



Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru
General Teaching Council for Wales

The Professional Development Pilot Projects Phase 1: Summary Evaluation Report

Introduction

In November 2001 the General Teaching Council for Wales commissioned the PPI Group/UWIC to evaluate the three Professional Development Pilot Projects (pilot projects), a new initiative administered by the Council with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

The three projects were:

- Professional Development Bursary Pilot Project (bursaries)
- Visit and Exchange Pilot Project (visits & exchanges)
- Teacher Research Scholarship Pilot Project (scholarships).

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- identify the benefits that individual teachers and their schools have gained from participating in the pilot projects
- compare the project outcomes with outcomes from other types of continuing professional development (CPD), including GEST-funded activity and other mechanisms in and outside the UK
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the projects
- make recommendations for the future implementation of the projects, and suggest areas for future pilot projects.

The evaluation was conducted through a combination of evaluation proformas, questionnaires, and interviews with a representative sample of participants and headteachers/line managers. Responses were received from 1,025 participants, 104 headteachers/line managers, and 29 tutors/mentors in the scholarships project.

General Teaching Council for Wales, 4th Floor Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW
Telephone: 029 2055 0353 Email: cpd@gtcw.org.uk www.gtcw.org.uk

©General Teaching Council for Wales, 2002. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by way of any information storage or retrieval system without prior permission from the publisher.

The Project Participants and their Activities

- the applicants were drawn from 570 schools (8 nursery, 397 primary, 144 secondary and 21 special), nearly 30% of the schools in Wales. Most were teachers with up to 20 years' experience; nearly half had been in their schools for less than 5 years;
- most applicants were classroom teachers, heads of department or curriculum leaders; the remainder were headteachers and other senior management, special needs teachers and a very few supply teachers. The great majority were not seeking accreditation for their project work;
- rates of application by LEA varied significantly;
- about 70% of projects focused on classroom issues and 30% on management issues. Most curriculum areas were well or fairly well represented, but few projects, except in design & technology, included an ICT element;
- most of the project activities were linked with personal action plans, or with departmental or school development or action plans. Virtually all teachers easily secured their headteacher's support for the activities.

The view of the participants

Overall, respondents were highly satisfied with the Council's general administration of the scheme.

Virtually all respondents said there had been, or would be, opportunities to share outcomes with colleagues, through whole-staff meetings, departmental meetings and INSET days.

All respondents said they would recommend the scheme to other colleagues. The great majority of teachers and heads stated that the activity would not have been undertaken without the Council funding, but difficulties relating to supply cover were mentioned by a number of heads.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- more flexible funding arrangements, including interim payments, a longer timescale, alignment to the academic year, and funding for follow-up activities
- a group application for schools with large groups of staff involved
- more guidance and a wider choice of projects for funding
- wider dissemination of the 'end products', including publication of reports on the web
- production of a database of available INSET and of schools willing to take part in project work

Benefits to individual teachers

All participants, and virtually all headteachers and mentors, indicated that the projects had been effective or very effective in improving participants' professional knowledge and skills.

Benefits included:

- the development of individual needs and skills, through activities tailored to personal needs, with a focus on self-planning and development
- motivational and career incentives, including enthusiasm to consider new perspectives and innovations, increase in status and esteem, and the breaking down of professional isolation
- identification and adoption of good practice, especially through the visit & exchange fund

- time to develop reflective practice – the benefit most often cited by respondents
- work-based learning, both in their own school and in others
- working collaboratively with other professionals
- learning and teaching gains, including developing good practice in KS2/KS3 transition.



Benefits to schools

Virtually all participants and their headteachers indicated that their activity had been effective or very effective in improving provision and raising standards in their schools.

Benefits included:

- improvements in specific skills
- introduction and evaluation of new teaching strategies
- curricular enrichment through collaboration between schools
- curricular enrichment through the production or acquisition of new materials
- improved continuity and progression on transfer between schools
- improved continuity and progression within schools.

Strengths and weaknesses of the pilot projects

The evaluation evidence suggests that the great majority of the pilot projects have had far more strengths than weaknesses. Strengths include:

- benefits that GEST-funded CDP does not offer: greater concentration on individual, class and school-based initiatives; activities (particularly in visits & exchange and scholarships) that would not have been funded through GEST; and greater financial benefits to primary schools
- gains in skills and knowledge made by teachers
- careful planning and clear purpose, leading to useful and some genuinely innovative outcomes
- Council administration of the scheme
- focus on the needs of the learner and improving the quality of learning in schools

- increasing teachers' confidence, morale, self-esteem and professionalism
- harmonisation of individual teachers' interests with the needs of the school
- collaboration between schools and with other agencies
- opportunities for teachers to experience, try out and share new ideas and practice, and to investigate literature on educational research, learning and teaching and school improvement, with a view to improving the quality of education in their own schools.

Possible weaknesses include:

- problems in obtaining appropriate supply cover
- the under-representation of certain groups of teachers;
- the quality of some of the scholarship proposals and outcomes;

- the quality of some of the scholarship mentoring;
- unrealistic timescales for some of the scholarship projects.

There is scope for improvement in quality control in all three schemes to ensure best value for money.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

1. The pilot projects have been an overwhelming success in developing teachers' professional skills, knowledge and understanding and in stimulating their enthusiasm and motivation.
2. The pilot projects have had a significant impact upon participants schools and have contributed / can be expected to contribute, to raising standards in schools.

3. The pilot projects complement GEST-funded CPD and allow for a level and quality of entitlement to teachers in Wales that reflects good practice elsewhere in education and in other professions
 4. The pilot projects represent a step-change in the promotion of the philosophy of CPD within the teaching profession in Wales, and have been very efficiently administered by Council staff.
- producing clear criteria on the eligibility of award-bearing courses for bursaries and scholarship awards.
3. To further enhance quality control, the Council should:
 - tighten the criteria for the awarding of scholarship funding
 - encourage participants to engage in discussion with their headteachers/line-managers, to agree objectives and outcomes for their planned activities.

Recommendations

1. The Welsh Assembly Government should continue to make funding available through the Council to enable pilot projects to become a settled entitlement for teachers.
2. To maximise the impact of the pilot projects, the Council should consider:
 - how it can better promote the scheme to increase participation from under-represented groups and areas
 - ways in which good practice generated by the pilot projects can be shared and disseminated

Suggestions for future schemes

These include funding and support for visits to other countries, teacher networks, clusters of schools to cooperate on a project, larger-scale research projects, and progression funding to consolidate work undertaken in the initial pilot scheme.

The full version of the evaluation report is available on the Council web site – www.gtcw.org.uk/cpd_pilot.html