



# Effective teacher professional development: A practical set of prompts

Teacher professional development can make a substantial difference to student learning – if it is planned and delivered effectively. These questions highlight key evidence around how best to do this. It should be read in conjunction with WCPP’s briefing on effective teacher professional development (Fletcher-Wood, 2022).

AREA OF FOCUS	PRINCIPLES	WHAT YOU CAN DO
Picking a focus for teacher learning	Professional development helps teachers when it is based on the science of learning, and the evidence around effective teaching actions.	Review <a href="#">The Science of Learning</a> and the Pedagogical Principles set out in the <a href="#">NAPL</a> . Identify how your professional development programme will help teachers understand and act on them.
Identifying a way to help teachers gain new knowledge and skills	<p>Don't worry about superficial features of professional development programmes, like how long they are, or whether they have expert input – a long programme can be good or bad.</p> <p>Focus on the mechanisms which help people change their behaviour. For example, each of these mechanisms has been shown to help people change their behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing models</li> <li>• Practising</li> <li>• Making detailed action plans</li> <li>• Getting feedback</li> </ul>	Choose a few behaviour change mechanisms to use in your professional development programme from this <a href="#">list</a> (not all are relevant).
Ensuring professional development runs as intended	<p>Promising professional development programmes can be undermined by poor implementation.</p> <p>In particular, teachers need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time to attend professional development, reflect, and act upon their learning</li> <li>• Encouragement and support from leaders</li> </ul>	<p>Review your professional development plan, looking for potential obstacles.</p> <p>Ask teachers to review the plan, looking for potential obstacles.</p> <p>Identify and protect time for teachers to learn, reflect and act on their learning.</p> <p>Pointedly demonstrate support for teacher professional development.</p>



## Find out more

For an accompanying policy briefing which reviews the evidence on teacher professional development, see: Fletcher-Wood, H. (2022). **Effective teacher professional development**. Cardiff: WCPP.

## Author details

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