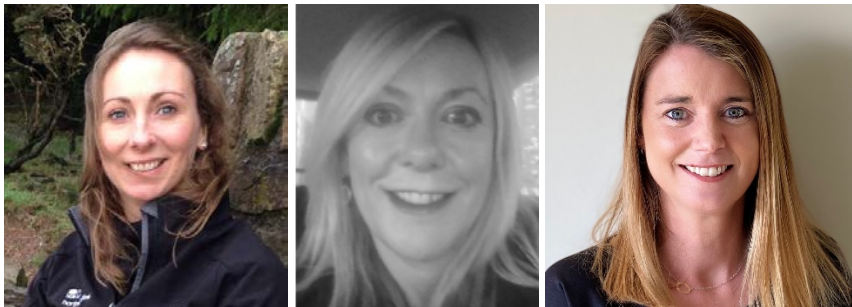


Title of Research Project: I Want to Break Free - Breaking Down the Barriers to CPD in the 21st Century Second Level School

Researchers: Katie Chapple, Marinella Raftery, and Norma Lenihan



Contact Details: Katiechapple78@gmail.com

Relevant key words: CPD; Voluntary CPD; Barriers to CPD; Lifelong Learning; Teacher Development

Summary:

This descriptive research engaged with secondary school teachers to uncover what motivates and discourages them from engaging with voluntary Continued Professional Development (CPD). Participants (n.= 64) from a variety of settings engaged with an online anonymous survey to reveal their own views on why they did or did not engage with voluntary CPD. In addition to the survey, one director of an Education Centre was interviewed to glean the perspective of the delivery of CPD.

This project formally began in March 2020 but just as the data began to be collected, Covid 19 sent the country into a lockdown. When the project was re-started six months later, the world of CPD had drastically changed with many teachers engaging with online CPD and education centres changing their methods of delivery.

96% of participants had taken part in voluntary CPD citing upskilling as the most important expertise they gained, with resources, collaboration, confidence, understanding, and promotion being cited also. With regard to barriers, participants cited time as the greatest factor, followed by the feeling of exhaustion, family commitments, cost, and location. In terms of solutions, participants suggested that they be given time in lieu or for the CPD to be held during the school day as motivational factors. Participants reported having a thirst for CPD acknowledgement, whether financial, promotional, or time in lieu, and it is considered that these factors would help break down barriers to CPD.

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