Study Guide
Block 3: Professional and school development

Prepared for the Open University by Deirdre Cook, Deborah Cooper and Peter Scrimshaw
E851 Professional Development with ICT

E851 Course Team

Josephine Campbell
Deirdre Cook (Chair)
Deborah Cooper
Paul Hopkins
Robert McCormick
Sue Roberts (Course Coordinator)
Peter Scrimshaw
Helen Sturges (Presentation Course Manager)

External assessor (E850 and E851)

Don Passey, University of Lancaster
E851 Professional Development with ICT

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Introduction

The starting point for Block 3 will be a consideration of professional development and school development as manifestations of change in your own institution. This block develops the idea of change as a long-term and complex process. We will be exploring further the nature of professional and school development, and the issues surrounding change. We will select from the extensive range of material on educational change, from the literature on the management of change and professional development. The readings take a wide perspective on issues beyond your immediate classroom, and will cover the following:

- analysing change in your institution (Weeks 11–12);
- reflecting on your own learning (as a teacher) and on the change process (Weeks 13–14);
- the idea of levels of change (Week 14);
- the future of educational change and professional development (Week 14).

In Weeks 11 and 12, the focus will be on the range and context of internal and external factors involved in the change process, identifying agents of change and external sources of change. We also examine the reasons why so many innovations seem to fail when they are implemented, and what can be learned from this. Most of the readings in this block do not refer specifically to ICT change; rather, we will be stepping back to look at change from a broader perspective.

In Weeks 13 and 14, we will consider the relationship between teachers’ personal learning and interactions, and professional development and the extent of change. In Week 14 we also investigate the future of educational change and professional development.

Finally, in Weeks 15 and 16, there is time for you to revisit the key ideas from the readings and other sources, and to complete the Examinable Component. The Examinable Component covers all three blocks of the course.

The use of evidence

Throughout this course we have emphasized that your studies should support your work in school, particularly as a teacher-researcher. This is why many of the self-study activities ask you to use and analyse evidence from your own context. You will notice, when reading Fullan’s view of the place of teacher advocacy, that the contribution made by individuals to the thinking of others is often not fully recognized. Your classroom study may be just such a source of innovation.

You will have been keeping, in a Professional Portfolio, notes from these study activities and any other evidence of your school investigations: for example, notes on an interview with colleague or a specific policy. You may want to select illustrative excerpts from this Portfolio, to demonstrate the source of your ideas in the Examinable Component. In Block 3, as in the other blocks, you will be presenting your personal position on issues, backed up by evidence of your understanding of the links between theory and practice.
Weeks 11–12: Identifying issues of school/departmental change

(20–24 hours)

The focus over the next two weeks will be on change in your institution and the broader perspective on why many innovations fail. This will include analysing a change with which you have been involved, and reflecting on the social and organizational factors.

According to Fullan, most curriculum development and educational change is not implemented in practice. In the next reading, you will find Fullan’s analysis of the many reasons for this. The assumption in exploring this issue is that it is possible to learn from past examples of change and reform (even failed ones), and to identify factors critical for success.

Reading 13

Read Fullan, Chapter 4, ‘The causes and processes of initiation’. You are asked to read the whole of the chapter this week, but begin with pages 49–58 here. Fullan characterizes change as a process with three broad phases:

Phase 1 Mobilization, adoption or initiation
Phase 2 Implementation or initial use
Phase 3 Continuation, incorporation, routinization or institutionalization

The purpose of the activity that follows (Activity 13) is for you to analyse the preparations made for a new educational change in your institution, which involved the whole school, a year group or department, and to relate it to this reading. It may seem straightforward simply to describe what happened or did not happen. However, for a deeper analysis of change it is worth asking key questions about phase one and the effect, on the intended outcomes, of the issues and factors that Fullan identifies. Fullan outlines a number of innovations to illustrate the components associated with their implementation. As you read, apply these to your own situation.

Fullan includes a wide range of references to the literature on educational change, although he does not refer specifically to ICT. He looks in detail at the Success For All programme and an Australian standards-related reform project, to identify a number of dimensions that are likely to be significant features of successful implementation. The issues he considers relate to the educational context of a number of countries.

Activity 13

Key questions surrounding initiation (2 hours)

For this activity you need to select one specific, planned change that has taken place in your school, year group or department. The change need not have been successful, nor need it relate to ICT, but it would be helpful if it were already beyond the implementation stage. Examples might be the introduction of a literacy programme, a new assessment and testing policy, performance management or bilingual policies. The change could have its roots in a national context rather than start from your classroom teaching ideas. Or it may be that a new member of staff was the agent of change.

Analyse and note down what happened at the initiation stage and who was involved. Do this in about 300 words, using the key questions given below to
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guide you. You may also describe in a few lines the local context, but do not
spend too long on description. The crucial parts of the analysis are the factors
leading up to the change, including why and how it started, and who initiated
it. We will return to what happened at the implementation stage in later
activities.

The following key questions should be used to organize your analysis:

Why was there a need for change? Was it characterized as a solution to a
pre-existing problem, or an innovation? What outcomes was the project
intending to achieve?

Who were the key players and agents of change at this initiation stage?
Who was not involved or consulted?

Where did the impetus for the initiative come from? To what extent was it
an external push versus an internal one?

When and how? What was the intended time-frame for the change?
What were the resource implications?

What was the initial response(s) from teachers to the initiative? If there
was conflict of interests, how was this managed?

Keep this analysis of change in mind for the next activity.

Activity 14

Diagram of change factors (2 hours)

Look at the Figure 4.2 in Fullan on the factors associated with the initiation of
change. Your task is to present your own diagrammatic representation of the
key factors and the key people associated with change in your institution, as
uncovered in your analysis in the previous activity.

There are no prizes for elaborate artwork here, therefore an organization chart
or simple diagram will suffice. You should assume that your audience is not
familiar with your local context and that you are presenting this diagram via
PowerPoint at a meeting or a poster session at an international conference of
other teacher-researchers.

Reading 14

Now read the rest of Fullan, Chapter 4 (pp. 58–67). As you read, list the
dilemmas that might affect the initiation phase of an innovative change.

Activity 15

Relevance, readiness and resources (2 hours)

For this activity, you can return to an initiative in your school that is linked to
ICT rather than to a broader change: for example, you could think back to the
introduction of the NOF training (professional development) in your school.

Make notes (of up to 300 words) reporting on Fullan’s view that, given the
‘right conditions’, teachers are willing to adopt change. Review your selected
initiative in terms of three of the items listed in the exemplification he gives:
‘an innovation that is clear and practical, a supportive district administration
and principal, opportunity to interact with other teachers, advocacy from the
union, and outside resource help’ (p. 60). (Please substitute the appropriate
terminology for your situation, for example ‘LEA’ rather than ‘district
administration’.). In what ways would you wish any of these preparatory
aspects to have been different, knowing what you know now?
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Remember to be clear about where your views come from (e.g. your own perspective, whole-staff evaluation) and specify your level of analysis (LEA/EA/ELB, school, department, classroom).

Reading 15

Read Fullan, Chapter 5, ‘Causes/processes of implementation and continuation’. You should read all of the chapter, concentrating especially on pp. 71–87. You will see that Fullan does not present an idealized view of everything going to plan at the implementation stage: as he says, ‘People often become clearer about their needs only when they start doing things …’ (p. 76). Change is socially complex and subject to external factors.

As you read, make notes focusing on two key themes. First, make a list of the general reasons Fullan suggests for failure of implementation. Secondly, make notes on the importance of peer relationships and collegiality. The suggestion is that part of the process of change must include the development of meanings and that, in such interaction, some misunderstandings will be inevitable. It is worth keeping detailed page references on this theme from your readings from Fullan, Craft and others in preparation for the Examinable Component.

In Chapter 6, Fullan draws attention to the powerful nature of the assumptions sometimes made about educational change. You may now find it useful to read through the list of ten ‘do’ and ‘don’t’ assumptions which he relates to successful approaches.

Activity 16

Experience of implementation (2 hours)

Post a report (approximately 200 words) on the E851 conference, of your experience of the process of implementation of the ICT initiative you selected in Activity 15, and focus on the interaction with colleagues which occurred in relation to it. Use the questions listed below as your structure, writing three or four sentences in response to each. If your report is likely to cause anxiety, simply keep it as a private analysis rather than making it available to other students. (In any case, do not identify your school.) If you do feel it is suitable for the conference, remember not to identify individuals.

- How much interaction has there been in implementing ICT professional development in your experience? What form did this take?
- To what extent did the people involved work alone or in collaboration with colleagues? Which approach do you yourself find most useful? What reasons would you give to support your preference?
- How did the person with the brief for monitoring professional development encourage the sharing of information and experiences? What else could have been done?
- If available, has the electronic conference environment been important for interaction? Why or why not?
- If there was conflict or rejection of initiatives, how was this dealt with?

Reading 16

Read ‘Achieving clarity: principle to practice’, by Françoise Fokias (in the Supplementary Reading booklet). This article is a further illustration of an implementation that did not go according to plan, this time an ICT one. You
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may want to concentrate on pages 34–7. In Part one, the author describes what was done; in Part two, she reflects on what should have been done differently with reference to models of change.

It is interesting to see that the author has learned by going back over the professional development aspect. She describes herself as an unsuccessful change agent. Her conclusion is that a purely ‘skills and knowledge’ model was not enough to make the policy work in the classroom; enthusiasm, commitment and time to try things out were also necessary: ‘My perception was that the new computers, combined with the acceptance of my policy document, would herald a profound change in IT practice for the whole school’ (p. 35), but it did not. She attributes this to her assumption ‘that change would occur as an event without negotiation or participation’ (p. 38). In her consideration of professional development, Fokias gives some thought to the ways in which her initial acceptance of what she refers to as the ‘skills and knowledge’ model came to change. She refers to the need for change agents to have ‘clarity about their own understanding’, and outlines how, for her, achieving this created meaning regarding her role. One of the ways forward for teachers is, she feels, practitioner research.

Now reread Fokias, this time considering two issues that are not fully explored by the author:

1. the contribution that acting as teacher-researcher can make to one’s own or colleagues’ professional development;
2. the extent to which the relationships between teachers need to be fostered if collegiality is to be a reality.

Activity 17

Action planning for change (2 hours)

From your reading and experience so far you will now be in a better position to actively plan for change and to anticipate some of the factors which might need extra attention. Taking a planned or possible change, note down how you would introduce it, using the following questions as your structure, since you may want to return to them in the final assessment:

- What methods of negotiation and participation could you organize in your school to involve the recipients of change in the process?
- Who would lead the introduction of the change?
- What combination of informal or formal participation strategies (e.g. conversations, staff meetings, questionnaires) would you recommend? Or would you use both types of strategy?
- Would you involve a pupil perspective?
- What sorts of evidence would it be possible for you to collect in order to evaluate the change and to add to your repertoire as an action-researcher?
Weeks 13–14: Relating issues to levels and theories of change

(20–24 hours)

The next two-week cycle of work will involve further readings on the theories of change both in relation to curriculum change and development in general, and ICT change specifically. In your reading of Fullan so far, you should have seen something of the complexity of the change process, and have noted how many factors can impact upon this over time. You will also have seen how one teacher describes the ways in which her reflections allowed her to learn from the successes and failures of putting an ICT policy into practice, when she considered some of the wider issues of staff development and personal beliefs and actions.

We will now look in more detail at the argument that the change process can change both individuals and systems. A consideration of the depth, extent and level of change is important.

Reading 17

Read ‘Professional development and educational improvement’, by Robert McCormick and Mary James (in the Supplementary Reading booklet.) This extract from their book examines the assumptions behind the history of curriculum development and in-service training. As you read, consider the in-service training you have recently been involved with and your evidence for how well it worked. Think about these assumptions, especially with reference to the distinction that Bennis, Benne and Chin (1969) make between three strategies for change in social systems:

- power-coercive
- empirical-rational
- normative-re-educative

In the examples that follow, the first two models are rejected in favour of the third. A key idea is that of a 'centre-periphery model' which distinguishes central government on the one hand, and schools and teachers on the other. The authors outline a shift away from centralized curriculum development projects in the 1970s to school-based curriculum development, moving influence over the development away from the centre to the periphery. The case for this was that as earlier models 'seemed to demonstrate that it was not sufficient to change knowledge, but necessary also to change the attitudes, values and the taken-for-granted ways of doing things' (p. 47).

The issue of how much values are changed during a change process will be considered in the next reading. The implication of this model of change is that supporting teachers through professional development is crucial. This is an argument you have met in Craft and in Block 2 which emphasized the importance of the relationship between individual development and school development.
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Reading 18

Read 'Information and communications technology, knowledge and pedagogy', by Robert McCormick and Peter Scrimshaw (in the Supplementary Reading booklet).

You read this article first in Block 2. At this point you were introduced there to the importance of different views of learning and teaching in relation to ICT. We revisit this extract now because it provides a useful building-block for the theories of change outlined in this part of the course. Change in the form of new technology will not automatically lead to more effective learning, as this analysis of classroom practice — and, in particular, of teacher knowledge — shows. To refresh your memory of the 'efficiency' and 'extension' levels of change, first skim-read pp. 18–21, keeping in mind some examples from your curriculum area.

Next read p. 21 onwards, and consider the third category of transformation. As you read, think about the practical implications at school level of promoting this type of change. First, there may be problems because assessment may not have caught up with the knowledge changes. Secondly, teachers may reject ICT if it does not match their views of learning. Thirdly, as pupils come into contact with opposing discourses, tensions and confusion may arise.

Activity 18

(1 hour)

Make notes (of approximately 100–150 words) based on your rereading of the McCormick and Scrimshaw article, using the following questions to guide you:

Do you see much transformation happening in your school already? Give details of why or why not.

Do you agree with the authors' conclusion on the tension between centralization and this type of professional development?

The future

One way to bring together all the work done so far on change and professional development is to consider some key ideas about the future of educational change, including school development, professional development and ICT. However, before we go to the future, it is worth looking at the past.

So-called 'futuristic' technologies may well be presented with the message that the change will be revolutionary and modernizing. This is especially the case when we look at the language of advertisements. With hindsight, the futuristic vision soon seems dated and unglamorous as teaching methods change. You may consider that parts of Video 4 are already dated, and that electronic whiteboards and CD-ROMs will soon be as out of date as language laboratories!
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Predicting the likely impact of technology on education is a risky business, the history of which is littered with heroic failures. Take, for example, Uzanne, quoted in Kuhn and Stannard (1996): ‘With the coming of the New Media, the need for print on paper will rapidly diminish. The day will soon arrive when the world’s literature will be available from The Automatic Library at the mere pressing of a button.’ This sounds like another World Wide Web fan, with the New Medium – except Uzanne was talking about the New Medium of wax phonograph cylinders, in a book called The End of Books published over one hundred years ago in 1894! Seymour Papert (1980), the father of LOGO, painted a vision of a society liberated by interactions with environments such as LOGO, ultimately moving away from formalised schooling to a more generalised learning culture which would permeate the home. Nearly twenty years has seen little evidence of this happening, and although turtle graphics LOGO has become very common in schools it has rarely impacted on the fundamental culture of the school or home.

(McFarlane, 1997, p. 173.)

Reading 19

Read Fullan, Chapter 16, ‘The future of educational change’. You will already have been thinking about how you personally might change your approach to professional development in future as a result of this course and your experiences. As you read this chapter, in which Fullan considers the implications for practice of both ‘accountability’ and ‘professional learning communities’, note the sections where you agree or strongly disagree with Fullan.

Fullan also believes that there is a need for schools to work with other groups in society for the wider good. Consider this in the light of the work you did in Block 2 on home–community links, and reconsider how the curriculum may be extended in the future to encourage greater involvement of parents and community in the school. Can you see any evidence of this happening already? What advantages and drawbacks can you see in greater involvement of this kind?

Fullan concludes by saying, ‘The ultimate goal of change is when people see themselves as shareholders with a stake in the success of the system as a whole, with the pursuit of meaning as the elusive key’ (p. 272).

Activity 19

Your predictions for educational change (30 minutes)

On the conference, share your predictions of the following. You are allowed to be controversial!

Which technologies will soon look dated and die a death, and which are more likely to bring deeper change?

What is your future vision of the teaching profession?

In what ways, if any, do you expect the approach to the professional development of teachers to change in the future?
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Activity 20

Final revision of your action plan (2 hours)

Return now to your revised E851 action plan. In this block you have read a number of articles and chapters which have presented different ways of thinking about change in schools. You have also used these ways of thinking to look again at what has happened in your own school. Please now revise your action plan to take account of this experience.

Weeks 15–16: Working on the Examinable Component

(20–24 hours)

The final two weeks are allocated to time that allows you to focus again on the key ideas of the course and to go back over the notes in your Professional Portfolio. Make sure that you discuss your understanding of what is expected in the Examinable Component with your tutor and tutor group. You may also find the conference a useful source of ideas. Look carefully at the marking criteria for the final assessment, and remember to be selective in the evidence you choose to include as an appendix to your assignment.

Activity 21

Review (2 hours)

The following activity is designed to help you synthesize key references to all three blocks of the course. First, go back to the aims of the course (Study Guide 1, p.5) and review the notes you made for your Professional Portfolio to identify the ‘evidence’ you will use for your Examinable Component. You may also find the feedback from your TMAs helpful.

(‘Evidence’ could be specific references to the course materials or readings which you intend to use to support your response to the Examinable Component task or which challenged your thinking or practice. ‘Evidence’ could also come from your research project, conference discussion, dialogues with your tutor or colleagues, from school documentation or from your wider educational reading around the course themes. Remember that using evidence in a focused way will be much more effective in strengthening your argument than generalized allusions to an entire text. Your readers will want to know why you selected the particular quote and how it links to the point you are making. On page 131 of the Methodology Handbook you will find a reminder on how to refer to a range of items in your written report.)

To develop your skills in investigating teaching and learning in the classroom

Here you may find it useful to consider your small-scale research project and to note the contributions it made to any changes to your practice, views or beliefs about the role of ICT in the teaching and learning context that you selected. List the contributions you feel the use of ICT made to pupils’ learning in the target subject. Outline in note form how you used – or how you might, in supportive circumstances, use – such research investigations to instigate change to any aspect of pedagogy in your school or department (i.e.
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pedagogy as delineated by McCormick and Scrimshaw in the Supplementary Reading booklet.

To develop your understanding of the nature of professional development and school development

and

To develop your skills in action planning to suit your personal and professional needs

Summarize the notes you made in relation to TMA 02 and check that you can identify clearly the 'mutually supportive, different but compatible or directly at odds' elements of your own and your school's priorities for professional development, and highlight any 'adjustments' required between the two development strands. Ensure that any changes are represented on your action plan. Note, too, how and why your personal and professional needs relating to ICT have altered (or justify their remaining the same). Link your reflections here to your readings of the course materials, key texts or the wider educational literature.

To enable you to analyse change in your institution with an awareness of the issues involved

Revisit the notes you made for Activity 16, keeping in mind the dilemmas of the initiation and implementation stages – i.e. draw on any of Fullan's eight sources affecting initiation (Fullan, p. 54), or any of his nine critical factors (p. 72, Fig 5.1). Highlight and note those of Fullan's points which you feel are most relevant to you in the light of your knowledge to date about the processes of change and your experience of some of the following:

- active initiation and participation;
- pressure and support;
- changes in behaviour and beliefs;
- the problem of ownership.

When you have finished, go to the Assessment Guide and begin work on the Examinable Component.

References


