

Title: Language teacher professional development: a consortium approach to translating research findings into impact.

Professor Ernesto Macaro
Department of Education
University of Oxford

This presentation focuses on language teacher education and describes a project which had the aim of bringing about change in second language pedagogy in England. Research in second language acquisition carried out at Oxford University and elsewhere was distilled into 8 pedagogical principles by establishing a 'Consortium for Professional Development' comprising teacher educators from Oxford University and Reading University, and teachers from Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Herefordshire and Cambridgeshire with the aim of creating a 'snowball effect'. Development materials, illustrating how to address the 8 principles, were refined and produced and were then used by members of the Consortium (teams of researchers and school teachers) at 7 national workshops attended by over 300 teachers and teacher trainers as well as representatives of government agencies. 219 teachers agreed to implement the pedagogical principles in their respective school departments. The Consortium provided follow-up support for these departments (via email, the website and in some cases through face-to-face contact). Questionnaires, complemented by interviews and reports gathered from many of the schools who undertook to implement the principles, indicated a statistically significant increase in teachers' favourable attitudes to the principles pre- and post-workshop, an increase sustained by a third questionnaire administered six months later. The presentation will outline the research which fed into the pedagogical principles, will give insights into the nature of the project evaluation and will attempt to argue that a 'consortium approach' to teacher professional development is a powerful model for ensuring that research findings translate into knowledge exchange and impact.