

Planning and Identifying Professional Development



Planning and Identifying Professional Development

Timing of PD planning	3
Years of experience.....	3
Setting	4
Ways of identifying PD needs	5
Teaching experience	6
Setting	6
How accredited teachers planned their PD activities	7
Setting	8
Teaching experience	8
Summary	10

In 2015 over 100,000 NSW teachers were surveyed about their professional development experiences, preferences and needs. Almost 12,000 teachers responded to the survey. Among other things, teachers were asked how they identified and planned their PD. An additional question was targeted specifically at accredited teachers to determine other factors that influenced their PD planning. There were 8920 responses to the first questions, and 4768 responses to the question targeted at accredited teachers.

Timing of PD planning

Teachers most frequently planned when they found something that interested them or by term or semester.

When teachers were asked about the timing of their PD planning, one third of teachers responded that they planned their PD when they found something that interested them. Almost another third (31%) planned by term by term or semester by semester. Of the remainder, 9% planned 12 months or more in advance and 12% planned according to their maintenance of accreditation. Approximately 4% responded that they have not considered planning their PD (Table 1).

Table 1 Timing of planning for PD

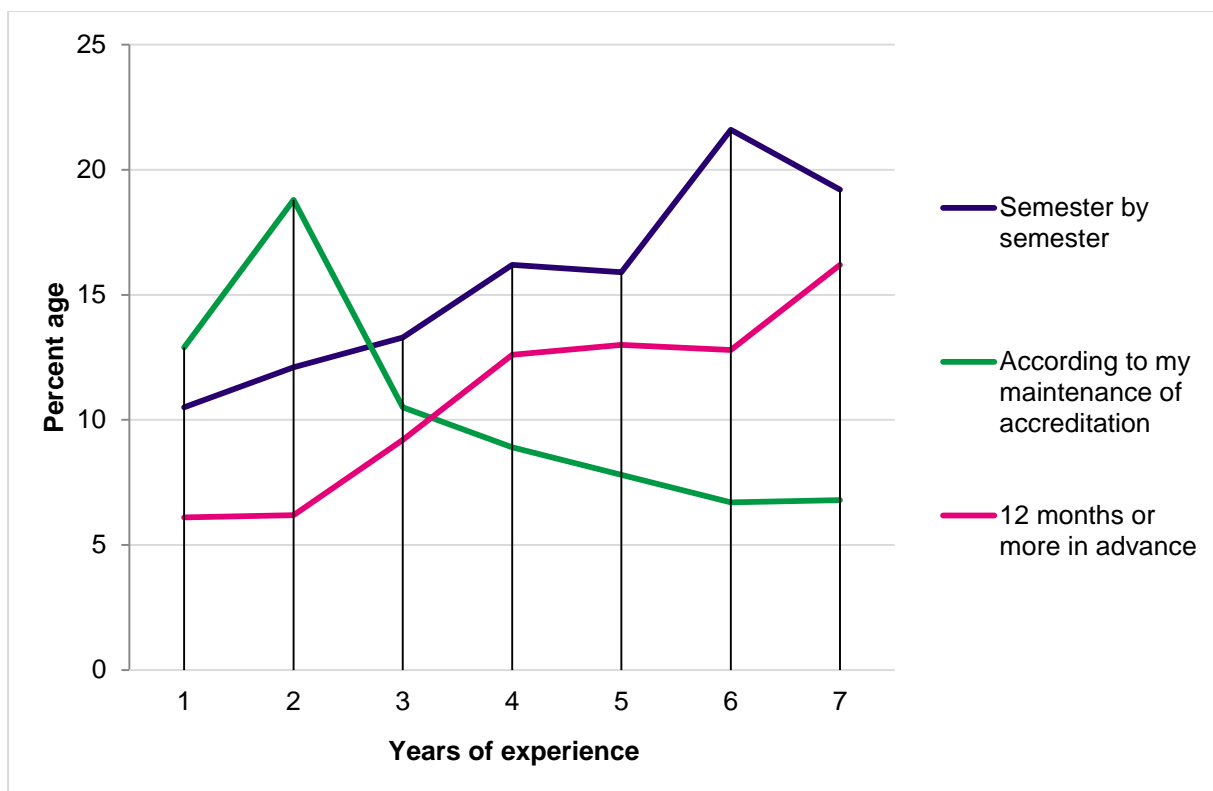
Option	n=	Percent %
If/when I find something that interests me	2835	33.1
Term by term, as relevant	1428	16.7
Semester by semester, as relevant	1192	13.9
According to my maintenance of accreditation	1051	12.3
12 months or more in advance	788	9.2
In between work commitments and other factors	599	7.0
I have not considered planning my PD	348	4.1
As I am directed	312	3.6

Years of experience

At every level of experience (from 1-5 to more than 30 years) teachers most often planned PD when something interested them.

However, more experienced teachers engaged in more forward planning. This was evident in increased semester by semester planning (19% for teachers with more than 30 years of experience compared to 11% for teachers with 1-5 years of experience), and planning 12 months or more in advance (more than 30 years 16% and 1-5 years 6%). While less experienced teachers less often planned their PD in advance, they more frequently planned according to their maintenance of accreditation requirements (1-5 years 13% to more than 30 years 7%). It is notable that 7% of the least experienced teachers (1-5 years of experience) indicated that they had not considered planning their PD (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Timing of planning for PD by years of experience



Setting

Nearly half (48%) of early childhood teachers, 36% of secondary teachers, and 28% of primary teachers planned their PD when they found something that interested them.

Early childhood teachers were less inclined than primary or secondary teachers to plan their PD by semester (9% compared to primary, 15% and secondary 14%) or according to their maintenance of accreditation requirements (6% compared to 13% both for primary and secondary teachers Table 2). The latter finding is unsurprising given that the survey was conducted in 2015 prior to the requirement for some of the teachers in this category (those who work in early childhood education and care settings) to become engaged with the accreditation process.

Table 2 Timing of planning for PD by teaching setting

Option	EC (n=562)	Primary (n=3045)	Secondary (n=4344)
If/when I find something that interests me	47.5	27.5	35.6
Term by term, as relevant	15.8	20.8	14.1
Semester by semester, as relevant	8.5	15.0	13.5
According to my maintenance of accreditation	5.7	13.4	12.8
12 months or more in advance	9.3	7.6	9.4
In between work commitments and other factors	6.8	6.0	7.8
I have not considered planning my PD	4.4	5.1	3.4

Option	EC (n=562)	Primary (n=3045)	Secondary (n=4344)
As I am directed	2.0	4.6	3.3

Ways of identifying PD needs

Teachers were provided with ten options and asked to nominate the ways in which they decided their PD needs. For each of the options they were required to respond on a five-point scale with categories never, rarely, occasionally, mostly, and always. For the purposes of this paper the responses 'never' and 'rarely' were combined, as were the responses 'mostly' and 'always'. The results have been expressed as percentages.

Teachers most often responded that they decided on their PD needs by using reflective and responsive practices.

Nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents mostly or always identified their PD by reflecting on their own classroom experiences, 73% of teachers indicated they responded to issues that affect their current practice/role, and 60% reflected on their student performance and achievement data to identify their PD needs. It is notable that teachers often responded rarely or never to determining their PD needs through a whole school strategic perspective (28%) and through feedback from performance and development processes (29%). Further investigation is needed to determine whether these findings relate to particular groups (eg, casual teachers). More than half the respondents (53%) said that they rarely or never work with a mentor (Table 3).

Table 3 Ways of identifying PD needs (n=8920)

Option	Never/rarely	Occasionally	Mostly/always
I reflect on my own classroom experiences	6.0	19.7	74.2
I respond to emerging issues that affect my current practice/role	7.0	20.2	72.8
I reflect on student performance and achievement data	13.7	26.6	59.8
I explore ideas through research or professional reading	19.9	36.0	44.1
I work through networks and/or professional associations	23.9	32.7	43.3
I identify priorities through a whole school strategic perspective	28.3	31.6	40.1
I work in conjunction with friends and colleagues	26.5	35.3	38.2
I use feedback from my performance and development processes	29.3	34.9	35.8

Option	Never/rarely	Occasionally	Mostly/always
I engage with the needs of my community & its leaders	31.7	34.2	34.1
I work with a mentor	53.0	28.7	18.3

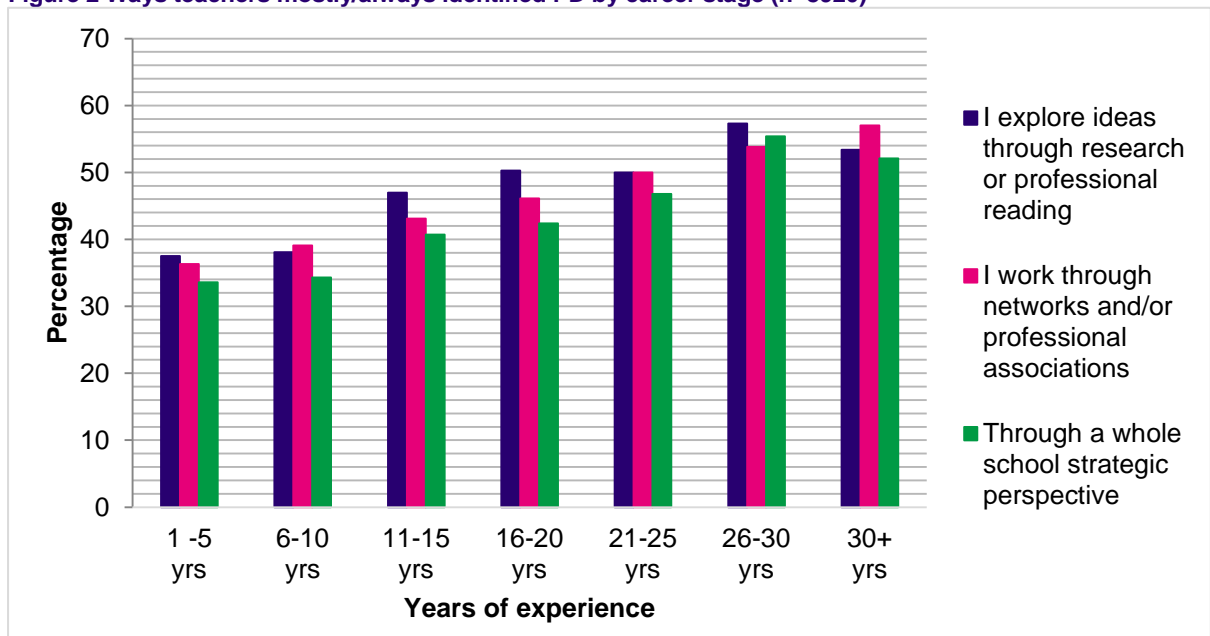
Teaching experience

Engagement with PD increased with years of teaching experience.

For example, only 38% of teachers with 1-5 years of experience said they mostly or always explored ideas through research or professional reading but more than half the teachers with 26 or more years' experience engaged in this activity (26-30 years 57%, more than 30 years 53%). Thirty six percent of teachers with 1-5 years of experience engaged through networks and/or professional associations compared with 54% of teachers with 26-30 years' experience and 57% of teachers with more than 30 years' experience. Thirty four percent of teachers with 1-5 years of experience identified priorities through a whole school strategic perspective compared with 55% of teachers with 26-30 years' experience and 52% of teachers with more than 30 years' experience. (Figure 2)

Less experienced teachers (25%) used a mentor more often than more experienced teachers (eg, more than 30 years' experience 14%).

Figure 2 Ways teachers mostly/always identified PD by career stage (n=8920)



Setting

Early childhood teachers responded in different ways to primary or secondary teachers.

Compared to primary or secondary teachers, early childhood teachers more often responded to emerging issues that affect their current practice/role (82% compared to primary 74% and secondary 71%), explored ideas through research or professional reading (59% compared to primary 44% and secondary 41%), worked through networks and/or professional associations (53% compared to primary 38% and secondary 45%), used feedback from their performance and development processes (48% compared to primary 39% and secondary 32%), and engaged with the needs of their community and its leaders (44% compared to primary 36% and secondary 30%).

However, early childhood teachers reflected on student performance and achievement data less often than their primary and secondary counterparts (46% compared to 66% and 58%, respectively). As noted above, primary teachers (38%) identified PD through networks and/or professional associations less often than secondary teachers (45%), who in turn used networks and/or professional associations less than early childhood teachers (53%). Secondary teachers nominated 'mostly' or 'always' less than teachers in the other settings on all other options. (Table 4)

Table 4 Ways teachers from different settings mostly/always identified PD

Option	Early Childhood n=586	Primary n=3176	Secondary n=4506
I reflect on my own classroom experiences	75.8	78.1	73.1
I respond to emerging issues that affect my current practice/role	82.0	73.8	70.7
I reflect on student performance and achievement data	45.8	65.5	57.8
I explore ideas through research or professional reading	59.4	43.5	40.7
I work through networks and/or professional associations	53.4	38.0	45.1
I identify priorities through a whole school strategic perspective	38.6	46.1	36.4
I work in conjunction with friends and colleagues	42.6	40.8	36.0
I use feedback from my performance and development processes	47.8	39.4	31.7
I engage with the needs of my community & its leaders	44.0	36.3	30.2
I work with a mentor	18.6	22.3	15.9

How accredited teachers planned their PD activities

Accredited teachers were provided with ten options, most of which related to regulatory requirements, and asked to indicate how often they used each of the various methods to plan their PD (never, rarely, occasionally or mostly). Accredited teachers most often used knowledge of the accreditation requirements (53% mostly and 31% occasionally), used the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST 52% mostly and 30% occasionally),

balanced QTC Registered PD activities with teacher identified activities (43% mostly and 33% occasionally), focussed on addressing particular descriptors from the APST (39% mostly and 36% occasionally), chose QTC Registered PD linked to their accredited career stage (37% mostly and 35% occasionally), and worked with colleagues to identify their professional learning needs (36% mostly and 41% occasionally).

Setting

Accredited primary and secondary teachers planned in similar ways.

There was little difference in most of the responses of primary and secondary teachers, however primary teachers more frequently worked with colleagues to identify their PD needs (48% compared to secondary 41%) and used the APST more often (55% compared to secondary 50%). Interestingly 19% of both groups responded that they placed little emphasis on specific accreditation requirements (Table 5).

Table 5 Ways teachers from different settings mostly planned their PD

	Primary n=1841	Secondary n=2598
I use knowledge of the accreditation requirements	53.7	53.0
I use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers	55.2	49.8
I work with colleagues to identify my PD needs	47.8	41.4
I balance QTC Registered PD activities with Teacher Identified activities	44.4	43.0
I focus on addressing particular descriptors from the APST	41.2	36.9
I choose QTC Registered PD linked to my accredited career stage	36.2	38.0
I select only QTC Registered courses	22.1	26.3
I place little emphasis on specific accreditation requirements	18.6	19.3
I choose QTC Registered PD above my accredited career stage	11.3	11.5
My professional commitment activities determine the nature of my PD (HA/Lead Teachers)	25.5	26.3

Teaching experience

Across all levels of teaching experience, the two preferred ways of planning PD were to use knowledge of the accreditation requirements and the Australian Professional Standard for Teaching.

In these two preferred options there was a peak in 'mostly' responses among teachers with 26-30 years' experience, that is, in use of knowledge of the accreditation requirements (1-25

years 52-54%, 26-30 years 61%) and use of the APST (26-30 years 65%, with all other groups 56% or less). The third option for all groups was working with colleagues to identify PD needs. For this option 50% of the least experienced teachers (1-5 years) reported they mostly used this method, followed by the most experienced teachers (26-30 years 49% and more than 30 years 47%, while teachers from the other groups use this method less frequently (from 42-45%).

The order of preference for other options was balancing QTC registered PD activities with teacher identified activities, focus on addressing particular descriptors from the APST, and choosing QTC registered PD linked to my accredited career stage (Table 6).

Table 6 Ways in which accredited teachers with different levels of teaching experience mostly plan their PD

	Years of teaching experience						
	1-5 n=108 7	6-10 n=233 0	11-15 n=567	16-20 n=236	21-25 n=193	26-30 n=136	30+ n=219
I use knowledge of the accreditation requirements	53.3	52.1	53.4	53.0	54.4	61.0	58.0
I use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers	54.0	49.6	49.2	53.4	54.4	64.7	55.7
I work with colleagues to identify my PL needs	50.0	51.5	42.7	41.9	44.6	49.3	47.0
I balance QTC Registered PD activities with Teacher Identified activities	38.5	44.2	43.4	39.8	46.6	47.8	45.7
I focus on addressing particular descriptors from the APST	35.1	36.8	36.2	44.9	44.6	55.1	44.7
I choose QTC Registered PD linked to my accredited career stage	29.3	37.8	37.2	30.5	34.2	35.3	38.8
I select only QTC Registered courses	22.4	25.5	24.5	21.6	24.4	25.0	17.8
I place little emphasis on specific accreditation requirements	18.7	18.5	18.7	22.0	18.1	20.6	19.6
I choose QTC Registered PD above my accredited career stage	11.2	10.2	13.4	11.4	18.1	15.4	13.2
My professional commitment activities determine the nature of my PD (HA/Lead Teachers)	21.3	24.2	27.9	33.9	37.8	47.8	36.5

Summary

- One third of teachers responded that they planned their PD when they found something that interested them. Approximately another third (31%) planned by term or semester. Of the remainder, 9% planned a year in advance and 12% planned according to their maintenance of accreditation requirements. Approximately 4% responded that they had not considered planning their PD.
- Experienced teachers engaged in more forward planning than less experienced teachers, who more frequently planned according to their maintenance of accreditation. Seven per cent of teachers with 1-5 years of experience indicated that they had not considered planning their PD.
- Early childhood teachers planned their PD when they found something that interested them more frequently than primary and secondary teachers.
- Teachers most often used reflective and responsive practices to decide on their PD requirements by, for example, reflecting on their own classroom experiences. More than half the respondents indicated that they never or rarely worked with a mentor.
- Engagement in all methods of PD identification increased with teaching experience. A notable exception was the use of a mentor, which, as expected, was lowest for the most experienced teachers.
- Primary teachers identified their PD differently from early childhood and secondary teachers, that is, they identified PD through networks and/or professional associations less often than secondary and early childhood teachers.
- When accredited teachers were asked how they planned their PD, they most often responded that they used knowledge of accreditation requirements and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. They also worked with colleagues to identify PD needs, balanced QTC registered PD activities with teacher identified activities, and chose QTC registered PD linked to their accredited career stage.