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## **Schools and Teachers' CPD in England State of the Nation research study: policy context, aims and design**

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### **Background**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an introduction to the Schools and Teachers' CPD in England State of the Nation Study and a context for the three papers that follow. The English policy context of teachers' professional learning is discussed and details of the aims and research design are given.

The policy context of teachers' CPD is predominantly oriented towards policy implementation and effective management of this. Centrally devised but locally delivered training accompanying major policy initiatives such as the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy in Primary schools and the National Key Stage 3 Strategy in Secondary schools are examples of this. Government reform efforts over the past decade have been explicitly directed at integration across performance management, school improvement and teachers' professional development. Meanwhile centrally formulated standards of practice expected of teachers at different career stages are set out in the Teachers' Standards Framework. Consistent with this, Government-promoted programmes of professional development provide for role-related training and development reducing scope for more broad-based and reflective professional development opportunities.

At the same time National Workforce Reform set out to address the lack of time that teachers had to learn with colleagues and reflect on practice by reducing the number of administrative tasks for which teachers are responsible, limiting time spent covering for absent colleagues and guaranteeing planning, preparation and assessment time. Reductions in routine administration have yet to become established in schools (Day et al, 2007). In short, while teachers' professional learning and development has been made a school-based activity, there is still considerable direction from central Government.

### **Research Questions**

The aims of the State of the Nation study were to examine prevailing teacher learning practices and perspectives in schools in England in relation to (a) benefits, status and effectiveness, (b) planning and organization, and (c) access.

### **Methods**

The research design consisted of a literature review of reports of empirical research into teachers' professional learning and development since 2004, qualitative research in nine primary and three secondary schools, and a survey of a national representative sample of primary and secondary teachers in England. The focus of this paper and the symposium relates to the survey data.

Two survey measures (one for teachers and one for school leaders) elicited information about: features of teachers' learning programs, teachers' beliefs and values, teachers' learning practices, teacher experience, school context, school conditions for learning including beliefs and norms about instruction, impact of learning on teachers' knowledge, beliefs and values, and impact of learning on teachers' practices.

The surveys were designed in order to generate systematic quantitative data in relation to the model of teacher learning presented in paper 2. They build on reliable and valid instruments that the authors or other researchers have developed and used in previous, recent large-scale research studies.

## **Frame**

The international literature on teacher learning appears divided between those such as Desimone (2009) who suggest that a basic model of learning is sufficient to explore effectiveness and those such as Borko (2004) and Gusky (2000) who claim that to understand teacher learning, we must consider the impacts of conditions and contexts. Our research tests the assumptions of these two 'camps' and explores how far they can be bridged.

## **Research findings**

Empirical and theoretical findings developed through the research are presented in other papers in the symposium.