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The Impact of Academic Accreditation and Recognition on Teachers' Engagement with Professional Learning: A Literature Review

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The Impact of Academic Accreditation on Engagement with Professional Learning

Methodology

- Literature review
- Evidence drawn from official government policy; state-sponsored bodies or meso-level organisations with a defined remit for PL; peer-reviewed academic journals; recognised research institutes or professional bodies; and other publications generated by recognised academic authorities or policymakers.
- Structured searches using agreed key search terms.

1. What are the most effective models of accreditation of Professional Learning?

<u>Examples of models</u>	Formal - Compulsory	Formal - Optional	Informal – Compulsory	Informal - Optional
Academic qualification	M level ITE (Fin)	MEP (Wal)		Possible 3 step pathway to M-level (Sco)
Non-academic qualification	NPQH (Wal)	NPQ (Eng)		
Recognition - framework	Teacher Competencies Framework (HK)	Graduate through to Lead Teachers (Aus)	Framework for Professional Learning (Ont) - autonomous engagement	
Recognition - culture	Professional Learning Passport - NQT (Wal)	Master Teachers (S Korea)		

- Little international evidence that academic qualifications are a requirement beyond initial teacher education.
- If no requirement for academic accreditation for PL, then no clear appetite for engagement.
- Accreditation generally more desirable when compulsory or where professional culture creates desirability (Day and Gu, 2007).
- When accreditation is optional, schemes can lose favour.
- General outcome - academic accreditation acceptable or desirable but not compulsory.

2. What system-wide alternatives to qualifications-based recognition exist?

- Development of a framework of recognition for professional development and career progress e.g. ‘Framework for Professional Learning’ in Ontario, Canada. In some countries, frameworks are linked to a performance management or appraisal system (e.g. Zhang, Ding, Xu, 2016). Difficulties can be:
 - motivations for PL become focussed on personal gain or status rather than genuine, pupil centred benefits (e.g. Park & So, 2014).
 - PL inevitably becomes individual rather than collaborative.
- Ontario Framework offers structure for engagement and recognition, but commitment is autonomous and individual (Ontario College of Teachers, 2016) where onus on teacher to develop personal professional motivations.
- Australian model of a professional progression and recognition is interesting and useful (AITSL, 2011). Provides development ladder outside usual career pathways which of leadership and management. Similar alternatives in Shanghai and South Korea (e.g. Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, Hunter, 2016), but influenced by contextual social values of status and standing within the community.

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3. What does the literature tell us about the impact of academic accreditation on engagement?

- Little evidence that academic accreditation has impact on teachers’ engagement with professional PL.
- May drive a different agenda than that desired by the professional learner (Kennedy, 2005).
- How teachers engage with PL varies according to stage of development and desired career (Coldwell, 2017).
- Engagement may be enhanced through optional academically accredited courses, within a flexible structure where content is selected and driven locally.
- Collaboration enhances engagement (Campbell et al., 2017).
- Academically accredited programmes need synergy and coherence with other schemes and frameworks

4. Recommendations

A PL framework for Wales that provides:

- Options for academic accreditation (Donaldson, 2010).
- Is integrated coherently with other requirements.
- Accreditation within framework that is flexible, locally driven, embedded in classroom practice (Opfer 2016)
- External conditions must not undermine teachers’ professionalism and agency (Kennedy, 2005: 241).
- Avoid the development of a ‘two-tier profession’ (Thomas, 2016: 229)
- That PLP is used as baseline for recognition of PL
- That a progression ladder is developed which recognises development within teaching and learning achievements and developments.