

CPD Model: Kingswood School Bath

At Kingswood School, Bath, the Mathematics Department has started to implement the Collaborative Practice Model of Continuing Professional Development.

Head of Mathematics Garrod Musto has divided the department of eight (six fulltime) into three groups, including himself in each one. Each group collaboratively plans, delivers / observes and reviews three lessons per term, giving nine cycles per term within the department so that the Collaborative Practice Model is very much a 'live issue'.

Garrod has chosen to focus each group on one of the three Key Stages. As he explained, "We all teach a range of year groups, so it makes sense to rotate group membership so that everyone has experience of all areas and, for those who don't teach beyond GCSE for example, to gain an appreciation of what is needed further down the mathematical road."

For the planning and reviewing sessions, each group uses a period set aside for departmental meetings. Initial attempts to get more than one group together proved a little too unfocused so four of the teachers have videoed a complete cycle that is being used for training within the department.

Garrod strongly believes that this model of CPD is hugely beneficial and has advantages over more 'traditional' models.

"The Collaborative Practice Model of CPD is a method of delivering professional development to the department internally which, importantly, enables staff to feel they have ownership of the process," he said.

"It can also provide opportunities for staff to share their expert knowledge. It is important to emphasise that during each cycle of the planning, delivery and evaluation phases, a variety of school specific issues can be addressed which may be subject related or broader whole class or classroom management issues. This aspect cannot be underestimated: many professional 'INSET' courses for teachers nowadays cater for some issues (or aspects of teaching) but, as many are a day long, they might only scratch the surface of the problem, whereas here is a "free" method of setting your own developmental agenda to progress both as a department and also as individuals."

Other members of the department are finding the Collaborative Practice Model very positive and supportive. Anna Cooper, in her second year of teaching, explained. "I like it because it is beneficial to me to sit down, focus and discuss different ideas within the department, because all members of staff contribute in different ways. It is also good to see the whole system of "plan, teach and evaluate" as a cycle. I do not feel remotely threatened by the model; it is the process that is under scrutiny not the individual delivering it."

Clearly, the model does have implications in terms of time and, potentially, cost. The support of Senior Management is essential and, at Kingswood, Academic Deputy Head, Sarah Dawson, is fully committed to the initiative. She said, "I think this model is extremely worthwhile. Despite implications for cover for a single period during the observation phase, the longer term value of the model outweighs this issue. It encourages new ideas, team building skills and reflective practice."

Sarah sees a much wider role for the Collaborative Practice Model, beyond the Mathematics Department. "It has real potential for all curricular areas. The Mathematics Department will be feeding back their experiences of the CPD Model to our Heads of Department, and I am confident that others will wish to trial this method."