LEARNING LEADERS

LESSONS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FROM OTHER PROFESSIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION JURISDICTIONS

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners

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The Education and Training Inspectorate
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LEARNING LEADERS:

Lessons on professional learning from other professions and other education jurisdictions.

1. Introduction

This paper is associated with and supports the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) evaluation work[1] related to the Department of Education (DE) Strategy, *Learning Leaders*, carried out in 2015-16 .

The paper looks at how three 'service-oriented' professions approach their continuing professional learning and development and four examples of professional development approaches in education systems from the UK and further abroad and asks what lessons might be transferable to the teaching profession here.

Most definitions of professional learning and development view it as a continuing process, beyond formal undergraduate and postgraduate training, to enable individual practitioners to:

a. support specific changes in their practice in order to improve their knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions; and

b. sustain high levels of capability and confidence in their professional work.

Practices in teacher professional learning in the North Devon Teaching Alliance; through the Welsh New Deal for Professional Learning; in the Weatherhead Alliance in the Wirral, England; and as provided by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney, Australia were reviewed and contribute to this paper.

Furthermore, the appended case studies, from the Royal College of Veterinary surgeons (RCVS); the Royal College of General practitioners (RCGP); and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) illustrate how continued professional learning and development:

a. is set within a time-bound accreditation framework, overseen by a well-established and highly respected professional body that is responsible for auditing, assessing, and quality assuring professional codes of conduct and standards of competence;

b. is used to change professional practice in order to improve learner/patient/client[1] satisfaction, which is demonstrated through evidence of

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[1] https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/learning-leaders-evaluation-department-educations-strategy-teacher-professional

that improvement;

    c. is a non-negotiable and integral part of appraisal and revalidation of professional recognition linked to performance; and

    d. provides authentic and up-to-date provision for a workforce that has a variety of learning and skills needs, through the use of a diverse range of learning activities and methods of delivery, including online provision and assessment, to suit the circumstances of each professional workforce.

2. What lessons do these professional practices have for the teaching profession?

The key characteristics of the seven case studies illustrate how:

    a. Continued professional learning reflects a professional set of values, ethos and accountability to the health and well-being of the learner/patient/client relevant to each professional group. Professional learning is based on well-defined expectations which are clearly set out by a relevant well-established Professional Body or Royal College. The aforementioned models of professional development for teachers are also aligned to local universities of higher education and/or professional bodies such as, for example, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (UK) and the Catholic Education Office in Sydney.

    b. Continued professional learning and development outside of the education profession is a regulatory requirement which demands a high level of professional response and a continuing annual commitment: it is a vital component of continuing change and improvement. It also provides opportunities to develop and/or embrace new experiences and innovations in order to take forward new techniques, theories and working practices.

    c. Professional learning methodology is specific and measurable; the competences that have to be demonstrated are prescribed centrally. The range of learning opportunities and associated study resources is provided in such a way that engagement is measurable, with limits to ensure that the extent of engagement is both significant, yet manageable.

[1] The references to patient/clients apply to those case studies from other 'service' professions.

d. Professional learning requires reflection on practice, set within a manageable time- bound framework that links to appraisal and revalidation of recognition within a performance management system. There are professional credits which are assessed against a set of agreed professional standards, subject to peer review and challenge, which, in two of the cases appended, are audited on a sample basis annually across the profession by the appropriate body. A credit-based recording system has agreed benchmarks that can be easily used to demonstrate if professional learning has effected improvement, in which case additional credit may be claimed.

e. Motivation is derived from the professional drive to provide optimal learning experiences for individuals; the obligation to honour the demands from the employer and society; and the need to preserve job satisfaction and recognition as a professional practitioner.

f. A wide range of online learning and other strategies, along with the use of an e-portfolio are typical ways of collating and recording activities for appraisal and revalidation, and in one case for additional accreditation.

g. Professional learning has both skills-based and knowledge-based competences which are directly related to the individual, with an expectation for continued improvement in their work. Evidence of continued learning is essential for career progression and is structured into a formal personal development plan with the responsibility resting with each individual to make choices related to their own stage of learning and development and in the context in which they work.

All of the strategies outlined in the case studies, including those from other professions could be applied to the teaching profession in Northern Ireland.

A professional learning programme for teachers should have well-defined expectations which: are manageable for continuing learning and improvement; recognise effective classroom practice through the outcome of progress of the learner; are clearly set out and appraised by a well-established and highly respected professional body. With the exception of the existence for teaching of a well-established and highly respected body which provides a professional function, the remaining elements are achievable in the short term.

While the case studies demonstrate various processes of re-validation of recognition, re- validation is not a part of teacher professional development.

However, the system of PRSD in schools is an existing system through which teachers are 'rewarded' through incremental progression for demonstrating competence to a peer.

The methodology needs to be specific, measurable and time-bound; however the competences that are required to be demonstrated must be realistic and take account of the context of the school and the community it serves, valued-added outcomes and the wide range of learning and emotional needs of learners.

The place within the teaching profession of an expectation of continuing professional development which comes near to matching the rigour and commitment shown in the three other professional case studies is yet to be established.

The intrinsic incentive of a successful school being able to show and take pride in the progress and achievement of its learners needs to be recognised. It encourages and motivates teachers to embrace new experiences and innovation, to advance their knowledge, skills, and pedagogy, and to provide the best experiences for learners.

Individual learning may be readily maintained in an e-portfolio, of the kind developed by the Teacher E-Portfolio Project, which is situated in the context of the teacher as a 'learning leader'.

1.   The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Professional body/framework

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the statutory regulator responsible under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 for keeping the register of veterinary surgeons eligible to practice in the United Kingdom (UK). It sets the standards for veterinary education and regulates the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons. The RCVS also exercise powers, under their Royal Charter, to award Fellowships, Diplomas and Certificates to veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and others.

Rationale and framework/guidance

Under the RCVS code of professional conduct veterinary surgeons, as members of a self- regulating profession, have a responsibility to: ensure that they maintain and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their professional practice and confidence; and to make continuous improvements to the standards of service they provide to their patients and clients.

The RCVS has adopted the definition of continued professional learning and development (CPLD) as *"the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the necessary development of personal qualities for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the member's working life".*

The recommended minimum CPLD is 105 hours over a three-year period with an average of 35 hours per year. A CPLD allowance is built into the salary offered, and a good CPLD allowance is offered as an enhancement. The RCVS has an online system for veterinary surgeons to record their CPLD activities. The online professional development record (PDR) provides more facilities than are available on the printed card, and allows vets to record and reflect on their professional development plans and objectives.

Professional learning activities

The range of activities and methods of delivery include:

- Ad hoc, undocumented private study (*up to 10 hours per year*).
- Clinical audit activity.
- Discussion group - informal learning set.
- Distance learning - on-line/formal (assessed and/or moderated by a third party); on- line/informal (not assessed) and webinars.

- Lecture by external provider.

- Mentoring, or being mentored.

- Practical training - clinical skills lab and wet lab.

- Preparing a new lecture/presentation.

- Project - working on a new project/in a new area of work.

- Reading - planned and documented private study/reading.

- Research – clinical, scientific and veterinary business.

- Secondment to another work place.

- 'Seeing practice' - work-based observation.

- Seminar/workshop – external.

- Studying for an external qualification.

- Training - in house and training as an examiner/assessor.

Workplace activities, such as case conferences, may also count provided that there is systematic reflection on learning. Similarly, research and clinical audit activities may be recognised as adding to professional development if there is evidence of how they have contributed to personal learning. Private, documented, self-directed learning such as keeping up to date with relevant veterinary journals can be incorporated and it is good practice for vets to keep their own personal record of such activities, either in the form of a learning diary or through an online-PDR. Otherwise, undocumented private studies can only account for up to ten hours per year.

There are increasing opportunities to take part in online assessment, and other 'mediated' distance learning involving online tutors and learning groups. There is no restriction on the number of hours of online assessment or mediated distance learning that can be counted towards the CPD record.

There are options to work towards a qualification, such as the RCVS or European Diploma, modules of the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, or other university postgraduate certificates and degrees. Achieving such a qualification provides ample evidence of engagement in CPD activities.

Evidence, Validation and Appraisal

The RCVS expects all of its members to engage in CPLD to ensure the maintenance of the highest professional standards in line with the promise each member made on admission to membership of the RCVS, namely, *" I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will pursue the work of my profession with integrity and accept my responsibilities to the public, my clients, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and that ABOVE ALL my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care."*

The code also requires veterinary surgeons to provide the RCVS with their CPLD records when requested to do so. The RCVS carry out audits on a regular basis to confirm the quality and quantity of CPD by its members. CPD is a personal obligation of all responsible veterinary surgeons and is viewed as the continuous progression of capability and competence.

2.   The Royal College of General Practitioners

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the professional body for general (medical) practitioners (GP) in the United Kingdom, and is committed to improving patient care, clinical standards and GP training. The RCGP represents and supports GPs on key issues including licensing, education, training, research and clinical standards. It is the largest of the medical royal colleges, with over 50,000 members.

The RCGP curriculum defines the knowledge, skills and qualities required to practise as an independent GP in the UK's National Health Service (NHS). The curriculum forms the foundation for GP training and assessment across the UK, and is relevant to GPs throughout their career.

The RCGP runs a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits scheme that offers GPs a flexible learning framework in which to produce a portfolio of work that supports the revalidation process. Key elements of the college's work in this field include developing a quality assured appraisal system and an e-Portfolio that logs evidence of GPs' learning.

The credit-based system is a mechanism for recording CPD, based on the time spent on an activity and the impact it has on the doctor, his or her patients, and the service. It can be used by any practicing GP in the UK, whatever their stage of career, RCGP membership status, work setting, employment status, learning style or special interest. The scheme works on the basis that:

- a minimum of 50 credits is recommended. One hour of education is equivalent to one learning credit; however, if that education leads to changes for patients, the doctor or the practice can claim two learning credits for each hour of such education;

- a broad range of general practice experience should be covered in 250 credits over 5 years; and

- credits are self assessed, verified through appraisal.

The CPD scheme is supported by the Essential Knowledge Update (EKU), which provides doctors with: e-learning tools and publications on the latest developments in

clinical practice knowledge; and synoptic articles or guidelines that have been recently published and have made an immediate impact on general practice.

The scheme is also intended to support doctors to meet the requirements for appraisal and revalidation. Appraisal enables GPs to continuously improve the quality of their practice and helps with the early identification of doctors in difficulty, so that they can be offered appropriate support. GP appraisals are currently managed by a doctor's designated body. The appraisal process underpins revalidation and enables GPs to demonstrate, through the collection of a single portfolio of evidence (including evidence of CPD), that they meet the required standards.

Within the CPD process the GP has to validate self-improvement in four to five areas and must demonstrate learning in each of the following areas:

- patients (e.g. a change in practice, implementing a new clinical guideline, initiating and monitoring a new drug for the first time);

- the individual (personal development, e.g. development of a new skill or further development of existing skills);

- service (e.g. developing and implementing a new service, developing a local patient pathway, teaching others); and

- others (teaching and training, leadership within the NHS locally or nationally).

Professional learning activities

GPs can demonstrate their learning and their areas for improvement by accumulating credits through a range learning activities which include:

- Audit - reviewing their current practice.

- Distance & Online Learning - a number of providers of online training which will normally give the number of hours allocated to the course. Achievement is normally measured by multiple-choice questions at the start and end of the course. Ultimately, the Appraiser decides on the validity of the course chosen.

- Meetings.

- Practical Skills.
- Practice Developments:

  o Patient's Unmet Needs (PUNs) & Doctor's Educational Needs (DENs)
  o Professional Reading – this must be more than reading the British

Medical Journal for 1 hour per week. Reading must be directly related to areas for improvement and must have a reflection and a possible impact summary.

- Significant Events:

    o Structured Learning – Higher Education courses at Masters and Diploma level.

- Surveys - Patient and colleague surveys are mandatory, at least every 5 years for revalidation purposes:

    o Other Quality Improvement Activities – such as shadowing a consultant.

Evidence, Validation and Appraisal

Effective CPD schemes are flexible and largely based on self-evaluation. This lets doctors develop what they do in the context of their individual professional practice by providing evidence of external scrutiny. In the UK, the CPD programme informs the appraisal/revalidation process, which culminates in a recommendation to the General Medical Council (GMC) that the doctor should be revalidated. It is therefore important for doctors to keep a record of the CPD activities and fulfil the requirements of the programme.

While the credit-based recording system is not mandatory, it provides a simple way of recording CPD and is designed to help GPs meet their revalidation needs, by providing a mechanism for collecting and demonstrating how their learning is used to improve patient care in all aspects of their work. Credits are initially self-assessed, but are verified at annual appraisal with relevant supporting information. GPs are expected to fill out the required documentation provided by the GMC outlining how they have addressed their areas for improvement, what learning activities were completed and what credit claims are made. All GPs in training maintain an e-portfolio and in some doctor's groups all GPs maintain e-portfolios, for example, the hospital doctors in Northern Ireland's Western Trust.

The revalidation process ensures doctors remain up-to-date and fit to practice. An updated revalidation system has been established in response to the concerns raised by the Shipman Inquiry.

In order to validate their CPD record, GPs request a GP appraiser from a local list. These appraisers apply for the post in addition to their own clinical responsibilities. They are specifically trained in appraising and normally appraise about 25 GPs a year. GPs are appraised by the same appraiser for a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. The e-portfolio is submitted to the appraiser 2-4 weeks in advance of the planned appraisal meeting which is conducted at the GP's place

of work. Evidence of claimed credits is reviewed and the appropriateness of the GP's choice of four to five areas of improvement is validated as part of their Personal Development Plan (PDP) for the year. The appraisers validate the GP's credit claims and impact measures, sign off on the year's PDP and agree the next year's areas for improvement.

3. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council workers

Professional body/framework

Registration on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) Social Care Register recognises an individual's commitment to providing quality social care services and requires all staff to meet the NISCC standards for their conduct and practice. It also requires staff to demonstrate that they are suitably trained, professional in their practice and accountable for the standard of the care they provide.

The NISCC standards of conduct and practice describe the values, attitudes, behaviours and competences required by social workers. These standards provide the basis for safe and effective practice. The Standards of Conduct and Practice form the core regulatory framework for the social work and social care workforce. As registered professionals, social workers are required to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills to practise confidently and safely.

Rationale and framework/guidance

The NISCC Professional in Practice (PiP) is the professional development framework for social work and enables social workers to maintain Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) and gain recognition for their learning. It provides professional credits and professional certificated awards for learning and development, assessed against a set of professional standards.

The NISCC Workforce Development Team regulates and quality assures graduate and post graduate social work education and training delivered in Northern Ireland (NI) to ensure that it is consistent with the NI requirements. NISCC Professional Advisers undertake a range of regulatory activity across the social work education continuum including:

- Approval/Re-approval of provision and assessors.

- Attendance at Programmed Management Boards and Assessment Panels.

- Annual Monitoring.

- External Examiner/Assessor reporting.

- Training.

- Standardisation.

- NISCC Quality Assurance Framework.

The NISCC Quality Assurance Framework for Education & Training outlines the principles and procedures for the regulation and quality assurance activity. It ensures that:

- social workers are trained to the highest standards to provide safe and effective practice linked to the NISCC's registration requirements;

- teaching, learning and practice are fit for purpose;

- there is effective service user and carer participation in education and training provision;

- there is a coordinated approach with regulators of social work service provision, for example, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA); and

- continuous improvement is evident in education and training provision through monitoring and review including thematic reviews.

The PiP framework recognises all learning both formal and informal. It offers flexibility and economy and places practitioners in charge of their own professional development'. It provides an opportunity to accumulate credits by recognising a wide range of training and learning as well as providing a range of professional awards certificated by NISCC.

Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) is the training and learning carried out by registrants to update and develop the skills and knowledge they need throughout their career. The NISCC PRTL requirements set out for each three/five year registration period the requirements for registrants and the responsibilities for employers. The registrant is required to:

- complete 90 hours of study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance their professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole (this can formal/informal and in/outside the workplace) (Social workers can gain credits from reflection on learning - 1 hour learning activity and a brief reflective analysis equates to 2 learning credits- by demonstrating impact, additional credits can be claimed - 1 credit per hour of learning);

- have a written learning and development plan which is agreed with their employer and is regularly reviewed; and

- maintain a record of their PRTL and submit a summary to NISCC if requested to do so as part of an audit sample.

The employer has the responsibility to:

- provide induction, training and development opportunities to help staff do their jobs effectively and ensure that they are appropriately trained for their post within the context of continuous learning and development standards;

- work with staff on the development of a learning plan which is regularly reviewed; and

- help staff to record their PRTL on a regular basis and support them if they are selected by NISCC for a PRTL audit.

Professional learning activities

To accommodate the diversity of employment arrangements across social care, the NISCC accept a range of activities and learning opportunities as PRTL. This includes:

- Formal or in-service training.

- Courses, seminars and workshops.

- Reading articles or researching social care topics.

- Training and mentoring colleagues.

- Following updates to legislation and policies relating to the sector.

- Refresher training/preparation to undertake social care work.

Evidence, Validation and Appraisal

All social workers must maintain their registration for as long as they are in practice. This includes renewing their registration at the end of each three/five year registration period.

To renew registration, social workers must complete an application and confirm their:

- continued good character, good conduct, and competence;

- current physical and mental fitness to perform whole or part of the work of a registered worker;

- agreement to continue to abide by the standards of conduct and practice;

- completed 90 hours of PRTL;

- fulfilment of any conditions attached to their previous registration;

- previous annual payments are up-to-date and pay the accompanying fee; and

- provide their completed PRTL audit form if requested to do so.

If the renewal application is successful, they will be registered for a further three/five year period. Registrants who do not apply for renewal will be referred to the Registration Committee for removal from the Register. Employers are informed automatically when a registration is not renewed.

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