

A tension for Spanish teachers' professional development: "skills to carry out your job" or continuing "...personal cultural knowledge and attributes"?

Katerin Berniz

Flinders University kate.berniz@flinders.edu.au

This article is a critical reflection on a study of the views of Spanish teachers in South Australian schools about their professional development (PD) needs and experiences. Officials responsible for designing Spanish specific PD were interviewed. Sixteen teachers were randomly selected from private, public, country and metropolitan middle schools and were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire with an open-ended response format. Non-native and native Spanish speaking participants formed the cohort. The findings of the study revealed that within-system weaknesses and individual-identified locus of control, were barriers to Spanish teachers' PD and growth. Tensions existed between teachers and officials' expectations of PD which influenced participants' views of PD and achievable outcomes. The findings suggest participatory strategic negotiations are required if both parties are to improve the perceptions of the value of PD provisions and outcomes.

Spanish teachers, professional development, Provider, Learner Partnerships,
teachers' views, perspectives

This project investigated the perceptions and needs of teachers of Spanish and included a group of 16 teachers, a third of the teacher population, from metropolitan and country South Australia. The project also involved interviewing officials engaged in programming and planning PD for Spanish teachers in schools during and prior to 1999. During individual interviews, participants were asked to reflect on what first came to mind when they thought of PD and discuss their past experiences with PD and evaluations of providers and provisions of Spanish specific PD. A rating scale was provided to teachers for them to rate PD forms. The purpose of this investigation was to understand what PD existed for Spanish teachers, to seek Spanish teachers' evaluations of PD undertaken and to examine teachers' perceptions of their needs and goals for learning. The teacher participants were practising Spanish teachers at the time of the study. The officials' group of participants were directly involved in the planning and execution of PD for Spanish teachers. In the country and metropolitan cohort of teachers and the group of officials, there were native and non-native Spanish speaking participants.

It has been argued that first-hand accounts of teachers' perceptions and experiences should influence the content and methods in any teacher development program, if it were to engage actively teachers in their learning (Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training 1991; Dawkins 1990; Hughes 1991; Lawson, Hattam, McInerney & Smyth 1997; McMillan 2003; Abadiano & Turner 2004). The perspective that underlined this study, viewed positive reform as being essentially generated through contextual understanding, researching firsthand accounts and individual perspective valuing because change, as Le Roux states, might

happen to us but innovation was not only dependent on individuals but also on collective will (Driscoll and Halloway 1994). This perspective was essential to this study's understanding of teachers' perspectives and voices. In the following discussion I will explain what the perspectives of teachers and officials were and the resulting implications for PD and teachers' learning.

WHY ARE TEACHERS A MAIN RESOURCE FOR PD?

Spanish teachers' voices and perspectives, often absent from language teaching research published, were considered to be a fundamental missing piece in the tapestry of Spanish language teacher development programs. These were found to be lacking, based on a number of teachers' and officials' reflections of PD provisions prior to 2000. Teacher perspectives have been reported to be a requirement for promoting participants' willingness "to engage with all issues involved in teaching-and-learning how to interact and communicate interculturally" (Scarino & Papademetre 2002, p.2). However, published formal needs analysis of these teachers was apparently non-existent at the time.

In 2000, the results of a survey of needs were published in the *Newsletter of the Spanish Language Support Service R-12 South Australia* (DECS 2000). The survey reported that: 40 percent of Spanish teachers stated that their oral proficiency was basic, 25 percent stated that it was efficient, 20 percent stated that they were fluent, and 14 percent stated that they were very fluent¹. It would be imperative to understand more about Spanish teachers' levels of proficiency in order to prepare PD adequately for the group. Despite the reported low levels of proficiency, the PD offered, appeared to not address directly Spanish teachers' needs, ignoring the recommendations of a two decade old report (SAIL et. al 1989) for language-level specific PD. This situation was complex and provisions did not depend entirely on the good will and enthusiasm of providers. These committed individuals had advocated the teaching of Spanish in South Australia for many years. External federal and state support was clearly needed in order to support teachers and providers of PD. The recent review of PD sessions has shown little promise in this area.

PD sessions in 2005 (DECS 2005) showed that little transformation had been achieved, specifically to extend teachers' individual proficiencies and cater for their interests. PD sessions for Spanish teachers included nine sessions in total with PD for understanding SACSA, DELE testing, generalist PD for more advanced levels and one session on action research. In contrast, Japanese teachers PD (DECS 2005) included over 20 sessions for PD related to SACSA, general PD, language practice, enhancing linguistic proficiency, use of ICT in the classroom, Intercultural Language Learning, Curriculum Leaders' Training and specialist courses for beginning language practice. This PD program showed an advance in depth, quantity and variety in comparison to offerings for Spanish teachers prior to 1999. This would also appear to apply to the program in 2005.

The findings of this study and a recent review of PD initiatives show that there is a need for ongoing research in this area since little has changed to personalise PD for Spanish teachers. It seems as though departmental initiatives continue to dominate the programs of Spanish teachers' PD (four out of nine sessions offered in 2005 in total). *A Review of Teacher Education in NSW* (DET 2000) stated that "freedom of choice for teachers in schools is almost non-existent. Teachers' professional development is directed at the system's requirements" and this issue is prominent in the interviews conducted in this study.

¹ The survey's sample size was not published.

THE STUDY'S INTERVIEWS

The interviews used in this study were semi-structured and enabled an in-depth open-ended response. The design of the interviews allowed teachers and officials to express their views openly. This generated opportunities for gathering rich data and challenging the researcher to develop appropriate and dynamic coding procedures. Taylor and Bogdan proposed that requesting access to and acknowledging the teacher's own words increased the reliability of the data (Burns 2000 p.424).

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PD AND SPANISH TEACHERS' LEARNING

From this study's data it was evident that a majority of the Spanish teachers and officials interviewed suggested that the PD provided was largely ineffective because it did not address individual linguistic and cultural needs. Research had shown that PD was not only central to maintaining high teaching and educational standards but also to influencing the process of extending students' learning (Guskey in McMillan 2003). Since ownership over learning was imperative to sustainable learning and its outcomes (Abadiano & Turner 2004), a gap existed between PD provisions for Spanish teachers and their perceived utility. The interviews of Spanish teachers illustrated that the individual teachers experienced low morale regarding the PD they had undertaken. This was considered to be a negative influence on teachers' participation in PD.

In this study Spanish teachers' reflections of their participation in PD coincided in nature with the findings in other research into teachers' views of PD (DET 2000; Evans 2000; Goodfellow 2002). In these studies top-down style PD was reportedly considered not relevant or appealing to potential learners (Abadiano & Turner 2004) since PD often involved teachers in passive learning of "the latest ideas regarding teaching and learning from experts" (Klingner 2004 p.248). This weakened the promotion of teacher autonomy in learning (Wajnryb & Richards In McMillan 2003). Spanish teachers stated in this study that PD was "a means to acquire skills", "meet employment requirements" or "skills to carry out your job". These definitions emphasise how in some cases teachers themselves adopt passive attitudes to PD.

In the available research literature, teacher direction in teachers' learning was generally rare, as was the case with Spanish teachers and their involvement in PD. Today, further initiatives have increased teacher involvement. The Spanish Teachers Association of South Australia had more recently sought teacher expertise in planning annual conferences. Teacher expertise was considered essential. One teacher stated that "you never finish learning, students are changing and you need to update learning and experience", illustrating that the task was ongoing, required ownership and sharing of ideas, an ideal situation at conferences for Spanish teachers and their PD. Two teachers said that PD was about "learning and growing", one of them concluded that it was vital and helped overcome isolation. The issues discussed have implications, ranging from positive to damaging effects of influence on teacher motivation for undertaking PD. A general lack of hope in Spanish language teachers' perceptions of PD prior to the year 2000 was of concern to teachers and trainers. This was a local and global issue in nature and effect.

International and Local Barriers to Teachers' Professional Development

On an international level, educational reform in the teaching of foreign languages, in America (Guntermann 1992; Modern Languages Association 1978), the United Kingdom (Howard & McGrath 1995), Japan (Arani & Matoba 2006) and Australia, has demonstrated increased expectations of language teachers, particularly in terms of the definitions of what counts as quality teaching and in-service education in foreign language teaching. In South Australia, this has led to the specification of standards of professionalism for teachers of languages and cultures (AFMLTA & DEST 2003). These expectations are extremely high and on some level, offer contradictory messages and demands for classroom practice, adding to the workloads of language

teachers (Arani & Matoba 2006). Spanish language teachers, who were teachers of a minority language in an educational system shifting away from the languages of Europe (Scarino & Papademetre 2002), despite the increasing recognition of the Spanish language and its varieties in curricula around the world, faced major challenges in South Australian schools. There was limited relief for them at times when they embarked on the journey of their own learning. These challenges continue to impact on teachers' learning and PD needs today.

Around the world, Spanish departments also met with higher demands to respond to an increased number of background speakers as well as meeting the technological and globalized social order's needs. The changing conditions affected aims and outcomes of PD. In Australia, with the influx of native Spanish speakers in Australian courses (In press 2002 EFE News Service) there is also a need to adapt. In America, this growth has shown that some departments are "ill equipped" to respond to new and renewed needs (Stavans 2005). How well we can deal with this issue is unknown and appears to have not attracted the attention of research workers and scholars.

Without teacher motivation for the provision of PD, educational progress may stagnate. A belief in teacher motivation underlies most policies and official debates that have shown renewed interest in teachers' PD. These interests sometimes ignore the importance of the process of prescribing PD. Scarino and Papademetre (2002) rightly argued that often debates about standards of professionalism were complex given that they aimed to consider the needs of those affected by reforms and changes, as well as the context of their needs, while also considering educational department agendas, where issues of politics and association could not be ignored. In this study, negotiations were examined and reported to be limited. Initiatives were mostly organised and executed by official bodies. Although policies encouraged teachers to take control of their learning, through a wave of devolving responsibilities, barriers identified within the system appeared to obstruct commitments to sustained PD. Spanish teachers' views illustrated this.

Considering needs in context requires: "learning" and "growing"

Throughout the period of this investigation, no published accounts or government reports were located in the area of Spanish teachers' PD needs or expectations. To some extent, this illustrated that so-called 'top down' initiatives might be in place. Without formal individual and group feedback about needs, and the inclusion of the parties affected in the process of PD design and implementation, it would seem that the parties involved lacked an understanding of the relevance and motivation for system and individually driven learning. Needs would appear to have been completely overlooked.

It has been argued that "unsatisfied learning needs tend to have an adverse effect upon work performance" (Green 1996 p.78; Evans 2000). Evans added that: "Individual's needs determine their values and ideologies-which, in turn, through an iterative process, determine their needs-and these combine to shape individual's conceptions of, their 'ideal' job" (Evans 2000 p.176). For this reason, providing teachers with opportunities for learning and transforming the PD for these teachers across the whole period of their careers (Kist 2006) would be essential to future PD. Banking on the already existing hunger for both process and content, among the Spanish teachers, would be a great advantage.

Spanish Teachers' Definitions and Reflections

For Spanish teachers, professional development is a broad concept that is multidimensional in nature. PD is defined as the "skills to carry out your job", the "means to acquire skills" and the meeting of "employment requirements". PD was also considered to be related to [the teachers'] "own personal learning" and that of others, through "transfer of understandings" and resources. The majority of Spanish teachers' views were positive when defining PD and its potential to enhance teaching practice and status. For example, a Spanish teacher stated that PD helped

teachers become “involved” in their profession and another stated that “it aided the process of becoming better teachers and improving practice”. Table 1 presents information on the frequency with which Spanish teachers mentioned each PD form or issue related to PD.

Table 1: Frequency of Spanish teachers’ responses

Teacher Responses to: What do you think of when you think of PD for Spanish teachers?	Frequency
Types of PD: workshop, hub group, conference, reading	81
Pedagogy; LOTE practice and methodology	51
Content- Generalist courses: Mandatory Reporting; First Aid	46
Personal; growth, extension, interest, learning, satisfaction	19
Affective Responses; positive, neutral and negative reactions in talking about PD	18
Learning methods; observing practice; analysing materials	16
PD providers; STASA, Curriculum Officer for DETE, SSABSA	16
Travel - Long term exchange; in-country experience	11
Network; working with other teachers or native speakers	9
Time; in school; out of school; having enough time; time to reflect and digest new understandings	5
Curriculum Resources; ALL: Statements & Profiles; SACSA	4
Place: in the city, in the country	2
Immediate: something which can be put into practice instantly	2

Most Spanish teachers discussed PD as a process and an ongoing exercise. One teacher mentioned that it was necessary if a teacher was to be up to date in theories and methods of current value and application. It was perceived to be for personal and professional growth, implying that it might be self-directed. One teacher stated that engaging with PD was about recognizing the importance of the language and “keeping the language going”. This would imply that teaching was almost like a form of cultural work and activism for the language. PD should therefore also support teachers’ roles as cultural workers.

On the other hand, more passive views were held on the matter. One teacher stated that PD was only for non-native teachers and recent graduates. Another believed that PD was a “waste of time”. A majority of teachers’ identified PD forms in a discussion of their preferences, which were largely other directed. Table 2 gives the most preferred forms of PD discussed by Spanish teachers. The teachers completed a rating scale for preferred forms of PD. Responses are listed in Table 2 in no particular order.

This table shows the types of PD mentioned by Spanish teachers. Generally, Spanish teachers were positive towards the PD forms listed in Table 2. The average rating was 8.0 on a rating scale of 1 to 10. However, an analysis of the responses of individual teachers showed quite distinct preferences. In addition the analysis of the ratings of metropolitan and country teacher subgroups yielded no statistically significant differences in preference for certain forms. A Mann-Whitney non- parametric test was used and differences in mean ratings of the two groups of teachers were examined, showing no differences in mean ratings. A qualitative analysis provided an in-depth perspective of the group of Spanish teachers’ perspectives and needs of individual teachers showed how the group and subgroups identified certain forms, with more frequency and how some of these were related to needs, contexts and individual choice with variations across cultural and demographic contexts. For instance, in teachers’ discussions PD was identified as a form of training and a means to assist teachers with programs, gathering and sharing ideas and work products.

Table 2: Types of PD valued by Spanish teachers

Delivery & Content of PD	Formal PD	Informal PD
Face to face	Workshop	Conversation
Listening	Reading	Social events ie. Fiesta
Video conferencing	Planning units	Talking with natives
Structured and strict demonstrations	Across the curriculum	Sharing ideas and work with teachers
Viewing curriculum documents	Hub group	Listening to music
Level specific	Action research	Watching a film
Overseas guests and speaking to natives	Understanding the system	Travel
Exchanging resources	Travel	Dancing
Culture	Conference	
Cooking		
Incorporating Spanish		

This view was common in previous research. Studies have claimed that teachers viewed knowledge generation and knowledge learning as part of a process of transmission rather than creation, with a focus on practical application (Collinson & Fedoruk Cook 2004). This was quite different to constructivist beliefs which guided much educational policy and the current SACSA framework. On the other hand, Spanish teachers often discussed the importance of PD that involved talking and working with others and being “able to take things back to the classroom”.

The discussion of teachers' views illustrates the value awarded to collaborative networking and rapid investment desired by teachers in order for PD to be effective. This encourages a degree of passivity which may be encouraged by the pace and style in which changes take place in education, stressful workloads and how time and support are managed. This discussion of the qualitative analysis emphasizes how this group of teachers' lack of homogeneity is better understood by interpreting the similarities, differences, nuances and counterproductive views, in the context of their identified needs and current social, professional and demographic contexts. Moreover, this affects future plans that are required in all considerations of these teachers' learning.

The complexity of the range of definitions illustrated that the teachers perceived the locus of control over learning in a majority of instances, as residing with providers of PD. However, native Spanish speaking teachers often said that they took care of their own PD. One non-native Spanish teacher stated that if she wanted to find out something about Spanish culture that she would have to do it herself. Through the interpretation of teachers' and officials' words it was revealed that there were obvious differences between these parties. Views about PD were in some areas in direct opposition. The examples of teachers' words are employed here to demonstrate how complex the group's needs are.

Officials Perspectives

Officials interviewed in this study held quite unique views of what it meant to be engaged in professional development. When asked to define PD officials talked about “teaching” and “skills needed for the classroom”, holding here similar instrumentalist approaches toward learning and application, as were exhibited in some of the teachers' views. Two officials stated that PD was needed to have “a high level of linguistic proficiency”.

In contrast to the group of teachers, officials generated a list that included a greater scope and variety of formal and informal PD forms. Some of the PD forms included training, reading, working with colleagues, action research, undertaking scholarship work, networking with colleagues, attending conferences, programming work and participating in unit and assessment writing. Most officials valued studying abroad, participating in curriculum and resource development and indicated an interest in “having teachers' input” into these areas. One official stated that establishing “open networks” with colleagues was very important. Another official

stated that PD supported a teacher's capacity to develop "personal cultural knowledge and attributes". The need for critical, personal reflection on one's knowledge, language and culture was highlighted as part of this process. One official summed up the self-directedness valued by officials, for Spanish teachers' PD. He stated that PD was a means to "insight [or for my] own curiosity", "keeping up-to-date with own academic interests and continuous learning". Another stated that PD needed to encourage and support people "to do their personal best". She later added that PD was more than "what they [teachers] do in the classroom but for what they do for personal enrichment". This official believed that teachers should aim to be "reflective practitioners" and to understand the idea that "it is threatening", to be a lifelong learner, but that "it is very liberating".

Officials Evaluations and Reflections Regarding PD for Spanish Language Teachers

Officials' were asked to evaluate PD provisions and one concluded that for PD to be successful, it needed to provide "a balance" between the needs of providers of PD and those of an audience of a "reasonable size". It was his belief that this was not the case in the past. He proposed that "PD hasn't been thought for teachers on a career levels basis". Three officials, a majority of those interviewed, stated that Spanish teachers' attendance at PD was poor; an issue which made addressing needs difficult. One official stated that there were many important and valid reasons for this. She proposed that teachers were overworked and that a "kind of siege mentality" existed which was a factor holding teachers back. This official also stated that some people clearly resisted change while others embraced it.

A study of what PD worked with teachers claimed that unless teachers perceived changes to be relevant to "their situation, then change isn't likely to occur" (Abadiano & Turner 2004). Other research has claimed that "imposed changes which affect the things they value the most can mean that teachers can no longer find a match between their aims and purposes and those prevailing in schools" (Sikes, in Evans 2000 p.185). It is important to note here that these are influential issues and generate implications for teachers' learning and motivation to undertake PD, but also for work satisfaction. These issues affect Spanish teachers' participation in concrete ways.

Obstacles to Spanish teachers' PD

Spanish teachers' PD is bound to be problematic, given that these teachers possess unique individual interests, a wide range of educational levels and are at different career stages. Spanish teachers hold a variety of approaches to learning and teaching and motivation for their area of work. This variety presented a challenge for providers who had been found to prefer PD that valued a "one size fits all mentality" (Klingner 2004). The impacts on education systems and institutionally driven changes to the environments in which teachers' work and learn played a major role in teachers' perceptions of PD and the obstacles produced, especially with respect to whether they perceived PD to be a necessity, an obligation, a burden or a waste of time. PD was therefore dynamic in many ways and teachers appeared to engage in PD as consumers, creators and collaborators but also with a variety of degrees of interest, enthusiasm, apathy and resistance. This was evident across the group of Spanish teachers interviewed and should be taken into consideration when seeking to understand how obstacles could be created on both sides of the fence.

Spanish Teachers' relationships, with the school community and support from administrators, varied with teacher and context. Most teachers stated that although they appeared to receive support, the range of support and strategies to avail Spanish specific PD support and funding, were greatly limited. Lack of school and administrative support was a popular issue in research

into teachers' PD (Klingner 2004) and this created damaging effects for teachers' work and emotional wellbeing.

When Spanish teachers' interviews were examined for affective responses, tensions were revealed. Five teachers, native and non-native Spanish speakers, were negative towards the PD they had undertaken. Three teachers were neutral to PD and eight teachers expressed clearly positive attitudes to the PD they had undertaken. In a study on effects of change on job morale and satisfaction a teacher stated that at times teachers got into a routine of work and that this affected their levels of satisfaction to the extent that "they tend to look outward for the root of the problems, rather than looking inward" (Evans 2000, p.182). This would appear to apply to some approaches taken by a few of the Spanish teachers and officials interviewed in this study. It should be noted that counterproductive views were also held.

Few teachers (three) thought that PD was unnecessary or could be a waste of time. One official stated that "advisers should lead intellectual debates". The former views would contradict the popular and contemporary view that teachers should facilitate lifelong learning by being lifelong learners themselves. The latter diverged from current PD trends supported by the group of officials' interviewed which promoted teacher autonomy, by suggesting a top-down approach. These views illustrate how dichotomies and overgeneralisations fail to capture key views that may stand in the way of change or empowerment.

Spanish teachers perceived a number of internal and external school factors, some that affected the group and others' that affected the sub-groups to a larger extent. For instance, country teachers stated that issues of distance, access, time, school support and lack of opportunity to speak to other speakers and teachers of Spanish affected them. All country teachers highlighted the issue of language teacher isolation. One teacher said, "the monocultural aspect of rural life is very so different to the urban lifestyles" and that "here in country SA a lot of people are still very"... "behind in their multicultural intellect", when reflecting on support mechanisms in and outside the school. The changes that were driven by the SACSA framework at that time, in its early stages, for instance, were also perceived to be creating new pressures adding to the existing lack of support for languages in schools. A teacher commented on this issue saying that:

The Department is making so many changes by doing the SACSA framework, Partnerships 21 all those sorts of things, putting different priorities on school budgeting, on school curriculum and so on and really in rural South Australia I don't think that a lot of people still conceive a need for LOTE to be one of the main 8 areas for kids education.

Most country teachers mentioned often that isolation was a big factor and that distance, lack of administrative and community support, affected in different ways their participation in PD sessions. Some perceived PD to be planned ignoring school schedules and driving time to the session, since 37.5 hours were expected for PD by the Department for all teachers without concession, and that PD provisions were either too basic or irrelevant to their needs. A teacher shared his frustration with PD planning. He said it was organised mostly: "from 4 o'clock to 7 o'clock in the city", and that he would therefore need to ask for the afternoon off "to travel two to three hours there and back". The issue of time was not only an issue for country teachers' work but also for their wellbeing. Lack of time has been a perennial issue for teachers (Collinson & Fedoruk Cook 2004). Time was a recurring theme in all of the teachers' interviews.

The metropolitan teachers perceived obstacles to include the costs of attending PD and the lack of budget and government funding provided to support Spanish teachers. A lack of funding for providers was also discussed. A teacher stated that one provider's funding was being cut, a reduction that affected her ability to service needs. Although teachers discussed the language support services and language advisers as being very helpful in their involvement, teachers

mentioned that they were rarely available on site or in an ongoing way given that the advisers themselves, despite their commitment and enthusiasm, lacked government support and adequate funding. One teacher said that the range of linguistic proficiencies of providers was positive and comforting. In contrast, one non-native Spanish speaking teacher from the country stated that officials' proficiencies were low and that he: [did not] "need to be taught by someone who [knew] less than [him]". Four teachers mentioned that PD providers' proficiencies were low. Three teachers added that PD providers often lacked appropriate qualifications and teaching experience meaningfully to "meet their linguistic needs". Other obstacles mentioned by metropolitan teachers included the age of employment, level of proficiency in the Spanish and English language of some teachers, not having access to a language consultant in 1999 and excessive paperwork required to apply for PD. Teachers stated that sufficient time was not released for PD, especially to study abroad. The imposition that teachers used "in-class time" to attend PD sessions, giving up student time, marking, family and teacher time was often mentioned to be a major obstacle for PD. These views were complex and continued to illustrate the myriad range of reflections and expectations and the perceived impediments that impacted on participation in Spanish teachers' PD and future participation in PD.

CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of implications from the analysis of the group of teachers' perceptions of PD. The apparent lack of faith in provisions does not distinguish this group of teachers from those prominently reported on in educational research and research into teachers' learning and training (Ayres, Meyer, Erevelles, & Park-Lee, 1994). There appears to be a lack of consistency, effective networking and partnerships engaged in obtaining critical feedback, throughout the process of planning and implementing PD for Spanish teachers. This appears to be counterproductive to teachers' learning and participation in the PD provided.

A review of provision and an analysis of needs with regard to Spanish teachers' linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, for Spanish language and cultural learning and in some cases, for learning the English language and innovative Spanish language teaching methods, appears to be well overdue. Officials and teachers appear to be well prepared to develop these partnerships. An official's suggestion to audit teachers and providers is considered to be an important step towards dismantling barriers that exist in providing PD to Spanish teachers at some level. A current review of these contexts must not be delayed, though it is envisaged that this is a sensitive issue for PD providers and participants to deal with. It is likely that collaborative partnerships and efforts may minimise the negative impact of approaches which neglect either party's needs.

Given the range of needs and views discussed in this article, one teacher's comment stands as a highly valid point: "you can never say you'll provide PD for all Spanish teachers because needs are too diverse". It is proposed in this article that this is especially true if top-down approaches are used. The challenge for PD providers; teachers as self directed learners and officials as learners and providers, is to understand and acknowledge that PD should be:

concerned with creating improvements in educational practice and the social relationships that underlie those practices, and ought to be about crafting and living out mutual forms of accountability among teachers, administrators, parents and students (Smyth 1995).

REFERENCES

- Abadiano, H. R. (2004) Professional Staff Development: What Works?. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 40 (2), 87-91.

- Arani, M & Matoba, M., (2006) Challenges in Japanese Teachers' Professional Development: A Focus on An Alternative Perspective. In: Comparative Education in teacher Training, 4, Edited by Popov, N., Wolhuter, C., Heller, C., & Kysilka, M. Ulgarian. *Comparative Education Society & Bureau for Educational Services*, 107-115.
- Berniz, K (2000) The Professional Development Perceptions, Needs and Experiences of Teachers of Spanish. Unpublished Honours Thesis. Flinders University of South Australia.
- Burns, R. (2000) *Introduction to Research Methods*. Australia. Longman Cheshire Pty. Ltd.
- Collinson, V. & Fedoruk Cook, T. (2004) Learning to Share, Sharing to Learn: fostering Organizational Learning Through Teachers' Dissemination of Knowledge. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42 (3) 312-332.
- Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training 1991, *The Views of Teachers on the Profession and Professional Development*. Schools and Curriculum Policy Branch, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Dawkins J., 1990, The Language of Australia, Discussion Paper on an Australian Literacy and Language Policy for the 1990s, Vol. 1, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra.
- DECS (2005) Languages Professional Learning Calendar 2005 (draft) [Online] <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/languages/services/> [July 2005]
- DET (2000) A Review of Teacher Education in NSW. Quality Matters: The Next Steps. [Online] <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/teachrev/> [November 2006]
- EFE News Service (2002) Worldwide use of Spanish, Already Widespread, Is Growing [Online] <http://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx> [December 2 2006]
- Evans, L. (2000) The Effects of Educational Change on Morale, Job Satisfaction and Motivation. *Journal of Educational Change*, 1, 173-192.
- Goodfellow, J (2002) Practical Wisdom: Exploring the Hidden Dimensions of Professional Practice. [Online] <http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/goo02388.htm> [December 2006]
- Green, S. (1996) The Professional Development of Modern Languages Teachers. *Language Learning Journal*, 14, 75-79.
- Guntermann G. (1992) Developing Tomorrow's Teachers of World Language, [Online] Available: SilverPlatter/Eric/EDB50880] 23 October 2000.
- Howard R., & McGrath I. (1995) *Distance Education for Language Teachers*. Multilingual Matters Limited. Cromwell press
- Hughes P. (1991) *Teachers in Society, Teachers Professional Development*. ACER, Victoria.
- Kist, (2006) New Literacies: Working with Standards and Stretching Professional Development. *Language Arts. Urbana* 84(1) 63-65.
- Klingner, J. (2004) The Science of Professional Development. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37 (3) 248-255.
- Lawson, M. Hattam, R. McInerney, P. & Smyth, J. (1997) *Teacher Learning and the Teaching of Teachers*. Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching, Flinders University, South Australia.
- McEwen (2000) Newsletter of The Spanish Language Support Service R-12 South Australia. DECS.
- McMillan, L. (2003) PD: Explore, discover and reflect...or just more good ideas for teaching grammar? 16th Educational Conference Melbourne 2003. Melbourne: Embassy Centre for English Studies.
- Modern Language Association of America & American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1978) Report of the MLA Task Force on the Commonly Taught Languages. *Foreign Language Annals*, 11 (6) 635-665.
- South Australian Institute of Languages, Scurrah, M. J., Lorenzin, G., Diaz, J., Gomez Soto, D. (1992) *The Teaching of Spanish in South Australia*. Flinders University of South Australia. SAIL.
- Scarino, A., Papademetre, L. (2002) Developing professional 'standards' for teachers of languages and cultures: who prescribes and who ascribes in the profession? Draft version of paper presented at: AILA International Conference, Singapore, Dec. 2002. [Online] www.unisa.edu.au
- Smyth, J. (1998) Researching the Cultural Politics of Teacher Learning [Online] <http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/smy98192.htm> [December 2005]
- Stavans, I. (2005) The Challenges Facing Spanish Departments. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51 (47) B6.