



Building school capacity for CPD

This guide endeavours to emphasise that sustained school improvement is most likely when CPD processes sit at the very heart of school life. There are several suggestions, pro-formas and strategies within this guide that can help to support these CPD processes.

CPD success, however, won't come about just by adopting a few ideas from a guidebook; a school needs to build capacity for improvement by creating an ethos, culture and set of expectations within which people can flourish. The 13 suggestions outlined can help build capacity come from NCSL research (2002).

Here are a few of the practices observed in schools within the research:

- Staff who will positively challenge practices and norms in the school are seen as a valuable commodity.
- Each week there is a short meeting where one member of staff talks through a best lesson. Attendance is voluntary but all staff have to lead on a rolling basis.
- Tasks are matched to people's abilities and experience, not to their seniority within school.
- All leaders, including the head, undertake an annual 360° review appraisal of their leadership approaches, successes and shortcomings.

1. Challenge low expectations as part of your learning vision

This learning vision must be focused on learning at all levels: students, adults who work in school and the school organisation. It needs to be made clear that everyone can and must learn.

2. Put people at the centre; don't neglect emotions

Change is an intensely personal experience and leaders need to communicate to people they are aware of their abilities, worth and responsibilities. Leaders need to take these into account when managing change.

3. Establish a positive culture

Develop trust and openness, celebrate successes and use humour positively.

4. Develop deep understanding of the change process

Build a sophisticated view of the change process and how it is likely to develop over time and the pressures it will create.

5. Cultivate development-friendly norms

Change the culture of the school so that there is commitment to values such as continuous improvement, life-long learning and risk taking.

6. Become learning experts: model, promote and support professional learning

Provide a range of opportunities for adults who work in school to become more expert in student learning and to share responsibility for organising learning experiences.

7. Work between and beyond schools

This means not only working with other schools and the local community but reaching out to other sources of support and resources such as businesses, higher education establishments and involvement in inter-agency work.

8. Change structures where necessary

Adapt timetables, create new policies, amend roles and responsibilities to help facilitate and co-ordinate the improvement process

9. Broaden leadership

Co-ordinating and sustaining change requires a broad range of individuals to take on leadership roles. Others in school need to be empowered to lead.

10. Give enquiry and reflection pride of place

It is vital that a school evaluates what they value and generate their own knowledge of how to develop what is worthwhile.

11. Listen, especially to students

Students' voices have an essential role to play within the process of improving a school because it is the improvement of their learning which is the ultimate aim.

12. Seek connectedness

There is a need to develop a widespread understanding of the school as a dynamic whole in which no one action or intervention is discreet.

13. Promote collective responsibility: develop school-based professional community

This means developing a sense of responsibility and accountability for change and improvement amongst everyone in the school.