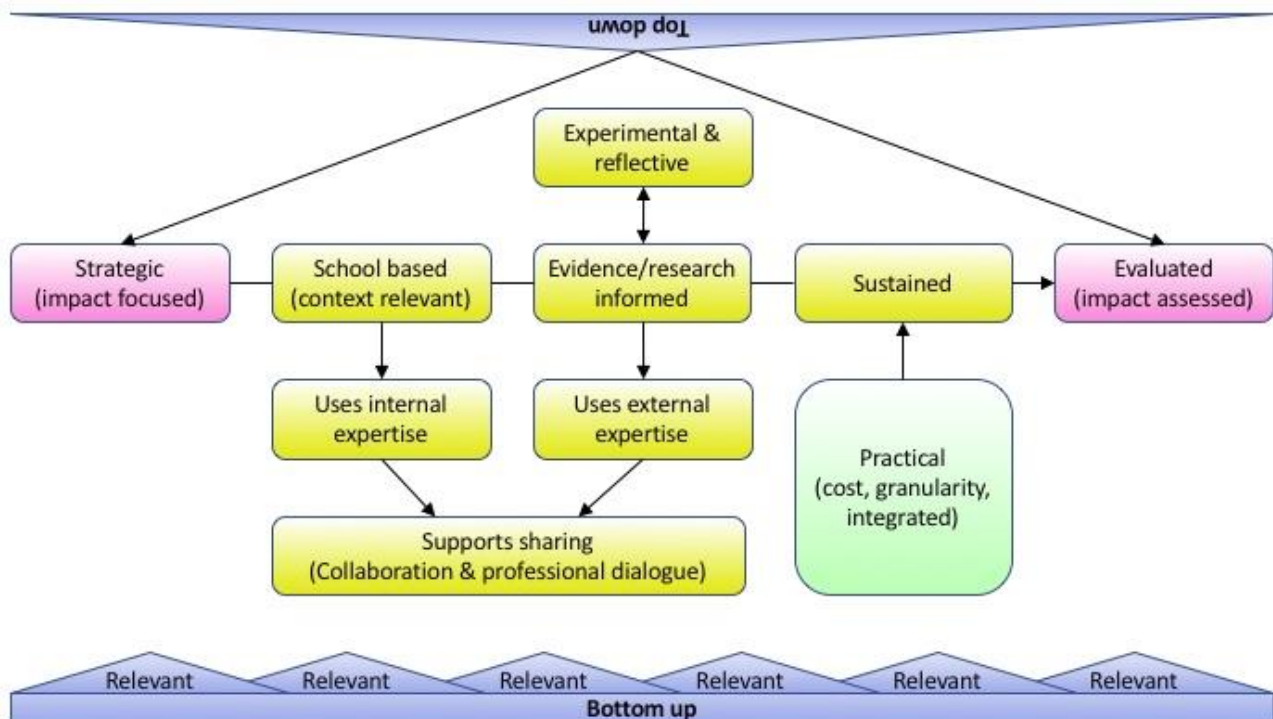


## Characteristics of effective CPD

Effective professional development (PD) - professional learning if you prefer - is critical to maintaining and enhancing practice (and thus learning) in schools. However, the most common forms of PD for teachers tend not to be effective - in the sense of leading to positive changes in practice which lead to improvements in young people's learning. This begs the question - what does effective PD look like?

**Figure 1 Characteristics of effective PD**



Way back in 2014 [Fiona Henry](#)<sup>1</sup> and I wrote [a paper reflecting on this question](#)<sup>2</sup>. The key characteristics of effective PD which we identified then (see Figure 1 above) haven't changed. They include PD being:

- top down - so that it is strategic and impact focused (involving the senior management team, linking with the school development plan, and being integrated with the school's systems and processes);
- school based so that it is context relevant (for example in terms of using resources that are available for teacher to use in their practice);
- informed by external expertise as well as recognising and valuing the expertise of school staff;
- experimental & reflective (valuing calculated risk taking, learning from mistakes as well as things that go well, and making tacit knowledge explicit);
- collaborative so that staff learn with and from each other;

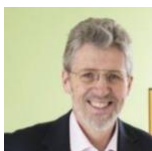
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/fiona-henry-6651b227/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wje.v4n2p12>

- evidence/research informed to learn from the wider community and avoid 'obvious mistakes/dead ends';
- sustained so that there is time for it to impact on practice and enhance young people's learning (which ultimately is the purpose of education);
- evaluated (in relation to planned impact) so that it's cost-effectiveness is clear and future investment and professional development needs can be justified;
- practical - in the terms of cost (both financial and staff time). This includes being at the right level of granularity to integrate with teachers' work;
- bottom up so that it is perceived as being relevant and valuable to the staff involved, including building upon initiatives that emerge from teachers' personal interests and networks.

We analysed a range of different approaches to professional learning, such things as [TeachMeets](#)<sup>3</sup>, [personal learning networks](#)<sup>4</sup> (PLNs), and subject community websites as well as more traditional courses, conferences and workshops. We concluded that the most effective form of professional learning involved the school becoming a learning organisation - within which staff were supported in being practitioner researchers (but the value of practitioner research is the focus of another blog post which I have yet to write!).

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Author: Peter Twining

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<sup>3</sup> [http://edfutures.net/New\\_Models\\_of\\_CPD#TeachMeets](http://edfutures.net/New_Models_of_CPD#TeachMeets)

<sup>4</sup> [http://edfutures.net/New\\_Models\\_of\\_CPD#Personal\\_Learning\\_Networks](http://edfutures.net/New_Models_of_CPD#Personal_Learning_Networks)

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