

**DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN MATHEMATICS  
NCETM/BSRLM WORKING GROUP**

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The aims of the research projects instigated by the NCETM are:

- a) to investigate “what works” in terms of professional development in mathematics
- b) to develop a culture of action research being part of CPD by encouraging teachers to become active researchers and supporting them in doing so and
- c) to develop communities of practice as a result of the research.

With this as a background the aim of the working group is to develop a framework for researching professional development in mathematics. The first meeting of the working group centred around open discussions of a range of issues, drawing on the expertise of the participants. These issues (outlined below) will be used to structure the next meeting of the NCETM/BSRLM workshop at the BSRLM day meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2007.

*Purpose of professional development in mathematics*

Professional development is about being stimulated to re-think, to experiment, to make fresh distinctions and to probe those distinctions to see if they are informative in enabling pedagogic and didactic choices which influence learners’ experiences and behaviour.

*Landscape of professional development*

There is a need to be open about what constitutes professional development. This could take many forms which include: individual inquiry; membership of professional organisations; participation in school-based or local authority networks; participation in research or curriculum development projects; participation in courses.

*Researching professional development.*

There is a need to develop research probes/questions that can be used to evaluate professional development. An example of such a question is “what evidence would convince you that the PD activity is informing teachers’ practices and students’ learning?” It is also important to understand how schools evaluate PD.

*Identifying outlier schools*

It is important to identify outlier schools in which students are achieving relatively highly in mathematics and then probe these in more depth.

*What can we learn from the medical profession?*

Can we learn from the ways in which doctors and nurses are freed up to research?

What is a practice informed by research?

*Coherence of research supported by NCETM*

The group expressed the view that it is important that the NCETM funds a coherent programme of research related to professional development, and that this should be articulated with research funded by ESRC and other fund-raising bodies.