



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 The Science of Learning and the Pedagogical Principles set out in the NAPL . 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"> • Seeing models • Practising • Making detailed action plans • Getting feedback 	Choose a few behaviour change mechanisms to use in your professional development programme from this list (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"> • Time to attend professional development, reflect, and act upon their learning • Encouragement and support from leaders 	<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.

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