



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NOVICE TEACHERS IN NUKUS, UZBEKISTAN: EVIDENCE FROM A MIXED-METHODS FIELD STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an empirical analysis of the influence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on the teaching performance of novice English language teachers in Nukus, Uzbekistan, using data drawn from a recent mixed-methods field study. The study combined a structured survey of 50 novice teachers (1–3 years of experience) with semi-structured interviews of five purposively selected participants. Quantitative analysis shows high engagement in CPD activities (70% of respondents in the past year) and favourable self-reported impacts on pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and teacher confidence. Workshops (56%), online courses (40%) and conferences (36%) were the most attended formats. Time constraints, limited access and financial costs emerged as the primary barriers to CPD engagement. Thematic analysis of interviews reveals that CPD participation catalysed pedagogical shifts (project-based learning, technology integration, student-centred methods), increased student engagement, and strengthened teachers' professional agency, though institutional support remained uneven. The paper situates these findings within international literature on induction, mentoring and CPD, and provides policy and practice recommendations tailored to the Uzbek context.

Introduction

High-quality teaching is a central determinant of student learning outcomes, and the early career phase of a teacher's professional life is particularly consequential for the development of classroom practice and long-term retention. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is widely recognised as a major pathway for supporting novice teachers through the transition from preservice study to independent classroom practice.



In contexts undergoing rapid curricular and policy change, such as Uzbekistan, CPD that is sustained, contextually relevant and scaffolded via mentoring and induction can contribute to both teacher competence and retention. This article reports detailed findings from a mixed-methods field study conducted in Nukus, Uzbekistan, and discusses implications for CPD design and policy in similar contexts.

Literature Review

Research on early-career teacher development has consistently emphasised the importance of sustained, practice-embedded CPD as a mechanism for improving instructional quality and reducing attrition. Ingersoll (2003) reframed teacher shortages as an issue of high turnover rather than inadequate supply, arguing that policy attention should shift toward retention through induction and professional learning. Subsequent analyses confirm that early-career teachers are particularly vulnerable to leaving the profession if they lack structured support during their first three years (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Building on this perspective, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) demonstrated that CPD initiatives which are ongoing, collaborative and contextually relevant produce stronger improvements in teacher knowledge and classroom practice than one-off workshops. Their global survey highlighted the effectiveness of professional learning communities, peer observation and coaching, especially for novice teachers who are still consolidating pedagogical skills. More recent reviews (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017; OECD, 2021) reinforce these findings, showing that system-level supports—such as protected time, mentoring frameworks and alignment between pre-service curricula and induction—are critical to making CPD work for early-career teachers.

Mentoring and induction programmes emerge as central pillars of CPD for novices. Hobson et al. (2009) reported that well-designed mentoring relationships not only transmit classroom management strategies but also support the development of a professional identity and reduce feelings of isolation. Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) meta-analysis found positive effects of induction and mentoring on teacher retention, instructional practice and, in some cases, student achievement. Recent empirical work continues to underline the value of multi-layered support structures; for instance, Pogodzinski et al. (2019) show that novices who participate in structured mentoring coupled with collaborative planning time report greater self-efficacy and are more likely to remain in teaching.

Methodological innovations have also advanced understanding of CPD impact. Singer and Willett (2003) introduced applied longitudinal data analysis as a way to model change in teacher practices over time and assess how CPD influences professional growth trajectories. This approach has been taken up in several recent studies examining novice teachers' learning curves across induction years (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). These designs move beyond cross-sectional surveys to capture causal dynamics and sustainability of CPD effects.

The political and policy dimensions of CPD are equally important. Day and Sachs (2004) argue that professional development cannot be understood solely as a technical process of skill acquisition but must be situated within broader questions of teacher



empowerment, professionalism and agency. In centralised systems, novice teachers' opportunities to shape their own learning are often constrained by rigid curricula and accountability regimes. Effective CPD therefore needs to be not only content-rich but also autonomy-enhancing, offering early-career teachers opportunities to exercise professional judgement and engage in inquiry-based learning.

Finally, the literature provides widely cited design principles for effective professional development. Desimone (2011) identified five core features—content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration and collective participation—that predict stronger impacts on teacher knowledge and practice. Ingvarson et al. (2005) extended this framework by analysing contextual factors such as school leadership, collaborative culture and external incentives that shape how CPD translates into classroom change. International evidence from the OECD's TALIS survey (2021) shows that novice teachers who report access to CPD aligned with these features also report higher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Together, this body of research underscores that CPD for novice teachers is most effective when it is: (1) integrated with induction and mentoring; (2) aligned with both pre-service preparation and school priorities; (3) sustained over time with opportunities for active learning and reflection; and (4) situated within supportive institutional and policy environments. These findings provide the conceptual foundation for the present study of CPD experiences among novice English teachers in Uzbekistan.

Methods

A mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected via a structured online questionnaire administered to fifty novice English language teachers working in secondary schools in Nukus (defined here as teachers with between one and three years of classroom experience). The questionnaire comprised four sections: demographic information; CPD participation and formats; perceptions of CPD impact (Likert-scale items); and barriers/facilitators. The instrument incorporated both closed and open items; Cronbach's alpha for the Likert-scale items was reported as 0.80, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five purposively sampled participants selected to reflect variation in CPD engagement and school contexts. Interviews focused on motivations for CPD participation, specific CPD experiences deemed impactful, changes in teaching practice and student engagement, barriers to participation, and suggestions for improvement. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple inferential procedures (frequencies, percentages, means); qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and illustrative examples. Where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive account of CPD influence.

Results

Quantitative findings

The quantitative survey (n = 50) yields descriptive statistics about CPD participation, preferred formats, perceived impacts, and reported barriers. Key indicators from the survey are summarised in Tables 1–3 and Figures 1–2.

Table 1. Demographic summary (N = 50)



| Characteristic | Count | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Female | 38 | 76% |
| Male | 12 | 24% |
| Years of experience | 1-3 (all participants) | 100% (≤ 3 years) |

Table 2. CPD participation and types (N = 50)

| CPD Variable | Count | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Participants who engaged in CPD in past year | 35 | 70% |
| Workshops | 28 | 56% |
| Online courses | 20 | 40% |
| Conferences | 18 | 36% |
| Webinars | 12 | 24% |
| Peer collaboration | 15 | 30% |

Table 3. Reported barriers to CPD engagement (N = 50)

| Barrier | Count | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Lack of time | 15 | 30% |
| Limited access to quality CPD | 12 | 24% |
| Financial constraints | 8 | 16% |
| Institutional obstacles (e.g. time off denied) | 5 | 10% |

Figure 1. CPD formats attended (counts).

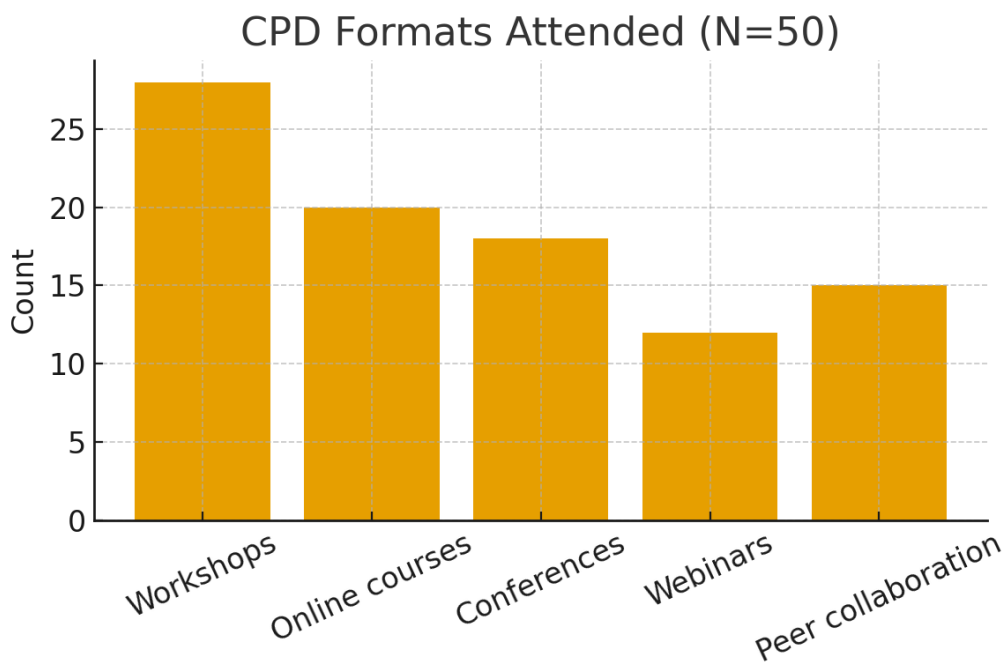
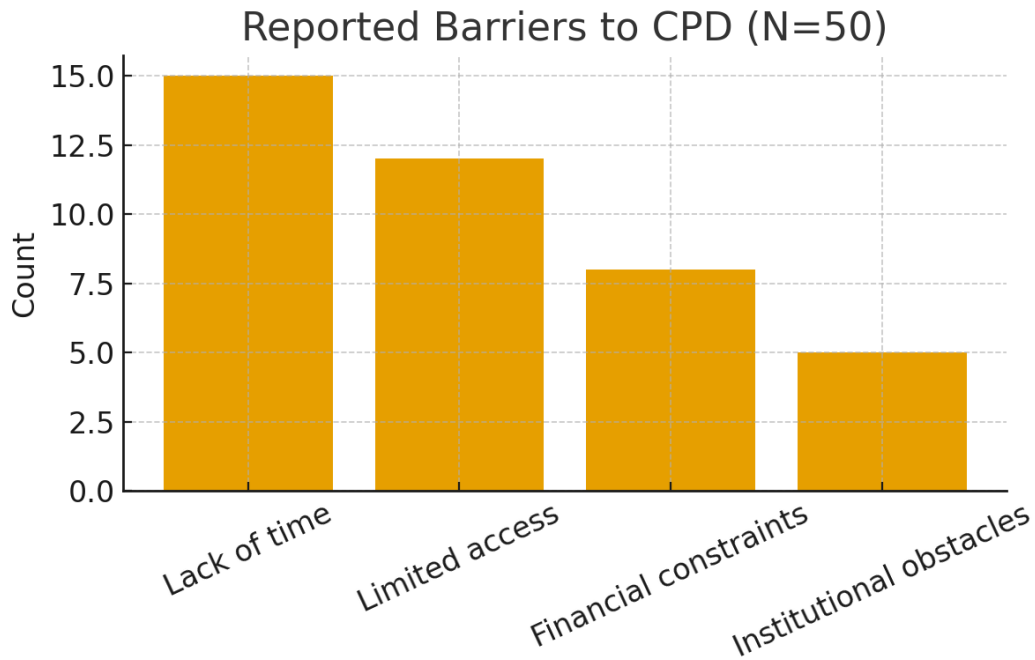


Figure 2. Barriers to CPD participation (counts).



Qualitative findings

Semi-structured interviews with five novice teachers yielded rich descriptions of CPD experiences, perceived impacts and barriers. Thematic analysis identified five principal themes: (1) pedagogical transformation, (2) technology integration, (3) increases in student engagement, (4) barriers to participation, and (5) preferences for CPD formats and institutional supports.

| Theme | Illustrative finding / paraphrased example |
|------------------------------|---|
| Pedagogical transformation | Teachers reported adopting project-based learning and student-centered activities after workshops. |
| Technology integration | Online courses led teachers to incorporate digital tools and interactive tasks into lessons. |
| Student engagement | Teachers observed higher participation and quality of student work following CPD-informed changes. |
| Barriers | Time, cost, and institutional resistance limited participation for some teachers. |
| Preferred formats & supports | Teachers favoured a blend of workshops and online courses, and recommended school-sponsored CPD and mentorship. |

Selected paraphrased illustrative excerpts from interview data (anonymised):

- 'A workshop on inclusive practices helped me design tasks that all students can access.'
- 'An online course on digital tools changed how I design speaking activities.'
- 'When I started using project-based work, students became more motivated and their work improved.'



Discussion

The mixed-methods evidence indicates that CPD participation is associated with self-reported gains in pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and confidence among novice English teachers. The predominance of workshops and online courses mirrors global trends in CPD formats, while barriers such as time and cost are consistent with findings from international reviews. The qualitative accounts corroborate the quantitative patterns and provide plausible mechanisms—mentoring, hands-on activities and opportunities for reflection—through which CPD influences practice.

From a policy perspective, the data suggest three priorities for strengthening CPD and early-career teacher support in similar transitional contexts: (1) develop and fund sustained induction and mentoring structures; (2) provide flexible, affordable CPD modalities (blended learning; school-based workshops); and (3) build institutional incentives and protected time so that novice teachers can apply learning without excessive workload strain.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the quantitative sample is limited to a single city (Nukus), which constrains generalisability. Second, the analysis relies primarily on self-reported measures of CPD influence rather than objective classroom observation metrics or student achievement data. Third, interview sample size is small (n=5), limiting the breadth of qualitative perspectives. These limitations point to the value of larger-scale longitudinal studies combining classroom observation, student outcomes and more extensive sampling across regions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for policymakers and practitioners include: (1) institutionalise multi-year induction programmes with trained mentors; (2) subsidise or provide low-cost online CPD modules to increase accessibility; (3) schedule protected time for collaborative lesson planning and peer observation; (4) create school-based CPD resource repositories and mentoring rosters; and (5) commission longitudinal evaluation of pre-service reform graduates to measure sustained impacts on practice and retention.

Conclusion

This article synthesises quantitative and qualitative data from a recent mixed-methods field study in Nukus to show that CPD plays a positive role in novice English teachers' professional development, pedagogical change and perceived student engagement. Addressing structural barriers—time, cost, and institutional support—will strengthen CPD uptake and translate training into classroom practice. Policymakers, teacher educators and school leaders should prioritise coherent CPD pathways that combine induction, mentoring and flexible learning modalities.

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