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Call for Papers: Special Issue, Studia Paedagogica

Facilitating Teacher Continuous Professional Development: How, why and by whom?

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The next planned special issue of Studia Paedagogica will focus on the issue of facilitation and facilitators in the context of teachers' continuous professional development (CPD).

Teachers need to learn throughout their careers. Be it due to changes in school policy, developments in subject knowledge, new strategies around teaching and learning or societal changes that play out in classrooms. The latest TALIS Survey (OECD, 2019) showed that 94% of participating teachers had engaged in some form of CPD activity at least once in the previous year. By far the most frequent format was attending courses or seminars, followed by reading professional literature and attending conferences and the observation of practices as part of a formal arrangement.

Much research in the field of CPD focuses on particular programmes to assess whether they are effective in influencing teachers, sometimes including control groups (Asterhan & Lefstein, 2023). Aspects that often remain invisible in research reporting on CPD, however, are who designs and leads these efforts and how they are implemented (Perry & Booth, 2021). These roles are usually captured by the word "*facilitator*", although the term remains ill defined. The minimal definition of facilitator for the purposes of this special is: those who conduct CPD events or programmes for teachers.

To date, much of the research conducted on the topic focuses on a specific form of facilitation, namely that offered by members of research teams in the context of CPD designed as part of intervention research. In this setting, programmes usually involve some form of collective learning where teachers meet regularly in an established learning group that is attached to a research project with limited funding. This type of research reports on detailed analyses of what researchers-facilitators actually do in CPD meetings and how they mediate discussions (Lefstein et al., 2020). This research highlights actions oriented towards establishing and maintaining a supportive learning environment as an important aspect of facilitation, for instance by drawing on humour or validating participants' ideas (Alles et al., 2019; Borko et al., 2014; Guzman et al., 2019; van Es et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2011). Another crucial task relates to how facilitators shape the contents of the discussion aiming at moving participants' understanding forward. This is achieved, for instance, by questioning

established practices, steering towards productive disagreements and linking concrete situations with principles or "big ideas" (Borko et al., 2014; Coles, 2012; Dobie & Anderson, 2015; Hamza et al., 2018; van Es et al., 2014). This is not without tensions, not least given the sometimes competing voices or agendas of researchers-facilitators and teachers (Lefstein & Snell, 2011). Much of the research on CPD concludes that the role is highly complex, requires high levels of skill and professional judgment, etc., thus turning it into a highly "exclusive" position reserved for a few experts. Notwithstanding, in other cases, facilitation is assumed by local actors who lead teachers in their institutions with different degrees of formality. Findings in this area indicate that the role requires facilitators to create and sustain learning opportunities within an institution (e.g. Hennessy et al., 2021) and negotiating the new power dynamics emerging from shifting roles from peer to facilitator (Segal et al., 2018). Other CPD settings, like shorter workshops or online, asynchronous learning remain rather underexplored.

Taken together, while a knowledge base on facilitation has been developed, important questions remain open on the how, why and by whom of CPD facilitation, which this special issue will attempt to address. Contributors can focus on questions like the following (or related topics):

- How can the role of CPD facilitators be defined? What should the role entail in different CPD settings? Is it possible or meaningful to create typologies according to CPD features?
- Is it possible to define "good facilitation" and what does it look like? What aspects of the role are problematic and how can they be negotiated?
- How can the role of facilitators be conceptualized and integrated within theories of (teacher) learning?
- What are productive ways in which facilitators can mediate or orchestrate teacher learning in collective settings? Is there a connection between facilitation and teachers' learning trajectories or CPD outcomes?
- What role do facilitators' knowledge and expertise play in their type and quality of facilitation? Are there differences depending on the aims and contents of CPD programmes?
- Who can or should enact such a role? And what are possible advantages and disadvantages in each case? What are the implications of having local versus external CPD facilitators? How does this impact the possibilities of scaling up CPD approaches or programmes?
- How can people develop and learn about the facilitator role? What should they learn? How can this be made scalable and sustainable?
- Are there settings in which the facilitator role can be distributed or replaced in CPD by the use of tools (e.g. online infrastructure)?
- How do facilitators themselves see their role? How are they perceived by others?
- Should there be educational policies in place around the development and exercise of CPD facilitation and what could these look like?

This special issue will be published in English in **June, 2025**. The deadline for submitting abstracts is **May 31, 2024**, and full papers should be submitted by **October 30, 2024**. Abstracts should contain a title and a list of authors, and provide a summary of the study.

Send abstracts to the email address studiapaedagogica@phil.muni. Full texts are to be submitted via the [Open Journal System](#). Articles should be written in U.S. English and meet the requirements set out in the instructions for authors on the journal's website. Manuscripts will be submitted to a double-blind peer-review process that will enable the editors to select papers for publication. If you have any concerns about the suitability of your topic for this special issue, you can contact the editorial office at the email address above.

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