

# What counts as CPD?

■ Paul Denley

*For many teachers of science, there is great variation in the quantity and quality of continuing professional development (CPD) in which they are able to take part and often little co-ordination to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the range of provision for them to be able to take advantage of it.*

In many professions, membership of a professional body is essential to be allowed to practice. There is usually a requirement for members to keep some sort of record or log of their ongoing professional development in order to maintain their registration. Sometimes, different activities are given a points rating, or hours spent on those activities are added up to give a minimum total for a year.

In teaching (and perhaps particularly in science teaching), there is no such system, but there is clearly a need to keep up with the subject and how it is best taught, as well as an expectation that professional development needs to be a continuous process that begins

with initial teaching training and extends throughout the career.

In order to provide some sort of professional recognition equivalent to that associated with other professions, ASE was awarded the licence by the Science Council to award Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach) in 2007. After being accepted for CSciTeach, there is a requirement to keep a professional development record, which is periodically checked in order to maintain registration. Although there is no attempt to quantify activities or suggest any minimum amounts of time spent on CPD in any one year, the approach to defining what sort of activities 'count' as CPD is quite broad.

In the past, the term 'in-service training', or INSET, described the only organised form of professional development available to most teachers. This usually involved a 'course' of some sort, usually off-site and of short duration. Although the content of such courses might have been very good, it was very much left up to the teacher to take back ideas and materials and make sense of them in their own setting. Often, despite the very best intentions, this meant that there was minimal

impact on teacher practice and, perhaps more importantly, on student learning. Although courses still exist, much more attention is given today to the impact of such activities. For example, a course might extend over a period of time with requirements that teachers try things out in the classroom between sessions and share good practice as part of the programme.

However, the change from talking about INSET and using the term CPD instead suggests a different way of looking at the range of ways in which professional development takes place and may encourage us to think about what forms of professional development are particularly appropriate and effective for us.

The concept map shown here attempts to show the range of CPD opportunities available to teachers of science<sup>1</sup>. One feature that is perhaps striking in the map is that the 'formal' possibilities make up one area, but that there are also others – the 'informal' and the 'incidental', which might be just as significant (or even more so) in terms of impact as activities that have been purposefully designed for professional development. The 'online' area is still developing and, although the idea of online courses might not yet be very advanced, opportunities for social networking and using online resources such as *YouTube* can be very powerful in getting ideas and entering into professional discussions about the subject and how best to teach it.

As part of maintaining a CPD record for CSciTeach, it is important not only to log activities, but also to consider their impact, firstly directly on the individual's practice, then on others who might be colleagues, or on learners. This is more challenging. We are sure many readers will remember attending CPD sessions about which they gave a very positive evaluation at the end but from which there was little actual impact. Perhaps

## CSciTeach and RSciTech – New awards

ASE is proud to announce the following awards, granted since May 2016:

### CSciTeach:

Andrew Ward  
Tracy Tyrrell  
Joanna Pellereau  
Emma Winter  
Clarysly Deller

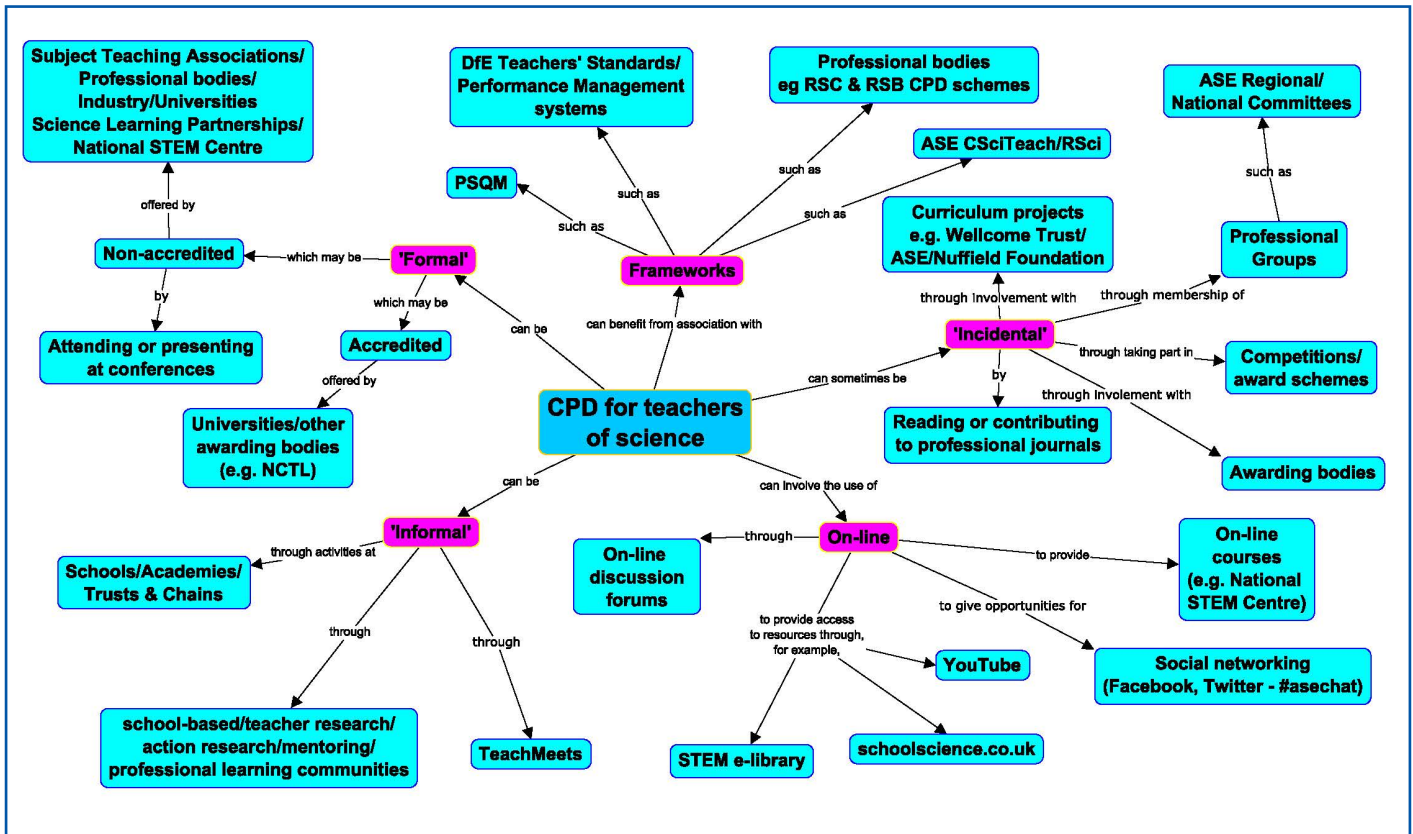
### RSciTech:

Margaret Owen Jones  
Ruth Thompson Heath  
Amy Davis  
Stephen Metson

**CSciTeach**  
Chartered Science Teacher

**RSciTech**  
Registered Science Technician

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the most effective CPD combines several different areas on the map – a course combined with online support and opportunities to work with colleagues back in school? This sort of integration of different forms of CPD is something that individual teachers can do, but it would be more effectively done together with others in the same school or department. It would be even more effective if resources for CPD were available to support the process. It is not a good reason for teachers to be attracted to particular sorts of CPD just because they do not have resource requirements.

As mentioned at the start of this article, there is an expectation in all professions that CPD is a part of the life of a professional and that, as

professionals, we have at least some degree of responsibility for our professional development. That means not only taking part in CPD activities, but also reflecting on their effectiveness and evaluating their impact on our practice and on others.

So, why not use this map as a way of reviewing your own professional development? Think about the past year – how many CPD activities have you taken part in? How did they change or influence your practice? What evidence can you present to show their impact on your practice and that of other colleagues and your learners? What was most effective for you? How could that best be supported? How can you work with others to take advantage of sharing and collaboration in your CPD?

Obviously we would also encourage you to think about registration to be a Chartered Science Teacher or Registered Scientist. The framework offered gives some formality to recognising your professional standing and the part played by professional development within that. Further information can be found on the ASE website (<http://www.ase.org.uk/professional-development/>).

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<sup>1</sup> The map is developed from one originally published in 2006 (Bishop, K. & Denley, P., 'Science Learning Centres and governmental policy for continuing professional development (CPD) in England', *Journal of In-service Education*, 32, (1), 85–102). Comment and suggestions for additions are welcome (contact author at p.denley@bath.ac.uk).