

# CPD FOR TEACHERS

This Learning Digest identifies learning points for Uni Connect partnerships in relation to the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers. It is based on interviews and a workshop with partnership leads conducted as part of Uni Connect's formative evaluation (2019-2021), commissioned by the Office for Students. It is not intended to provide a definitive approach to CPD for teachers, rather some useful learning points for consideration. This learning digest is produced by Ipsos Mori, from independent research commissioned by the OfS. It does not necessarily reflect the OfS's views or position.

The quality of engagement and use of outreach information by teachers has the potential to support the legacy of the Uni Connect programme

access to a wide range of resources, knowledge and training around pathways to higher education (HE)

To support teachers, some partnerships have developed CPD programmes which aim to:

- ensure that local teachers and practitioners have
- help teachers integrate information around pathways to HE into their work with learners
- ensure that teachers are well equipped to help local learners

## With special thanks to all Uni Connect partnerships and particularly to:

- Ben Tucker – Aspire to HE, <https://aspiretohe.co.uk/contact-us>
- Claire O'Neil – Southern Universities Network, [claire.oneill@soton.ac.uk](mailto:claire.oneill@soton.ac.uk)
- Shannen Dabson – Shaping Futures, <https://shaping-futures.org.uk/contact-us>

## Key considerations



### DEFINING REGIONAL AND LOCAL CPD NEEDS

- Understand teachers' needs by using established mechanisms - e.g. through staff embedded in schools and colleges, relevant networks, scheduled meetings and / or surveys and focus groups
- Engage with local CECS to ensure careers-focused CPD is closely aligned to industry trends
- Signpost to CPD offered in the region and develop courses, if needed, to address gaps which address Uni Connect objectives
- Engage with local authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) or any other organisation which coordinates careers-focused CPD in the area as early as possible



### DEVELOPING AND SIGNPOSTING CPD COURSES

- If a CPD course needs developing, impartiality and quality of content can be supported by:
  - consulting the literature
  - conducting focus groups and administering surveys to identify gaps
  - building and consulting a network of external organisations who are 'specialists' in the area and might be interested in supporting course development and delivery
- Partnerships can consider developing and delivering CPD courses collaboratively to meet specific shared national needs
- Consider how CPD courses can best support Uni Connect's legacy and sustainability, e.g. through developing resources and ensuring that changes are embedded
- Signpost to Uni Connect CPD offers using multiple communication channels, e.g. through the partnership website, newsletters, direct emails to teachers
- Ask partners and organisations involved/interested in CPD courses to advertise them through their own communication channels can increase reach



### DELIVERING AND EVALUATING CPD COURSES

- Leverage technology to deliver online CPD to large, disparate groups of teachers, e.g. large scale conferences, online resources, or moving CPD online
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of CPD, especially if and how it has altered teaching practices. If signposting, monitor interest in digital newsletters and email communications, e.g. by analysing click-through rates and cookies embedded in bit.ly links, which could provide helpful data to support improvements
- Consider developing formal and informal networks, which can support teachers to more easily share knowledge and best practice

## Potential issues to be alert to



- The types of CPD that Uni Connect as a whole and individual partnerships could be delivering, and to whom, is still to be determined
- When delivering CPD, it might be helpful to focus on the topic(s) examined and minimise the 'spotlight' on the institution delivering the CPD in order to best fulfil Uni Connect's impartial broker role
- It can be challenging to assess the impact of one-off CPD sessions as data collection has to be proportionate to the intensity of the intervention and impacts can be more difficult to detect for lighter touch activities. Continuous initiatives or those with multiple phases can be easier to track/evaluate
- Avoid duplication of existing CPD offers
- Attendance in person can be challenging for teachers due to their busy schedules.
- Striking a balance between ensuring that the appropriate school/college staff member(s) attend the right CPD and engaging large audiences requires careful consideration

## What does success look like?



- Use of technology in delivering CPD optimises reach and attendance
- Partnerships' networks are expanded and existing relationships strengthened
- Relevant and useful teacher CPD courses are developed, grounded in literature and feedback provided by teachers and other relevant stakeholders
- Knowledge and CPD resources are embedded within schools / colleges to help Uni Connect have a legacy in the region

## SOUTHERN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK – EMBEDDING ACADEMIC RESILIENCE IN SCHOOLS

SUN partnered with BoingBoing and YoungMinds to deliver a series of training sessions on the Academic Resilience Approach in schools.

The training:

- Aimed to help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds maintain their academic resilience
- Was delivered by SUN with no cost to schools
- Used a framework that enabled teachers to assess the support they were providing to pupils in order for them to maintain their academic resilience
- Was followed by a series of 'audits' with senior leaders, teachers and learners using focus groups and surveys.
- Audits assessed stakeholders' perceptions of the training's knowledge and identified further gaps in teachers' knowledge as regards academic resilience



### Why is this activity easily replicable?

1. The training can be delivered virtually
2. The resources used as part of the training are free for any partnership to access
3. The resilience framework has been tested across the country and does not require significant changes / adaptations if used in different regions

### IMPACT

- The training helped teachers become more observant of pupils struggling with academic resilience
- The training helped to reduce other pupil interventions.



“It's a whole school approach. It's about teachers, everybody who works there, parents... It's about systemic change that you make, so it's not about this one-off, 'Here's a couple of worksheets that you can do with the students.' It's about looking at overall what can you change about the school to help build resilience for the young people...  
**Claire O'Neil, SUN**”

## SHAPING FUTURES – THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' NEEDS WHEN DEVELOPING CPD

- Shaping Futures collaborated with regional partners to deliver a series of CPD events, one of which was for teachers who were planning to teach or to provide educational support to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- To develop the content of the CPD event, a survey and a series of focus groups were used to identify gaps in qualified and trainee teachers' confidence and knowledge in terms of access and routes to HE -

- A survey was administered to all local schools and was filled in by teachers
- Focus groups were conducted involving university and college partners and teachers
- Focus groups were carried out with students with SEND in order to collect their views on gaps in their teachers' knowledge

- Gaps identified became the basis of the CPD event

### OUTCOMES

Conducting extensive scoping when developing the CPD event:

1. Contributed positively to the quality of the content – the relevance, engagement and usefulness of the CPD was increased
2. Had a positive impact on participants – the scoping phase (and the event) supported teachers and institutions to create a network, many of whom were interested in participating in, or being a partner in future scoping activities and CPD events

“[We] set up a focus group, invited local teachers and SENCOs and some student representatives as well. The university in Liverpool has a disabled students society, so we invited some of these students to come along. We also spoke to the students, just to find out where they felt the gaps in teachers' knowledge were... That was our starting point, to find out where the gaps were and what areas we should address in any CPD that we run.  
**Shannen Dabson, Shaping Futures**”