

## CPD UPDATE

### My first editorial from March 2005

**Near the beginning of 2005 I became the editor of CPD Update. It was a monthly journal, not long, that was subscribed to by schools, universities and organisations such as the General Teaching Council for England (abolished by Michael Gove). Back then education was run by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was about to become the more humanely run Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA). Insertion of the 'D' word helped us to accept the 'T' word. Ralph Tabberer was its chief executive and with him I felt that we were entering a time when the possibilities for partnership were increasing.**

Both the TTA and the TDA (emasculated by Michael Gove) were agencies, although many people think of them as Quangos, which stands for Quasi Autonomous Non-governmental Organisations, or some such. I believe that it is better to think of them according to their name, *agencies*. They were agents of government that had the freedom to work with others but could always be drawn back into line if they became too independently minded or take the blame when governmental policy went wrong. They flourished during the administrations of Margaret Thatcher.

In the editorial I refer to an LEA. That was a Local Education Authority (abolished, not I think nastily, by New Labour) that ran and supported local schools and was part of a system of educational democratic representation (almost eradicated by Michael Gove). I also mention CSE, the Certificate in Secondary Education, and GCSE, the General Certificate in Secondary Education (transformed by prime minister John Major into a simplistic, though complicated, means of measuring); both were designed to be studied by students of 14-16. Chief Moderators dealt with coursework, now frowned upon by government. I loved travelling round looking at, making sense of and learning from the project work of young people.

Key Stages were the four groupings of ages that led to the testing of children on the National Curriculum so that Key Stage One signified a test at 7 and Key Stage Two a test at 11. I won't go on: it depresses me, especially as testing now dominates so much of education.

Secondary Moderns were the relatively poorly resourced schools that almost 80% of eleven year olds were destined to attend from the age of eleven to fourteen (later fifteen) on the basis of a test underpinned by the beliefs of eugenicists who wished to improve our racial characteristics. If you have any doubts about the influence of the racism (not your ordinary, everyday racism) of the eugenicists you might try reading Richard Overby's *The Morbid Age* (2010).

Here is a link you might find to be of interest. It does not entirely support my view of eugenicists but Hobsbawm never had to undergo a test at the age of eleven that would claim to determine your general level of intelligence and, as a consequence, your worthiness as a human specimen. I did and perhaps you may feel that my inclusion at the age of eleven among the group identified as worthy only of an inferior education and reduced life chances colours my views. It does!

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n15/eric-hobsbawm/c-for-crisis>

Re-reading the editorial reminds of so much that has been thrown into the dustbin of educational history, particularly in England. I felt for a while that the National Strategies partially compensated for the declining capacity of LEAs to bring teachers together, exchange ideas and develop materials. I contributed the models and guidance for both the primary and secondary Critical Journals of Professional Development and admit to a sense of satisfaction knowing not only that schools were freely given copies but also that they could be found on Teachernet, an electronic resource once provided for teachers but now defunct. Also defunct are the programmes developed for Teachers TV whose popularity may have owed something to it being broadcast on a channel next to one specialising in pornography (so I am told) and the Teacher Training Resource Bank (TTRB).

Michael Gove was not the only vandal. Earlier, just when the Best Practice Research Scholarships (BPRS) were getting into their stride, as schools minister, David Miliband axed them.

I allude to the Children Agenda and workforce remodelling. The intention was that local government should begin to gather together all services to do with children, including education. It took another three or four years to construct it but, not long before the government of the time was replaced by our Coalition Government in 2010, a strategy was almost in place that would/could begin to bring cohesion to the CPD of all professionals working with children. I even wrote a poem about it that, if you have the patience, you can find via the following link. The date to watch out for is 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008. By then I was not in a mood to dish out compliments.

<http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/WebConDemNationJan2012.pdf>

CPD?

Continuing Professional Development.

Oh, I nearly forgot Ofsted. You might think that this stands for Office for Standards in Education (the inspectors) and that there is only one 'F' in Ofsted. Fascinating Aida have a different definition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d13gX-1HJg4>

What follows is my first ever Editorial for CPD Update from 5<sup>th</sup>. February 2005. What, we may wonder, has changed since then and what remains the same? Whatever happened to CPD Co-ordinators in schools or the 12 people once employed by the DfES to stimulate professional learning in education throughout England? And who can remember the CPD Strategy of Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education? The past certainly is a different country.

I also mention Paul Williamson in the editorial. He was a brilliant former student of mine. I am sure that he remains brilliant but wonder what has become of him. From memory, his diary began with the plans he had at the beginning of the week, describes what actually happened during the week and ends with some sardonic reflection upon the course in time management that he once undertook. I believe Mike Tyson, the boxer, said something to the effect that everyone has a plan until they are punched on the nose. I think he must have read Paul's diary.

### **Editorial**

**As the new editor of CPD Update I want to introduce myself and say something about my approach to the job. My name is Cliff Jones. I began teaching in a secondary modern in Bootle in 1968. Having experienced three major re-organisations I left school teaching after sixteen years to work for an LEA and specialised, at various times, in low attainment and alternative curriculum strategies, curriculum design and assessment systems, recording achievement, education/industry links, citizenship and National Curriculum assessment in all key stages.**

I have also been a chief moderator, chief examiner and chair of examiners for CSE and GCSE.

For the last nine years I have been in Higher Education working as a Director of CPD for teachers and related professionals. That has involved responding to the requirements of the DfES, the TTA and Ofsted; but also includes working at home and abroad with members of the teaching profession from very mixed ethnic, political and religious backgrounds who, nevertheless, share a surprising number of concerns, issues, anxieties and fulfilment from the job.

I am particularly interested in how members of the education professions perceive CPD. For some it is confined to timed, targeted and tidy events; for others CPD can be untimed, un-targeted, extremely untidy but, nevertheless, rewarding. The education professions are often told to seek out and follow "best practice". And yet, most of us learn from well supported, blame free reflection upon what might look like mistakes. It is always good to hear about, and learn from, the professional experience of others. On the other hand, it is not, I believe, a good idea to buy someone else's best practice without a big pinch of critically reflective salt: without thinking about how it can adapt to

particular contexts and how it fits into what you have good reason to believe works well.

For the last few years I have been heavily involved in the development of Critical Journals of Professional Development and Portfolios of Evidence for Impact. The word “impact” is inescapable in CPD these days. It is one of the “big issues” identified by the Teacher Training Agency. Put nicely it means CPD that makes a difference. A critical journal of professional development can provide a framework for telling the story of a teacher’s development as a professional, including what was learned when things did not go according to plan. And a portfolio of evidence for the impact of that development can support the journal. One of my motivations for this was to make links between postgraduate awards and the programmes of the National College for School Leadership, the National Strategies and other aspects of the ordinary professional lives of teachers.

Experience of working with teachers tells me that it is when they ask serious questions about the evidence for their own professional development that they discover that they have more skills, knowledge and understanding than they thought they had. The business of teaching and learning can be more interesting, relevant and useful if teachers are allowed to explore their professional lives, especially with support from peer coaches, mentors and, when formal systems do not feel appropriate, mates. Success is not always to be defined by the shortness of the distance between target and attainment. We often find that we have unexpected evidence for unintended professional outcomes. In other words, when we look at the evidence generated as we develop professionally we often find that some of it was unanticipated but, when examined critically, it is of high value.

Although I was amused by the teacher who told me that the way deal with targets was to fire an arrow anywhere you felt like aiming and then to run up to where it had landed and paint a target round it.

Another interest and concern of mine is that evaluation of the impact of CPD should be carried out in such a way that it is professionally useful. For me this means working a bit smarter at it if we are to avoid the traps of measuring what is easy to measure and compiling lots of numbers without thinking about their significance. Elsewhere in this issue we begin a series designed to support CPD co-ordinators and others in working to a model for evaluation that can be customised, reflects the circumstances in which schools operate, allows attention to be drawn to unexpected but valuable evidence and forms a sound basis for future development.

Meanwhile, all the news on the CPD front seems to be giving the same message: that life for the co-ordinator of professional development is going to change. Monitoring what is happening to colleagues will not be sufficient. In future more of the job will be about supporting, managing, enabling, modelling and evaluating the professional lives of an even wider range of colleagues.

We hear in this issue about workforce re-modelling. And Ralph Tabberer has reminded us in his speech (“Teaching as a People Business”, reported in the last issue) about the forthcoming Excellent Teacher status and the Children Agenda. Some schools are already home to a range of social services, with implications for the budgeting, planning, implementation and evaluation of CPD.

For CPD co-ordinators the stakes are, therefore, about to be raised. Consequentially, it becomes even more crucial that you are kept informed, share ideas and new knowledge and talk to each other. CPD Update shall endeavour to continue its role as a medium for this.

And yet, despite the best intentions of government and its agents, the life of all teachers, even CPD co-ordinators, is beset by the unexpected events that intrude upon even the best-planned professional life.

Paul Williamson’s diary in this issue provides an insight to a reality that perhaps senior politicians and their advisers discount when considering the implementation of their new ideas.

**There is, however, one thing that, as editor of CPD Update, I need from you. That is your input and feedback. I am looking for articles; and they do not have to agree with my own views. But even if you do not feel like writing a piece for publication it is important that you air your concerns and interests. I look forward to hearing from you.**