Teacher-led Professional Development (PD):

Building supportive networks

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Workshop goals

• define teacher-led and context-embedded (TLCE) PD

• Key points in the literature

• an example of TLCE PD

• explore and plan your own TLCE PD with criteria
Warmer

Find someone who ...
Group discussion

What does *context-embedded* mean to you?

What are benefits of context-embedded PD?

What might be challenges to *context-embedded* PD?

What might be some differences between *teacher-led* PD and *standard forms* of PD?

Thinking about key terms ...
TLCE PD

What does the literature say?
What is teacher-led professional development?

- **Thinking about practice** - using successes, challenges and those niggling feelings as a basis to share, investigate → develop professionally.

- **Teacher agency** – freedom of choice is motivating → driving teacher development from the bottom up.

- **Collaborating with peers** - personally relevant learning that is based on professional contexts (context-embedded PD).

- **Management supports TL PD by giving time**
What does the literature say about context-embedded PD?

• ‘A culture of context-embedded PD is vital to any healthy and successful teaching institution’ (Burns, 2016).

• Educational institutions void of TLCE PD where top-down PD is common adversely impacts staff morale, creativity and connectedness (Burns, 2014; Chappell & Benson, 2013; Farrell, 2013, 2015; Godfrey et. al., 2008; Johnson & Golombek, 2003).

• ‘Context-embedded PD honours both teachers and managers as leaders in PD’ (Wirth, 2018)
Teacher-led PD and context-embedded PD (TLCE): how do they align?

Teacher-led PD

- Teachers have freedom to choose and plan their PD

Context-embedded PD

- planned through consultation = personally relevant

**ongoing and supportive peer networks,**
  eg Journal Club
  - Building on each others’ knowledge
  - Peer support
  - Creativity and connectedness
Think about times when you’ve talked about your teaching.

How did you go about it?
What are some underlying theories?

• **TLCE PD uses stories/narratives** to explore complexities of teacher beliefs, knowledge and opinions in order to enhance practice and ‘quality of life’ for teachers (Borg, 2003; Johnson and Golombek, 2011; Chappell & Benson, 2013)

• **Effective PD: Collaborative supportive networks**
  
  (Chappell & Benson, 2013; Wei et. al. 2009; Craig & Deretchin, 2009; Wong, 2006)

• **Reflective practice** (Farrell, 2015; Richards and Farrell, 2011) thinking about practice based on the teaching context(s)
Why are teacher narratives important?

Golombek and Johnson (2004, p. 308):

‘Two decades of educational research argues that teachers’ knowledge is largely structured through stories ... Thus, the use of narrative has emerged as the predominant means of getting at what teachers know, what they do with what they know and the sociocultural contexts within which they teach and learn to teach’.
Example of a teacher-led context-embedded PD
Journal Club: An example of TLCE PD

Using their practice as impetus, a teacher selects and presents a peer-reviewed article to share over lunch

Voluntary: run by teachers for teachers

Sharing stories from their practice to get at what teachers know and want to know

Stories of practice are shared in light of the article

Journal Club initiates and strengthens:
- Sharing
- Agency
- Exploring
- Collegiality
Explore & Plan
## Planning context-embedded and teacher-led PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key elements</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-led / context-embedded</td>
<td>consult with all teacher: What PD do they want? Delivery and content</td>
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<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>teachers have the freedom to decide what/when</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>predictable times throughout the year</td>
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<td>Research and literature driven PD</td>
<td>supported by research articles and journals</td>
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<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>consider: • costs • timetable constraints / timing in the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coming together, e.g. over lunch</td>
<td>great for bonding and opening up to share challenges and successes</td>
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<td>Validate and support</td>
<td>the degree to which this is done will influence: • PD sustainability • sharing / overall learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>teachers’ knowledge is largely structured through stories (Golombek &amp; Johnson 2004)</td>
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Points to consider when initiating TLCE PD

- Non-judgemental
- Positive and supportive environment: *validate* what teachers share
- Shared and respectful voice space
- Regular and predictable frequency
- Tell stories to get at what we know and need to know
- Voluntary
- *Time* 1.5 hrs
- Eat together!

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Summary of benefits

Teacher-led and context-embedded PD:

Helps to maintain positivity and relevance in a complex and evolving workplace

Keeps teachers in tune with current research and literature in their field

Provides teachers with a forum to explore and reflect on their own practice

Can ignite the possibility to pursue action research

Establishes professional support networks by drawing on knowledgeable peers in a caring atmosphere

Can help teachers navigate challenging and changing times in the workplace through support networks
Questions
Thank you

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References


