD or the efficacy of PD is dependent on a number of aspects. These include but are not limited to:

- the quality of the presenters (where relevant),
- the “fit” with the professional development need for participants and communities,
- the way the PD linked with classroom practice and/or daily work tasks.

There was a consensus that PD should be locally planned with support from regional PD officers, connect with local need, connect individuals or teams with a learning community, involve supported practice over time, and set an expectation for report on progress made as a result of the PD.

*“...if it’s valuable PD you see a result, something happens, you learn something more, you implement it, it’s implemented.” [SJa, interview]*

Another major theme identified in the analysis of the focus group and interview transcripts was the notion of time. It was clear that the attitude, such as emphasized in Focus group 2,

*“The best type of PD is focused, sustained and PD that challenges teachers to change; also challenging to pedagogy and assessment.” [Focus 2]*

was consistent across education sectors.

It was also common for respondents to agree with the notion that:

*“ There needs to be a flexible approach to PD planning and resources to implement effective PD. Teachers need time to think, and often the nature of the PD does not allow for this.” [Focus 2]*

PD practices also needed explicit expectations and thorough follow up to be effective. Many educators also believed that stronger School/University partnerships should be built up so that educational sectors aligned both theoretical and practical approaches to teaching practice.

There was also agreement that having school based experts built capacity for effective PD but it was as equally important for those that participate and deliver get recognition for such.

A number of barriers were also highlighted in the focus group and interview data. These included:

geographic diversity (particularly access for those schools that are remote); lack of teacher sharing and connecting; disengaged teachers; time and timing; prior experience with poor PD; organisational convenience/compliance; burnout; teacher transience and insecurity.

*“-that they work in isolation often they don’t realize that they are good. They don’t compare themselves. They don’t see anyone.” [Focus 1]*

*“-And they have the fear of that tall poppy syndrome too. They don’t want to be lifted up above their peers, as best practice. “[Focus 1]*

### **Survey findings**

Conversely there was little evidence of dissatisfaction with the quality of PD from teachers who responded to the survey questions.

- Mean level of satisfaction for the PD scale = 3.87 indicating endorsement for the quality of PD.
- Only 20% of respondents identified substantial dissatisfaction with the quality of PD.
- 20% indicated unreserved support for the quality of PD.

However, responses were skewed towards non-committal or guarded endorsement, which suggests there is still room for improvement in the quality of PD. There was also a variation in reported usefulness of PD reflects discrepancy between type or content area of PD delivered & desired PD.

**Diagram 1**

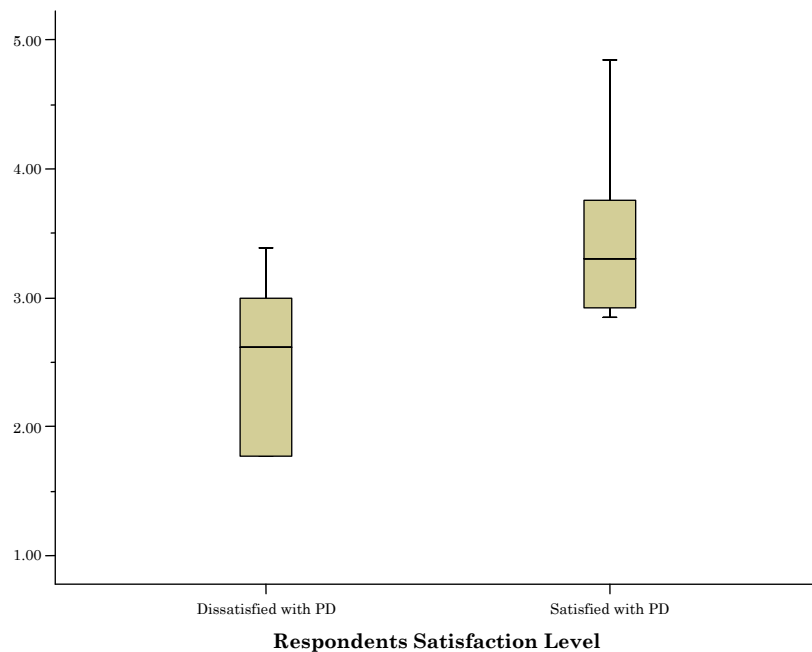


Diagram 1 shows that there was a strong and positive correlation between the satisfaction and organizational support score. This means that teachers who felt they were supported by their administration for PD ventures were generally happier with their PD experiences.

A consistent overriding theme was that effective PD is not a singular construct but that it reflects variety of need, contexts and objectives in both selection of focus and mode/s of engagement. Effective PD recognises and taps into extant expertise and works to build organisational and individual capacity for further growth. Effective PD depends on partnerships, time and timing, funding and reflection. It sets expectations, carefully assesses efficacy and provides a platform for reporting on evaluated PD to the professional community.

### **A model for effective Professional Development planning and strategies**

This research project provided comprehensive evidence to support the notion that effective PD should be responsive, contextualised and dependent on the attitudes of local professionals, their career stage, and their engagement. It is clear that there is no one size fits all best practice model for PD mode of delivery.

This project found that in publishing the PD Agenda, Education Queensland provides much of the direction for PD activity in schools and across regions. The existing Education Queensland system also provides PD coordinators to assist in the identification of local PD need, brokering and networking of PD opportunity and assisting in the setting of expectation deriving from PD programs. This has been shown to be quite successful. The data also shows that teachers are well aware that there are also programs available for staff to access for personal development especially aspiring leaders and beginning and establishing teachers. Recently there has begun the development of a suite of Pathways options that present staff with opportunities to work toward formal qualifications to support their work. Upgrading of formal qualifications for teacher aides is also available. Additionally, Education Queensland provides induction material for beginning and establishing teachers. Participants in this project were also well aware of staff that had completed advanced qualifications at tertiary institutions. Education Queensland clearly recognises that the development of systemic wide professional capability relies on attention to the professionalism of the workforce. However, the data from this research tends to suggest that formal support, compliance requirements, and recognition is limited to the restricted set of systemic PD purposes published in the agenda. There was a strong suggestion that personal development efforts were not comprehensively encouraged, rewarded, acknowledged or utilised. This has had the effect of sidelining the perceived value and relevance of personal professional development PD.

To effectively develop their professionalism, teachers require opportunity for self identified development need, opportunity to pursue development as individuals supported by a team, small teams, or identified communities, and these opportunities need to be supported and rewarded. Although it is clear that all the elements of a potentially effective PD system are present, the lack of

formal recognition and support/encouragement for personal and team growth programs has resulted in a perception that the systemic PD need by way of the PD agenda, is all that is valued. Funding for projects via AGQTP certainly largely ignore strategies for enhancing the personal professional capabilities of staff.

An effective model of PD would be one where there is more support for individual and small group based PD promoting the development of the workforce at the grass roots. The research team recognise the need for PD that derives from systemic dissemination requirements regarding policy etc, but this is only one aspect of PD. Professional learning however, is specific to the individual, the context, the team, and local objectives, and this drives the need for establishment of a PD model that also provides well for individual growth. Figure 1 depicts the layers of PD purposes that contribute to an overall effective PD model. Note that, as depicted, PD balance is considered to comprise greater focus on personal growth than team development, and so on up the pyramid to the systemic purposes for PD.

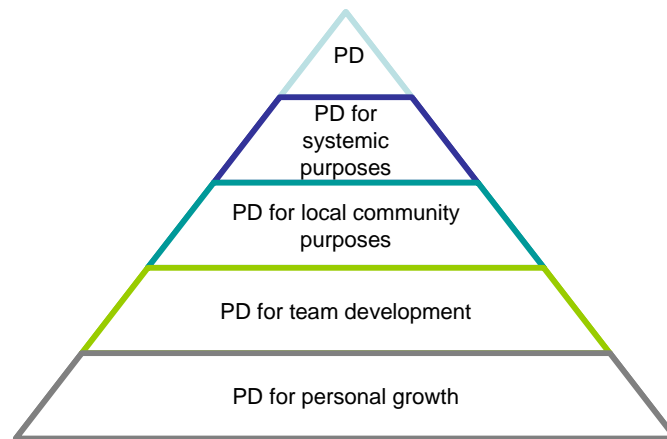


Figure 1. PD pyramid

The PD agenda as provided by Education Queensland does well to direct attention to key themes, but it does limit the opportunities for individuals. Retaining the PD Agenda framework but supplementing it with a more personalised and situational construct for professional growth would herald an extremely positive future for the profession. The vision here is a framework that promotes teachers developing their own PD goals, while being supported, and mentored. Pursuit of PD would be over a significant duration to allow for reflection (e.g. online programs of study, professional portfolio development), and may involve a variety of options including Pathways programs (already an initiative of Education Queensland), specialised higher education qualifications, mentoring development programs, leadership programs and so forth. Teachers could carefully manage their development through processes that require them to explicitly detail and demonstrate their achievement of objectives linked to Professional Standards. Teachers could be released for engagement in PD (e.g. one day per week), and selected for such release through

a merit/need based selection processes and formal application. Teachers engaged in these personal development programs would be required to develop local events in their area of expertise for the benefit of their colleagues. This would be an important process for developing the skills of colleagues, and enticing them to consider their own PD needs. AGQTP funding could be structured to reflect the balance depicted in Figure 1.

There also needs to be mechanisms for projecting the benefits of PD growth across the system. The research has identified several barriers to sharing between educational professionals. Not least are their extant insecurity and the expectation that attempts at shared expertise will not be well received or regarded. A system that recognises, rewards and expects collegial sharing will be the foundation of a much more effective PD framework. Therefore, a model for PD that formalises, supports and promotes personal PD as well as the other purposes of PD, and which incorporates a more reflexive relationship between these PD layers, should break down some of these barriers.

This research project has not found any evidence to support the notion that there would be one best mode for PD. PD mode must be as varied as there are things to be learned and people to learn them. The research has discerned however, that there may well be one best model for PD management, a reflexive four layer model. Priorities for PD would be set as non prescriptive guidelines to assist PD coordinators in their advocacy role. These priorities would reflect predominant need flagged to PD coordinators and consolidated centrally, as well as policy driven requirements identified for the profession/system. Funding for PD would reflect the hierarchical balance depicted in Figure 1, but management would respond to the nature of the relevant PD layer. That is, at the personal PD purposes layer, management of PD would be shared between professional associations (for disciplinary based initiatives), regional offices (who might act in the selection by merit of people for tertiary and formal qualification opportunities), schools (who might manage formal mentoring programs), and individuals (who might apply for study release programs, or engage in Pathways options). At the Team PD layer, management might narrow to include just school, cluster or professional association projects brokered by PD coordinators. At the community PD layer, management might rest with school leadership teams supported by PD coordinators. Finally, at the systemic purposes PD layer, management might rest with regional leadership. Refer to Figure 2 for a rough sketch of proposed management responsibilities.



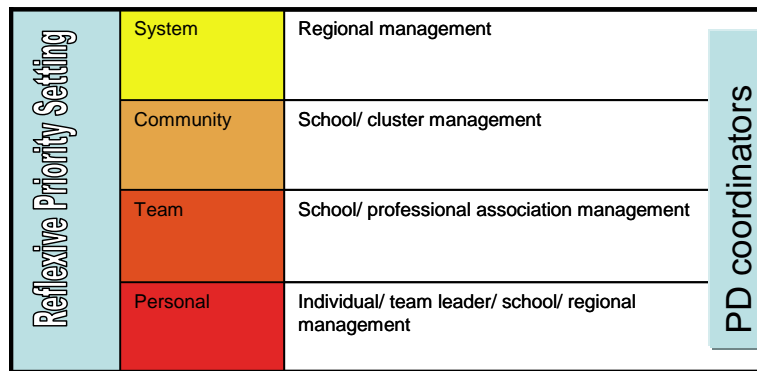


Figure 2: PD Management model

This model is designed to provide support for development of opportunities in each of the four layers of PD purpose. It provides for formal processes for application and selection by merit/need, for funding and release. It includes the valuable PD coordinators in each region to assist staff to articulate their PD need and to connect them with personnel and materiel resources for the conduct of PD. And it suggests the place for reflexive development of PD agenda priorities.

The research task for this project was to identify how PD needs may be identified and met. It became clear that PD needs are various and as such may be identified in a variety of ways. The PD management model presented in Figure 2 provides a responsibility sketch for the identification of PD need at each layer of purpose. For example, for personal PD needs, we rely on individuals themselves, their team leaders, school leaders, and PD coordinators to identify PD priorities and opportunities for individuals to engage in development programs. The Professional Standards framework provides an ideal tool here for teachers to use to both identify areas of need and against which to provide demonstrable evidence of achievement and development.

The important test of any model for PD is that it adequately responds to the requirements of each stakeholder. This research project has identified that the current management model does not effectively address the needs of all stakeholder groups, with particular deficits with regard to the scope for recognised and supported personal professional development. The research team propose that the suggested management model frame will form an appropriate vehicle for the establishment of a more comprehensive and respected PD scheme. The success of PD initiatives now and into the future will be best gauged by: the engagement levels of staff in personal PD programs, the degree to which staff report that PD has been relevant and has effected changes in their personal practices against the Professional Standards, and the degree to which PD coordinators are employed to broker PD initiatives for teams, schools, and communities.

## Recommendations from report

1. Supplement the systemic PD Agenda priority framework with formal provisions for PD at the personal, team and school community layers
2. Where possible identify, develop and utilise in-house expertise for PD programs
3. Develop partnerships between schools and with tertiary institutions through the design of collaborative PD
4. Provide PD over time, with express expectation for collaboration with colleagues.
5. Utilise technology wherever possible to supplement and promote the establishment of Communities of Learners
6. Develop a reflexive capacity for the setting of PD agenda priorities
7. Provide long term development /Special Study Program opportunities for staff on a merit basis to be taken as 1 day per week release to engage in development that will promote demonstrable improvement linked to Professional Standards. Include in the arrangement a requirement for connection and discussion with colleagues about program experiences
8. Maintain and support the PD coordinator roles in each region
9. Recognise and reward practice that shows direct link to a PD engagement

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