

# **Professional Development and Transfer of Learning. Two sides of the Same Coin?**

**Dr Lex McDonald  
Victoria University of Wellington**

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# **Key Ideas**

- There are three key ideas in teacher professional development: teacher learning, teacher motivation and transfer of the training
- If improved student outcomes are to be achieved, then these three inter-related ideas need to be considered.
- A case is made for transfer to be understood as an integrative mechanism that facilitates motivation and learning.

# **What is Teacher Professional Development?**

- Up until relatively recently teacher PD has been characterized by transmission teaching, one-shot workshops, specialist presenters, individually–driven learning.
- Today attention is upon student outcomes, teacher learning and implementation of ideas, community of learners and specialists and technology usage.

# **Definition of Teacher PD**

- “PD, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her personal role (and this process) has a significant impact upon teachers beliefs and practices, students’ learning and on the implementation of educational reform”  
(Villegas-Reimers,2003)
- But how do teachers learn, how is transfer facilitated and students respond?

# **What Do We Know about Teacher Learning?**

- Considerable attention on factors associated with effective PD but little on the processes of teacher learning and the co-evolution of classroom practice.
- Timperley et al (2007) identifies conditions for teacher PD learning and the importance of constructivist explanations of learning.
- But more is needed: adult learning ideas, teacher change issues and professional learning explanations are important as is teacher motivation and transfer of the training

# **Adult Learning**

Two key perspectives need to be considered

- Individual/psychological factors (e.g., teacher beliefs)
- Contextual (e.g., cultural factors)

# **Teacher and Change**

- The teacher is within a system
- Support is important
- Often slow adoption of ideas
- Need to understand the organizational opportunities and restraints

# **Professional Competency**

- This concerns the movement from novice to expert
- **Dreyfus and Dreyfus** model: novice  
→ advanced beginner → competent worker → proficient → expert
- **Schon**: artistry and reflection
- **Cheetham and Chivers**: meta – competencies (e.g., communication) → Core competencies (i.e., knowledge, expertise, behaviour and values)

# **Teacher Motivation**

- Largely over-looked area.
- In the past mainly behavioural explanations and now intrinsic approaches are used.
- But complex multi-dimensional issue.
- Motivation and transfer literature is helpful: pre-training, training framing, organisational context, instructional approaches, individual factors and after training factors

# **Transfer of Training**

- TOT is an integrative function because it embodies learning and motivation
- Transfer refers to the application of past learning.
- Controversial debated concept
- Need a strategic approach – it is a plan that has a TOT framework incorporating learning and motivational strategies.

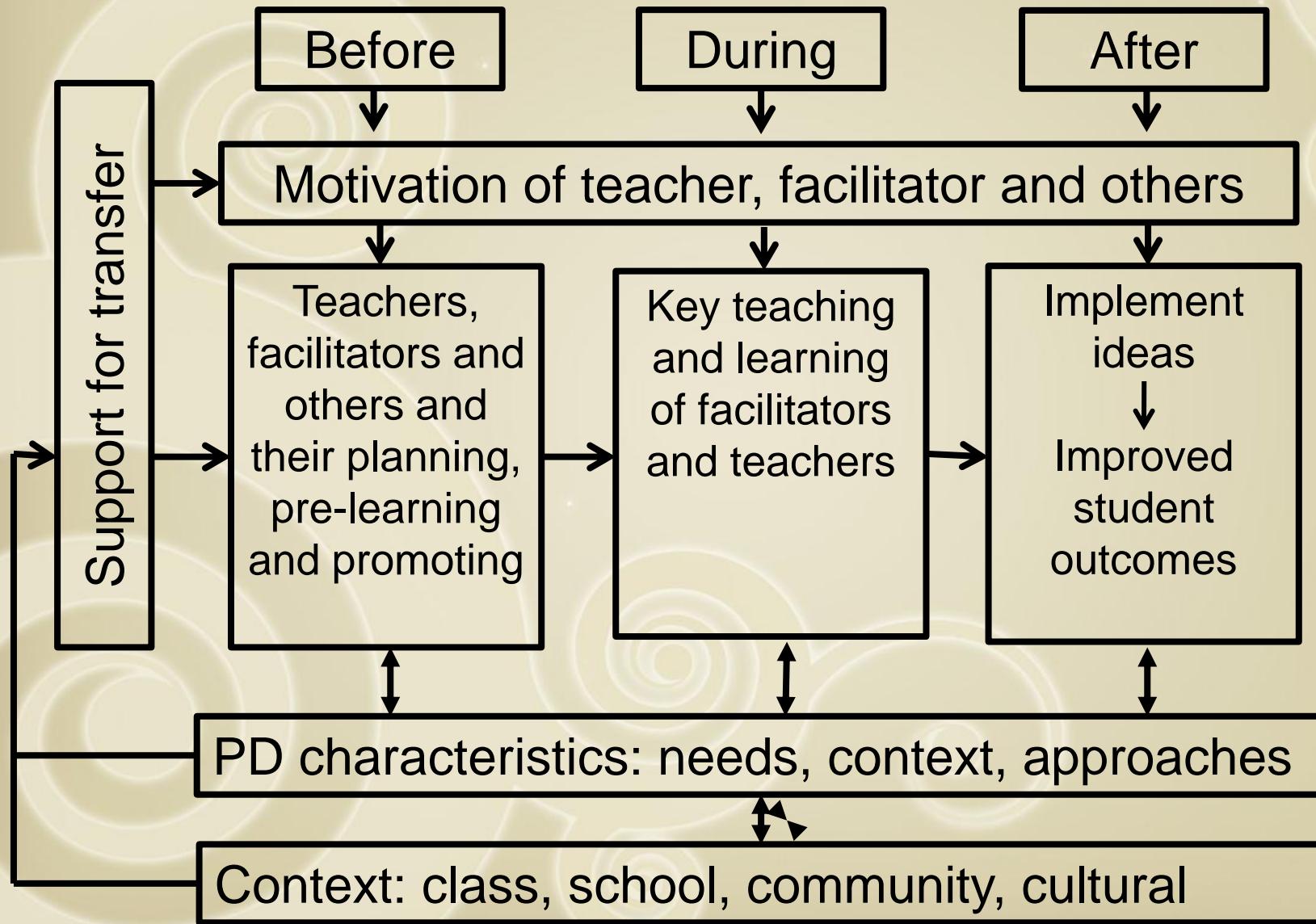
# **Conclusion**

“Both transfer and PD are defined in terms of being process and outcomes oriented, but the relative emphasis varies. In PD emphasis is upon the process to achieve desired outcomes whilst transfer emphasizes the outcomes but depends upon the processes of learning to achieve these outcomes. They are two sides of the same (performance improvement) coin.”

# Implications

- **TOT in PD must be given a priority** otherwise improved student learning outcomes will not occur.
- **Educators need detailed knowledge** about TOT, learning and motivation and the interactions.
- **A strategic PD plan** integrating evidence based practices of TOT, motivation and learning should be developed – not a smorgasbord of ad hoc approaches.
- **The contextual aspects** of learning, motivation and transfer are critical considerations in the PD plan.

# Teacher PD Transfer Model



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**Lex.Mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz**