

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW and DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The national agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' sets the contractual context for professional review and development. It requires that teachers have an ongoing commitment to maintain their professional expertise through an agreed programme of continuing professional development (CPD).

The need for CPD, the continuing development of knowledge and skills, is well recognised in education. Changes in the curriculum and in approaches to learning and teaching, developments in technology and the constantly evolving role of schools in our society, together mean that a teacher's competences and knowledge need frequent review and development.

Professional review and development (PRD) is the process whereby the development and training needs of all staff are identified and agreed in relation to their current practice, the requirements of the school or local authority improvement plan and national priorities. Professional review and development is one of a range of quality assurance strategies in school and is central to raising attainment and achievement and improving the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Good professional review supports and challenges individual teachers, empowering them to seek out and engage in meaningful and transformative CPD experiences. It is therefore increasingly understood that CPD is very much more than attendance at courses or other such events and increasingly the case that teachers are seeking professional development through collaborative work based activity, peer support, professional reading, classroom visits and observation, acting posts and other practice based activity. Successful professional review and development directly benefits pupils through practical improvements in the classroom and raises the quality of the learning experience.

Background

There is clear evidence to suggest that the single biggest element in school improvement is the quality and preparedness of teachers. No other factor makes such a significant contribution to the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching. The agenda set out in Curriculum for Excellence requires that all pupils should be taught by teachers who are familiar with curricular change, knowledgeable about learning and teaching methodologies, up to date with technology, and who can enable them to achieve to their full potential and equip them for the changing world in which they live.

‘...teachers accept responsibility for their own professional development, for the quality of learning in their classrooms, and for their role in self evaluation and improvement at personal and establishment levels’ **Improving Scottish Education** (HMIE 2006)

It is worth remembering that PRD is the process which ensures that all teachers are fully prepared to carry out their contractual obligations. The traditional process has a number of elements or components:

- Preparation for the interview including self evaluation
- PRD interview including CPD needs identification
- CPD Plan and Record
- Undertaking professional development activity
- Evaluating impact of CPD on practice

As with other activities there is a need for schools and local authorities to evaluate the outcomes of the PRD process to ensure that it is effective in improving learning and teaching.

Rationale

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a set of principles and recommendations as being helpful to ensure quality in the PRD process. The National CPD Team considers it timely to refresh and enhance the process of professional review and development in line with the revised **CPD Booklet 2008**. Given that the PRD process and active engagement in CPD is essential in ensuring quality of provision in our schools, PRD must be a high quality experience which is responsive to the needs of teachers. This can be most effectively achieved where teachers feel fully involved in the process and supported in identifying and undertaking professional development. CPD is now a compulsory and accepted part of contracts of all teachers in school, but what constitutes appropriate development for all the various stages of a teacher's career is less well defined. PRD is a life long learning tool and a lens for individual progress with self evaluation and reflection against the appropriate Standard being pivotal to the process. Engagement in these activities will result in a clearer indication of appropriate development needs for the individual. It should be noted that all teachers will benefit from critical self evaluation against the **Standard for Full Registration** however some might find it more appropriate to self evaluate against the **Standard for Charter Teacher** or the **Standard for Headship**.

Teachers are encouraged to go beyond the traditional model for PRD remembering that the important part of the process is the relationship between those involved. The case studies attached exemplify alternative models. The models also demonstrate the importance of applying a cyclical process of self reflection, planning, CPD activity and evaluation of impact to promote further professional development.

This paper, offering principles and recommendations, is the result of the work of the National CPD Team with support from an advisory group consisting of CPD Coordinators at authority level.

Principles

Evidence from research and practice offers a range of principles which are considered important for effective professional review and development:

- There is an ongoing commitment to maintain professional expertise at every stage of a teacher's career, regardless of post. See **Brighthouse's 5 stage model** – initial education and training, beginner teacher to established expert, early management to established expert, consultant practitioner and teacher entering retirement.
- Effective PRD is based upon self evaluation and personal reflection and is effective when undertaken against the relevant Standard. **CPDReflect** and **CPDFind** will assist with self evaluation and development.
- Teachers are required to maintain a CPD plan and record which identifies professional development and training needs, indicates how these might be addressed and includes an evaluation or reflection of impact on practice. Identified development needs should be a balance of personal professional development priorities and those required to address the school and local authority improvement plan.
- Within the context of lifelong learning, each teacher is responsible for meeting his/her own development needs to ensure effective learning and teaching.
- Incorporate PRD as part of the culture of the school which will include good leadership, collegiality, a positive ethos and effective quality assurance procedures all within a coaching backdrop.
- Ensure a high quality and meaningful experience for both the individual being reviewed and the reviewer through appropriate training being offered.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as support for discussion on any review of the PRD process:

- Dialogue should be within a culture of improvement which recognises and celebrates success.
- It would be worth considering alternative arrangements for frequency, regularity and format of review meetings.
- Coaching techniques will improve the quality of dialogue
- The process can be enhanced by considering a non hierarchical approach
- The process should be continuous with professional review opportunities on a regular basis and beyond the obligatory traditional once per year arrangement
- Move away from the current perception of a managed process towards one with the focus on a skilled up profession
- Sources such as **CPD for Educational Leaders** provide good frameworks for effective self evaluation
- The **CPD continuum** provides a useful self evaluation instrument in Leadership development
- 360 analysis is a useful strategy for critical reflection and can be supported by the involvement of a critical friend and a collegiate approach
- Impact should be evident on professional practice and pupil learning

Professional Development

A review of the literature

One of the key elements in educational reform is the professional development of teachers. Research shows that professional development has an impact on teachers' beliefs and practices including behaviour, on the students' learning, and on the implementation of educational reforms and school improvement. Societies now acknowledge that teachers are the most significant change agent in these reforms. This new emphasis on teacher professional development promotes the concept of teaching as a profession.

Good teaching has a significant positive impact on learning. Becoming an excellent teacher is a long term, life long process requiring the development of skills, the acquisition of specific knowledge and the promotion of certain ethical values and attitudes.

Professional development is described as the growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining their teaching systematically (Glatthorn 1995) and includes formal and informal experiences (Ganser 2000). The new perspective of professional development has several characteristics:

Teachers are treated as active learners (McLaughlin and Zarrow 2001), it is a long term process, the most effective form is that which is based in schools and is related to daily activity of teachers and learners (Dudzinski et al 2000), the process is linked to school reform (Guskey 1995), the teacher is conceived as a reflective practitioner, it is most effective as a collaborative process in which there are meaningful interactions (Clement and Vanderberghe 2000) and a process which may look and be very different in different settings (Scribner 1999).

According to Guskey (1995) there are some guidelines for success to be followed when planning and implementing professional development including the need to recognise change as being both an individual and an organisational process. Corcoran (1995) emphasises respect for teachers as professionals and adult learners. Meanwhile Fullan (1987) refers to crucial factors for successful professional development including redefinition as a process of learning, the role of leadership at school level, and the organisational culture within the school.

Given the number of models reported in literature and the possible combinations, those interested in designing and implementing professional development have a variety of options and opportunities. Some models of professional development require and imply certain organisational partnerships to be effective and include networks at Authority level and with other institutions including HEI. Other models describe those that can be implemented on a smaller scale at classroom and school level and include reflection, co-operative or collegial development, observation of good practice, project-based initiatives, action research, self-directed development and coaching/mentoring.

The reflective model, the teacher as a reflective practitioner, requires the teacher to reflect on the meaning and effectiveness of their practice. This model is inspired by Schon (1995) which explains reflection as being curious about some aspect of practice and developing a plan for future action. Glazer et al (2000) refers to reading that can contribute to reflection and discussion, and the use of an external facilitator (coach) in the reflection process. Results of studies show that programmes designed to promote teachers' reflection on their practices do result in these teachers developing a more complex view of beliefs and teaching practices (Clarke 1995) and an improvement in their teaching.

Some authors have reported on the impact of teachers' own narratives on their experiences can have on their professional development (Clements 2001). Teachers' own story, or journaling, is an 'extraordinarily powerful' tool to promote teachers growth and development (Ershler 2001). Journals can be private or shared with colleagues for response, feedback, and interpretation or comment (Killion 1999). Coaching provides opportunities and structures for teachers' professional development. Coaching is the process by which a critical listener/observer asks questions, makes observations and offers suggestions that help a teacher grow reflect and produce different decisions (Harwell-Kee 1999). Various studies report the effectiveness of coaching as a form of professional development.

There are a number of factors to consider when planning and implementing a model of professional development. For the process to be successful, a 'culture of support' must be established. Lieberman (1994) talks of collegiality, openness and trust. Bush (1999) adds to this in preparing teachers to become leaders or assume responsibility for their own professional development. Teachers need to make time both to make professional development an ongoing part of their work on a regular basis (Bush 1999) but also to see the results of their efforts (Dorph and Holtz 2000). Teachers need time for reflection. Research shows that the more time given for professional development activities then the more effectively teachers teach and consequently the more successfully students learn.

There are number of recommendations that emerge from this review of the literature: Professional review and development is a continuous and long term process. It needs to be systematically planned and supported and teachers need to be encouraged to participate in the process designed for their own development. Professional review must respond to the individual's professional needs and their stage of professional development at the time. The goals of development should be in alignment with those of the curriculum and with school improvement. A collaborative approach where teachers are supported and feel valued is important. It is also important to recognise in the PRD process that a variety of models and techniques of professional development must be regularly available, not all development can be or should be courses. Technology is increasingly a means of supporting PRD and the PRD process will be enhanced by individuals fully engaging with resources designed to facilitate their professional review and development.

Case studies

Each case study exemplifies at least one of the principles.

Case Study 1

Danny McDonald – DHT Baldraggon Academy - Dundee City

Changing the Personal Review and Development (PRD) Conversation

Staff at Baldraggon Academy are working together to improve the quality of dialogue in the PRD process. The process now features regular review meetings and uses coaching approaches.

Background

Danny is depute headteacher of the school, which was formed as a result of a merger between Kirkton High School and Rockwell High School. The school roll is around 600 with 52 teaching staff.

Definition of coaching

Danny's definition of coaching is that it is a process which aims to bring the solutions out of a person and which supports the coachee to find the solution. In contrast, giving the mentee the benefit of their experience is the role of the mentor, which he suggests is a process which works very well with newly qualified teachers (NQTs) although he adds that the mentor would hopefully use a coaching model too.

Initial involvement

Danny's initial involvement in this area was to support teachers using a mentoring approach. When the Scottish Executive Education Department pilot was introduced, he was invited to bid for some funding. His successful bid allowed him to have 12 teachers, including two of the senior management team (SMT), trained by an external provider. At the same time a group of staff were working with all staff in a collegiate way, firstly to establish the aims and values of the school but also to change the way they communicated with each other. This involved all staff in a series of 12 in-service sessions looking, through circle time, at their shared aims and values. This was a new way of consultation. The nature of these 'conversations' was not dissimilar to the coaching process. There were also similarities here with restorative practices, which the school had introduced in session 2005/06. It was important for the school that pupils' voices were also heard and this happened through social education classes. The philosophy behind this approach centered on a humanitarian view of how schools might be. Coaching was seen as key to taking continuing professional development forward a fresh approach to CPD.

In the meantime, another 12 staff were trained, the rest of SMT, some principal teachers (PTs) and a few more teachers, bringing the total number of staff trained to 24 out of a staff of 52. At this stage it was possible to take a serious look at reviewing the process of PRD, which it was felt had become stale, to include coaching as part of the process and a coaching group was formed to do this. The new coaching professional review and development (PRD) model was set up as an alternative with all but one member of staff agreeing to be involved; the traditional method was still available to that member of staff. The new model started in September 2007 with coaching conversations taking place between coach and coachee three times per year, when goals are set by the coachee. Goals set must articulate with the school's aims and values and are reviewed three times per year with the coach.

The coaches meet before each block of coaching sessions and co-coach each other. There is also an evaluation of approach at the end of each block of coaching and so far the feedback is very positive. The 12 hours required for coaching comes from the working time agreement and is agreed by an executive working group within the school. While the structure is still hierarchical, it is hoped that a SMT involvement on 360 degree evaluation might initiate a change to a less hierarchical structure.

Key learning

One of the key areas of learning for Danny was the way that, even outwith the PRD/Coaching model, all staff involved have embraced coaching in different ways and all those trained continue to see a value in it. He also thinks it is critical to keep an eye to practice to ensure that it is coaching that is taking place, ie a solution-focused approach, rather than mentoring.

Case Study 2

Jim Morris - Coaching & Mentoring Project Officer - Moray Council

Moray Educational Services Leadership: Coaching for Change Project

This authority is engaged in a coaching and leadership project in which dialogue, reflection and coaching are seen as fundamental to achieving a shift of leadership culture.

Background

The Moray coaching project commenced in the spring 2006 with support from the Scottish Executive. The project sees professional dialogue and reflection through coaching as fundamental to achieving a shift of leadership culture in the authority. Since December 2006, one strand of the project now sees all newly appointed Headteachers in Moray being given a coach for their initial year in their new post. Presently, 13 Headteachers are coached by a team of 6 coaches, who are officers in the Educational Development Services department. Coaching sessions are held initially on a fortnightly basis, then once a month. It should be perhaps noted that two of the coaches are presently on secondment from their substantive post of Principal teacher, but under this initiative are now coaching newly appointed Headteachers.

Working definitions

"Coaching is about unlocking potential in order to maximise performance - it's about bring out the best in people."

"The coach does not need to have the knowledge or expertise that the Headteacher as the coach uses questions to challenge the Headteacher's thinking and to promote reflection. The coach only needs expertise in asking the correct questions."

Key principles/coaching approach

Coaching is a relationship based on trust and works best when both parties feel that their time is valuable and is valued by the other. Trust is the hallmark of a successful coaching relationship, so it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that everything said is confidential and that if anything heard within the context of the coaching relationship needs to be actioned, it must be done in a way that maintains the relationship. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be honest with their coach in order for the coach to be able to fully support them.

The coaching GROW model is used to facilitate coaching conversations and a record is kept by the Headteacher and the coach in a Coaching Conversation Log which:

- Celebrates success -what is working well at the moment.
- Identify and prioritise challenges
- Commits to specific next steps for both the Headteacher and the coach.

The coaching Conversation Log not only guides the questioning that takes place between the Headteacher and their coach but also serves to document professional growth that takes place.

Coaching sessions work to an agenda set by the Headteacher and focuses on solutions that the Headteacher has to come up with - it is not the job of the coach to give advice. All coaches have undergone training in effective questioning techniques using the GROW model.

PR&D and Coaching example

Due to confidential nature of the coaching discussions that have taken place it is not possible to give a detailed description of a specific example of PR&D and coaching, but this initiative has many examples of how Headteachers, who as part of this programme, have welcomed the opportunity to think out their thoughts out loud, in a safe environment and have time to be more reflective. As a result of coaching, Headteachers are more strategic in their thoughts and actions and now adopt a coaching approach within their leadership style within their school.

Key learning

This project has shown that coaching is a powerful tool in professional development and when used skilfully and respectfully can also be an enriching learning experience for both the Headteacher and the coach. To date the following learning experiences have been noted:

- Thinking more clearly about things
- Feeling valued and listened to
- Recognising and appreciating skills and resources
- Increasing the range of options when needing to make a decision
- Clarifying how they'd like things to be as they get even better - having vision
- Understanding the steps that have to be taken to get there
- Becoming more creative and optimistic
- Feeling more positive and confident about change

Looking Ahead

We are now nearing the stage when some of our Headteachers have or are reaching the end of their year with a coach. At this point, a coaching conversation takes place to look at how they would like coaching to continue. Some have decided to continue with monthly coaching sessions, others are of the opinion that coaching has now given them the necessary skills to coach themselves when they need to make decisions or implement change.

Moray Educational Services is committed to this initiative, as we can see the benefits that it is bringing to professional learning and leadership development. Looking ahead we would like to expand coaching for newly appointed DHTs and PTs as our pool of coaches in Moray grows.

Case Study 3

STIRLING COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CASE STUDY: PROFESSIONAL REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

This is an account of the review of the PRD process across an authority. The review process clearly reflects the emerging developments in coaching and mentoring.

Rationale

The need for a “new” Policy and Guidance for Professional Review and Development came from a variety of sources. There was a general dissatisfaction on how the process was currently undertaken and appeared paper heavy for the majority of participants. Furthermore, there was a concern that the process had lost the impetus of continuing professional development and was merely seen as a process that had been imposed and was participated in by dictat. There had been an evolution within the teaching profession of continuing professional development over the last decade. There was a greater understanding of the link between professional development and improvement in learning and teaching. Furthermore, the “Teaching Profession for the 21st Century” had established a greater degree of teacher professionalism and had raised the issue of collegiate working as well as clear contractual link with the Professional Review and Development process. Other initiatives had also brought forward the concept of “dispersed leadership”, leadership at all levels and the autonomy and responsibilities of individual teachers. Recent initiatives by the Scottish Government had also raised the development of the teaching force as a key element in the context of Curriculum for Excellence and reflected in the concept of “Teachers for Excellence”.

Response – Working Group

In response to these “needs”, a Working Group was established and had wide ranging membership from the teaching force including Headteachers in various sectors, staff association representatives and staff from the local authority. The general remit of the group focused on establishing a process which was an “entitlement” and seen as a right of access. The entitlement would be expressed in streamlining the application of the process being meaningful in the process itself and develop worth and value in outcome.

As part of the process of development, research/survey was undertaken of current practice within establishments, and information on what was considered most appropriate practice collated. There were also examples where documentation had been streamlined and brought up to date to assist in this process.

Needs Identified

This general mandate focused on the concept of ownership with the person being reviewed. This general concept focused on self-evaluation as the key element and with the emergence of “standards” at various levels. This would be the key element for professional reflection.

As the process developed, a number of principles consistent with the concept of “entitlement” were developed. These principles included self-evaluation against standards, reflection and identification of evidence and the development of strategies and priorities from this process. Furthermore, it was agreed that in order to engage with the concept of continuing professional development with medium term or long term targets would be required that would be satisfied by a range of CPD activities.

Policy and Guidance

The policy developed gave consideration to the range of initiatives and developments that had been undertaken in recent years and required to be included within any new process. These included:

- A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century
- Commitments to continuing professional development
- The concept of “Teachers for Excellence”
- Scottish Social Services Council recommendations
- The maintenance of entitlement model
- The need to harmonise development cycles associated with improvement plans and budgeting processes – cycles of development in three years
- Interim meetings on an annual basis

The guidance emanating from the policy gave practical advice on how these elements would be integrated through exemplar documentation and focused on the concept of continuing professional development, ownership and responsibility. The engagement of standards which would allow reflection of professional practice, was a key element. These nationally raised standards for teachers included the Standard for Full Registration, the Standard for Chartered Teacher, the Standard for Headship and allowed a frame of reference for professional dialogue. These standards would clearly identify appropriate reflection on professional activity and allow common discussion on areas. From these standards it would also involve a process able to identify strategies and development priorities based on agreed evidence as illustrated within the standards themselves. The development cycle for continuous improvement can also be expressed in medium term (one year) and longer term (three years) continuing professional development activities.

It was also accepted that the new arrangements associated with Professional Review and Development: A Professional Entitlement, would assist in moving the service forward in terms of cultural change. This would include aspects of:

- Dispersed Leadership
- Professional Ownership
- Collegiality

These aspects could be carried through the process of review in the following context. It was anticipated that ownership of the process would lie with the reviewee. The self-evaluation would clearly come from the reflection of professional dialogue associated with the “Standards”. The neutrality of the standards would allow professional discussion with a limited degree of personal opinion. This was seen as a way forward in terms of collegiality. Other aspects would impinge upon the review process including requirement to be clear on evidence. This would allow reflection by both the reviewee and reviewers perspective where discussion should be based on evidence rather than opinion. This was seen as helpful in professional discussion and dialogue on an ongoing basis. It was also agreed that the process would be owned by the reviewee who would write up their recording arrangements and this would be agreed and endorsed by the reviewer. Any workload issues associated with this process would lie with the reviewee and this personal ownership would be a key element. The outcomes associated with the CPD activities would be negotiated with the line manager and responsibility would personally associate with the reviewee and supported through the establishment and service.

Launch

Discussions on the new arrangements were undertaken with Head of Establishment and arrangements established for a briefing/training programme.

The briefing/training programme would include emphasis on the key principles identified in the Guidance and Policy, emphasis on the process rather than the paper, establishment of high level and expectation of professionalism. This would be delivered through briefing/training sessions to all Senior Managers in the case of Primary/Nurseries in cluster groupings and in the case of secondaries, through negotiation and through Senior Management Teams and Faculty/Principle Teacher.

Phasing In

It was agreed that the process would take time to integrate within current arrangements and that the phasing in would be on the basis of current cycles ie when a new review cycle was about to be undertaken, the new process would be established.

It was also agreed that the implementation would be subject to ongoing review in the initial year. This would allow any refinement of documentation and observation on issues that require clarification. Furthermore, documentation in terms of review had been established based on the “standards”. However, more locally based review papers were also established where standards did not yet exist. It was agreed that they would be informal and official guidance and be supplemented with job descriptions/specifications where necessary. This would allow all staff to have opportunities for professional dialogue based on current arrangements and tasks within their remit. Future arrangements would also include the development of additional self-evaluation tools which would be helpful as the process evolved

Conclusion

The process of review of Policy and Guidance has been one of professional reflection. The process has allowed alternative arrangements which embody professionalism in the 21st Century. The methodologies used within the review process clearly reflect developments that are based on effective “Coaching and Mentoring” and assist in developing high quality conversations and dialogue.

Initial reactions in practice have been incredibly positive with staff comfortable with the streamlined process and clearly responding to the neutrality of reflection on professional standards. Furthermore, this reflects the emerging developments with staff entering the profession who are commonly reflective against the standard for full registration. As time moves on, this will be a common and enlightening process for the profession.

Case Study 4

Jim Keegans - Project Lead, Flexible Routes to Headship and member of the National CPD Team.

Flexible Routes to Achieving the Standard for Headship

A coaching culture is integral to this pilot programme in support of those aspiring to headship. Each participant is supported in their progress towards achieving the Standard by a professional development coach. The role of the coach is explained here.

The role of coaching

The Scottish Government following extensive consultation is currently piloting the Flexible Routes programme for achieving the Standard for Headship. The pilot consists of 3 cohorts of 10 participants each, and involves 5 Local Authorities. The aim of the pilot is to encourage more individuals to aspire to headship by offering choice and flexibility. Each participant is supported on the programme through the appointment at Authority level of a Professional Development Coach.

The overall vision of the Flexible Routes programme is to develop the leadership potential of aspiring headteachers in Scotland through high quality professional development coach support. Coach objectives in the programme are to support and challenge participants in the process of self evaluation against the Standard for Headship, to support in the construction of individual Professional Learning Plans, to address and respond to individual CPD needs, to engage with participants during a period of formative assessment in progress towards the Standard, to engage with participants mainly on 1:1 face to face contact, and to provide opportunities for networking of participants on a formal and informal basis.

The coach role has involved setting up a rhythm of coaching sessions with participants on a frequency of one session every 2-3 weeks although this can vary dependent on individual need. Emotional Competence evidence for individuals from the equivalent of a 360 analysis is used by the coach and participant in the process of self evaluation and linked to CPD needs. This is a unique coaching initiative providing active coaching and an opportunity for in-depth 1:1 relationship. Evaluation indicates that participants value the contact with the professional development coach. Good working relationships have been established on the basis of honesty, integrity, respect, trust and confidentiality as essential attributes. Coaches require to be approachable, to have good listening skills, to build confidence and encourage, and to be alert to participants' sensitivities and sources of vulnerability. As a consequence of their experiences, several participants on the programme are developing coaching techniques and are developing a coaching culture to contribute to improvement in their own school.

The coach is perceived as operating a multiple role as coach, mentor, assessor, tutor and facilitator. Some coaching can occur in school, 'in situ', which is an area for further exploration and likely to be a feature of any future programme. Training of the

coaches has been necessary for success, confidence of coaches and the quality of support for participants. The varied and flexible role of the coach with ongoing training ensures that this as a professional development opportunity for the coach. The programme means a significant contribution to capacity building of coaching at Local Authority level.

Personal qualities and professional skills of the coach are critical to the success of the coaching process in the Flexible Routes pilot. The coach requires to be experienced at senior level in leadership and management, to have experience or an awareness of coaching skills and theory, to have an adequate body of knowledge on educational literature and how critical reflection can influence practice, and to be aware of their own professional needs as a continuing learner in the process of coaching. Early evaluation indicates that high quality coaching has a significant impact on the professional development of participants.

Case Study 5

Siobhan Hasson - DHT St Kentigern's Academy -West Lothian Council

This case study provides detail of the review of the PRD process at school level. Integral to this review is the place of coaching to improve the dialogue in PRD conversations.

PRD and Coaching

Background

St.Kentigern's Academy in West Lothian Council is a Secondary school with 1160 pupils and approx 120 staff. The SMT comprises the HT and 3 DHTs.

Two Depute Head Teachers, (including myself), were trained in Coaching techniques by an external agency led by Peter Hook and Andy Vass. My remit includes CPD co-ordinator and 'Learning and Teaching' co-ordinator, and as such I am responsible for the organisation of the PRD programme. In learning about Coaching, I saw the opportunity to use it as a tool to improve the quality of the PRD meetings, and as a way forward to review and improve the link between PRD and CPD.

It has been taken forward as part of a whole school project that I am doing (for my SQH). The aims of the project are to create a structured CPD programme, to build on the link between the Review process and CPD, informing the School Improvement Plan, and to evaluate the impact of CPD on L & T.

Working Definition and Key principles

The working definition that I am using is that it is a way of improving the quality of dialogue in conversations that will lead people to learn, and reach solutions to challenges that they face in their teaching environment. It is about asking probing and open ended questions to challenge thinking and help a person to set their own goals.

Some of the key principles include:

Asking an open ended question – How? What will you do?

Not providing the answer

Asking 'what else?', and repeating to exhaust all avenues

Using 'scaling' as a technique, where are you now? where do you want to be?

One DHT and I have been formally trained on a 2 day external course. We delivered a CPD session to the Extended Management Team (as they do the PRD meetings). I have also provided external taster courses for 3 further members of staff who are involved in the Close Tracking programme with students.

PRD and Coaching example

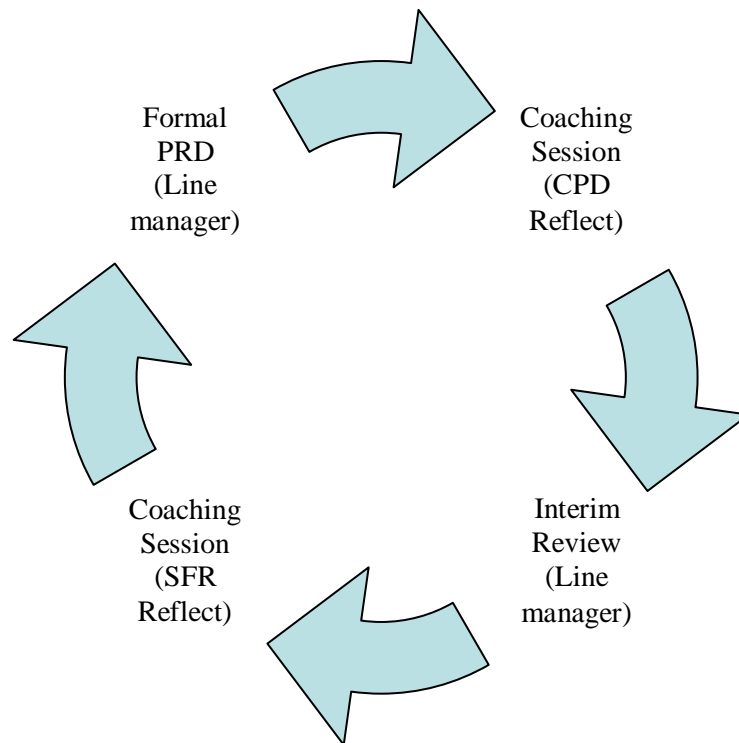
As part of a PRD meeting, the Coachee identified an area for improvement - raising attainment at Higher level. The Coach asked how the person would do this as this was the first year of her teaching at Higher level. Through asking the 'what else' questions, the person identified a range of strategies to undertake including a good practise visit to another school, SQA standards CPD training event, peer observations, critical friend, using departmental QA policy, taking advice from experienced members of the department. The Coach continued to meet with the coachee regularly (on request of the coachee), and monitored progress through discussion, classroom observation and linking with the PTC for the department. The commitment is for the duration of the session, and has involved 3 lengthy coaching sessions as well as shorter informal discussions. Challenges included setting up the good practise visit as this relied on the goodwill of another school. However, after some negotiation, 2 visits were organised successfully. Another challenge has been the attitude and behaviour of the class, which was unexpected. This led to further discussions and a challenge for the coach who had been in a mentoring role previously with the coachee (as a probationer) and given guidance on behaviour management. To approach this as a coach rather than mentor proved to be challenging in not providing the answers. This helped to enable the coachee to become more reflective in their practice, and more innovative. The coachee is more confident to the extent that she wants to teach Advanced Higher next session, and is taking steps to identify her own CPD needs to prepare for this.

Key learning

It is very important to be trained and spend time practising your new skills before embarking on a programme of in-house CPD in Coaching. Also, it is vital that the rationale for changing the approach to PRD is discussed and explained fully to all stakeholders. It is also necessary to evaluate the new programme and get feedback from staff who have experienced the PRD meetings using Coaching strategies.

Looking ahead

The PRD programme will start next term, and I aim to engage the EMT in a presentation and discussion of where I see PRD developing next session.



The continuum shown above will be put forward as the model for next session. As can be seen, Coaching has a major part to play in the cycle. The challenge will be to build capacity of the number of staff who can use Coaching techniques to support it. The CPD improvement team will support staff in encouraging use of CPD Reflect, portfolios, developing a CPD library, engaging staff at DM's in identifying CPD activities, evaluation and impact of CPD on L&T. As well as this, I plan to place this on the EMT agenda regularly and lead its implementation keeping the profile at the forefront of improvement planning.

Case Study 6

Ruth Munro - DHT Dunbar Grammar – East Lothian Council

Professional Review and Development through Coaching

This school has introduced a coaching programme offering an individualised means of supporting senior students. The programme is structured to give four opportunities for coaching conversations over the course of S5 with staff acting as coaches for the students.

In 2006–7 East Lothian Council ran a *Leadership Coaching Programme* for senior managers, with coaching on work-related issues. This involved six 1:1 telephone coaching sessions per individual, with a professional coach provided by nurture HR. In addition to supporting senior managers in their leadership and strategic management roles, this also aimed to develop the understanding and commitment of senior managers to coaching, essential for their ownership of the coaching programme. I took up post as Depute Head Teacher in Dunbar Grammar School in East Lothian Council in January 2007, having been a Quality Improvement Officer in the authority for the previous three years. The fact that my coaching sessions took place shortly after I took up post as a DHT was coincidental to a degree, but proved to be very beneficial.

Perhaps because of the time-limited nature of this project, my coach and I didn't spend much time mulling over the various definitions of coaching – rather we pressed on with the coaching conversations themselves. On reflection, this was probably due to my prior knowledge of and enthusiasm for coaching. Had I been sceptical, or just completely new to the idea, I am confident that my coach would have been happy to discuss definitions and the underpinning philosophy of her work.

Certainly my own reading and further activity have thrown up definitions of coaching which seem appropriate. Myles Downey says that coaching is “the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another.” This appeals to me for a number of reasons. The focus on learning *and* development encapsulates the blend of increased technical aptitude and personal growth that results from effective coaching. Effective coaching should always seek to make a positive difference – so the inclusion of the term ‘performance’ is entirely appropriate. ‘Facilitating’ is, perhaps, an overused term these days. However, in this context it acknowledges the non-directive nature of the process – coaches help individuals to explore, understand or learn for themselves. Finally, the word ‘art’ really captures the human nature of coaching. Of course there are strategies and models and techniques which can be learned and applied - really effective coaching, though, is down to the skills of the coach, practised, honed and applied over time.

One of the benefits of the programme which I was involved in was its flexibility – because we didn't need to meet face to face, there was much more scope for arranging sessions, and even for changing them at short notice if the need arose. Initially, I was somewhat sceptical of the fact that the coaching would be done over the telephone by someone I had never met. Even though I was well-disposed to the idea of coaching, I found it difficult to imagine how I would feel talking in such personal terms to someone without being able to see their face. As it happened, the skills of my coach in creating a rapport were such that this was never an issue, and the benefits of the telephone method certainly outweighed any initial concern on my part.

The coaching sessions themselves used the GROW model. In this model, G stands for goal – what you want to achieve; R for reality – what is happening at the time; O for options – what possibilities are open to you; and W for will – what will you do. I found that this model was helpful in that it gave a natural momentum to the conversations and provided a useful structure for thinking about a range of issues.

The coach's skilful use of questioning was key in ensuring that I considered issues in detail and from a range of perspectives. It was also beneficial to have someone reflect back issues and make links between different comments I had made. I have also reflected on the fact that my coach did not have a background in education. This meant that I was sometimes challenged on statements or assertions which another teacher may have simply accepted. The challenge was welcome and certainly prompted me to reflect on my assumptions and think about how open we are as a profession regarding learning from other disciplines. For me, having a coach who was not a member of staff in my authority or school was liberating. I felt totally at ease in discussing sensitive issues – relationships with colleagues or my personal aspirations, for example.

Over the course of the six sessions, a range of topics were covered: time management; work/life balance; workload; values; communication and team building. Some of these were planned, others arose out of situations I was facing at the time. All of the sessions were productive, and I was surprised both at how easily I was able to shut out the hubbub of school and at how much was achieved in a relatively short time. Each session ended with an agreement about my next steps and the timescales in which I would undertake them. One thing which interested me was how aware I was of the process of being coached – it felt methodical, but never dull.

In terms of the impact on my own professional development, my main feeling is that coaching has accelerated the process. An experienced coach is able to get to the heart of an issue through skilful questioning. The answers were inside my own head all along, but without a coach it would have taken me longer to find them.

In a number of cases, I have been able to continue using the strategies that my coach walked me through initially. An example of this is the technique we used to explore workload issues. I was facing a three week period where a number of major events associated with different parts of my remit were about to converge – a situation made no less challenging by its familiarity! At the beginning of the conversation I was feeling overwhelmed and stressed out – my goal was very straightforward: get to the end of week having achieved successful outcomes in the various projects. Recognising how I was feeling, my coach allowed me some time to set the scene.

Having ensured that I had mentioned all of the elements of the challenges I faced, she asked me to move to a different chair. She then told me that I was now at the end of week three, everything had gone very well, I had successfully dealt with the challenges and had been given lots of positive feedback. The physical move reinforced this imaginative leap. I was then asked how I had achieved this and, in a matter of minutes, had come up with a long list of actions. Coming back to the present, further questioning helped me to flesh these out and create a sequence which resulted in a clear and manageable strategy.

With hindsight, it seems like a very obvious approach, but at the time I was still fairly inexperienced, being new to both the role and the school. Under intense pressure, I hadn't been able to see a clear way forward. Even now that I am established in both my job and my school, there are still times where the volume of work seems daunting – I doubt there is a head or a depute who doesn't recognise that situation. What has changed for me, though, is that I have a strategy for dealing with those times. I don't need to change seats or go through the steps in the same way, but my self-awareness has been enhanced through coaching and I now recognise when I need to take a step back and think things through. You might say that I am now self-coaching.

There have been other benefits to coaching, too, in terms of my professional development. I would say I am more self-critical and achieving a better balance between the strategic and the operational elements of the job. I still reflect on some of the big questions that were posed and probably always will. I have also been able to pass strategies on to colleagues informally and in conversations where I have been the coach.

Looking back, coaching helped create the space to find my own answers to dilemmas, clarify my thinking on big issues and solve my own problems and is one of the best professional learning experiences I have had to date. I would encourage others to try it.