

Speaker

My NPQ Journey



Name: Martin Smith

School: Finchley Catholic High School

Title: Lead Practitioner and Induction Lead

NPQ: NPQLT

Brief description of your impact story or case study:

Having been a Head of Department for 9 years, I decided to complete the NPQLT to support my transition into becoming a Lead Practitioner. I had a lot of 'hands on' experience leading a Maths department, but since my new role would include working closely with other departments to drive progress in Teaching and Learning across the whole school, I hoped that the qualification would provide me with a broader framework in which I could then give greater support and guidance. At the start of my new role, I was charged with working closely with a colleague, whose department had just undergone a 'deep-dive', and there were a number of areas of improvement that required action.

I met with the Head of Department, and he was enthusiastic to begin putting things in place. At this stage, I referred to the learning that I had from studying the Culture and Learning module - namely Theory of Change. The first instruction was to read some literature that I had seen as part of my course, and to meet one week later to discuss. What was clear was, while he was keen to get moving, he had to give himself the time to very carefully determine the next steps - ensuring that they were sufficiently evidence-based, and aligned with the school and department visions. First, he decided on what his long-term goal would be, and how it aligned with the department and school's vision. Given his goal, he was first tasked with finding out more about it. He had the information from the deep-dive, but he needed greater evidence. Once that stage had been complete, he turned his attention to what strategies he should deploy to drive progress in this area. Also, 1. what were the barriers to solving this problem? 2. what strategies did the evidence suggest might be successful in overcoming it? 3. how will we ensure these strategies are relevant to his context? Upon reading the information that I had shared with him, we were then able to construct a plan, that was clear, concise, evidence based, carefully considered, and well structured.

My work with this department has continued throughout this year, and I have seen from first hand the impact of my learning, and the subsequent guidance that I was able to provide, on this ever improving department.

As well as this example, successfully completing the course has also enhanced my practice in other ways. For example. Using the literature and evidence bases to encourage teachers to be critical consumers of research, and to engage with new developments in our profession; and transferring what I have learnt into the CPD offer that the school provides.

What was the main change or impact your project had on your school/community?

I have been able to support middle leaders, as much as I have been able to help teaching staff, to improve their practice. I have also been able to line manage two departments this year - a role usually reserved for those in the Senior Leadership team.

What key learning or insights would you like to share with the broader NPQ community?

NPQLT is appropriate not just for middle leaders, but teachers looking to become Lead Practitioners.