

DISCUSSION GROUP:

DEVELOPING A TAXONOMY FOR DELIVERING AND LEADING CPD

The group met on two occasions and gave consideration to three documents

- The DfEE Consultation Paper of February 2000 which established a set of principles and presaged the establishment of Performance Management; continuation of the development of Standards (in relation to the Hay McBer model); the establishment of Career Planning; Professional Bursaries and support for 'masters' courses, including a 'development portfolio building on the Career Entry Profile; a commitment to sharing good practice through AST and Beacon School investment; Learning Partnerships incorporating ASTs, Training Schools, EAZ and Excellence in Cities; Best Practice Research Scholarships. All of this is supported by significant monies and quality controls (such as a provider Code of Practice).

This was an extensive wish list, but the promise of money was significant. In practice all these initiatives would appear to be pursued independently rather than as the coherent integrated package as which they are presented (see the development portfolio below). There was a heavy dependence in the end on two factors. Firstly there is a commitment to observation as means of teaching – and there is little evidence (if any) of observation being effective unless a part of some more analytic and reflective process. Teachers need to learn how to observe and how to utilise that observation. (DW noted that he had watched MUFC for thirty years without significant improvement in performance). Secondly there was a major reliance on ICT as the universal panacea. The experience of the O.U. has been that ICT based teacher development needs significant peer support for effectiveness. One potentially major influence was the implementation of Performance Management which appears to be developing as a significant way of committing schools to supporting teacher development through defined targets and resource commitments. There is clearly great potential on this DfEE commitment, especially if the GTC can integrate and manage it.

- The DfEE Development Portfolio Consultation of June/July 2001. This set out (in rather 'obvious' terms) the development of a record of informal inset activities which all teachers are intended to maintain. One major issue was the separation of 'Career Planning, formal training provision, personal study and this loose collection of experiences into separate issues, when clearly a proper c.v. development would encompass an integrated and balanced menu. Again much emphasis is on observing (and there were expressions of great doubt as to whether beacon schools were properly conducting their commitment to being open,

mentoring and ‘sponsoring’ their fellow schools inset development). The real impact of AST (leading teachers) needs independent monitoring. There was some doubt as to whether teachers would invest the necessary energy to maintain the all the different portfolios.

- The third document was a paper prepared for the Joint Mathematical Council as a means of focusing on necessary areas for further development. After reviewing the past initiatives in INSET it proposed three priorities for CPD. Firstly the need to encourage and enable the emergence of future curriculum leaders in school mathematics. Most LEA/NNF resource was short term training provision or individual issue courses. Almost no HEI offered a substantial mathematics course anymore. The method of funding had driven them into modular mixed provision in which the mathematics took up a minority element. Perhaps a ‘Consultants Certificate’ could be instituted to replace the old M.A. Diploma course which was very effective in preparing the 1980s advisory teacher cohort. Secondly the welcome ‘Best Practice Research Scholarships’ could be a valuable way of curriculum development, but only if they were integrated into the national developments, and not left as a random collection of interesting purely local enquiries. The valuable work done by these teachers needs to become part of the evidence for future developments, and for these they need to become part of the network of the mathematics education community. This is in part recognised by the attachment of HEI advice to the scholarships, but the role of that advice needs definition - not providing ‘academic rigour’ (the scholarships are too short for this unless part of a wider programme already) but placing the local work into national contexts. Third is the need for a transparent structure for the development of the school mathematics curriculum, involving all relevant partners.

It is true to say that the discussion group was generally pessimistic of CPD development, seeing political ‘intuition’ rather than rational decision planning as the likely process. There were, however, developments that could be potentially valuable and needed supporting. It does need, however, a coherent and co-operative development plan from all the stakeholders if the forces of dogma are to be resisted.