Appetite for digital CPD

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Kieren Liu, Impact Manager
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Introduction
Research Objectives

- Understand the experience of digital continuing professional development (CPD) among school teachers and school leaders.
- Understand the appetite for digital CPD opportunities among these groups.
- Explore their needs in relation to digital CPD opportunities.
- Explore what else could be of interest to them in the CPD space.
Methodology

Phase 1
Background research

- Desk research
- Internal calls

Phase 2
Fieldwork - Primary data

- Teacher survey
- Teacher interviews
- Policy maker interviews
Sample

Survey

6630 teachers completed the survey

Interviews

47 teachers

11 Policy makers

Across 6 regions
Overview of teacher CPD

Insights from desk research, policy makers and British Council teams
A number of factors impact on the importance of CPD

CPD is valued by teachers and seen as an important part of developing and maintaining the teacher workforce. A number of factors play into this perceived importance:

**Teacher Shortages**

With 74 countries worldwide facing a teacher shortage, and policy makers highlighting an aging teacher population, there is an ever growing need for up to date and engaging teacher CPD.

**Reforms and Policy**

OECD findings from 2018 cite that many countries now mandate participation in CPD for employment purposes or promotion opportunities. Policy makers and British Council stakeholders echo the growing importance that government places worldwide on CPD.

**Impact of the Pandemic**

The learning gap will only be heightened by a lack of teacher training. In LMICs, ‘learning poverty’ – the number of 10 year-olds who can’t read and understand a simple story by the end of primary – was at 53%, while for the poorest countries it was 80% on average.

Digital CPD has increased in recent years, dating pre-pandemic

- Research highlights that uptake of CPD had been growing prior to the pandemic.
- Policy makers and internal British Council stakeholders note the pandemic has accelerated uptake of digital CPD for teachers.
- As a result, digital CPD is now a very crowded market.
- Policy makers reflect that this influx of digital CPD programmes can mean that not all of them are effective.
- Overall, however, well-designed and supported digital CPD can be as effective as face-to-face learning if not more effective.

[OECD, 2018]
Overall views on digital CPD Teachers
Insights from teacher survey and interviews
The majority of teachers have experienced good quality digital CPD

96% Of teachers have used some form of digital CPD

90% Of teachers rate the quality of digital CPD they have used as good or very good

“Sometimes we have webinars set up by the British Council where they invite people to come speak. People from different parts of the world. So, anytime we’re put in to listen to that we get enriched by what is said.”

Head teacher, Nigeria
Events, workshops and seminars are the most used digital CPD

Digital CPD used

- Not used digital CPD: 4%
- Other: 4%
- School/teacher recognition: 22%
- International school partnerships: 23%
- Comms of practice: 36%
- Courses (facilitated): 44%
- Courses (self-study): 47%
- Downloadable resources: 57%
- Workshops/Events/seminars: 67%

“Accessing resources either to use as development or use in your classroom, my classroom. Every time I'm going to try to know the latest techniques in teaching or new strategies through courses, pre-courses, diplomas, to apply it in my classroom”

Head of maths, Egypt
Differences between preferences and usage

Teacher digital CPD preferences ranked by usage

- Teachers in MENA are much less likely to prefer downloadable resources (27%). This could be due to lack of good quality resources in Arabic.
- Europe has significantly higher preference for events or seminars than all other regions (71%).
- Americas show the most preference for facilitated courses (35%).
- International school partnerships are notably more preferred by teachers in South Asia (32%) and the UK (33%).

C4. If you had to pick, what would be your top 2 preferred methods of digital CPD? Chart display % that selected the option (N=6630)
What does this mean?

- In a competitive landscape teachers are used to high quality CPD.
- A mixture of events/seminars and downloadable resources would appeal to the most teachers, this appeals to the dual needs of interesting and engaging CPD and quick and flexible learning they can fit around their own schedule. Considerations should be made for different regional preferences.
- When offering courses, these should aim to be at least part facilitated, as many teachers do not enjoy fully self-study courses, for instance, interactive touch points throughout longer courses.
- The benefits of downloadable resources can be lost if they are not in the local language (e.g. Arabic for MENA) or have to be significantly adapted.
Digital CPD - Technology barriers
Reliable internet access is rarer than smart device access

Two thirds of teachers always have access to a smart device
A further 24% usually have access.
Leaving 11% who sometimes or rarely have access.

Only 48% of teachers always have reliable internet access
Additionally, 39% usually have access.
Leaving 11% who sometimes have access and 3% who rarely or never have reliable internet.

C1. Thinking about both at school and at home, how often do you have access to a “smart” device (that can connect to the internet)? This includes smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers (N=6630)
C2. How often do you have access to a reliable* internet connection? Scale: Always / Usually / Sometimes / Rarely / Never (N=6630)
Sub-Saharan Africa has the biggest connection issue

While globally teachers working in rural areas were slightly less likely to have reliable internet access than those in urban areas, this is much more dependent on region.

In the EU, being rural or urban makes no difference to internet accessibility.
The advantages of digital CPD are mostly practical considerations

All regions globally identified the following practical advantages of digital CPD:

- Time-saving and flexible
- Cost saving
- Many teachers can access digital from home

Additional advantages identified by one of more regions include:

- Widening participation of CPD
- The benefit of digital CPD for enabling international links
- Flexibility of self-study syllabus

Teachers in the UK and EU also mentioned technology advantages:

- Recordings
- Use of interactive tools
Digital CPD - Needs and barriers
CPD must be interesting, focused on student outcomes, and relevant to the local curriculum

While the pattern is roughly similar across regions there are some notable exceptions:

- Self service in MENA is much less important (71%).
- EU and UK are much less interested in accreditation, live facilitators, and local networking than other regions.
- While still the least popular, employer requirement is important for half of teachers in Americas and MENA.
What teachers say about their needs

Globally, a number of unprompted CPD needs came up in the interviews that are common to all regions.

- Mental health and wellbeing training
- Digital skills
- Networking opportunities
The importance of interesting and relevant topics is vital

In our survey and interviews, we asked teachers if there were any other important factors

“Needs to be motivational and a topic that I am interested in, that benefits the students and can be embedded into the school curriculum. The time of the CPD is important, as during school hours is very difficult.”

Primary teacher, UK

“Provisions of smart phones to the learners will enhance good learning outcomes”

Headteacher, Nigeria

“The topics to be covered should be relevant to the learners and the community.”

Senior leadership team, Zambia

“Supply of Digital tools and access to network connection”

Headteacher, Nigeria
The main barriers to CPD are similar to the top needs

The three most common barriers affect at least one third of teachers

- **45%** Lack of interest
- **41%** Irrelevant to curriculum
- **33%** Lack of clear student outcomes

Regionally - there are some stark differences in barriers.

- In **Wider Europe**, English only language is the most common barrier, with 4 in 10 teachers listing it.
- A lack of accreditation/recognition would put off over a third of **MENA and SSA** teachers, as would having no networking opportunities.
- Only **11%** of SSA teachers see Online only as a barrier, this is actually higher in MENA and South Asia (14% and 15% respectively).
There are no practical barriers to access in the UK and EU

For teachers in the UK and EU, and urban areas of Brazil, there are other factors that turn teachers away from digital CPD

- Digital fatigue
- Shorter online attention span
- Disengagement of other participants
- Firewalls in schools
- Lack of interactivity
- Often passive form of learning
- Pace of delivery
- Time constraints
- Outside working hours
What does this mean?

Barriers to digital CPD

- Where poor internet - Consider using digital only for small/short, downloadable CPD
- Concerns around digital fatigue
- Adapting for local language is important

Priorities when choosing digital CPD

- Clearly linked to student outcomes
- Relevant to local needs and curriculum
- Interesting topics in an accessible format

While there is space for different forms of CPD it’s important to use digital for the correct format. Courses and longer format CPD should have expert facilitation and consider using a hybrid of face-to-face and online learning.

www.britishcouncil.org
British Council’s CPD themes
British Council CPD topics are of interest to most teachers

Core skills is the most popular topic, 81% saying they are interested or very interested in it, but even the ‘less popular’ of the four topics - inclusion - is of interest to more than two thirds of teachers.

Class teachers tend to be slightly less interested in all of the topics than heads or SLT.

Head teachers are significantly more interested in inclusion than both SLT and class teachers.
Summary
Summary - What CPD works

CPD should come from a trusted and credible brand

Self study courses should be available but the best will find ways to increase interactivity

CPD should focus on student outcomes

Fulfill specific needs for the market, via a broad range of offers

Link to specific curricula in each market, to ensure its relevant and quick and easy to access

Teachers like to see resources signposted more clearly by age range and by topic,

Practical considerations should be taken into account
Thank you