

Approaches to measuring the impact of professional development

If enhancing the knowledge, skills and understanding of staff is central to school improvement, it is vitally important to evaluate the impact of professional development on teaching and on learning. This is likely to occur as part of monitoring by senior staff and by subject leaders over a period of time. It may involve the analysis of assessment data, where appropriate.

Issues to consider in evaluating the impact of professional development

1. Timescale

Soon after the event has taken place:

- What has been learned?
- Were learning objectives identified beforehand met?
- What are the implications for practice in the school?
- What is the scope of changes required?
- How will this involve amendments to action plans?
- What support will be needed?
- How will we monitor progress? e.g. self assessment, performance management, observations

After a period of time (which will vary according to the focus)

- What is working well?
- What is proving difficult and why?
- What else do we need to do to support the change(s)?
- What is the impact on teaching and learning and how can we evaluate this? E.g. work sampling, discussions with teachers/pupils/parents, observations, assessment information

2. Methods of evaluating impact

These will vary according to the focus but could include:

- discussions with staff and/or pupils
- questionnaires for pupils and/or staff
- lesson observations
- assessment data
- scrutiny of pupils' work
- self-evaluative activities by staff
- measuring changes in pupil behaviour e.g. motivation, participation
- attendance records
- surveys of parents' views
- evidence of recruitment, retention and staff progression
- staff data, e.g. absence

Most of these approaches will yield hard data.

CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education) suggests that the key impact is changed behaviours - both of teachers and pupils. These are soft measures and include:

Staff Measures:

- confidence, e.g. in making a difference, to try new things
- motivation and morale
- self esteem
- enthusiasm
- willingness to listen, learn and reflect
- improved self-evaluation
- creativity
- willingness and ability to make changes
- understanding of good and successful practice
- planning and using a wider range and variety of learning activities and strategies
- greater subject knowledge
- willingness to continue professional development

- initiative
- sustained and embedded change
- career progression
- risk taking
- collaboration
- teacher-pupil relationships
- enhanced commitment to teaching as a career

Pupil Measures:

- enjoyment in learning
- attitudes - attendance, involvement in life of school
- participation
- pride in and organisation of work
- better response to questions and tasks
- performance and progress - added value
- engagement in a wider range of learning activities
- attitudes towards subjects and aspects

The methods and measures above have been developed based on those provided in the CPD Toolkit, produced by the East Midlands CPD Partnership