Continuing Professional Development and English Language Teaching

A report on Teachers' CPD in Lithuania
Dr Christopher Tribble, King's College London | christopher.tribble@kcl.ac.uk

Commissioned by the British Council
March / April 2017
Overview

- Methodology
- Findings (Desk Review)
  - Teachers' CPD in an international context: experience and practices
  - The Lithuanian context
- Findings (Survey)
  - Teachers' experience
- Findings (Field Visit)
  - Observations
  - Interviews
- Concluding comments
## Research approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>RESEARCH METHOD</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February - March 2017</td>
<td>Desk Review</td>
<td>To summarise current understanding of effective CPD for teachers&lt;br&gt;To clarify the socio-economic context in which CPD is taking place, and the educational policy which frames education provision in compulsory schooling in Lithuania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>To gain insights into the current understanding, attitudes and beliefs of English language teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>To gain <strong>an insight</strong> into current approaches to English language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Semi-structured Interview</td>
<td>To identify understanding, attitudes and beliefs of stakeholders in relation to CPD and the current system for compulsory state education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESK REVIEW FINDINGS #1

CPD in an international context
CPD: a working definition

- *professional development* is defined [...] as related to activities developing an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher

(Caena, 2011: 3)
The UK model for teachers' CPD

Direct Professional Development
Directly seeks to improve specific pupil outcomes (academic and wider)

Indirect Professional Development
Links to pupil outcomes less clearly, and may contribute by helping to improve the running of a school or by developing teachers in other ways. Indirect professional development could include, for example:

- leadership development;
- training in operational or procedural tasks;
- attending education conferences to increase awareness of new ideas; or
- statutory training around particular approaches.

Improved Practice
Briefing and administrative information exchange
There is an important place for briefing, administrative information exchange and statutory updates; however, this is not the same as professional development and should not be seen as part of the time or resource allocated to it.

Appraisal and monitoring of teaching
Systems for appraisal and monitoring of teaching are necessary, and can help to determine starting points for professional development. In themselves, however, they are not direct teacher development processes and should not be seen as part of the time and resource allocated to them.

Improved Pupil Outcomes
Care should be taken so that these systems do not impede effective professional development by reducing motivation, undermining trust or generating excessive workload.
The UK standard for Teacher's CPD

1. Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
2. Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
3. Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.
4. Professional development programmes should be sustained over time.
5. Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership.
Wider perspectives on teachers' CPD

- CPD: good practice, failing practice
  - GOOD PRACTICE =
    - ‘Change as professional learning’.
    - Draws on adult learning theory + cognition theories
    - Leads to teachers being reflective practitioners, and taking responsibility for learning to improve the quality of professional performance.
    - Requires a move AWAY from technical-rational-top-down approaches and TOWARDS cultural-individual interactive approaches
  - FAILING PRACTICE =
    - deficit-mastery model (e.g. ‘one-shot’ professional development approaches)

CPD: a consensus on ways forward

- **ENCOURAGE** teachers’ engagement in curriculum-focused TPD, collaborative learning activities, and research with other teachers (Professional Learning Communities)
- **DEVELOP** strategies to monitor the quality of the TPD delivered to teachers
- **PREVENT** barriers to accessing high-quality TPD at the national or local level (e.g. gender, ethnicity, types of schools, etc.)
- **ENSURE** that teachers who have not completed initial training are exposed to high-quality TPD.
- **CREATE** a support structure for TPD in order to enable teachers to improve their practices
- **INVOLVE** school leadership, along with local and national policy makers.

(based on Barrera-Pedemonte, F. 2016: 16-17)
DESK REVIEW FINDINGS #2

The Lithuanian context
Social and economic context

- Massive demographic and economic changes (especially since EU accession and the financial crash of 2008)
- 23% population decline since 1992
  - 1992 (3,706,300) // 2016 (2,849,300)
- Current challenges include:
  - low salaries (average net salary in 2016 was €600.20)
  - limited opportunities for employment outside the informal sector
  - state pensions of €255.20 per month (2016) very low level compared with other EU countries
Higher education

- **BEFORE 2015** Lithuania had a high attainment rate among 30–34 year olds compared with the rest of the EU

- **CHALLENGES**
  - Budget for higher education down from 1.3% of GDP in 2010 to 0.6% in 2015
  - Very low average salary of teachers and researchers in Lithuanian universities (€619, 2017 = below the average national salary)
  - Some of the lowest levels of public funding per student in Europe

- **OUTCOMES**
  - Number of students entering higher education falling 6% per year over the last three years
  - Dramatic decline in research activity and teaching quality
Teacher supply

- Two models for teacher education in Lithuania:
  - concurrent model (when all components of the initial teacher training curriculum are combined from the outset)
  - consecutive model (when professional training, i.e. studies in educational subjects, methods of teaching and pedagogical practice in school that enable students to qualify as teachers, are combined with academic studies).

- ISSUES:
  - Number of new graduates entering the school system has dropped to very low levels, with those selecting the concurrent model declining dramatically since 2011.
  - No teachers graduating from the Lithuanian University of Educational Science (LEUS) in physics or chemistry last three years.
Continuing Professional Development

- Generous framework for CPD
  - Teacher training legal entitlement (up to 5 days of training per academic year or to 25 days over a 5 year period)

- Training opportunities for:
  - Current teachers without required formal professional qualifications for their grade or subject,
  - Methodological updating
  - New policy priorities such as special needs education

- Delivery: full-time, evening or extramural classes, distance learning.
  - Courses provided through
    - accredited higher education establishments (especially LEUS)
    - national centres such as the Education Development Centre, School development Centre, or National Centre for Special Needs Education and Psychology
    - 58 teacher training centres, teachers' associations, and private providers
Challenges to the school system in Lithuania

- Basic gross statutory salary of teachers in lower secondary education in Lithuania as a share of GDP per capita = lowest in the EU (+from 2009-2014 teachers' salaries were frozen)
- School age population declined 50% between 1990 and 2006
- Surplus of school places and an imbalanced teaching workforce.
- Currently 37.1% of primary level teachers are older than 50. (42.4% in Secondary).
- Teachers unwilling to retire from school + very small proportion (10%) of graduates taking pedagogical studies entering the teaching profession
Policy responses

- Main aim of current policy is to continue to reform the teaching profession and its remuneration.
  - New system of tenured payment for teachers (lessons taught + all other working hours)
  - Increases in salaries for novice teachers
  - Funding for early retirement compensation

- Teacher education scholarships for high achieving students

- Plans to improve the competencies and qualifications of teaching staff (compulsory for all teacher training institutions in higher education from 2017)

- Business-initiated programme, "I choose to teach" (STEM disciplines)
Summary: key issues in CPD for Teachers

- Lack of systematic, long term CPD system linked to school improvement and student learning outcomes
- No coherent evaluation system for classroom teachers or CPD impact
- No requirement for teachers to demonstrate the impact of training
- Significant regional differences in funding for training and training quality
SURVEY FINDINGS
The survey

- 390 English language teachers in Lithuania
- The survey gives insights into the current composition and capacities of this important professional group
- Although the sample was not scientifically established, the high level of return still makes the findings of interest to policy makers
### Survey: respondent profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years teaching experience</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey: areas of enquiry

- Using inclusive practices
- Understanding your learners
- Assessing learning
- Promoting 21st century skills
- Managing resources
- Integrating ICT
- Knowing the subject
- Managing the lesson
- Planning lessons and courses
Survey: question types

- Managing the lesson (5 point Likert scale)
  - 2.1  a. I can create a positive learning environment.
  - 2.2  b. I can give explanations that the learners are able to understand.
  - 2.3  c. I can give instructions effectively.
  - 2.4  d. I can check learners’ understanding during the lesson.
  - 2.5  e. I can monitor learner engagement.

- Results interpretation
  - Professional Practices at the top of the table are perceived to be the weakest areas for this group of teachers
  - Professional Practices at the bottom of the table are perceived to be the strongest areas for this group of teachers
Survey: Professional practice results

Using inclusive practices
Promoting 21st century skills
Assessing learning
Integrating ICT
Understanding your learners
Managing the lesson
Managing resources
Planning lessons and courses
Knowing the subject

 LOW CONFIDENCE & CAPACITY

 HIGH CONFIDENCE & CAPACITY
FIELD VISIT FINDINGS
Field Visit programme (4 days)

- 21 interviews with Educational Managers, Teacher trainers, Head teachers, Teachers and school students.

| Education Development Centre | Director of the Centre  
Representatives of In-Service Training Division |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ministry of Science and Education | Pre-school and Primary Education Division  
Lower and Upper Secondary Education  
Education Quality and Region Policy Department  
Lifelong Learning Department – Teacher Activity Division |
| Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences | Representatives of Institutions offering Teacher Education Programs |
| The Lithuanian Association of Teachers of English |  
School visits  
Lentvaris Motiejus Šimelionis Gymnasium  
Šalčininkai Janas Sniadeckis Gymnasium  
Juodšiliai Šilo Gymnasium  
Vilnius Žaros Gymnasium |
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION
Classroom observation: planning the lesson

**Teachers:**
- use published materials effectively
- draw on web based resources
- link learning objectives with the curriculum
Classroom observation: managing the lesson

Teachers:

• sequence lessons appropriately
• use classroom organisation to maximise learning opportunities
• establish strong positive relations with their students
Classroom observation: managing the lesson
Classroom observation: integrating ICT | managing resources

Teachers:
• have access to a set of basic IT resources
• make moderately successful use of these resources
• are highly motivated to make better use of more up-to-date resources when they are available.
INTERVIEWS
CPD: provision | definition

- Typical understanding of CPD =
  - training input > to enhance the qualifications and knowledge of participants

- Typical CPD activities =
  - "Qualifying courses - organised at different levels - University / Faculty / Nationally / Internationally / Participating in conferences / undergo requalification"

- Comments from the field:
  - MoE: DELIVERY MODEL: "5 Days INSET per year a RIGHT - but not always taken up. INSET primarily viewed as "workshops" - little or no use of other forms of delivery."
  - Head teacher: LACK OF CONTINUITY: "For the English language teachers I don't see continuous courses. There are just seminars. If we are participating in projects, then yes, but the information is related only to the project. And there are no cycle of courses with the same topics."
ISSUES: quality | accessibility

- Majority of interviewees were critical of the training offer. Training inputs are:
  - too theoretical
  - insufficiently connected to classroom needs
  - low relevance to the curriculum or teachers' priorities
  - insufficient quality
  - web based resources are difficult to access if you don't know English

- Comments from the field
  - Teacher trainer: "The list of accredited institutions and the certificates that are offered are valued - but there's a concern that the institutions in the list don't always offer the best programmes"
  - Teacher: "The language barrier [is very high] for those who wish to use the material on the Internet in English (many older teachers were learning German at school). There is a big difference between the different generations of teachers. The older generation lack English skills."
ISSUES: structure | time | motivation

- When problems related to inappropriate structure and scheduling are combined with low motivation and teacher overload, the challenge of implementing a systematic approach to CPD becomes clearer.

- Comments from the field
  - Teachers: "There's no systematic approach to CPD"
  - Head teacher: "There should be no law allocating 5 days to CPD. It's an artificial figure. CPD should be linked to need."
  - Teachers: "More often, it is a one-time event: seminars, conferences. You stay there, you listen, you share everything with other school teachers and everything ends. Courses are continuous very rarely, where are you going away for a half of the year, doing some kind of a job and you present it."
Comments related to the curriculum for C21 Skills reflect an awareness of the importance of transferable core competencies, but also indicate that at present the implementation of any kind of 21st Century programme is at best ad hoc, and highly dependent on the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of individual teachers or school directors.

Comments from the field

Teacher: "Competencies are included in lessons, maybe not every each of them. However, the stress of the subject is bigger, because everything is tied with the student preparation for the Matura exams."
WHAT NEXT?
Final comments

- The current administrative framework for CPD in Lithuania offers the potential for long term improvement.
  - Sufficient time is allocated for teachers to participate
  - Schools have access to funds (either from local budgets or through participation in international projects)

- PROBLEMS
  - Provision is not as consistent or as relevant as it should be
  - CPD is too often perceived as a one-off experience.
  - Lithuanian teachers lack access to consistent, coherent Continuing Professional Development programmes linked to school improvement and student learning outcomes

- GOOD NEWS
  - Despite problems school directors, teachers and policy makers all accept the importance of CPD
  - Most professionals interviewed were aware of the limitations of one-off interventions