Constructing Teachers' Professional Identities –

Appendices
Case studies

Philippa Cordingley, Bart Crisp, Paige Johns, Thomas Perry, Carol Campbell, Miranda Bell and Megan Bradbury

February 2019

Education International
Internationale de l'Education
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Teacher Identity, Professional Learning and Leadership:
An Ontario Case Study

Carol Campbell and Sharon Alexander,

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto 7 September 2018

Introduction

This case study provides an overview of the province of Ontario in Canada and, then, focuses in-depth on one particular initiative, the Norway-Canada (NORCAN) partnership as an example of developing teachers' identity, professional learning and leadership. The overview of Ontario draws on semi-structured interviews with two teacher federation staff, plus relevant policy and professional documents and existing research materials.

The case study of NORCAN focuses on the experiences of two Ontario publicly funded schools, Tecumseh Vista Academy (grades k12), part of Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) and Monsignor John Pereyma Catholic Secondary School (grades 9-12), belonging to the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB). Semi-structured interviews with the principal and four teachers at one of the schools and a focus group with the principal and four teachers at the second school were conducted, plus document analysis (websites, blogs, videos created by and shared between NORCAN members) and site observations.

At the time of conducting this research, the government of Ontario was in the process of election followed by a transition to a new government; due to the context of pre- and post-election transition arrangements, government officials were not available to participate in interviews for the research study.

Overview of Ontario, Canada

Ontario is Canada's most populous province with over 13.5 million people (38.5% of the total population of Canada). The province is also highly diverse, with almost 40% of Canada's immigrants settling in Ontario. Ontario's student population is similarly large and diverse. Over two million students attend Ontario's publicly funded school system, comprising about 95% of school-age children. In 2013 there were approximately: 115,492 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers (73,031 elementary and 42,460 secondary), 7,326 administrators (principals and vice-principals; 5,220 elementary and 2,105 secondary), and

4,390 early childhood educators in Ontario. The provincial government, through the Ministry of Education, sets the overall policies for education. Education is administered through district school boards and school authorities in four publicly funded systems: English Public; English Catholic; French Public; and French Catholic.

The union structure in Ontario is distinctive. All teachers in the publicly-funded school system are required to be members of the Ontario Teacher's Federation (OTF) and one of four affiliate organisations, depending on the system in which they are working: L'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). These organisations represent teachers' voice in educational policy and negotiate working conditions and terms of employment between teachers, the province's 72 school boards, and government. Teaching is a highly regulated profession with trainee teachers being required to have completed university-level training and qualifications. In their career, teachers have to uphold professional standards established by a College of Teaching.

The Policy Context

In 2003, a new Liberal government was elected to Ontario. The previous years had involved a Conservative government which had implemented cuts on publicly funded education, introduced accountability measures including standardised testing, and mandated teacher testing in order for teachers to be re-certified during their careers. One of the first actions of the newly elected government was to abolish teacher testing and instead redirect the funding involved to teachers' professional learning and development in partnership with teachers' federations.

The new government established a Partnership Table to bring together the main education professional associations and stakeholder organisations, including teachers' federations[1] , and the Ministry of Education. Over the following fifteen years, there was a commitment, in principle, to partnership working between the education profession and the government. Although, in practice,

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1   In Ontario, the term federation is used for teacher union

partnership work was eroded at times, especially with changing legislation concerning collective bargaining rights and changing ways of working between the government and the teaching profession, by and large the principle of partnership with, and respect for, teachers was upheld.

Over time the priorities of the government evolved and expanded. Initially, the government identified three key goals:

▶ Increased student achievement

▶ Reduced gaps in achievement

▶ Increased public confidence in publicly-funded education

An extensive Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for elementary schools and a Student Success Strategy for secondary schools was implemented. In 2013-14, public consultations were held on what the next goals for Ontario should be. A new vision for Achieving Excellence was launched in 2014 with four priority goals:

▶ Achieving excellence

▶ Ensuring equity

▶ Promoting well-being

▶ Enhancing public confidence

While the new goals embodied a broader focus than achievement results in literacy and numeracy, challenges for teachers included sometimes conflicting goals between an achievement agenda, involving test results, and a well-being agenda to prioritise students' emotional, social and physical well-being as well as their cognitive development. Early anxieties about initiative overload for teachers became a major concern, including in the last round of collective bargaining, which challenged commitments to addressing too many initiatives. Developing a new way of working between government, administrators in districts and schools, teachers and their professional organisations became a priority commitment and resulted in the development of a Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) on Collaborative Professionalism for labour and management relationships.

In relation to some of the key areas of policy over this time period, the teacher federation interviewees considered that there had been substantial professional input to curriculum, mainly through formal federation representation and subject associations. There was also significant and ongoing consultation with the profession on classroom assessment policy (eg, Growing Success) and student wellbeing, equity and inclusive education, among other areas.

On funding, while there were information meetings and discussions about government funding, the main area where teacher federations had influence was through collective bargaining concerning pay and conditions. The area where teacher federations considered that the teaching profession had been least influential was system accountability, including provincial assessments through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and teacher regulation through the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT).

At the time of writing, all of these areas are currently under review by the 2018 newly elected Conservative government. Their initial actions have involved repealing the existing Health and Physical Education Curriculum and introducing an anonymous website where parents can complain if they believe their child's teacher is not adhering to these curriculum changes. A major parental consultation, including curriculum, especially sex education and mathematics, skills required for students, use of cell phones in classrooms and provincial testing has been announced.

Reflecting on policy from the previous government to the current time, the policy area where the teaching profession has had the most influence relates to teachers' continuous professional learning. In 2005, a Working Table on Teacher Development was established by the Ministry of Education and involved all key partners, including the teachers' federations. Collaboratively, this group co-developed a New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) for newly qualified teachers, reformed Annual Performance Appraisals for teachers throughout their careers, and introduced a Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) for experienced teachers. A key element of teachers' professional learning has been the involvement and leadership of the teacher federations in the design and delivery of teacher development opportunities with an emphasis on valuing teacher voice and choice and supporting teacher expertise, autonomy and leadership.

One particularly successful approach has been the TLLP, launched in 2007, as a joint partnership between the Ministry and Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and affiliates with shared goals to:

▶ support experienced teachers to undertake self-directed advanced professional development;

▶ develop teachers' leadership skills for sharing their professional learning and exemplary practices; and

▶ facilitate knowledge exchange for spread and sustainability of effective and innovative practices.

Research on TLLP has identified that this is a powerful approach to supporting and improving teachers' knowledge, understanding, practices and leadership skills, for sharing teachers' knowledge and expertise to support improved understanding and changes in practices for other adults including education professionals, parents/families and communities, and for benefiting students' engagement, motivation, learning and achievement (Campbell et al., 2018; Lieberman, Campbell & Yashkina, 2017). Based largely on the success of the TLLP, Ontario was invited to be part of a partnership with Alberta in Canada and Norway for the NORCAN partnership.

NORCAN

From 2014 to 2018, NORCAN was a partnership between the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), Norway's educator union, Utdaninningsforbundet, and the Ontario Ministry of Education and OTF to support learning across schools in each jurisdiction. NORCAN was designed to honour the professional expertise and agency of those involved and to provide the supports needed to harness and build on the learning and sharing already taking place. The animating question guiding the NORCAN partnership was: how can an international network of schools and educators committed to mindful leadership help to identify obstacles to students' mathematics learning and develop strategies for attaining success?

By collaborating across regional, provincial and international borders, educators and students involved in NORCAN were engaged in investigating diverse approaches to improving student learning in Mathematics, and simultaneously developed teacher, principal and student leadership in their respective schools. The project also included an explicit focus on equity, since Mathematics is often used as a mechanism for sorting and ranking students. Important areas of emphasis underpinning the NORCAN program are: 1) collaboration and trust – programme leaders: believe in the participants' autonomy and capacity to lead their own learning; believe in each partner organisation; build strong relationships. 2) Importance of evidence – the programme relies on a strong research component to enable articulation of success. 3) Formalised support structures - events that bring participants together; technology that serves as central communications and virtual contact mechanism; organisational support at multiple levels.

The Ontario schools, teachers and administrators that participated in NORCAN were selected as the focus of this case study because their transformative professional learning – involving on-going reflective practice, research-based action, collaboration between students, teachers and leaders within and across borders – demonstrates what is possible when teacher-led professional development is aligned with context-specific student, teacher and school needs, and when such efforts are fully supported by administrators, district and provincial governing bodies. In their pursuit of teacher-led, classroom, school and district improvement, and through exposure to the varied policy and programming approaches in other jurisdictions, these participants provide rich perspective on the factors that enable and inhibit teacher's professional learning and growth and thus student success.

Reflective practice fostered through TLLP and extended to NORCAN

Although this study explores how Ontario teachers engage in professional learning through the support of NORCAN, the project and its successes cannot be understood without knowledge of how the participating teachers came to be primed for the opportunities that NORCAN afforded. Although all teachers involved demonstrated agency, efficacy and professional expertise, many will attest that it was the learning from their TLLP projects that helped them feel prepared to collaborate and learn through NORCAN.

Through participation in the TLLP, many teachers found themselves re-focusing their initial questions, shifting from issues such as 'how to leverage technology to enhance engagement in math' to thinking about the deeper issues like the psychological, political, social and emotional barriers that prevent some students from academic achievement in math.

The iterative process of questioning, researching, trying something new, assessing outcomes, reflecting, adjusting the question and moving through the cycle repeatedly, demonstrated to the teachers involved that professional learning is a continual journey. They found that reflection helped them move from initial questions of 'how' to implement new pedagogical approaches to deeper questions relating to 'why' students were not finding success in math.

You're forced to be reflective. I'm still learning from it now. I was initially in that project to get funding to do some really cool stuff. Now, I realize, after reflecting and sharing and connecting with educators that effective student outcomes have more to do with teacher's continuous learning than with trying out some new trend. TLLP and NORCAN opened me up to this online community of constant learning and sharing. It really opened up my eyes. –

NORCAN Teacher

Although, many factors contribute to a school culture that enables and encourages teachers to take risks, learn and share, the growth of the professional learning communities at both Pereyma and Tecumseh can be partially attributed to the initial TLLPs at each school. In sharing their learning and reignited professional engagement, TLLP teachers inspired and encouraged their colleagues to lead their own projects. This helped to bolster the learning that was already taking place and provided the means to share that learning beyond schools. The culture of learning harnessed and further developed by TLLP involvement is deeply embedded in both schools. It is being continually strengthened by the NORCAN partnership and collaborative reflection has now spread across geographical barriers, bringing new ideas, perspectives and life into students, teachers and administrators learning.

Shifting teacher identity

Many of the teachers involved in NORCAN expressed a shift in their teacher identities as a result of being a NORCAN community member. Before leveraging the supports provided through the TLLP projects that then led to NORCAN, many of the teachers felt their role was to teach the curriculum to the best of their abilities and felt they were doing so in silos. Although they identified their professional skills and approaches to include: being masters and mistresses of the curriculum, having empathy and patience, building strong relationships with their students and being up-to-date with current pedagogical approaches - most did not necessarily view their role as one of constant learning, adapting, growing and sharing.

My perception has changed. I used to think it was just a job. I had no idea my career would evolve so much and that there would be so much growth and collaboration. I couldn't have imagined a teacher being invited in to work with Senior Officers in order to inform policy and programming. –

NORCAN Teacher

A similar transformation in teacher identity was expressed by several study participants who found that their paradigms had shifted since their initial involvement in collaborative classroom research. Some expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of sustained and meaningful professional development opportunities and professional connections they had had access to before they were "brought into the [TLLP/NORCAN] circle" – DCDSB Teacher. Many found the school board teacher-led, subject specific professional development days (that all teachers in the board have access to) helpful and engaging, but still felt that they were operating in isolation; disconnected from the network of educators they now are deeply engaged with.

Before I got involved in the TLLP and NORCAN I didn't have access to the conferences and speakers. I'd hear about some big math person coming to town and who gets to go? The principal. Everybody knew the learning wasn't going to make its way back to the classroom. If you aren't part of TLLP or NORCAN, you just don't have opportunities to get outside of our school board and meet other Ontario educators. -

NORCAN Teacher

Some said that they were not aware of what professional development was available to them within their own boards and province until they began connecting with teachers from other schools and districts. This lack of awareness was attributed to poor communication from organisers and also to a naivete, a lack of agency or not knowing who and what to ask – something that was learned through their TLLP and NORCAN journeys.

Learning how to leverage autonomy and agency

In supporting teachers to leverage their professional expertise, access research, take risks, share their findings, reflect and collaborate, NORCAN has bolstered the confidence of the teachers (and students) involved. Some teachers had this confidence from day one, which is what put them in the position to apply for a TLLP. These teachers attribute this initial confidence to having had supportive and encouraging administrators:

I have always had supportive administrators. I had my first administrator who believed in me and trusted in me and allowed me to do innovative things. If administrators are truly giving you autonomy, and if you've had that experience, an educator will feel confident to try new things. One of the sad realities is that not every educator gets that support. Is it just the teacher who has already carved out their role as an innovator who gets the support or does every educator get that friendly push and support. –

NORCAN Teacher

Others gained their confidence and sense of agency through being asked by peers to join a research project – and through that collaborative and supported process, gained trust in their ability to ask and act on questions.

One teacher believes that having the confidence to apply professional judgment to pedagogical decision making is what sets teachers who effectively learn and improve their practice apart from those who don't. This skill set is actively and collaboratively fostered throughout TLLP and NORCAN learning:

I always feel that professional judgement is making a decision and actually having a reason for that decision. Often times, teachers don't have a reason but rather just feel as though they are supposed to do things a certain way but don't know exactly why that is. Some feel pressure to fall in line with other teachers in their department regardless of their lack of official authority. -

NORCAN Teacher

Having received release time to collaborate with other mathematics teachers across jurisdictions, attend conferences, view presentations by researchers and thought leaders, and leverage their professional expertise to improve practice and share findings, NORCAN teachers now see themselves as lifelong learners who are tasked with the role of continual improvement and sharing. By having their expertise and perspective acknowledged and valued by leaders, they have learned to value their own voices and advocate for the changes they think are necessary.

They see that the autonomy afforded to teachers and leaders in Ontario could be better taken advantage of if more teachers and leaders were encouraged to advocate for what they believe in. One teacher speaks to a school culture of teachers with agency and administrators who encourage risk taking and learning.

Teachers come up with lots of initiatives at my school. Administration is supportive of everything that comes in front of them. I know that our teachers seem to have a lot of autonomy in our school board in how we deliver the curriculum. Our school board is supportive of what happens at the classroom level. I don't feel like there's anything huge standing in the way of wanting to do anything. -

NORCAN Teacher

The teacher and principal participants felt as though they would be granted the support and resources by their administrators and school boards for almost any initiative they are interested in, so long as they can communicate how it will impact student outcomes. Some of this perceived support may be due to the participant teachers being part of particularly forward-thinking schools and communities and that they themselves have proof of successful self-directed learning and have therefore earned the trust of those they report to.

Participants are grateful for being exposed to meaningful professional learning opportunities. Being part of a larger community of teacher leaders and learners continues to provide new pathways and seemingly endless opportunities. One teacher describes himself as feeling "almost unstoppable" now that he has gained the trust of his superiors and colleagues. Another said that she sees "no barriers in my way". However, these teachers admit that this exponential growth in opportunity grew out of being brought into projects by others and knowing or being shown how to advocate:

> *There needs to be PD opportunities for a lot of staff. Others need to be exposed to professional development that's really relevant to them and that they have a choice in as opposed to something that's been directed. Then they might be more interested in their own learning. -*
>
> **NORCAN Teacher**

Collaboration and sharing ignites professional engagement

The NORCAN funding allowed for release time so that teachers and students could travel to meet and exchange ideas and pedagogical approaches. Some of these meetings occurred between Ontario schools and others involved the NORCAN teams from Alberta and Norway. Ongoing online connections between meetings were also encouraged and nurtured, e.g. via video calling and posting to a dedicated NORCAN-Ning On line learning platform. This allocated time for collaboration has been described as "life changing" for one of the teachers involved:

NORCAN has totally blown our minds just in terms of how different things are from province to province. We are all learning so much from one another. Those opportunities are what make teachers grow. I don't think I would be doing what I'm doing now if it weren't for those opportunities. Until I could kind of bust free, I was sort of like a hamster spinning on a wheel, now I know there's always a better way. You just have to keep looking for it and eventually you will find it. -

NORCAN Teacher

The emphasis on collaboration and opening oneself up to feedback and collective learning has changed how teachers teach and how students learn. It has given them the confidence to de-privatise their learning, to ask for help, to learn from others and to continue to seek out learning opportunities.

Students became used to other teachers, administrators and senior officers moving in and out of the classrooms to observe and ask questions. Teachers became used to asking colleagues to pop into their classrooms to give feedback on a lesson.

It was the embedded release time and structured support that allowed teachers to share the learning of the TLLP projects across schools, districts and, for some, across the jurisdiction and globe. This sharing put the spotlight on the teachers and leaders that are now part of the NORCAN community. The sharing occurred through organised collaboration time supported by TLLP and then NORCAN, but also through having the opportunity to make connections, be invited to conferences, see researchers present, join local and global professional communities and learn about and follow teacher leaders and researchers online:

There has been so much co-learning across boards. We're interested in where the other is going next. We will share resources back and forth and it's just really exciting. -

NORCAN Teacher

Student voice and choice at the forefront of learning

The collaboration initiated through NORCAN is not restricted to teachers and leaders. The mathematics council, which was the creation of a principal at Tecumseh who was passionate about bringing student voice to the forefront of mathematics teaching, is a cornerstone of the NORCAN community of learning. It is a community where students can learn from their peers within and beyond their schools, and across borders, and where teachers can apply that learning to their approaches in class. Mathematics councils have been founded in all NORCAN schools and have even spread across districts, enabling more teachers and leaders to enhance student voice and choice in their schools:

> *If educators are open to hearing student voice, they also have to be willing to adapt their practice or student voice is inauthentic. We wanted to work together with our students to collectively come up with and enact a plan to support all learners, adult and student. Through sharing ideas, engaging in discourse, creating plans and putting plans in action, students develop agency as well.*
>
> **(Math Council Guidebook, Tecumseh Vista, p.2)**

Need for administrator support for enhanced teacher and school voice and choice

> *I used to think the teacher has the greatest impact but now I think that it's the principal who sets the entire sense of community. It's best when they are co-learning alongside of you. We learn from each other. For programs to flourish the principal needs to be the instructional leader in the school. –*
>
> **NORCAN Teacher**

All participants spoke to the powerful force of administrative leadership, or lack thereof, through their careers. For the most confident educators, it was the school culture of learning and trust built by the principal that allowed them to feel safe and supported to move forward.

One principal spoke to the importance of valuing teachers wherever they are in their learning, skill set and comfort level, and going from there. Not unlike how teachers are expected to approach student learning, it is also important to provide voice and choice to teachers in their learning. Just as voice and choice should be included in approaches to student and teacher learning, one principal believes school boards and ministries should also be granting voice and choice to individual schools. By including more principals and teachers in the decision-making processes and action plans, school boards and ministries may be better attuned to the learning needs and professional supports necessary within each school:

Schools have very different needs. Initiatives might not be for every school. Ministries and boards need to know that if this isn't the time to introduce the applied mathematics learning, then maybe we don't focus on that now, maybe we focus on that when it does become a need -

NORCAN Principal

There is, however, a certain level of flexibility and autonomy at the school level on how to implement the mandated initiatives. To a certain extent, principals can make decisions to adapt an initiative based on their comfort level, ability to take on a new challenge and perceived need for the initiative. Although that perceived autonomy at the school level tends to come in waves.

Conclusion

Policies and practices affecting teacher identity have evolved and changed in Ontario. From a period of a government hostile to the publicly funded education system and the teaching profession pre-2003, to a commitment to partnership working in principle and mostly in practice although challenges were experienced at times from 2003-2018, to a recent change of government focused on reforming education. Over the past fifteen years, a key feature of Ontario has been a commitment to teacher federations' leadership and involvement in the design, delivery and advocacy for teachers' professional learning, particularly for teacher voice and choice and for valuing teacher expertise, autonomy and leadership.

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Continuous Professional Learning and Development in Kenya

Teacher Continuous Professional Development – An Overview

The case study focuses on continuous professional development in Kenya and how wider system reforms within the Kenya 'Vision 2030' are expected to impact on CPD provision for Kenyan teachers. The picture of CPD 'on the ground' in Kenya is illustrated through the case of the British Council Kenya who, as part of their work, facilitate programmes and projects to build capacity in education and teacher training. As well as this illustrative example, the case study draws on a semi-structured interview with a member of the British Council Kenya, CUREE's International Teacher Professional Identity survey, and a number of policy documents, reports, and extant research materials.

Kenyan educational policy is currently in a transitional state due to the introduction of a system-wide reform back in 2009. 'The Vision 2030' is guided by the goal of 'nurturing learners' potential' and aims to do this by reforming a number of key foci within the system including teacher's professional development. The new reform aims to provide consistent and accredited CPD opportunities for teachers within Kenya, allowing teachers to have autonomy over their own CPD. This case study sets out to explore teacher professional development and learning within the Kenyan education system with a specific focus on how this impacts teacher professional identity. The case study focuses on the previous CPD provision, outlining several issues which were identified system-wide, and then how the reform has started to evolve the provision and the consequences which have arisen due to this change.

System Context and Priorities

Key stakeholders in the Kenya education system include:

‣ the State Departments for Basic Education,
‣ Vocational and Technical Training and University Education;
‣ and the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC).

The control, organisation and management of CPD in Kenya is primarily the responsibility of the Director of Quality Assurance in the Ministry of Education. Other organisations involved in supporting CPD are in the Kenya Education Management Institute and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).

The Kenya 'Vision 2030' reform was initially introduced in 2009 with the aim of equipping learners with the necessary skills for the 21st century. Although the education reform aspires to build upon a number of previous challenges identified within the system, an education sector report in 2015 identified sector-wide challenges such as: limited funding; shortage of teachers and instructors in primary, secondary and tertiary education; poor and inadequate infrastructure; slow pace of ICT integration; low level of investment in science and technology and; inadequacies of both legal policy and institutional frameworks – all of which are identified as key building blocks for Vision 2030.

Teacher Professional Development

Characteristics of
Teacher Professional Development and Learning Provision

Continuous professional development provision differs greatly across the Kenyan education system, with variation arising from the diverse offer of different CPD providers. Below is an illustration of the current CPD provision from the perspective of one CPD provider, the British Council Kenya.

Illustration of the current CPD provision in Kenya: the British Council Kenya

The British Council is an international organisation, supporting the development of cultural relations and educational opportunities in over 100 countries. The British Council Kenya aims to connect the UK and Kenyan school sectors in order to enrich education and promote global citizenship, facilitating programmes and projects to build capacity in education and teacher training. Here, we use the example of the British Council's work in Kenya to exemplify the common characteristics of CPD provision for teachers in Kenya.

For their CPD provision in Kenya, the British Council works with a globally-set agenda, so that when designing a new CPD programme for a country, they will first come up with a package which will then be adapted in collaboration with local officials, in this case the Ministry of Education to the Kenyan context.

CPD through BC Kenya often takes the form of tailored or specialised courses, workshops or seminars, organised locally or at regional level, and working towards a specific goal. The focus of the CPD will depend on the provider, but commonly BC Kenya's offer might include: financial skills; core skills and competencies; digital literacy; and management skills. Subject-specific CPD in Kenya is rare, except at a university level, and colleagues at BC Kenya comment that "politically, there has been a shift away from focusing teacher professional development on knowledge and moving it towards teaching and learning approaches." CPD needs analysis is closely aligned with teacher growth and promotion, owing to the requirement for teachers to take part in particular training and attain particular qualifications before they can progress into a more senior role.

The structure of CPD programmes varies widely both across and within programmes, with BC Kenya's offer ranging from one-off, 2-3-day collaborative training seminars to a series of day-long workshops with intervals between each. For BC Kenya and other CPD providers, the rhythm of CPD is becoming increasingly a challenge because of the limitations in the amount of in-school time teachers are allocated for taking part in CPD, and the requirement to work within these constraints. CPD providers such as BC Kenya face further challenges in relation to the differences urban and rural schools experience in gaining access to resources and CPD structures even though they are required to work to the same national curriculum. Unsurprisingly this generates substantial differences in their CPD needs.

Current Issues within the Current CPD Provision

Prior to the reforms, Kenyan teachers faced a number of key challenges in accessing high quality CPD, including:

▶ **A lack of in-school time allocated to CPD** – as noted in the 2014 Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)-Teachers' report, until this year, no time was officially allotted for teachers to complete tasks other than classroom teaching, including lesson planning and taking part in CPD. In spite of this, although teachers in Kenya were not required to continuously learn through professional development, they could be required to take part in ad hoc CPD based on performance evaluations. As a result, any teachers who chose to take part in CPD or to complete further qualifications would be required to do so during weekends or school holidays.

▶ **A reliance on self-funded provision** – teachers are currently expected to meet the costs of any CPD they choose to take part in, receiving no support other than government- allocated, unpaid study leave. In interviews carried out as part of this case study, one teacher commented that whilst he himself was able to take part in regular CPD this was not universally the case, as "not all schools are in a position to support teachers to attend CPD programmes, due to financial challenges and the scope of the syllabus."

▶ **A lack of control for teachers over the aims and activities of their CPD** – teachers also experience only a very limited amount of control over the CPD activities they take part in. Participation in CPD is often centrally controlled, or distributed only as far as school leaders, leaving very little autonomy for teachers in their own development; for example, BC Kenya described how often the regional director will be responsible for selecting a school to participate in a CPD programme, with the head teacher given a personal choice over which teachers take part, unless the provider has set specific selection criteria.

The reforms currently in place include a commitment to promoting CPD and helping teachers get access to and gain control over their professional development – addressing the issues highlighted above.

The Vision for 2030- Professional Development and Learning Reform

Current system-wide reforms include a commitment to continuous professional development. Following research and consultation by the KICD, the TSC recently issued a new Teacher Development Framework as part of the reform, which has the potential for significantly shifting the professional development landscape. Previously the TSC involvement in the professional development of teachers was limited, confining itself to entry level assessment. Under the new framework, referred to as the TPD, there has also been a shift away from focusing teacher development on knowledge and moving it towards teaching and learning approaches, whilst ensuring there is a link with teacher growth and promotion.

Characteristics of Professional Learning and Development Under the Reform

As part of the proposed curriculum reforms, there are a number of components of teacher development also under review. Areas for development within CPD include:

▶ Reviewing teacher training

▶ Upgrading teacher certification requirements

▶ Promoting specialisation amongst teachers

▶ Strengthening internship/teaching practice

▶ Action research

▶ Promoting mentorship

▶ Expanding community of practice

▶ Encouraging peer education

▶ Funding procurement and provision of quality instructional materials

The reform was introduced a number of years ago and a number of plans have been drawn up to build upon the areas of development, two of which are explored in more detail below: certification and consistency.

Certification

The TSC are also working to ensure that the structures CPD providers use are more effective in what they are asking participants to do in terms of cascading their learning; they are also focused on ways of measuring and ensuring this is happening. This helps to assess the value of the certification participants receive for taking part in CPD so that if a teacher has a certificate from a particular course or provider, they will know their work for this has involved some degree of sharing their learning back in their school. A further aim of the TPD is a programme for re-certification of all teachers, seeking to address gaps and establish structures to continually build the capacities of teachers and instructional leaders in public and private basic education institutions. Teachers will have to be re-accredited and re-certificated to allow them to continue with teaching. On successful completion of the prescribed TPD course for a particular level in the professional career path, every registered teacher will be issued with a teaching certificate renewable every five years.

Consistency

The TSC are in the process of shaping measures for ensuring consistency between the training teachers can access from different CPD providers who have been asked to submit accreditation proposals and evidence for the programmes they run. As part of the new framework, the TSC have released guidance which outlines seven standards for teacher professional development to which all CPD providers are required to conform to. CPD programmes must show that they address at least one standard.

Aspirations for Vision 2030

In introducing the reform, the TSC expects there to be an effect on the quality of professional learning and on education as a whole geared to the aspiration of 'nurturing every learner's potential'. TSC expects that the implementation of the TPD will not only motivate teachers to acquire relevant professional skills to enhance their competences, but also provide a means of career progression. Launching the TPD, the TSC described it as a "practice-based approach aimed at preparing teachers to adequately implement the competence-based curriculum being introduced in our schools, it is learner-friendly and anchored on a teacher's job therefore creating professional learning communities and encouraging lifelong learning."

There is evidence of early progress in light of the reforms. A high percentage of teachers feel they have control over their own professional development. This is evident in CUREE's 2017 survey probing teacher identity and views, in which 65% of teachers felt they mostly decided their professional development aims or did so with little input from colleagues. The same can be said about the choices they make regarding the activities they experience as part of their CPD; 69.9% felt they decided this with little input from colleagues. It has also been shown that the vast majority (96%) of teachers are actively seeking to develop their teaching. Nonetheless it is also widely recognised by teachers, CPD providers and officials that there are still a number of issues with the current reforms.

Union involvement in 2030 reform

As demonstrated within the case study, as part of the 2030 reform the education sector as a whole aims to develop the nation's human capacity, which is required by all sectors of the Kenyan economy. As a result of this aim and the implications for teachers, KNUT are keen to ensure their involvement in the reform and ensuring their interest in the professional development of its members is inherent in their mandate. Subsequently, the Union perceives its role in the 2030 reform to include:

▶ Overseeing the institutes involved in implementing flagship projects to ensure improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. Identifying and articulating capacity gaps present within its members e.g. using ICT to ensure attainment of planned objectives

▶ Proposing alternative programmes in response to members 'on-the-ground' experience

Implications for teacher identity

▶ The TSC has ambitious aspirations for reform across Kenyan education: from the structure, to the curriculum and for teacher professional development through the Teacher Development Framework. However, despite teachers reporting that they feel they have autonomy over selecting their CPD and activities, CPD remains centrally controlled, as it was prior to the reform. This is apparent in the teacher training needed to progress to the higher levels of the profession, which remains prescribed by the TSC; a situation that limits access to CPD for a number of teachers. It is also apparent in the certification structure for CPD providers. Although the new framework aims to encourage teachers to undertake professional, learner centred, development, under the TDF, teachers will still be expected to undertake professional development in their own time, which includes weekends and school holidays. It would be instructive to revisit the Kenyan context once the reforms have been embedded across the jurisdiction.

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The Role of Teacher Evaluation in Constructing Teacher Identity in Singapore

The Enhanced Performance Management System: Overview

This case study describes Singapore's system of teacher evaluation, known as the Enhanced Performance Management System or EPMS. The EPMS is a stand-out example of a coherent and sophisticated teacher evaluation system which makes strong links to related teacher policies and structures such as a career progression model, professional development and pay and incentives. It also is a model which looks to enhance rather than constrain teacher agency leadership, one which involves numerous actors, including senior teachers, subject area chairs and heads of department, in addition to principals and vice principals acting as supervisors, providing expertise and time for reflecting, counselling and support. This case study draws on policy documents, scholarly research, international reviews and the CUREE teacher identity survey to detail the aims and design of EPMS and how this shapes and is shaped by teachers' roles, professional learning and leadership.

Teacher evaluation in Singapore is carried out through the Enhanced Performance Management System or EPMS: a competency-based system introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2005 which aims to "transform [teachers'] careers" and help to "retain good and highly committed teachers"[2]. Through the EPMS, teachers are evaluated on an annual basis on both their performance and their Currently Estimated Potential (CEP). For their performance, teachers are assessed against the required competencies for their respective career stage and the targets from their previous evaluation. A teacher's CEP is then used to identify their potential to advance through the chosen career track, and correspondingly to plan opportunities for their continuous professional development (CPD).

Teachers are evaluated by a supervisor in their school, who might be a principal, vice-principal or head of department, dependent on their role. Teacher evaluation principally takes place via work review meetings between teachers and supervisors, carried out in three phases (performance planning, coaching and evaluation).

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[2]   OECD. 'Teacher Evaluation: A Conceptual Framework and examples of Country Practices' (December 2009), p37. Access via: http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/44568106.pdf.

This process is supported by classroom observations, teacher portfolios, peer consultation through a panel ranking process, and, in some cases, student results (although this is not compulsory).

The EPMS provides a valuable insight into the construction of teachers' professional identities in Singapore, in relation to:

▶ **structures and standards** - the structure provided for teachers to understand the key competencies and professional standards at different stages of their career progression, as well as the opportunities this offers for teachers to define their own roles and aspirations;

▶ **a model of distributed leadership** - how the EPMS represents a model for distributed leadership within the system as a whole; and

▶ **identifying development needs** - the provision of a clear, evidence-based structure for identifying teachers' professional development needs and shaping how these needs are met.

System Context and Priorities

High standards for teachers in the context of a high performing system

The 1970s and 80s saw profound changes to the education system in Singapore, which, over the succeeding 30-40 years, has come to be recognised as a highly successful system with "some of the best trained teachers in the world[3]" . This has been attributed to a large degree to how the system recruits, prepares, develops and retains its workforce and maintains high standards through incentivising strong performance and providing structures to support teachers in achieving this[4] .

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3 Ng, P.T. 'Educational reform in Singapore: from quantity to quality'. Educational Research for Policy Practice, 7:1 (2007), p150. Access here.

4 Darling-Hammond, Linda; Choo, Tan Lay. 'Creating Effective Teachers and Leaders in Singapore'. Teacher and Leader Effectiveness in High-Performing Education Systems. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (2011), p34. Access via: https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/teacher-and-leader-effectiveness-high-performing-education-systems.pdf

According to TALIS, 98% of teachers receive rigorous initial teacher training[5]. The Ministry is able to oversee and prescribe quality in providing only one teacher training institution, the National Institute of Education (NIE) – a feat possible in the context of an education system where both teacher training and recruitment are centrally controlled, in a densely populated city-state with a population of 5.6 million.

Only the top third of graduates are accepted into the NIE, following a series of stringent tests and interviews. Once they have completed their training, 98% of teachers also regularly take part in CPD, including collaborative learning, whilst 80% report participating in observation and feedback, substantially above international averages in both cases[6] .Teachers are evaluated in all areas of their role, including where they are responsible for mentoring other teachers, in a process which involves multiple school personnel and evidence sources. Stewart (2011) reflects that basing the system on more than "solely on student test scores" and taking into account a "range of school improvement goals, professional contributions and indicators of student well-being" contributes to the system's accountability[7].

> *"The future of every one of us in Singapore is to a large extent determined by what our teachers do in the classroom"*
>
> **Ong Pang Boon, Minister of Education, 1966**

The priority Singapore gives to supporting teacher quality is also reflected in how the EPMS incorporates a system of performance-based rewards for excellent practice, to motivate teachers to continue to learn and develop. The EPMS is used to assess whether a teacher is eligible for promotion (leading to access to higher salaries). In addition, the EPMS is used as part of the calculation for awarding the annual Performance Bonus within a school, where principals may make a monetary award of up to two months' salary for teachers who have reached the highest levels of performance and potential in their evaluation. There are also opportunities for wider additional recognition for excellent practice, such as the President Award for Teachers, the Caring Teachers' Award, the Most Inspiring Teachers' Award and the Outstanding Young Educator Award.

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5   Ng. 'Educational reform in Singapore: from quantity to quality'. p150

6   Ng. 'Educational reform in Singapore: from quantity to quality'. p150.

7   Stewart, Vivien. 'Raising Teacher Quality'. Educational Leadership, December 2010-January 2011, p19. Access via: http://otheroptions.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/file/view/Raising+Teacher+Quality.pdf/199289176/Raising%20Teacher%20Quality.pdf

In sum, the EPMS is part of a wider education system with a historically strong focus on maintaining high standards in the teaching profession, through incentivising and providing support structures and resources which promote excellent professional practice.

Teacher Role and Values

A significant part of maintaining high standards within a system (and constructing teachers' professional identities) first comes from defining what good practice should look like. The EPMS, in combination with the three-career track system, plays an important role in defining teachers' professional standards whilst offering opportunities for them to define and develop their own roles and aspirations.

> *"I emphasise three elements in teacher professionalism: reflective practice, pedagogical repertoire, collaboration & engagement"*
> **Secondary School Vice Principal CUREE survey, July 2018**

The EPMS is based on a series of competency models which outline the knowledge, skills and characteristics teachers are expected to demonstrate in their practice, and the principles for outstanding performance[8]. The competencies, however, are not universal. Singaporean teachers are afforded an unusual (by international standards) degree of control over their opportunities to specialise through the existence of the three career tracks (as outlined in Appendix A), each of which has its own set of competencies:

▶ Firstly, there is the Teaching Track, for teachers who wish to remain in the classroom, as well as to take on responsibilities for developing practice in their school through training and mentoring. Teachers who choose to follow the Teaching Track can advance through the levels of Senior and Lead Teacher to Master and Principal Master Teacher.

▶ Secondly, there is the Leadership Track, which provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles, first within their school, and then, at higher levels, within the Ministry.

▶ Teachers can also work as part of the Ministry through the Senior Specialist Track to develop the specialism in Curriculum and Instructional Design, Psychology and Guidance, Testing and Measurement or Research and Statistics.

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8   OECD. 'Teachers for the 21st Century: Using Evaluation to Improve Teaching'. OECD Publishing: 2013, p69. Access via: http://www.oecd.org/site/eduistp13/TS2013%20Background%20Report.pdf

These career tracks are designed to recognise teachers' individual strengths and aspirations. The tracks each come with a detailed set of competencies, organised into clusters. Different tracks are characterised by different competencies, which are further broken down into levels for each stage on the career track: starting at Level 1 with the basic competence requirements and building to the most advanced requirements at Level 5.

Appendix B outlines the Teaching Track competencies for all teachers (Level 1) and Master Teachers (Level 4). The competencies cover a broad conception of teaching, characterised by:

▶ for the Teaching Track, a focus on supporting the holistic development of pupils through quality learning, pastoral care and co-curricular activities;

▶ for the Leadership Track, a focus on developing strong leadership abilities and a broad vision for education improvement;

▶ for the Senior Specialist Track, a focus on developing deep knowledge and skills in their specialist area; and

▶ across three tracks, a common vision for the continual development of educational knowledge, skills and talent.

In working to competencies structured around the career tracks, the system aims to:

▶ provide teachers with clear and detailed information about the standards they are expected to adhere to as professionals, at the level of both the basic requirements, the features of outstanding performance and the steps between the two; and

▶ enable teachers to play to their professional strengths and aspirations, in a way which develops talent in different domains and at different levels of the wider education system.

However, it is worth noting that evidence from CUREE's International Teacher Professional Identity survey of over 200 practitioners in Singapore, conducted in July 2018, shows that this breadth of opportunity around what defines a teachers' role may not be universally popular. There were a number of responses commenting on the impact of the wide range of responsibilities contained within their role, including one Head of Department, who commented "The role of a teacher needs to be more narrowly defined and prioritised, with students' learning at the centre. The scope has become

too broad, making it impossible for many."[9] In addition, the available evidence suggests that the level of commitment to CPD which is espoused and perpetuated by the EPMS, as well as the system as a whole, may be having a negative impact on teachers' well-being and stress levels, with only 16% of teachers and 21% of school leaders in the CUREE survey suggesting they felt able to achieve a good work-life balance.

Teacher Leadership and Collaboration

A model of distributed leadership

> *"As a Lead Teacher, I need strong support from my principal to enact my role"*
>
> **Primary School Lead Teacher CUREE survey, July 2018**

Whilst all schools in Singapore remain under the administrative control of the Ministry, they retain a certain amount of decision-making autonomy, including around teacher evaluation. The system recognises that school principals alone cannot maintain the jurisdiction's high standards of practice, professionalism and student performance, and that systems such as the EPMS require a distributed leadership model, with teachers and other actors taking on a variety of roles[10].

This model involves numerous actors, including senior teachers, subject area chairs and heads of department, in addition to principals and vice principals acting as supervisors. According to Sclafani (2010), this involvement of multiple actors is crucial allowing the time for reflecting, counselling and support required by the EPMS, and is key to its success[11]. The ways in which different stakeholders are involved in constructing and implementing teacher evaluation include the following:

9 Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Crisp, B., Perry, T., Bradbury, M., Johns, P. 'Constructing Teachers' Professional Identities: Learning from Seven Countries'. Education International, forthcoming

10 Sclafani, Susan. 'Rethinking Human Capital in Education: Singapore as a Model for Teacher Development'. The Aspen Institute: 2010, p6. Access via: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED512422.pdf.

11 Sclafani. 'Rethinking Human Capital in Education: Singapore as a Model for Teacher Development', p6.

▶ **Individual school leaders** are given the scope to interpret the centrally set methods, competencies and guidelines of the EPMS for their own school and context.

▶ **School supervisors** assess teacher performance.

▶ A panel, usually comprising the **principal, vice-principal and heads of departments**, evaluate current estimated potential (CEP) through collectively ranking a group of teachers.

▶ **School management** are responsible for making decisions around teacher dismissal, although it is rare for the EPMS to lead to this.

Through this, the system emphasises the importance of collaboration – as part of both self- and peer-evaluation – as a facet of teachers' professional roles and represents how the whole school is expected to be a part of the process of continuous improvement and culture building. However, fewer than 5% of surveyed teachers and 17% of leaders felt that they had significant influence over how they were assessed, even with some input from colleagues or national frameworks, whilst close to half of teachers who responded felt they had no influence at all.

Opportunities for teacher leadership

Teacher leadership is promoted by and embedded within national policies in a way that positions teachers' professional identities as including a significant degree of collective self-determination According to Darling-Hammond and Choo (2011): "The Ministry of Education is constantly looking for ways to recognise and promote teacher leadership, both for individuals who have demonstrated various talents and for teachers as a whole"[12]. The three career tracks structure as part of the EPMS demonstrates one way in which the system attempts to achieve this. In moving to a higher stage in their respective career tracks, teachers have the opportunity to take on additional opportunities, including:

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12   Darling-Hammond & Choo. 'Creating Effective Teachers and Leaders in Singapore'. p34.

> ▶ through the Senior Specialist Track, the opportunity to get involved with full- or -part-time curriculum development, from school level all the way up to national curricula;

> ▶ through the Leadership Track, the opportunity to take on formal leadership roles as school, district, regional or national leaders; and

> ▶ through the Teaching Track, the opportunity to develop whole-school teaching and learning practices.

As teachers are evaluated and promoted into these roles, they gain access to free courses through the NIE, which they complete alongside teaching or whilst taking a sabbatical. All leadership training is funded by the government; demonstrating a national investment in developing teachers into leaders.

Professional Development and Learning

CPD is highly influential for the construction of teacher identity in Singapore, and the EPMS makes a significant contribution to this, in providing an evidence-based structure for identifying teachers' individual and collective professional development needs and shaping how these needs are met via collaboration between teachers and school leaders.

Identifying and addressing needs

From its inception, the EPMS was designed to be developmental in nature, and to support teacher improvement by affording opportunities for teachers to reflect on their achievements and potential. On average, the Ministry funds 100 hours of CPD for each teacher every year, at least 60% of which must be focused on the development of teaching and learning. Schools will generally offer support for 40 hours of this, and teachers' EPMS ratings will be used by heads of departments to complete a teacher needs analysis for the school, and to identify opportunities to maximise resources through in-school workshops. The EPMS specifically targets the identification of areas for development for teachers with low performance ratings and to provide support for struggling teachers through intensive coaching; consequently, dismissal for poor performance is rare[13].

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13   Steiner, Lucy. 'Using Competency-Based Evaluation to Drive Teacher Excellence: Lessons from Singapore'. Chapel Hill NC: Public Impact (2010), p17-18. Access via: http://opportunityculture.org/images/stories/singapore_lessons_2010.pdf.

Studies including those by Jackson & Bruegman (2009) and Goddard & Goddard (2007), cited by Darling-Hammond et al, have identified stronger value-added gains for students where teachers work together for school improvement, as evidence of the benefits of the emphasis on teacher collaboration through the EPMS[14]. The EPMS is structured around the three review meetings between teacher and supervisor, for planning, coaching and reflection; however, teachers are also encouraged to meet with their supervisor on a regular basis to review their progress and targets, and for supervisors to offer their support and identify additional opportunities for development. Through performing well in their evaluation, teachers are afforded plentiful access to opportunities for growth (Sclafani, 2008), including through sabbatical periods and opportunities for school-based research or post-graduate study[15].

Teacher attitudes towards the EPMS and its impact on their professional identity

"Affirmation and recognition by school leaders and reporting officers on my work and contribution will motivate me and make me want to do better"

Secondary School Teacher, CUREE survey, July 2018

The available evidence suggests that teachers in Singapore take evaluation and professional development very seriously; 92% of practitioners in CUREE's survey indicated that they actively seek to develop their teaching as part of their role, and according to Steiner, "rather than resisting the intensive amount of feedback they receive, most teachers are able to respect the evaluation system", citing the following reasons:[16]

▶ Teachers widely accept the validity of the EPMS – that it is evidence-based and focused explicitly on supporting them to take ownership of their professional goals and career progression.

▶ The structures in place enable teachers to clearly identify the competency levels required to reach these goals and, through their work review meetings, to discuss this with and receive advice and support from colleagues.

▶ As the EPMS rarely leads to dismissal, it is viewed primarily as a developmental rather than a punitive system.

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14   Darling-Hammond, Linda; Amrein-Beardsley, Audrey; Haertel, Edward H.; Rothstein, Jesse. 'Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: A Background Paper for Policy Makers'. Dirksen Senate Office Building: American Educational Research Association & National Academy of Education (2011), p10. Access via: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED533702.pdf.

15   Sclafani, Susan. 'Rethinking Human Capital in Education: Singapore as a Model for Teacher Development'. p3.

16   Steiner. 'Using Competency-Based Evaluation to Drive Teacher Excellence: Lessons from Singapore', p17

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Appendices

Appendix A –
Career Tracks for
Teachers in Singapore

Teaching Track	Leadership Track	Senior Specialist Track
	Director General of Education	
	Director	Chief Specialist
	Deputy Director	Principal Specialist
	Cluster Superintendent	
Prinvipal Master Teacher	Principal	Lead Specialist
Master Teacher	Vice Principal	Senior Specialist 2
Lead Teacher	Head of Department	Senior Specialist 1
Senior Teacher	Subject Head/ Level Head	

Appendix B –
Description of teacher
competencies

Competency Cluster	Competency	All Teachers	Master Teachers
Nurturing the Whole Child	n/a	• share values with student • take action to develop the student	• act consistently in the student's interest • get others to join the education process • influence policies, programs, and procedures
Cultivating Knowledge	Subject Mastery	• active interest in subject matter • take initiative to keep abreast of education trends in subject	• apply knowledge of trends • get feedback to determine effectiveness • develop innovative approaches • provide thought leadership
	Analytical Thinking	• break down problems • identify cause-and-effect relationships • prioritize tasks according to their importance	• see basic and multiple relationships • analyze and develop solutions to complex, multidimensional problems
	Initiative	• recognize and respond to current situations • act decisively in critical situations • address potential problems before they worsen	• think and act ahead of time to optimize opportunities • identify and prevent potential problems before they happen • anticipate situations to attain long-term benefits
	Teaching Creatively	• use routine methods to teach • provide worksheets and notes • appeal to students' interests by using specific techniques and approaches to teach concepts • assess learning through simple questioning	• use a variety of approaches • use reflective questioning to assist student comprehension • teach a range of concepts simultaneously • exploit learning opportunities inside and outside classroom • inspire learning beyond the curriculum
Winning Hearts and Minds	Understanding Environment	• know policies and procedures • recognize organizational capabilities • understand reasons for people's resistance • understand the rationale behind policies	• apply understanding of school issues • comprehend school climate and apply this knowledge to attain positive outcomes • develop activities that align with school's education vision • apply knowledge of socioeconomic forces • address long-term issues influencing the school's relation to the external world
	Developing Others	• give suggestions to address immediate developmental needs • provide guidance to beginning teachers that draws on personal experience and knowledge	• coach teachers for development • stretch potential of self and colleagues through professional development
Working with Others	Partnering with Parents	• keep parents informed about activities, student progress, and policies • treat parents as partners • encourage parental involvement	• work collaboratively with parents • build and nurture long-term relationships with parents
	Working in Teams	• willingly help others and share information • express positive attitudes and expectations of others • show willingness and keenness to learn from colleagues to attain work targets and goals	• encourage and empower team teachers • build team commitment • highlight and resolve issues that affect teacher effectiveness

Teacher Voice in Policymaking in Scotland

Scottish Curriculum Policy – An Overview

The focus of this case study is teacher voice in policy-making in Scotland. It examines the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and whether teachers in Scotland feel that their professional experience and voice is present and influential in decisions around how education is structured and led. This case study also explores the extent to which the expansion of teacher autonomy designed into the Curriculum for Excellence genuinely reflects and respects teachers' own desires, and the extent to which this design intention is reflected in the experience of implementing it "on the ground". The case study draws on a semi-structured interview with a senior policy-maker within the system; CUREE's International Teacher Professional Identity survey; outlets for professional voice including the Scottish Educational Journal; and a range of policy documents and research papers.

For several years the policy environment for education in Scotland has been characterised by dynamic change, organised around a series of reforms. These have been aimed at increasing autonomy for teachers and focussed on teaching students about the application of knowledge rather than imparting knowledge in abstract. The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), devised on the basis of the 2004 'A Curriculum for Excellence – The Curriculum Review Group' report, is supported by the general consensus in the Scottish educational policymaking landscape, with all five main Scottish political parties supporting it, as well as a number of key actors in Scotland including professional bodies. However, while teacher autonomy is an explicit core component of the CfE, questions remain about the extent to which this design intention is reflected in the experience of implementing it "on the ground". There is evidence that teachers in Scotland continue to feel that their professional experience and voice is missing from the ways in which education is structured and led. This case study aims to explore the extent to which the principle of expanding teacher autonomy designed into the Curriculum for Excellence is genuinely reflecting and respecting teachers' own desires, and what might be behind the lingering perception among Scottish teachers that their roles as educators are prescribed for them by others.

System Context and Priorities

Teacher recruitment and retention is a current high priority focus within the Scottish education system, with a concerted push within a number of system-wide policies including the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan to ensure that the jurisdiction has a "highly professional, skilled workforce, who can fully exploit the potential of the new curriculum". There is also an increasing emphasis on teacher development and leadership, with aspirations to increase Masters-level professional learning, enhance teacher leadership skills, and to foreground CPD, leadership and guidance materials and resources for teachers and leaders.

*Key stakeholders in the Scottish education system include: **the General Teaching Council for Scotland**, in charge of regulating the professional standards for all teachers; the **Scottish Government Education Directorate** who hold political responsibility for education; **Education Scotland**, a government executive agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education and securing the delivery of effective learning experiences and outcomes for all learners; and **local authorities**, who own and operate state schools and act as education authorities.*

The Scottish government has positioned greater leadership "from the middle" (i.e. below national- but above school-level) as an "essential" driver of a number of national frameworks, including the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The CfE is the national curriculum for Scottish schools, initially developed in 2002, published in 2004 and implemented in schools from 2010-11, with further changes being made during 2014, overseen by Education Scotland. The CfE provides detailed guidance on the objectives and aspirations for all learners, which schools should strive to promote. Its aim is to help young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes they need for life in the twenty-first century[17].

The CfE framework is nationally set, as is the provision of key guidance materials and resources, whilst decisions about implementation rest with local authorities, schools and head teachers. In this way, the framework was explicitly designed to be less prescriptive than previous curriculum models and to give teachers freedoms in pedagogy and implementation; to provide structure and support whilst allowing flexibility in the design of local curricula. In this context schools and their partners are to take responsibility for bringing together pupil experiences and outcomes and to

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17   What is Curriculum for Excellence (2018) https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/pol-icy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence

apply the national entitlements in ways that generate curriculum breadth in schemes of learning. Throughout this broad curriculum it is also expected there will be an emphasis on Scottish context, cultures and history.

"The CfE is designed to transform education in Scotland, for all leading to better outcomes children and young people"
(Scottish Government, 2009: 4)

Thus, the model seeks to combine 'top-down' government prescription with 'bottom-up' school-based curriculum development, carried out by teachers – and in doing so, developing a renewed vision of teachers as agents of change in a way not previously seen in the Scottish education system. However, the lack of coherence and structure offered by the CfE in pursuit of this flexibility has attracted criticism for its 'mix-and-match' approach and seemingly a-theoretical design.

The Impact of the CfE on Teacher Role and Identity

Since its implementation, the CfE has had a range of impacts on both the system and teachers' identity, a number of which are explored below.

Enabling teacher voice

The CfE combines what is claimed to be best 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to curriculum planning, providing central guidance for schools and thus ensuring maintenance of national standards, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility for schools and teachers to consider local needs when designing programmes of education[18]. The way the CfE framework and guidance aims to support this, is exemplified through the Social Studies curriculum, set out overleaf. This approach allows teachers to have control of what happens within their classroom and their schools. This is reflected in responses to a survey carried out by CUREE in May 2017 which asked teachers about their perception of the levels of

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18   Priestley, M. (2010). Curriculum for Excellence: transformational change or business as usual. Scottish Educational Review, 42(1), 23-36

autonomy they are afforded in their classroom and school; 78% of teachers reported that they would "mostly decide themselves" how they teach in the classroom[19]. This perspective was further supported by an article in the Scottish Education Journal, which reported, in relation to the development of the CfE:

"Schools and education authorities will continue to be accountable for the decisions they take about the curriculum they offer, with expectations that they will use arrangements creatively and flexibly and in ways which raise levels of achievement and attainment for all young people."
(Scottish Executive 2004: 10)

"a particular change in focus – one that is very welcome in our view – has been the renewed emphasis in policy on the role of teachers as an active developer of the curriculum and as an agent of change"[20]. Moreover, the CfE framework aspires to afford teachers the flexibility to organise, schedule and deliver experiences and outcomes in ways which meet the needs of all young people, whilst also providing reassurance about consistency where needed. This results in a more varied pattern of curriculum structures which reflect local needs and circumstances.

Teacher leadership

The renewed emphasis on the professional input of teachers as developers of the curriculum has enabled teachers' roles to encompass, to a greater extent than has previously been the case, leadership and collaborative thinking. Previous policies have been more prescriptive, with teachers seen more as technicians implementing present policy (Ball 2008; Biesta 2010), rather than as professionals creatively mediating a flexible policy framework (Supovitz, 2008); the CfE has tipped this on its head. Feagal Kelly, from the Scottish College for Educational Leadership comments that "all teachers should have the opportunity to be leaders". The current CfE means "teachers will create knowledge to enhance progress and lead the learning experiences of all their learners and work collaboratively with colleagues", supporting the development of an ever-evolving curriculum. Welcome as these opportunities may be in principle, there is a need to provide support for teachers to develop/improve their leadership abilities for them to be realised; something explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

19   Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Crisp, B., Perry, T., Bradbury, M., Johns, P. 'Constructing Teachers' Professional Identities: Learning from Seven Countries'. Education International, forthcoming.

20   Scottish Education Journal (June 2017) https://www.eis.org.uk/Scottish-Education-Journal/June17

Curriculum for Excellence in Practice – Social Studies

Here, we use the example of the curriculum for Social Studies to exemplify how the CfE aims to facilitate teacher autonomy in how they teach in the classroom.

The Social Studies curriculum as part of the CfE aspires to "develop [students'] understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of their local and national heritage within the world". It is structured under three headings: 'People, past events and societies'; 'People, place and environment'; and 'People in society, economy and business', each of which is designed to allow learning to reflect local contexts – for example, as part of the 'People, past events and societies' curriculum at primary level, which incorporates a scheme of learning around recreating the story of a place of local historical interest. The scheme acts as a basic framework for learning, with clear instructions of the principles teachers are expected to follow, whilst giving the teachers capacity to make contextual connections and connections between subject boundaries in order to enhance learning across the curriculum.

The Social Studies curriculum also aspires to give teachers discretion over how they are assessing their students against curriculum aims. For example, the CfE dictates that teachers should assess students' use of source analysis as part of the Social Studies curriculum but leaves open to teachers' choice the specific criteria against and context in which their students should be assessed. Thus, the skills of source analysis are being assessed – principally, how students are able to understand and use information in relation to new concepts – but with the teacher able to set this in a suitable context for their learners. The CfE also stresses that the Social Studies curriculum should aim to develop children's awareness of and interactions with social issues, which the framework suggests should be realised through trips to local heritage sites or meetings with local communities. In doing so, the Social Studies curriculum exemplifies the emphasis on local involvement; and the use of teacher initiative in assessing general principles through the lens of their own understanding and knowledge of their pupils and local context.

Barriers to Learning:
Teacher Perception of the CfE

Although CfE has been shown to have benefited teachers in a number of areas, including opportunities for enhanced teacher autonomy, there is evidence to suggest that this is still operating at a theoretical level and may not align with teachers' perceptions; that in spite of policies which aspire for teachers' roles and identities to be increasingly self-constructed, there persists a belief amongst teachers that this is centrally prescribed. This, and other barriers to the effectiveness of the CfE as a route to autonomy, are explored below.

Teacher independence or national dependence?

The CfE aims to put curriculum development back in the hands of the teaching professionals and schools. However, the practical realisation of this has not always been positively regarded by teachers; something reported in a number of editions of the Scottish Education Journal, "the experience of Scotland's teachers over the past decade has been one of top-down approaches to policy change which has left them feeling frustrated, marginalised and undervalued"[21]. This sentiment is consistent with the findings from CUREE's 2017 survey probing teacher identity and views, where the misalignment between government aspirations and teacher perspectives regarding the level of autonomy and opportunities for leadership are reported at multiple levels of the system. For example, fewer than 30% of teachers agreed that they had a significant influence in the direction their school was taking; this was even more evident at a local and national level, with 47% of respondents reporting that they had little or no influence within local education systems, and 64% within national systems. Furthermore, only 15% of teachers agreed with the statement: "Teachers are given opportunities to contribute to decisions about education in their country".

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21   Scottish Education Journal (Feb 2018) https://www.eis.org.uk/Scottish-Education-Journal/Feb2018

Increased autonomy or increased workload?

The CfE has exposed the current paucity of curriculum theory, across policy making, practitioner and academic communities, which has in turn led to lack of capacity to deal with issues that such curricula throw up as they are translated from 'policy' to 'practice'. Lack of capacity is manifested at macro, meso and micro levels:[22]

▶ **Development of policy at a macro-level** – where a theoretical perspective can lead to curriculum delivery that lacks coherence. It can encourage a mix-and-match approach to combining different models and leaves difficult tensions for those charged with enacting policy to resolve.

▶ **Development of policy at meso**- and micro-levels, the abstraction and complexity at the heart of CfE is seen as being at risk of denying local policy makers and practitioners the conceptual tools to make sense of policy and reconcile it with local needs and contingencies in a manner which is educational.

Alongside issues in relation to practitioner capacity, there have also been a number of complaints in reference to teacher conditions and pay, resulting in teachers feeling overworked and underpaid. Over 90% of respondents to a CfE survey felt the senior phase (years 4-6) implementation of CfE had increased their workload, with almost 80% reporting they feel the resulting, recent workload increase has been "very high" or "high". As a consequence of this, research conducted by Bath Spa University suggested 40% of teachers would leave the profession in the next 18 months if viable. This has led to wellbeing concerns regarding teacher treatment, as Scottish Education Journal puts it "if Scottish teachers are not in a good place, then Scottish education won't be either"[23].

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22   Priestley, M. (2010). Curriculum for Excellence: transformational change or business as usual. Scottish Educational Review, 42(1), 23-36

23   Scottish Education Journal (May 2012) https://www.eis.org.uk/Scottish-Education-Journal/Sej-may2012

Role of Teacher Unions

Teacher unions such as EIS, SSTA and NASUWT, play a vital role in ensuring there is a balance between teacher workload and achieving a curriculum of excellence in Scotland. They have provided extensive support to the CfE reform; for example, many of them have been part of the National CfE management board[24]. But the unions have also contributed to the reforms by highlighting dangers around the impact of the new reforms on teacher workload. In general the teacher unions have played a significant role in ensuring teachers voices are heard and taking action if they are not.

Innovation or an overreliance on old models?

These concerns about teacher workload are compounded by the perception of some teachers that the CfE has failed to provide sufficient training for teachers in curriculum development. This is felt to have led to an overreliance on old models and practices of learning, leading in turn to limitations in the extent to which teachers are able practically to realise the innovation and collaborative curriculum development which the framework encourages. When questioned during a CfE survey, over 90% of respondents believed that additional resources would be required to implement the senior phase of the CfE in their school, with teachers displaying high levels of dissatisfaction regarding the level of information and support provided. The survey revealed major concerns with regard to the implementation of CfE, with Larry Flanagan (General Secretary, EIS) summarising "the overall message from Scotland's secondary teachers is that currently they do not feel confident regarding their school's state of readiness to deliver the senior phase of CfE"[25].

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24   NASUWT, Curriculum for Excellence - https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/in-the-classroom/curriculum/curriculum-qualifications-scotland-/curriculum-for-excellence.html

25   Scottish Education Journal (April 2018) https://www.eis.org.uk/Scottish-Education-Journal/April18

A lack of metacognitive control?

There has been significant decline in academic performance in recent years within the Scottish system, as evident in the three-yearly studies run by the OECD[26] (as of PISA 2015). Scotland, which had been previously been regarded as well above the PISA average (in 2000), had in the most recent reports (including PISA 2015) fallen to an average rating, not only because of the rapid advancement of other systems but also in terms of an absolute decline in Scotland[27]. According to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) there has been a decline in performance for all three domains (reading, maths and science) against previous PISA assessments.

"Evidence on the current performance of Scotland's education system suggests that we have a good education system, which is performing strongly in a number of respects. However, we are not yet at the level of achieving consistently excellent levels of performance which would match the world-leading ambition of our vision."
Education Scotland Corporate Plan 2013-2016 (p.15)

Similar conclusions have been reached by the annual Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy which has shown attainment fall in both areas amongst primary and early secondary school children. Correlational (although not conclusive) links9 have been drawn between the implementation of the CfE and concerns that the constructivist approach of the new curriculum limits the extent to which learners are able to construct knowledge for themselves. Survey results and CfE documentation reveal no theoretical framework that may help teachers bring coherence to each curriculum subject to guide effective planning over time and or between core concepts and constructs[28].

26   OECD, Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective (2015) https://www.oecd.org/education/school/Improving-Schools-in-Scotland-An-OECD-Perspective.pdf

27   BBC, Scottish schools drop in world rankings. (2016) https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38207729

28   Paterson, Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: the betrayal of a whole generation?, (2018) http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/curriculum-for-excellence/

Aspirations for CfE
and What This Means for Teacher Identity

The CfE aspires to provide a level of autonomy to Scotland's teachers and a system of distributed leadership "from the middle" – which, as discussed above, has met with a number of challenges in its practical implementation, including a lack of support for innovation, increasing workloads and declining system performance. Larry Flanagan, General Secretary of the teaching union, Education Institute of Scotland, suggests that "any reform which isn't supported by teachers is doomed to fail", implying that more needs to be done to gain the support of teachers in the effective implementation of the CfE. The available evidence demonstrates that in future, there is a need for:

▶ an ambitious theory of change and a more robust evidence base for teachers to use in implementing the CfE, in particular with regard to learning outcomes and coherence in pupil progress;

▶ further thought about the role of teacher voice and the creation of frameworks supported by evidence and theory to bring practicality and coherence to the well intentioned and dynamic system and to create a convincing and properly resourced breadcrumb trail between national policies, communities, education networks and schools; and

▶ the provision of the necessary support and resources for teachers to fulfil their role as "agents of change" effectively, to the benefit of both their own and student learning.

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Responding to a Wave of New Arrivals in Sweden

Migrants arriving in Sweden– An Overview

The case study focuses on the impact of high levels of immigration and how this drives priorities within the Swedish Education system. It examines how Fast Track initiatives have been introduced to help pupils to integrate into schools, and to enable skilled immigrants such as qualified foreign teachers to quickly become part of the workforce. It will also examine how Sweden's decentralised approach to school management affects the ways in which schools approach national priorities and show how the precise nature of this varies across different schools. The specific school case study provides a highly contextualised exploration of one school's approach in developing procedures and approaches to integrate refugees and the obstacles which they face doing so.

The overview of Sweden draws on a semi-structured interview with a Swedish school policy adviser, the CUREE Teacher Identity Survey and a number of relevant policy documents, reports and research materials. The case study of School N focuses on the experience of one municipal secondary school (age 11-16) with high numbers of newly-arrived students enrolled. A semi-structured interview with the school principal and a focus group with three members of staff (one leads the support for newly-arrived students, and two regular teachers in Swedish and Swedish as a second language) were conducted, plus documentary analysis (e.g. student health plans). At the time of conducting the site visit to School N, teachers had returned from holiday to begin preparing for the commencement of the new academic year, but students had yet to return to the school in full.

System Context and Priorities

Swedish education policy is focusing on initiating some key reforms to counteract years of declining results in international comparisons such as PISA. As evidence of the (partial) success of these measures, the most recent PISA test, in 2016, brought Sweden into line with international averages following a fall in results in previous years from a strong position. A consensus-based approach to school reform has been taken through a schools' commission of teachers, researchers, and representatives from unions and organisational bodies, supported by

a policy direction of putting "trust in teachers". New initiatives are being put in place to address improvement priorities, as identified by the OECD, and challenges, such as those created by immigration.

The Swedish school system is regulated through the Education Act, and the national education goals are set and evaluated by the Ministry of Education and Research (MoER). Decisions on how to achieve these goals are devolved to schools and municipalities, and the MoER is supported by three agencies with specific areas of responsibility: The National Agency for Education, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, and the National Agency for Special Needs Education in Schools. Historically, all Swedish schools were run by municipalities, but in 1992 the Swedish government created a new type of school, the "Friskola" or free school. Free schools are publicly funded, must be approved by the Schools' Inspectorate, and follow national curricula and syllabuses. In addition to these, there are also a small number of other school types, such as Sami (an ethnic minority in Sweden and Scandinavia) schools, special schools, and a small number of fee-paying private schools.

The Swedish education system, and wider society and culture, focus on a widely-shared set of fundamental values. Educators aim to foster knowledge and value development, prepare students to live and work in society, and develop students in creativity, activity, and to be responsible and competent individuals and citizens. There is increasing investment in the education of 6-10 year olds. Swedish society has also embraced the value of lifelong learning, and the Swedish adult population shows an above-average proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments compared with other OECD countries[29]. A Schools' commission of teachers, researchers and representatives from unions and organisational bodies was put together to produce a thorough overview and make proposals for a systemic approach to school improvement, informed by a "national gathering of teachers".

Another challenge presently facing the school system is that Sweden has become a more culturally diverse country over a very short timescale. In 2015, 15% of the total population in Sweden was born abroad (higher than the OECD

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[29] Improving schools in Sweden: an OECD perspective http://www.oecd.org/education/school/Improving-Schools-in-Sweden.pdf

average of 9%), in which 39% have arrived in Sweden during the past 10 years[30], putting Sweden among the OECD countries with the largest foreign-born population. Integration of immigrant families and children is therefore of key importance to Swedish society. A series of Fast Track Initiatives have been put in place since 2016 to help pupils to integrate into schools, and to enable skilled immigrants such as qualified foreign teachers from abroad to more quickly enter the profession with shortened teacher training.

In addition to these shifts in the rate of immigration the arrival of large numbers of refugees and migrants into Europe, in particular in 2015, has precipitated a great deal of political upheaval, and has also generated a considerable additional workload for education professionals in adjusting to the presence of significant number of refugees in a short timescale; many of these refugees have complex emotional and language needs. As Sweden has been responsible for hosting a disproportionately large volume of refugees compared to other EU countries, the challenges it faces in meeting their needs provide both a good opportunity to explore how education systems, schools and teachers adjust to these additional responsibilities, and to highlight the importance of understanding what is and is not helpful in making these adjustments.

The highly decentralised approach to school management in Sweden means that the precise nature of how the nationally-set priorities are to be achieved varies widely across different Swedish schools, including those managed on a Municipal basis. What follows, therefore, is a highly contextualised exploration of one school's approach in developing procedures and approaches to integrate refugees, and the obstacles which they face in doing so. It also provides an illustration of what some of the observations about teachers' professional identities and values made in the body of the final report on CUREE's EI research look like when applied to a real-world setting.

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30   Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015 OECD http://www.oecd.org/migration/indicators-of-im-migrant-integration-2015-settling-in-9789264234024-en.htm

The Case Study School

School N is a medium-sized secondary school (serving children aged 11-16) in a suburban area near Stockholm, with around 400-500 students on the roll at any one time. The school has a total of 60 employees, comprising teachers, leaders and other support staff, including three teachers with responsibilities related to special educational needs. The case study visit took place in early August 2018, when teachers had returned from holiday to begin preparing for the commencement of the academic year but before students had returned to school in full.

The school had a group of around 30-40 newly-arrived students on the roll around the time of the visit, roughly 50% of whom spoke a language other than Swedish. School N employs three teachers with special skills in teaching Swedish as a second language, including specific qualifications in this discipline, and those teachers also took a lead co-ordination and delivery role in supporting refugees directly, including working with students with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other emotional challenges. They also help them acquire basic learning skills for working in Swedish classrooms.

School N's work is based on a set of core values which lay out the aspirations for the school and for its students. These can be summarised through five key elements, which are that the goal is to support students to become: safe, thoughtful, brave, creative, and optimistic for the future. It is worth noting that these aspirations transcend academic development, and in the opinion of the school's headteacher, are fundamentally more important than a pure academic focus. In the headteacher's opinion this marks School N out as distinct from many other Swedish schools he is aware of, reinforcing the extent to which approaches to carrying out national education goals in Sweden are devolved to schools and municipalities. This distinction, between school N and Swedish schools more generally, is supported by CUREE's survey probing teacher identity and views. The survey results suggested that, in general, Swedish teachers value communicating subject knowledge more highly than educating students to be good citizens and student enjoyment. This was also the case in the other six systems explored.

The Nature of the Demands on Swedish Teachers

Teachers at School N have a range of required professional commitments specified as part of their job. For example, in addition to their regular teaching hours and associated planning, marking etc, teachers in School N are also expected to contribute to the monitoring process for students' learning (a process described as "systematic follow-up and mapping of students' knowledge level"). This process involves assessing students' development in three major areas – language development and experiences (step 1); literacy and numeracy, plus understanding of the models and approaches required by the Swedish schooling system (step 2), and specific subject development (step 3).

This assessment process, in School N at least, flows directly into a follow-up procedure. Follow-ups are conducted in a regular six-weekly cycle, and monitor factors such as attendance, academic progress and, in the case of new arrivals in particular, whether the students feel safe and are integrating successfully and comfortably. As outlined above, the Swedish education system places considerable emphasis on developing Swedish students academically but also as outgoing, confident global citizens who can embody the values which have been identified as central to Swedish citizenship. This isa particular area of focus for Swedish educators who are dealing with a relatively high volume of refugees in their school.

The survey for this study identified classroom teaching, lesson planning, classroom assessment of students' work and supporting students' welfare as the activities which teachers believed to be major or substantial parts of their workload. Teachers also reported that administrative tasks, staff meetings, developing schemes of learning and teaching materials, collaborative teaching and taking part in collaborative professional development were significant but not major elements of their workload. This is important because CUREE's survey of teacher attitudes to their professional environment and identity shows that an unusually high percentage (over 70%) of Swedish teachers either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that "teachers in Sweden are able to have a good work-life balance"; Sweden had the second-highest level of disagreement with this statement out of the seven systems explored.

The survey also explored different aspects of educational leadership which teachers were able to contribute to; responses suggest that, for example, they believe that they are given leadership responsibilities in school. This is reinforced by the picture of a broadly-horizontal model of organisational leadership mentioned below in this case study.

A Leadership Model for Supporting New Arrivals

School N's approach to helping new arrivals integrate into Swedish education, and in Swedish society, is built around success factors for integration which the headteacher has identified as important. These success factors are:

▶ Developing a general consensus in attitude about all staff taking responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of new arrivals

▶ Supporting direct integration – it is important that students integrate sufficiently to work together with their peers as quickly as possible (within reason)

▶ Establishing a routine in which individual development plans for new arrivals are revised and evaluated on an ongoing basis, and adjusted and refined in response to emerging needs and successes

▶ Developing tools which can surface for both teachers and students the progress that new arrivals are making

These success factors provide a set of criteria which the headteacher, teachers with specific responsibilities for supporting new arrivals, and teaching colleagues in general in the school are expected to use to support rapid integration and progress in achievement for newly arrived children. The factors are also closely linked to the school's approach to teacher evaluation systems, becoming an initial starting point for appraisals. The organisation is geared up to help teachers organise and achieve these goals, and does so via a range of support structures focused on school management, pupil coordination (which is handled by a teacher with special educational training), mentoring, pastoral support (including the work of the school's counsellor, nurse, guidance counsellors etc) and the teachers themselves.

In addition to the structural measures in place at School N to support the job of successfully integrating newly arrived children into Swedish education and society, the headteacher described his overall mindset as being that it is a collective endeavour. To this end, he argues for a non-hierarchical approach to organising and executing the school plan, and wishes to make sure that colleagues feel that they have at the very least been consulted and given a chance to express a voice in how this important professional work should be managed. He believes that transparency around the leadership of the support process for refugees, and continuous clear communication from the leadership team to teachers are crucial building blocks in securing a non-hierarchical approach; he is also conscious of the additional demands and responsibilities which engaging with, and participating in discussions and decisions, is making on teachers.

Swedish Teachers' Perspectives

During our visit to School N, we were able to run a focus group with a selection of teachers working at School N who have frequent contact with and considerable responsibilities in supporting newly arrived students. All of the teachers taking part in the focus group discussion had a role in supporting newly-arrived students, and their professional specialisms included teaching Swedish as a second language.

Demands around responding to requirements

Linguistic issues were a prominent challenge which the focus group agreed existed and made their jobs more demanding. Even though these teachers had had the opportunity to develop specialist skills in supporting the teaching of Swedish as an additional language, translators are needed for the first steps with newly-arrived students. However the teachers reported that (in some cases) the administrative procedures for making this happen had prevented translators being provided in time. There was a feeling in the focus group that there is a weakness in the organisation of supply of expert practitioners within their region, and that this made it very difficult to perform the daily roles needed, necessitating additional effort from teachers beyond executing their regular responsibilities in order to fill in keenly felt gaps. This is compounded by a gradual process by which

Swedish teachers' responsibilities are expanded by the national government and through reforms agreed in principle through a partnership between government and teacher unions but operationalised locally. The result here is a continuing and growing demand for teachers to take on additional responsibilities which align closely with their values but which make considerable additional time and energy demands. The focus group also opined that it can be difficult to get support from school leaders to address this issue head on.

The picture of the help that exists for teachers to do their jobs in these kinds of difficult situations is a complex one – the focus group mentioned that they have heard suggestions that local municipalities might be able to provide further support on top of what is already available. The push appears to be to create a greater degree of consistency in the local support systems, as the focus group were of the opinion that fairly sophisticated measures were already in place in some instances. The discussion on this point ranged through a need for more Continuing Professional Development from, for example, psychologists, about how best to deal with children who are experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and from other specialists about other issues which are likely to emerge from the very different and challenging backgrounds of these students. The focus group also noted that there were problems around the resources provided to help teachers meet such needs. Their view was that such resources may exist but are very/too difficult for teachers to access or make use of, and the lines of communication with people in crucial support and direction roles are, according to the teachers in the focus group, not always clear enough.

The general feeling in the focus group was that there are a number of ways in which things in Swedish education could be improved to help teachers rise to the standards which their own and their community's values suggest for providing appropriate professional support for newly arrived refugee students. First, policy requirements from the local communes/municipal governments are, at times, too inflexible and don't do enough to acknowledge the wide variety of demands on teachers' time. Second there was, in the focus group's opinion, also a tendency for local governments to describe what things should happen, and then leave it to teachers to tackle every aspect of the implementation of these policies, without providing clear guidance or support to them in how to do so. Third, there exists, in the group's experience, a range of examples of

pedagogic CPDL which conforms to international evidence about CPDL which leads to improved outcomes for students (i.e. "good quality" CPDL), but the local government's specific guidance and help for working with migrants and refugees rarely takes that form, and instead more closely resembles "one-off" briefing sessions. But fourth, in the focus group's opinion, the major deficits lie in the organisational and logistical infrastructure (as in the example cited above), along with clarity of communication about requirements.

The consistent message from the focus group on the subject of the demands made of them by the system they worked in was that there are some major issues around the volume of planning, administration and marking which teachers are required to do and the differing extent to which these are felt to be part of a teacher's experience and role by local municipalities and by teachers themselves. The group asserted that if this could be co-ordinated by somebody it would enable them to focus more on their areas of expertise (i.e. teaching and learning and subject development). As one teacher put it "we're lacking organisation and time, but not freedom". The group also noted that, while they saw things they felt could be improved about the circumstances they found themselves in at School N, they also recognised that, in their experience, former students from migrant/refugee backgrounds, and teachers who have gone on to work elsewhere, all report that the approach at School N stood out as effective and successful.

Impacts on teachers' identities

In the opinion of the headteacher at School N, the impact on teachers' professional identities of responding to the challenges of working with new refugees and migrants would depend significantly on the existence and quality of support systems, structures and also the help from colleagues that is available. He also suggested that most teachers would willingly take on the responsibility of supporting new arrivals, provided they were confident that doing so would not materially disadvantage them professionally or in terms of their quality of life.This, broadly speaking, matches with the opinions provided by the focus group. The teachers themselves reported that their involvement in developing as professionals with a key responsibility for working directly with and in support of migrants' and refugees' successful integration into Sweden had been hugely rewarding for them. For one of the teachers, the specific aspect of teaching

Swedish as a second language was very motivating, and represented a natural progression from their previous experiences, giving them positive feelings about the increasingly specialist direction their career was taking. Another benefit for teachers' professional identities identified was the ability to see rapid, tangible progress in learners' development, which was generally much more rapid by comparison with the progress made by students with Swedish as a mother tongue.

All the teachers in the focus group also cited a specific interest in multicultural experiences, and noted that there are career benefits from having that additional degree of specialisation, suggesting that the education system, at least in their region, was doing a good job of promoting and recognising teachers' developing specialist expertise, experience and development. They also said that, in terms of its impact on their professional identity, the role was frequently fun, interesting and gave them opportunities to take part in engaging and stimulating professional development, citing the course they took on teaching Swedish as a second language as a particularly prominent example. Finally, they said that they found working in smaller sized classes, more intimate settings, and in a context where their students had very different outlooks compared to native-born Swedish students to be very enriching.

The group did, however, agree that their experience was not fully representative of that of other teachers at School N or in Sweden in general, and that their roles and general dispositions meant that they were more likely to find working with new arrivals more rewarding and satisfying than others. They also agreed that they could think of colleagues who felt that the responsibilities and additional workload of working with new arrivals were primarily a burden. However, they added that they saw themselves, as professionals, with both expertise and experience in working in this way, as having a role to play in helping such colleagues deal with their evolving roles as best as possible. Ultimately, it was their opinion that it is impossible to avoid having to deal with disruptions of this kind as a teacher, and that it was thus important to find ways to do so as successfully and efficiently as possible – including by improving the support available from local and national governments.

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