Trudie Steyn

Effective implementation of continuing professional development for South African teachers

The article attempts to satisfy two objectives: to arrive at a clear understanding of effective professional development (PD) programmes for teachers, and to outline how key aspects could influence the effective implementation of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, in particular that of CPTD. The article focuses on the following aspects: teachers' learning, teachers' commitment, quality leadership, the school context and requirements for PD programmes.

Effektiewe implementering van voortgesette professionele ontwikkeling van Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysers

Twee doelwitte word vir die artikel gestel: om 'n duidelike begrip te hê van effektiewe professionele ontwikkelingsprogramme vir onderwysers en om sleutelaspekte te bespreek wat die effektiewe implementering van die Nasionale Beleidsraamwerk vir Onderwysersopleiding en Ontwikkeling kan beïnvloed, in besonder Voortgesette Professionele Onderwysersontwikkeling. Die artikel fokus op die volgende aspekte: onderwysers se leer; onderwysers se toewyding; gehalte leierskap, die skoolkonteks en die vereistes waaraan professionele ontwikkelingsprogramme moet voldoen.

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The quality of education has been a major global concern for decades. To address this concern, many reform initiatives have focused on the quality of classroom teaching and more specifically on the teacher as the key to improving learner performance (Desimone *et al* 2006: 178, Knight & Wiseman 2005: 387, Mashile 2002: 174, Wanzare & Ward 2000: 1). The effectiveness of reform initiatives depends on the quality of teachers and as a result the professional development of teachers has become a major focal point of such initiatives (Boyle *et al* 2005: 1, Desimone *et al* 2006: 181). It is believed that

> teachers have the most direct, sustained contact with students, as well as considerable control over what is taught and the climate of learning, it is reasonably assumed that improving teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions is one of the most critical steps to improving student achievement (King & Newman 2001: 86).

This explains the degree of pressure exerted on teachers to be competent in their classrooms, and indicates a dire need for the professional development of teachers to meet these expectations.

The constant expansion of professional knowledge and skills is an essential part of development in all professions (Boyle *et al* 2005: 1). Over the past two decades professional development (PD) of teachers has changed from a "one-size-fits-all" model to the more ongoing, content-focused programmes which are often found at schools (Brandt 2003: 13, Desimone *et al* 2006: 183, Mundry 2005: 9). Unfortunately many of the programmes offered to teachers are inadequate and have not achieved their goals (Boyle *et al* 2005: 4, Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 4). This implies that it is necessary to revisit PD in order to identify factors that will influence its effectiveness.

Mundry (2005) outlines three shifts in beliefs about PD that have taken place:

- The crucial value of teachers' experience and knowledge with regard to student learning has increasingly been acknowledged (Mundry 2005: 9). All learners can be successful if they receive quality teaching. Quality teaching is, however, a complex issue based on a profound knowledge of the content as well as appropriate pedagogical and teaching strategies (Mundry 2005: 10).

Since teaching has such an influence on student learning, even experienced teachers have to continuously update their knowledge and skills throughout their careers. Teachers are required to be involved in life-long learning (Van Eekelen *et al* 2006: 408).

• PD is focused on the learning area or subject content and on how it is taught. Unfortunately many programmes focus either on the content or on teaching techniques (Mundry 2005: 11). In addition, mere attendance at PD programmes does not necessarily guarantee professional learning by teachers (Van Eekelen *et al* 2006: 408). Mundry (2005: 11) found that effective PD is focused "squarely on increasing teachers' content and pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills". Pedagogical content knowledge, which refers to teachers' specialised professional knowledge, develops with knowledge of the content and implies an understanding of techniques whereby teachers present content to learners (Mundry 2005: 12). However, teachers often do not participate in sustained content and pedagogically focused PD programmes (Desimone *et al* 2006: 209).

• PD aims to enhance the learning of challenging content for all learners. This positive change implies increased responsibility for PD programmes to more effectively equip teachers to teach challenging content and to ensure that all learners are able to meet the required standards. Essentially quality PD "is about engaging learners in learning" (Heaney 2004: 41).

It is therefore necessary to find appropriate PD approaches to ensure that all teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for improving learner performance (Anon 2001/2002: 17, Hirsh 2005: 38, Shaw 2003: 39). Desimone *et al* (2006: 209) even suggest that the provision and sponsoring of PD programmes which are ineffective and do not lead to the improvement of teaching and learning should be discontinued.

To transform education in South Africa it is necessary that teachers be appropriately equipped to meet the evolving challenges and needs of this developing country (RSA 2007: 4). The President's Education Initiative research project reports that the "most critical

challenge for teacher education in South Africa was the limited conceptual knowledge of many teachers" (RSA 2007: 4). The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (2005) also identified teachers' limited access to PD (RSA 2007: 5). Moreover, increased learner diversity and social inequalities will require skilled teachers who are expected to ensure that all learners learn and perform at appropriate levels (Lee 2005: 46, RSA 2007: 4). The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development is an attempt to address the need for suitably qualified teachers in South Africa (RSA 2007: 5). It focuses on two complementary sub-systems: Initial Professional Education of Teachers and Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) (RSA 2007: 2). For the purposes of this article, the focus will be on CPTD.

Although research on PD has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of professional development, little attention has been devoted to evaluating a PD policy itself and how it should be implemented. This may assist educational decision-makers to effectively develop teachers. Without this, PD programmes may be unsuccessfully implemented, hampering the effective continuing professional development of teachers, particularly in South Africa. The necessary knowledge and insight have the potential to inform and influence policy and practice. Thus, the following research question was posed: how useful is the proposed CPDT in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development and how should it be implemented? This article attempts to satisfy two objectives: to arrive at a clear understanding of the key aspects of effective PD programmes for teachers and to outline how these aspects may inform and influence CPDT and its effective implementation in South Africa.

A qualitative approach was used to address the above-mentioned question. A policy analysis was carried out by studying various relevant documents (cf McMillan & Schumacher 2006: 356 & 448, Strydom & Delport 2005: 315). The documents included the official National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development, concentrating in particular on CPDT, other relevant documents on professional development of teachers and research reports on the implementation of PD programmes as reported in the literature.

The purpose of this article is not to outline all the aspects that could influence CPDT in the policy, but to suggest that diverse factors may have a definite impact on the professional development of teachers in South Africa and its implementation.

1. Continuing professional teacher development (CPDT)

CPTD has been specifically designed to equip the teaching profession to meet the challenges and demands of a democratic South Africa in the twenty-first century (RSA 2007: 1). This is in line with the Skills Development Act of 1998, which encourages employers "to use the workplace as an active learning environment" and "to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills" (RSA 1998: 2).

The attributes required of teachers include an ability and eagerness to reflect on their teaching practice and learn from learners' learning experiences (RSA 2007: 16, Dymoke & Harrison 2006: 78). Teachers also have to update their skills in order to deliver the new curriculum (RSA 2007: 16). PD programmes should therefore focus on the integrated development of learning area/subject content knowledge and pedagogical skills, teachers' competence in the language of teaching and learning, the changing social character of schools, and the skills required for teaching in diverse classrooms (RSA 2007: 21). Studies indicate that socially and economically disadvantaged learners can benefit from quality teaching and achieve academic success (Knight & Wiseman 2005: 388). Often teachers' lack of awareness of culturally appropriate teaching practice is the reason why they lack the knowledge or skills required to educate disadvantaged learners. PD involving intercultural skills and knowledge of a diverse learner population is therefore required to address the mismatch between conditions in classrooms and the characteristics of diverse learners (Hirsh 2005: 40).

The CPTD system essentially aims to do the following (RSA 2007: 17):

- contribute towards the improvement of teachers' teaching skills by equipping them to effectively execute their essential and demanding tasks;
- continually improve teachers' professional competence and performance so that they can provide quality education;
- enable and empower teachers by improving their professional confidence, learning area/subject knowledge and skills, and teaching and classroom management;
- improve the professional status of teachers, and
- help teachers to identify suitable PD programmes that could contribute to their professional growth, thereby protecting them from misleading providers.

The ultimate aim of the CPTD is to enable learners to "learn well and equip themselves for further learning and for satisfying lives as productive citizens, for the benefit of their families, their communities and our nation" (RSA 2007: 25). This is also in line with the Skills Development Act of 1998, which aims to "improve the quality of life of workers" (RSA 1998: 2).

The South African Council for Educators (SACE), which is responsible for enhancing the professional development of teachers, will have the overall responsibility for the quality assurance, implementation and management of the CPTD (RSA 2007: 19). As part of PD all teachers registered with SACE must earn PD points by selecting approved professional development activities that meet their development needs (RSA 2007: 20). Gaining PD points is also an internationally acceptable technique which is used to recognise members' continuing professional development (Desimone *et al* 2006: 205).

The policy framework identifies four types of CPDT activities: school-driven, employer-driven, qualification-driven, and others offered by approved organisations (RSA 2006: 17). There is also a distinction between compulsory and other self-selected PD programmes. The former would be paid for by the education authority involved, while teachers may receive bursaries for self-selected PD (RSA 2007: 3).

The implementation of the CPTD system will be the responsibility of the South African Council for Educators (RSA 2007: 18). The policy (RSA 2007) is silent on the detailed steps of implement-

ation given in more detail in the draft Framework (2006: 26-26), but clearly indicates that the responsibility for implementation lies with SACE. Teachers will have the opportunity to earn PD points by participating in activities classified into five categories: school-led programmes; employer-led programmes; qualification programmes; other programmes, offered by NGOs, teachers' unions, community-based and faith-based organisations or other approved providers, and self-chosen activities (RSA 2007: 18).

The important underlying principle of implementation is that teachers individually and collectively will be responsible for their own professional development (PD). Although some CPTD activities will be compulsory, others will be self-selected. Compulsory activities will be paid for by the relevant education department while self-selected activities will be paid for by the individual teacher. Bursaries will be made available for studies in priority fields of study (RSA 2007: 18). The self-paid aspect of implementation could impede the effective implementation of CPTD. In order to earn PD points teachers and the system could be exposed to certain risks: the neglect of main teaching responsibilities, the increase in the administrative burden of teachers, and the poor quality of providers (RSA 2007: 18, 19) and could individually and collectively contribute towards lessening the effectiveness of CPTD.

In order to understand how certain aspects could influence the effectiveness of PD, it is necessary to briefly focus on the nature of PD.

2. An overview of professional development for teachers

In the last decade significant works on PD have been published. These have shed light on effective PD programmes that develop teachers' knowledge and skills, improve teaching practice and raise learners' performance (Desimone *et al* 2006: 182). The ultimate aim of PD is to promote student learning (Wanzare & Ward 2000: 1). Since PD programmes provide a better understanding of the content as well as pedagogical knowledge and skills, they are considered to be a means of self-development and professional learning and growth (Wanzare

& Ward 2000: 2). In support of the above, Hirsh's (2005: 43) study on effective PD reveals three important characteristics of PD learning:

- A profound understanding of specific content is a core component of effective PD. "There is no substitute for teachers who possess their own deep understanding of the subjects they teach" (Hirsh 2005: 43).
- Individual beliefs play an important role in the improvement process. The most effective PD programmes succeed when they change teachers at the belief level.
- A detailed plan for introducing new content and practices and facilitation of follow-up action is required.

Workshops, seminars and conferences are considered to be the traditional approaches to PD (Boyle *et al* 2005: 4, Lee 2005: 40). These approaches adopted a technical and simplistic view of teaching and believed that teachers' knowledge and skills could be improved by using experts from outside schools (Lee 2005: 39). Such approaches were not effective since they did not sufficiently change teachers' subject knowledge or pedagogical skills (Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 4). Policy-makers and education managers should therefore "abandon outmoded approaches to staff development and invest in these more 'practice-based' approaches to professional learning for teachers" (Mundry 2005: 14).

More recently, longer-term PD programmes have been designed to assist teachers by means of direct practical experience in order to improve student learning (Lee 2005: 39). The study by Boyle *et al* (2005) also indicates that this longer-term PD is currently the more common model. Where PD is designed for teachers of the same school, department or grade, they can discuss concepts and skills, observe colleagues, share practice and integrate what they have learnt (Boyle *et al* 2005: 22, Lee 2005: 40). Such programmes, with their emphasis on collaborative action research, also appear to be more effective than the PD programmes of the past (Lee 2005: 40). However, for PD to have a definite impact on teaching and learning in schools, positive interventions, empathetic skills, effective appraisal processes and opportunities to improve teachers' self-esteem and performance are required (Heaney 2004: 43).

Teachers' professional growth occurs when a PD programme acknowledges teachers' personal and professional needs. This means that appropriate strategies should be used to determine the areas in which teachers are deficient (Lee 2005: 40-9). Lee (2005) developed The Teacher Needs-Based PD Programme model to fulfil teachers' needs regarding content or pedagogical knowledge and skills and learners' needs. Their survey on the model indicated that teachers had made significant changes in their teaching practice as a result of this PD programme. Lee (2005: 46) attributes the success of the model to the fact that teachers were "partners of the whole process — planning their own learning experience, implementing practices, providing feedback, and evaluating the programme".

A needs-based model for mathematics on site was also successfully implemented in the study by Mewborn & Huberty (2004). In their site-based PD programme they used teachers' prior experiences to design their PD programme. Their experiences identified three main criteria for effective PD: PD programmes should be designed for teachers who teach specific grades; PD has to be sustained, contextualised and relevant to teachers' classroom practice, and PD programmes should be "site-based so that the staff developers understand their students, their curriculum, and their school structures" (Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 2). Their findings indicate various changes in teachers' classroom practices, such as an improvement in teachers' knowledge concerning content areas, feelings of competence to motivate learners and changes in classroom discourse approaches (Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 4). Principals who actively participated in the PD programmes developed an appreciation for the teaching of the subject and for the value of classroom discourse.

Needs-based PD is also supported by others who believe that principals could monitor and evaluate teachers and decide what kinds of PD programmes they need and then guide them in aligning programmes that fit their needs (Desimone *et al* 2006: 206). However, the equilibrium between supporting and balancing teachers' development may be more difficult to maintain with top-down decision-making about PD. When teachers do not have ownership for the selection of PD it has the potential of not being very effective because

of its top-down approach. This therefore contravenes the professionalism and autonomy of the teacher (Desimone *et al* 2006: 206-7).

It is clear from the above that PD is most effective when it is based on teachers' needs. It is a continuous process which includes formal, systematic and appropriately planned development and follow-up by means of supportive observation and feedback, staff dialogue and peer coaching (cf Bernauer 2002: 89, Bolam 2003: 103, Lee 2005: 47). A crucial question emerges: what aspects play a role in the effective implementation of PD for educators? The following major aspects can be identified from a literature review: a focus on teachers' learning, the commitment of teachers, quality leadership, the school context and requirements for PD programmes. How each of these aspects impact on PD and how they may inform CPDT in the Policy Framework are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

3. Aspects influencing professional development effectiveness

3.1 Focus on teachers' learning

Research reveals that the existence of individual differences between adult learners may have an impact on their learning (Burke 1997: 299). This also applies to teachers who as individuals have specific learning needs and learning styles. PD programmes should therefore be individualised and fully differentiated to meet their individual needs and preferences (cf Lee 2005: 46, Robinson & Carrington 2002: 240). If this can be achieved, teachers will acquire more skills, become more motivated and apply what they learn in classrooms (cf Mashile 2002: 174, Somers & Sikorova 2002: 108).

As adults, teachers prefer to take personal ownership of their own learning and should therefore participate in goal-setting, priorities, processes and the evaluation of PD (Bernauer 2002: 91). An essential feature of participation is that teachers see themselves as having the right to voice their opinions and to be listened to (cf Somers & Sikorova 2002: 104, Lee 2005: 41). Moreover, teachers need to feel that they are respected for what they know and can do. Many teachers

faced with curriculum changes may feel that their level of competence has been threatened by having to adjust their methods. For some this could be a source of growth, but support and sensitivity are nevertheless needed from those providing PD programmes (Smith & Coldron 1999: 255).

Although CPTD expects teachers "to take charge of their self-development by identifying the areas in which they need to grow professionally" (RSA 2007: 3) it does not explicitly explain the important role of schools, in particular poorly performing schools, in identifying such needs. Desimone *et al* (2006: 205) suggest that education leaders should find strategies to motivate teachers with poor content knowledge and skills to take content-focused PD programmes. They also suggest "scaffolding" PD opportunities by offering programmes targeted at teachers with varying levels of content knowledge and skills. PD should therefore be individualised to the extent that it builds on each teacher's experience and expertise while providing the basic knowledge that developing professionals require to develop and succeed (Partee & Sammon 2001: 15).

Ownership of PD is important, but who will identify teachers with poor content and pedagogical skills if teachers feel threatened when required to adjust their teaching methods? Furthermore, how will teachers be motivated and supported at schools to update their knowledge and skills? Organisations that are responsible for accrediting CPDT programmes need to be aware of models with a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Approved programmes should be differentiated in order to meet the learning needs and styles of teachers.

Since the focus of PD programmes is on teacher learning, it can be deduced that teacher commitment will play a crucial role in their development (cf Yu *et al* 2000: 369, Blackmore 2000: 3, Bernauer 2002: 90).

3.2 The commitment of teachers

PD programmes will be futile without the teachers' whole-hearted commitment, even if such programmes are well designed (Blackmore 2000: 3). A commitment to learning refers to a psychological state in

which the teacher desires to learn and experiment (Van Eekelen *et al* 2006: 410). Although teachers generally support effective teaching and learning, they are often unwilling to change their teaching practices on the basis of quality standards (Desimone *et al* 2006: 179). The Desimone *et al* (2006: 205) study on mathematics teachers reveals that teachers with more expert knowledge of their subject have more confidence and motivation to further develop their knowledge and skills, while teachers with less content knowledge often have no interest in PD, or may feel comfortable with their skills in and knowledge of the subject. However, the responsibility of each staff member is to continually experiment, deliberately reflect on what has happened as a result of the individual or team effort, and reflect with others on the way the system operates in order to learn how to improve (cf Boyle *et al* 2005: 5, Dymoke & Harrison 2006: 78).

The challenge for CPTD is to motivate teachers to become committed to their own development and learning. The punitive measure "Teachers who do not achieve a minimum number of PD points over two successive cycles of three years will be accountable to SACE for such failure" (RSA 2007: 20) may not persuade poor teachers to update their knowledge and skills. An incentive scheme to reward teachers for successfully implementing their acquired knowledge and skills may have more motivational value. One of the best ways of positively influencing teachers' behaviour is explained by the positive reinforcement theory of motivation (Champoux 2000: 144). This theory is based on the law of effect, which postulates that those actions that meet with pleasurable outcomes tend to be repeated, whereas those actions that meet with unpleasant actions tend not to be repeated. The reinforcement theory is based on the belief that external factors such as rewards or punishment determine a person's future performance. Examples of positive reinforcement include merit pay for good performance as well as praise and recognition when teachers do a good job.

Apart from teachers' commitment towards PD, quality leadership is required for PD to be effectively implemented by teachers at schools. It provides an orderly and nurturing environment that supports their development (Bernauer 2002: 90).

3.3 Quality leadership

Quality leadership means that education managers are involved in the learning process, which requires reflection on teaching and learning practice, and evidence that the PD of teachers has taken place (cf Dymoke & Harrison 2006: 80, Heaney 2004: 42, Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 6). This leadership style also involves a commitment to identify the needs of teachers and the appropriate training to meet these needs (Heaney 2004: 43, Lee 2005: 46).

Acknowledged as quality leadership in recent leadership theories, transformational leadership essentially aims to make actions in schools meaningful, to nurture PD and to encourage staff towards higher levels of commitment to school goals (Yu *et al* 2000: 370, Bernauer 2002: 90). According to the Open University, a transformational leadership style is about "coping with and creating a change process" (Heaney 2004: 42). Transformational leadership has various dimensions that could influence PD, including charismatic leadership, cultivating the acceptance of shared goals, providing an appropriate model and providing individualised support (Yu *et al* 2000).

Charismatic leadership describes leaders who have a profound influence on their followers, the school's climate and performance by the force of their personality, abilities, personal charm, magnetism and encouragement (Dreher 2002: 207). Charismatic leadership also translates into a vision for the school (Mester *et al* 2002: 73). By linking the school's vision to the outcomes and purpose of PD programmes, principals can play an important instructional leadership role (Desimone *et al* 2006: 206). This role also means that principals should provide opportunities for collaborative decision-making and team-building among teachers (Heaney 2004: 43). With such leadership styles principals form collegial relationships with staff and develop an appreciation for the value of working together and caring about each other (cf Robinson & Carrington 2002: 241, Bernauer 2002: 90). The shared values of members of a school influence their behaviour which, in turn, has an influence on the school culture (cf Robinson & Carrington 2002: 241, Yu *et al* 2000: 371).

Principals also play a major role in changing the norms, values, beliefs and assumptions of teachers (Lam & Pang 2003: 84). They provide intellectual stimulation when they challenge teachers to re-examine certain assumptions of their teaching practice and rethink how they could be more effective (Yu *et al* 2000: 370). Their actions should, however, also be consistent with the values they advocate and principals should be required to set appropriate models for teachers to follow (Yu *et al* 2000: 371).

Principals can provide individualised support by means of a motivational, supportive style of leadership (Heaney 2004: 42). Such support includes demonstrations of respect for teachers and concern about their personal feelings and needs (cf Lee 2005: 46, Yu *et al* 2000: 370). It is also important for principals to provide appropriate support to teachers to continue developing new classroom habits after PD programmes (cf Sparks 2003: 43, Somers & Sikorova 2002: 103).

Although one of the principles of the Policy Framework refers to "sustained leadership and support" for quality education (RSA 2007: 3) and CPTD acknowledges school-led programmes for teachers' development (RSA 2007: 18), the role and active involvement of school managers in CPTD are not explicitly encouraged or explained. Principals can play a key role in CPTD by identifying teachers' needs, motivating and supporting their development and working towards a collaborative school culture with shared values and norms. Site-based PD programmes have proved successful. In such programmes principals can play a key role in effectively implementing and sustaining teachers' learning and growth.

Apart from the influential role of leadership on PD it also influences school contexts which, in turn, may play an important role in the effectiveness of PD.

1   Cf King & Newman 2001: 87, Heaney 2004: 44, Hirsh 2005: 43, Lee 2005: 45, Van Eekelen *et al* 2006: 409.

3.4 The school context

Teachers' learning is affected by variables in the school context, which may either enhance or hamper the professional learning of teachers.[1] The Canadian study by Yu *et al* (2000) included mediating variables such as school culture, teacher collaboration and the school environment that may affect teacher commitment to development and therefore also impact on PD effectiveness.

A positive school culture is required for successful PD, otherwise precious time and resources will be spent on achieving only minor growth among teachers (Campbell 1997: 27). For a positive school culture a school should be humane and professionally supportive where teachers have the resources they require and the opportunities to work together and learn from each other.[2] Collaborating teachers utilise strengths and complement each other's knowledge and skills, thereby stimulating reflection and broadening their perspective. This creates more effective teaching and ownership of their own professional learning.[3] Collaborative learning is also regarded as the key to sustaining momentum.

Regrettably the traditional culture of teacher isolation and the limited time available for collegial interaction have not supported collaboration among teachers (Collinson 2001: 267). Another reason why teachers have accepted working in isolation is that they often feel unsure about their teaching (Bezzina 2002: 76). Resistance is therefore often experienced when trying to break this practice. The PD model requires that the bond of isolation that permeates teaching practice should be broken so that teachers can work together as professionals and help to develop the school (Bezzina 2002: 77, Collinson 2001: 267). Collaboration of this nature would also contribute towards the development of a positive school culture that is committed to change and the creation of better learning opportunities for all (cf Robinson & Carrington 2002: 240, Rhodes &

2   Cf Brandt 2003: 15, Partee & Sammon 2001: 15, Somers & Sikorova 2002: 103.
3   Cf Dymoke & Harrison 2006: 80, Boyle *et al* 2005: 4, Lee 2005: 40, Blackmore 2000: 3.

Houghton-Hill 2000: 431). The following conditions apply for the survival of a collegial culture (Bezzina 2002: 77):

- *Shared norms and values*

  Teachers collectively identify and determine the norms, values, beliefs and assumptions that are central to the existence of the school and that can shape decision-making and practices (Yu *et al* 2000: 370).

- *Reflective dialogue*

  Reflection promotes a deeper awareness of practice (cf Lee 2005: 45, Dymoke & Harrison 2006: 78). Commitment to reflective dialogue and practice lead to collaboration, which encourages staff members to address the concerns of the school.

- *Collective focus on teaching and learning*

  Teachers emphasise ways of improving the quality of education for the learners entrusted to them.

As mentioned earlier, PD must be ongoing and regular in order to be effective. Such models include content seminars built into the regular school days or the sharing of a problem or issue relating to content among team members of the learning area or subject (Desimone *et al* 2006: 207). Furthermore, his ongoing approach to PD supports the importance of feedback to teachers on their development (cf Lam & Pang 2003: 87, Birman *et al* 2000: 29, King & Newman 2001: 87). Teachers need to know whether they are making progress and that their professional learning has a positive impact on learners' performance.

CPDT focuses to a large extent on the development of individual teachers. As such it neglects to show the importance of teacher collaboration and a more collegial culture in schools. In collaborating schools teachers are actively engaged in complementing and developing each other's knowledge and skills, and ample opportunities are provided for teachers to work together and learn from each other. The approach in the Policy Framework nearly supports the traditional culture of teacher isolation by having individual teachers earning PD points. This may have a negative impact on the culture and performance of the school.

The preceding paragraphs have outlined numerous factors that may impact on the effective implementation of PD. However, the influential role of PD programmes for effective PD cannot be ignored.

3.5 Requirements for PD programmes

Traditional PD programmes are criticised for not giving teachers the time, activities and the content to improve their knowledge and skills (Birman *et al* 2000: 29). They include workshops, seminars and conferences, whereas mentoring, coaching, networking and study groups are regarded as progressive types of PD programme (Lee 2005: 39). The progressive types of programme are longer, have more content focus, active learning and coherence. The benefit of such PD programmes is that teachers can link the programme content with classroom practice over an extended period of time.

PD programmes designed for groups of teachers from the same school have several benefits (Lee 2005: 40). Teachers can share experiences, skills and any problems encountered in the programme. In addition, this approach is more receptive to teachers' needs and goals and the way they learn, it promotes the school's goals and has more impact on changing teachers' practice (Lee 2005: 46).

The duration of PD influences the depth of teacher change (Lee 2005: 39). Unfortunately, the main model for teachers is still one-shot programmes which often do not emphasise subject content or pedagogical skills (cf Desimone *et al* 2006: 183, Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 59). However, there is a movement towards accrediting PD programmes in order to stamp out ineffective ones (Desimone *et al* 2006: 206, RSA 2007: 19).

The key features of PDP include:

- *Content focus*

  Programmes must be contextualised for the school and must deepen teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills relating to a particular topic (cf Guskey 2002: 50, Birman *et al* 2000: 29, Somers & Sikorova 2002: 111).

- *Active learning*

  Teachers need to be actively involved during the presentation and obtain feedback on their teaching (cf Birman *et al* 2000: 29, Blackmore 2000: 3, Moore 2000: 14). Active learning includes opportunities to observe other teachers, present a programme or lead a discussion.

- *Evaluation*

  Programme evaluation is a critical and integral part of PD (Vincent & Ross 2001: 37). In essence an evaluation of PD programmes needs to focus on the impact of a PD programme in relation to teacher and learner outcomes (Knight & Wiseman 2005: 403).

  Table 1 summarises the relationship between the components of PD and the impact on the work performance of teachers. Unless theory is put into practice, any PD programme remains superficial. It is interesting to note that high transfer is only achieved when coaching is added to the equation (Rhodes & Houghton-Hill 2000: 431-2). A barrier in this instance is the lack of teacher collaboration and support from school leaders and other colleagues in realising the impact in the classroom (cf Anon 2001/2002: 18, Brandt 2003: 10).

Table 1: The relationship between components of training and impact on educators' performance

Training components and combinations	Impact on teachers' job performance		
	Knowledge	Skill	Transfer
Theory	Low	Low	Nil
Theory and demonstration	Medium	Medium	Nil
Theory, demonstration and practice	High	Medium	Nil
Theory, demonstration, practice and feedback	High	Medium	Low
Theory, demonstration, practice, feedback and coaching	High	High	High

Source: Rhodes & Houghton-Hill 2000: 432

Vincent & Ross (2001: 42), Moore (2000: 14) and Mewborn & Huberty (2004: 6) identify more general guidelines to make PD programmes effective: trainers should be experts and well prepared,

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learning outcomes should be clear to everybody, the learning styles of teachers should be accommodated and determined before the PD programme, an outline of the lesson could provide structure and organisation, different teaching aids should be used, participation should be encouraged, and continuous feedback should be provided.

CPTD supports the expansion of teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which is in line with effective PD programmes. A long-term approach to CPTD that maximises staff interaction and feedback on teachers' performance is, however, not explicitly acknowledged. In the past traditional one-shot approaches did not lead to the effective PD of teachers. When approving PD programmes SACE must ensure that aspects such as feedback and coaching as part of PD are not ignored. It is also important to select content experts with the necessary didactical skills to present contextualised PD programmes. Teachers do not want to have to "tolerate" programmes that "won't work" with their learners (Mewborn & Huberty 2004: 6).

4.   Conclusion

Ongoing PD for teachers is essential if quality education is to be provided to learners. PD therefore needs to remain a priority for education leaders and teachers in the education system since the outcome of professional development initiatives will ensure that teaching and learning can be enhanced (Heaney 2004: 45). CPDT is an initiative by the Department of Education aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of South African teachers which may have value in their professional development. Its success will be determined by its impact on the quality of teaching at schools. The policy framework provides broad guidelines for the implementation of CPTD. However, aspects that will influence its effective implementation need to be considered. This article attempted to focus on several such aspects: a focus on teachers' learning; the commitment of teachers; quality leadership as well as the school context and requirements for PD programmes. It is also important that new approaches to PD be acknowledged when implementing CPTD. These include longer-term programmes, ongoing

support to teachers at schools, more collaboration and interaction between teachers, and feedback on their development.

In conclusion, Lee (2005: 47) succinctly explains his view on effective PD:

> Overall, for the best outcomes, a PDP should have an appropriate level of challenge and support, provide activities demonstrating new ways to teach and learn, build internal capacity, use a team approach, provide time for reflection and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of its activities.

This also implies the need to do continuous school-based action research in the implementation of PD to ensure that shortcomings in practice are identified and addressed.

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