

Case Study

Enhancing the effectiveness of CPD with peer-led observation and development

...giving the space and freedom to teachers to learn and develop together...



discover. develop. share.

Pates Grammar School, designated in the second cohort of teaching schools, is using IRIS Connect to enhance the effectiveness of CPD, develop learning conversations and embed peer observation into everyday practice.

If you were asked five years ago what CPD is, what would you have said?

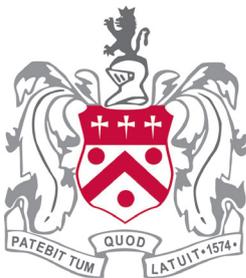
This is the question Russell Bowen, Assistant Head at Pates Grammar School posed, to delegates at the Outstanding and Beyond Conference in March. The overriding response was “going on a course” or “attending a training day”. Russell highlighted that five years ago teachers would never have said “talking to my colleagues about my job”.

Russell and the senior leadership team at Pates recognised that this was something that needed to change. In their drive to continually improve teaching and learning they wanted to go beyond traditional CPD, listen to the research and do what works. As Russell said, “Learning is doing, not just sitting and receiving pearls of wisdom. What we think of childrens learning should also apply to teachers learning”.

“At Pates we are trying to set teachers free to be masters of their own destiny and try things out, providing them with a framework to experiment and understand the effect of the things they’ve tried”. This ambition and commitment to collaborative CPD is why Pates adopted IRIS Connect. They are now looking to extend their community of practice to collaborate and share expertise with surrounding schools.

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Russell Bowen, Assistant Head Teacher
Pates Grammar School





“ IRIS enables us to gain insight into the learning in the classroom, to discuss teaching, and it overcomes time table clashes and time constraints. ”

Samantha Attwood, Head of Language Faculty
Pates Grammar School

Pates began using IRIS Connect to support staff to have professional learning conversations in a secure, trusting, honest and open environment. This facilitated the ingraining of a culture in which peer observation, sharing and openness are common place and natural.

Using IRIS Connect, teachers at Pates have been “set free” to explore, experiment and innovate in their teaching, being able to reflect on their teaching using IRIS and share with colleagues. The SLT wanted to encourage staff to research and collect evidence about teaching approaches. Russell explained that whilst he and other teachers at the school thought they knew what excellent teaching looked like, they needed to look again. IRIS Connect has allowed them to identify and examine excellent teaching objectively and have the opportunity to widen the discussions to include not only all teaching staff, but students and parents too.

Since the adoption of IRIS Connect eight months ago, Pates have found a whole range of uses for the system across the school, not just self-reflection and sharing between teachers. They’ve filmed assemblies; used IRIS with students to coach and deliver feedback on each-others presenting skills; and in department meetings to share exciting lesson ideas.

Staff at Pates have always been encouraged to visit other schools to experience new teaching ideas and methodologies. The leadership team is keen to use IRIS to collaborate with the wider teaching community as it allows them to share over distance without the expense of travel and lesson cover. This is the cornerstone to any Teaching School strategy by enabling schools to increase their capacity to deliver CPD and ITT with schools in their alliance.

“ There is a perception that the most recently trained teachers are ‘better’ than the more experienced teachers. This is not necessarily true, and I am keen to tap into the experience of our long-standing teachers here, building their confidence to share. We want to safeguard the excellent practice within our teaching staff, and to do so we need to talk about what they are doing which is so brilliant. Teaching is transient and we don’t want to lose brilliant teaching and learning ideas when teachers inevitably move on. ”

Samantha Attwood, Head of Language Faculty
Pates Grammar School

IRIS Connect
info@irisconnect.co.uk
0845 303 8578
www.irisconnect.co.uk

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