An Exploration of Irish Primary School Teachers' Views on Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

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International Context

- CPD is a policy priority - lifelong learning

- Various understandings of CPD - common aspects include CPD as a constructive, long-term collaborative process.

- Models of CPD have evolved over the last thirty years from predominately information giving to facilitation and participatory formats.

- CPD is compulsory in 25/33 OECD countries (2014).

- Scotland - engagement in a 'Professional Update' is a registration requirement for teachers (every 5 years, teachers present their learning - CPD review)

- Ireland has the lowest CPD days taken annually among OECD countries – 5.6 days over 18 months (2009).

Irish Context

- March 2016 - Teaching Council launched 'Cosán' - a framework for teachers' learning.

- CPD is expected to be a requirement for registered teachers

- Historically, CPD provision has been driven by system needs/ curricular reform rather than teacher/school needs.

- Wide variety of providers delivering myriad CPD programmes – lack of data available.

- Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), concept of CPD, Knowledge **for** Practice echoes Ireland's top down transmission, deficit style CPD model. Recent emphasis on Knowledge **of** Practice identifies teachers as transformative agents who apply theory to practice.
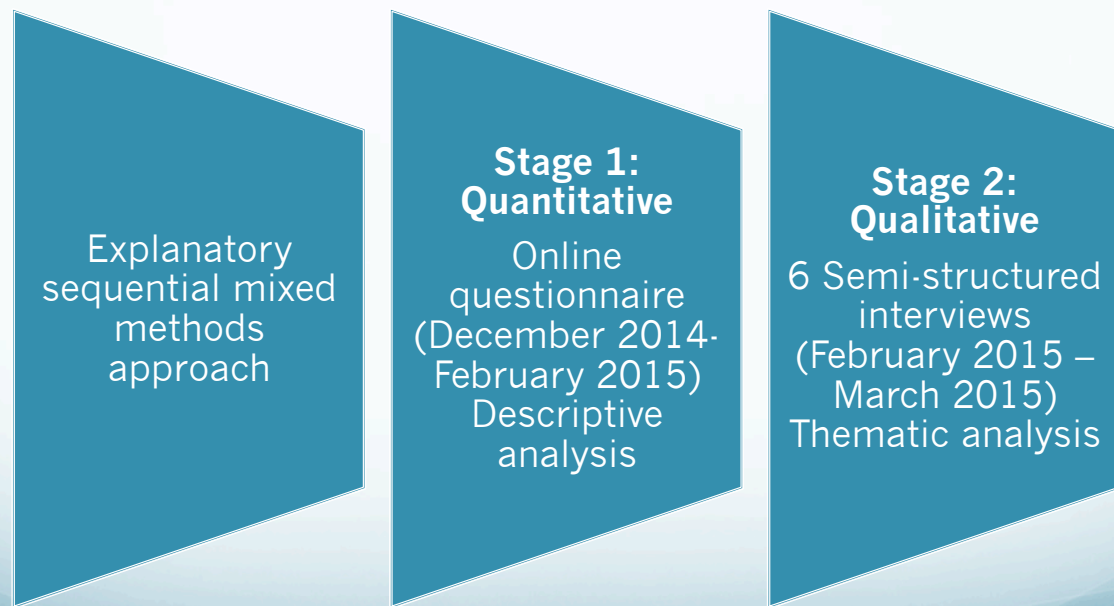
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Where are the gaps?
(Banks and Smith, 2011)

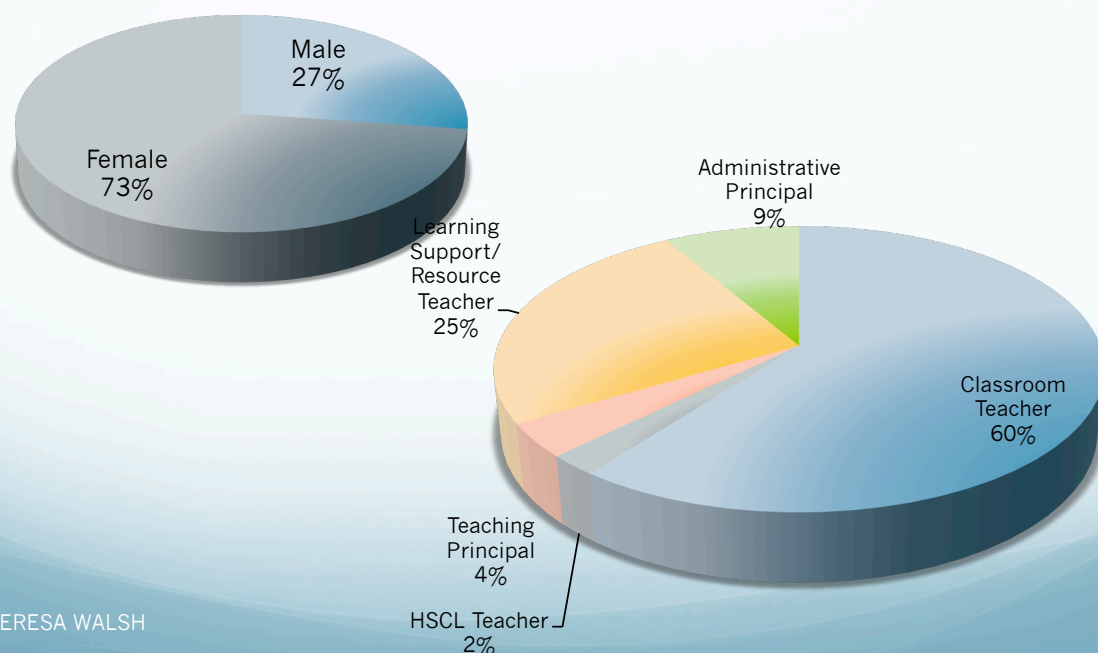| Definition	• What do teachers consider to be CPD?
Experience	• What are teachers' experiences of engaging in CPD?
Participation	• What motivates teachers to engage in CPD?
Enabling factors	• What supports and barriers impact on CPD engagement?
Evaluation	• What type of CPD is most effective?

Methodology

Explanatory sequential mixed methods approach	**Stage 1: Quantitative** Online questionnaire (December 2014- February 2015) Descriptive analysis	**Stage 2: Qualitative** 6 Semi-structured interviews (February 2015 – March 2015) Thematic analysis

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Survey Respondents
134 responses

Male 27%

Female 73%

Learning Support/ Resource Teacher 25%

Administrative Principal 9%

Classroom Teacher 60%

Teaching Principal 4%

HSCL Teacher 2%

Findings – Understanding and Engaging in CPD

1. What statements reflect your understanding of CPD?

| Statement	Percentage
One-week summer course	92%
Training course after school hours	86%
Training course during the school day	77%
Education conference	70%
School based collaborative discussions	68%
3rd level qualification	67%
Educational research	67%
Reading professional literature	62%
Inputs during Croke Park hour meetings	59%
Personal reflection	56%
Professional development networks	56%
Mentoring and peer observation	55%
Informal dialogue	55%
Facilitating professional development	53%

Findings – Understanding and Engaging in CPD

- *"Professional development can be anything from post graduate study to discussions in staff rooms, collaborative learning, general summer courses and reading up on educational issues which lead to an enhancement and enrichment of a teacher's teaching capacity."* [B, 14/2/2015]
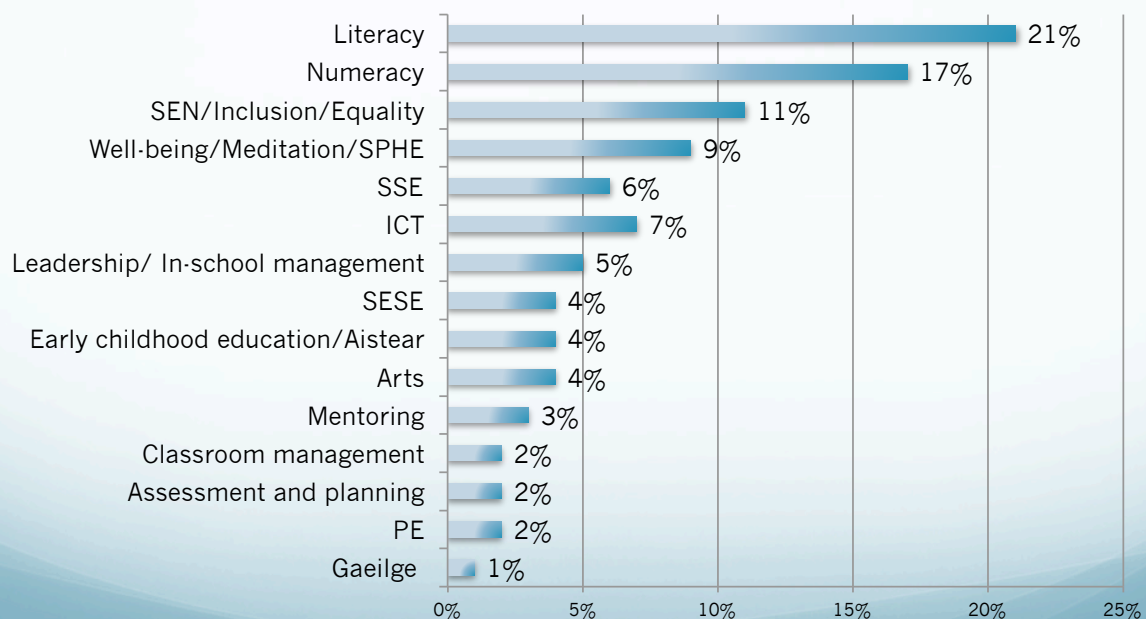
Findings – Understanding and Engaging in CPD

Since September 2013, <u>99%</u> of respondents have engaged in CPD.

Pie chart:
- 1-5 days: 18%
- 6-10 days: 19%
- 11-15 days: 19%
- 16-20 days: 11%
- 21+ days: 33%
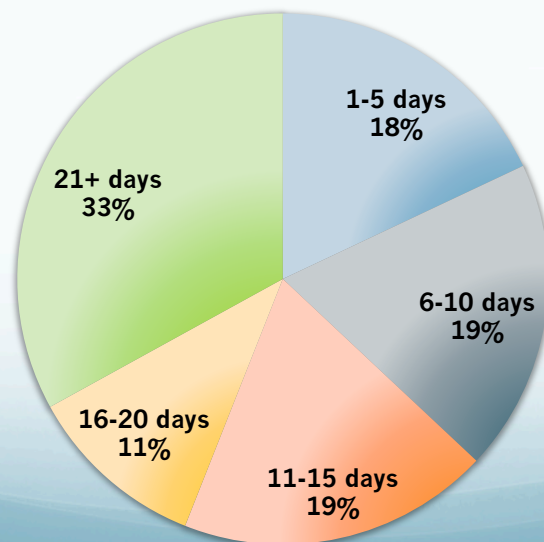
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Findings – Experience of engaging in CPD

2. In what broad areas was CPD undertaken since September 2013?

Bar chart:
- Literacy: 21%
- Numeracy: 17%
- SEN/Inclusion/Equality: 11%
- Well-being/Meditation/SPHE: 9%
- SSE: 6%
- ICT: 7%
- Leadership/ In-school management: 5%
- SESE: 4%
- Early childhood education/Aistear: 4%
- Arts: 4%
- Mentoring: 3%
- Classroom management: 2%
- Assessment and planning: 2%
- PE: 2%
- Gaeilge: 1%

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Findings – Motivations for engaging in CPD

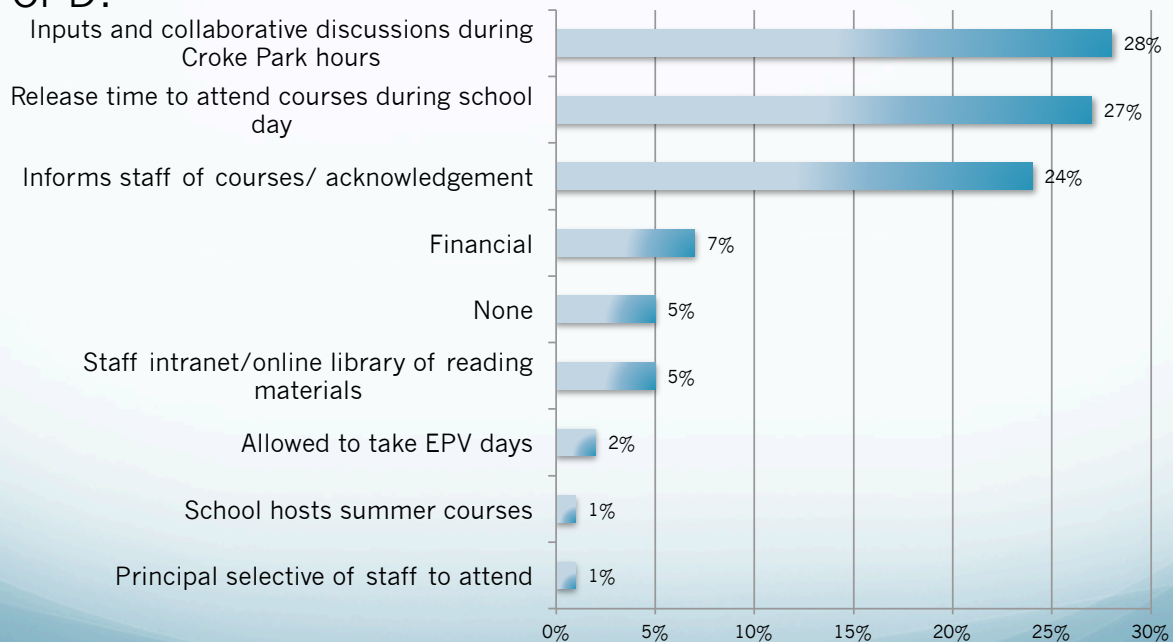### 3. Why do you engage in CPD?
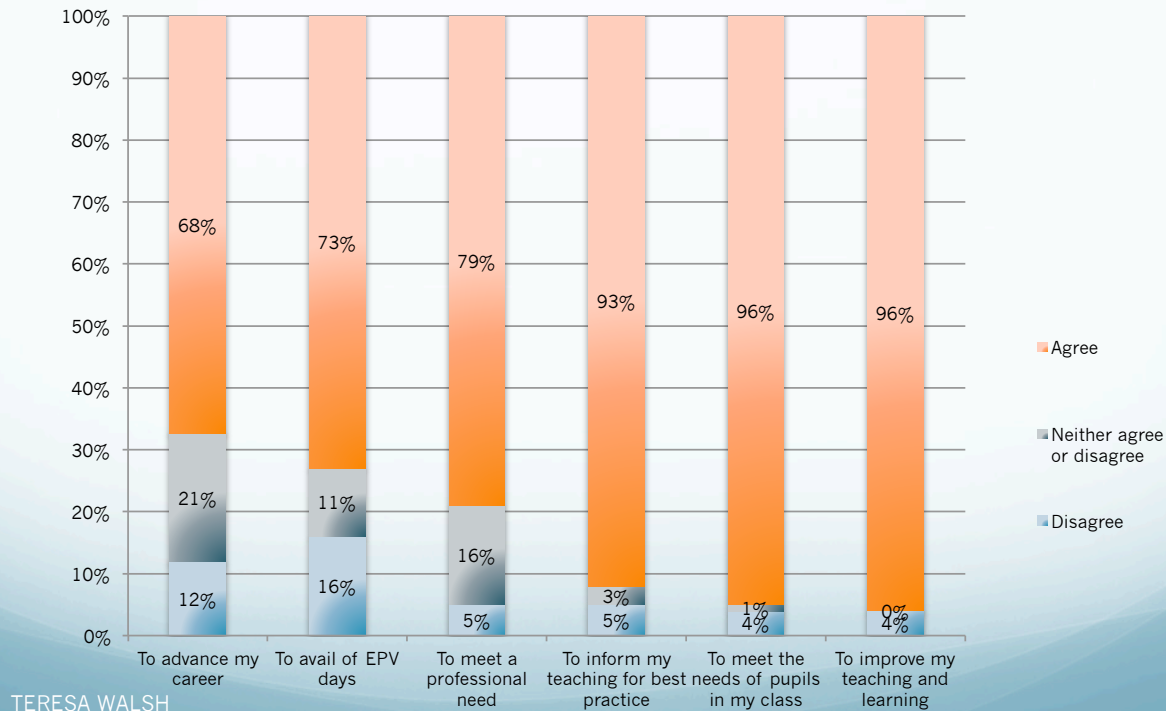
Findings – Motivations for engaging in CPD

- *"If you are teaching a child with dyslexia in your class and you are not familiar with methodologies as to how to help this pupil, you could read up on it and go to the SESS website and do a course on dyslexia. I am doing a one-day course in two weeks' time in an Education Centre. Indeed, this is why I'm currently pursuing a Masters in Special Education."* [A, 23/1/2015]

- *"The idea of getting an allowance does appeal to people. If I was to spend €10,000 on a Masters and I was to get it back over my lifetime, then I would think about investing in further education. But, if I wasn't going to get any money back for it, then I would be less likely to engage in such a CPD course."* [E, 27/1/2015]

Findings – Enabling factors for CPD

4. How does your school support your engagement in CPD?

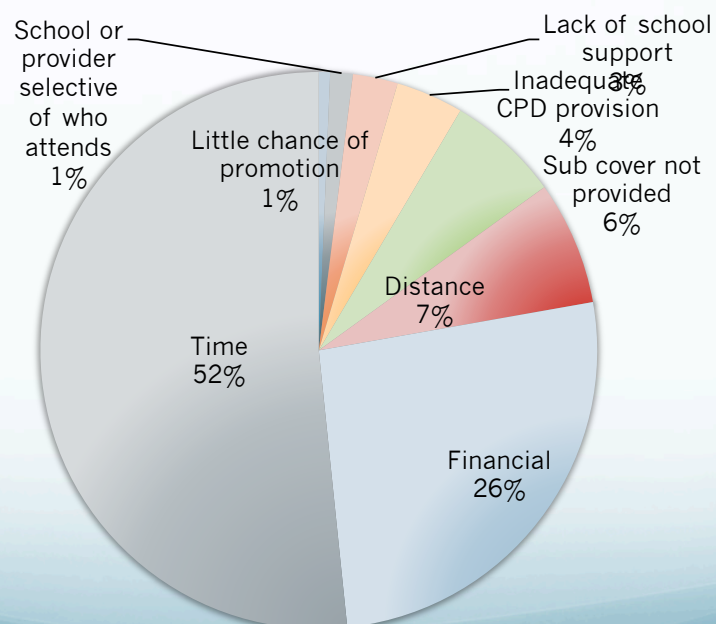| Category	Percentage
Inputs and collaborative discussions during Croke Park hours	28%
Release time to attend courses during school day	27%
Informs staff of courses/ acknowledgement	24%
Financial	7%
None	5%
Staff intranet/online library of reading materials	5%
Allowed to take EPV days	2%
School hosts summer courses	1%
Principal selective of staff to attend	1%

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Findings – Barriers to CPD

4. What are the barriers to engaging in CPD?

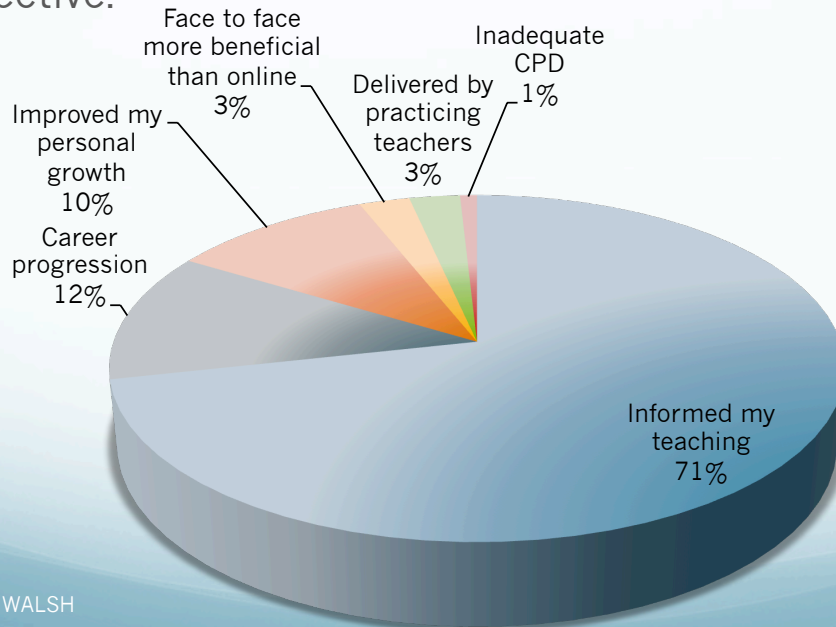63% stated that there are barriers preventing teachers from engaging in CPD.

Barrier	Percentage
School or provider selective of who attends	1%
Little chance of promotion	1%
Lack of school support	3%
Inadequate CPD provision	4%
Sub cover not provided	6%
Distance	7%
Time	52%
Financial	26%

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Findings – Effectiveness of CPD

5. In what way has CPD been effective?

99% identified CPD that they have engaged in as being effective.

Face to face more beneficial than online 3%
Inadequate CPD 1%
Delivered by practicing teachers 3%
Improved my personal growth 10%
Career progression 12%
Informed my teaching 71%

Findings – Effectiveness of types of CPD

6. What is the most effective form of CPD?

Online 1%
Personal professional reflection 7%
Reading professional literature 5%
Undertaking educational research 8%
Professional development networks 4%
Attending conference 9%
Mentoring NQT's 10%
Peer observation 10%
Engaging in informal dialogue 11%
School-based collaborative professional discussions 15%
Face to face 20%

Findings – Effectiveness of types of CPD

'There is so much more interaction in face-to-face and also informal learning happens and with online, I feel its quite isolating. It doesn't really support a teacher.''

[E, 27/1/2015]

Recommendations

System	School	Future research
• Clear definition to include all types of CPD. • Wide range of face-to-face courses- geographic location, time, finance, access to broadband, travel and school profile. • National database to record teachers CPD participation.	• Middle management role for coordinating CPD. • CPD school policy. • Principals should take a leading role in encouraging CPD.	• Compare age and responses to the lifecycle of a teacher - Huberman (1989). • Effectiveness of online CPD vs face-to-face CPD. • CPD needs of principals.