

TeachingEnglish webinar

Teacher Activity Groups: an effective model for professional development?

1 December 2020

Questions we'll answer

- What makes the TAG model unique?
- How have TAGs been implemented in British Council CPD projects in different countries?
- What evidence is available from these projects about the impact of TAGs on teacher development?
- What challenges for the impactful implementation of TAGs do these projects highlight?
- What are the conditions required to make TAGs effective?

CPD as a social activity

Teaching improves most in collegial settings where common goals are set ... and expertise is shared.
(Darling-Hammond 2013, p.150)

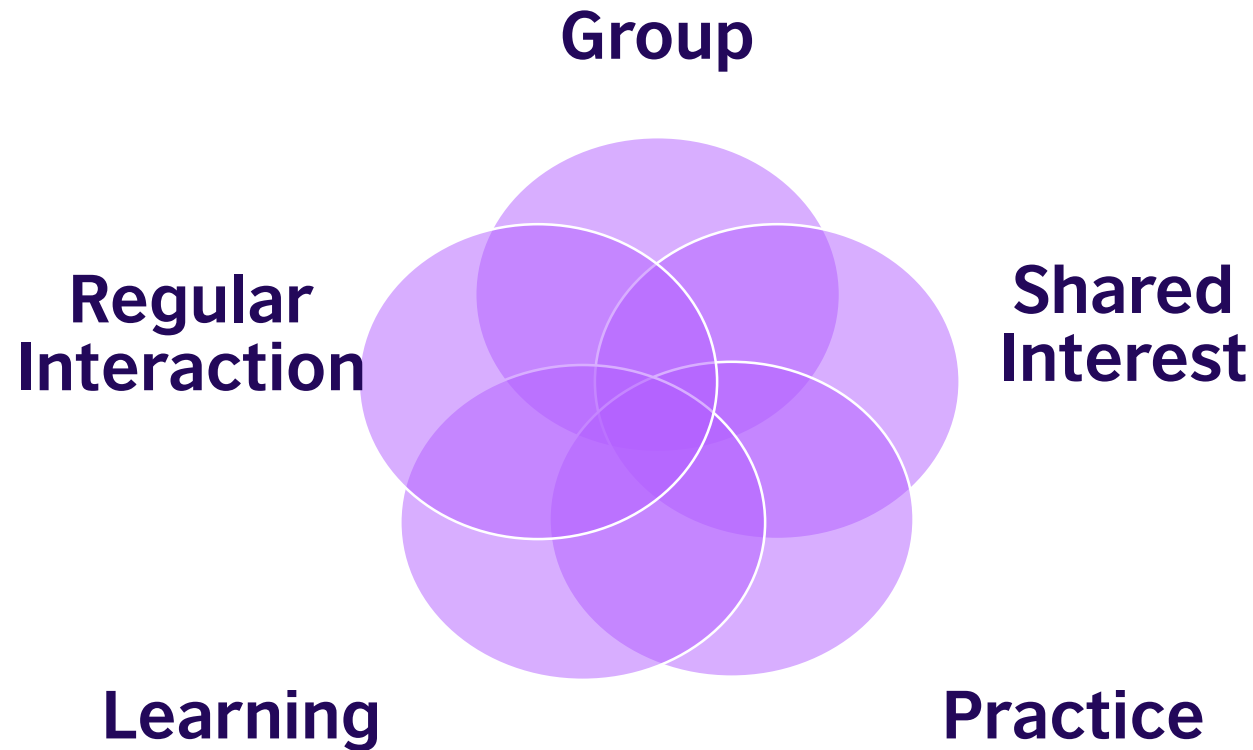


Community of practice

Groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

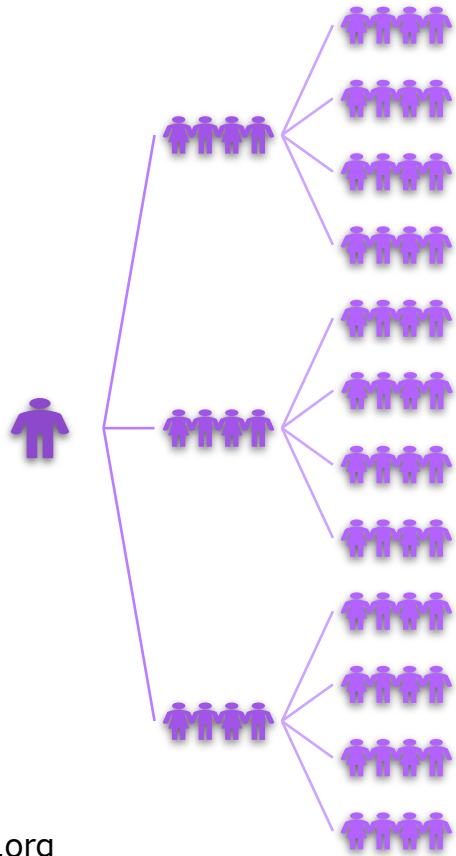
<https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

Community of practice

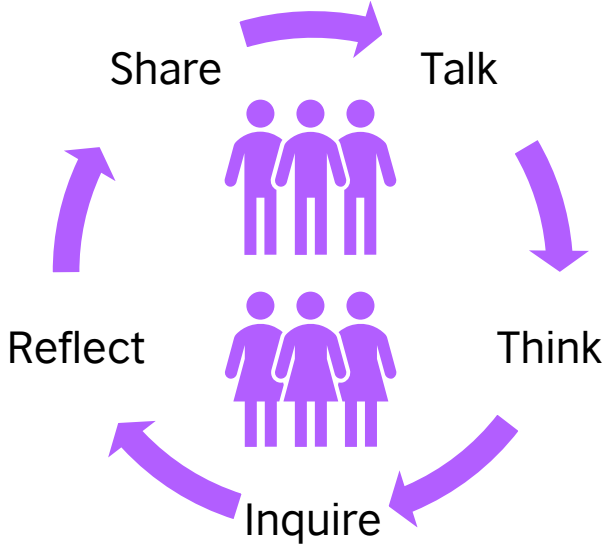


Cascade vs CoP model of CPD

Cascade



CoP



What is a Teacher Activity Group?

A structured, facilitated and sustained group



where teachers learn with each other and from one another – f2f or remotely



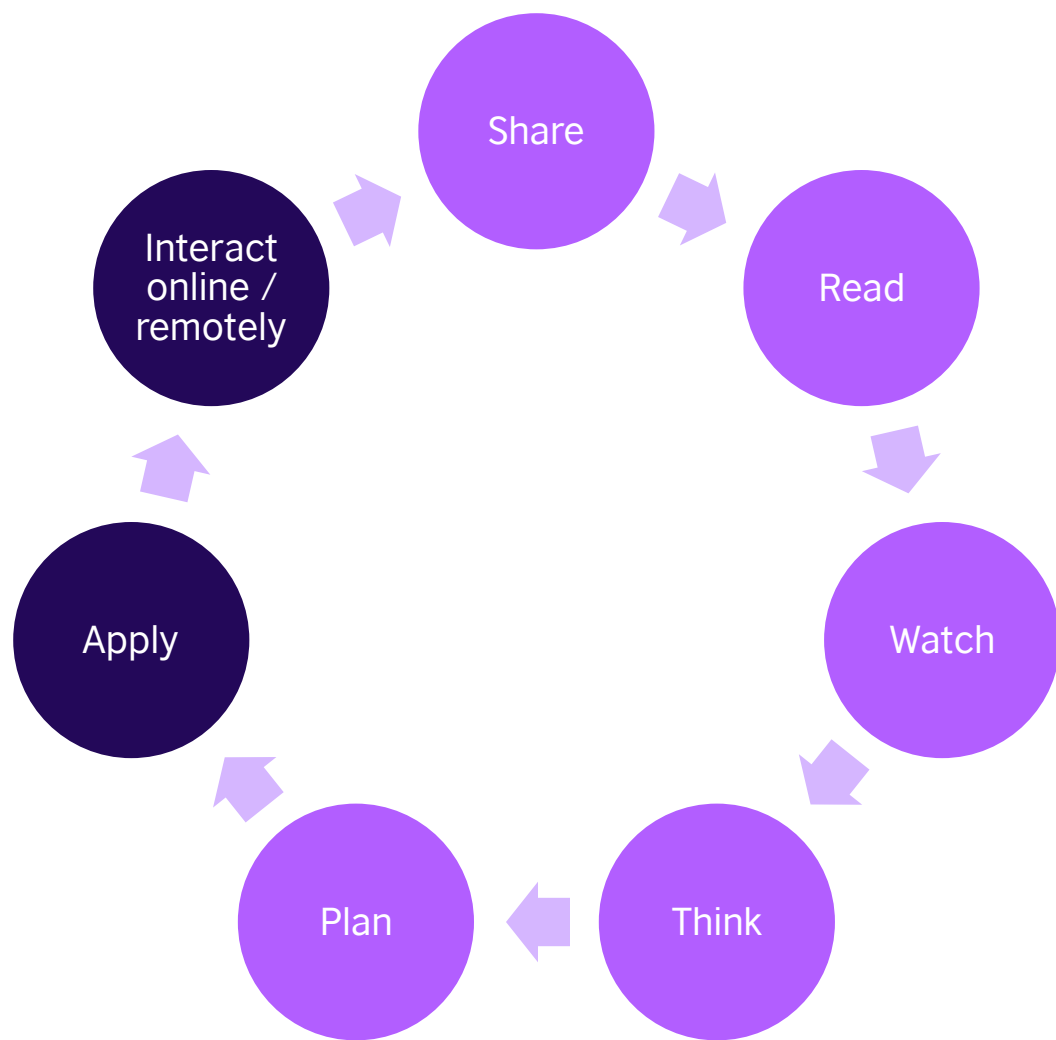
in order to improve teaching and learning.



by talking, sharing, collaborating, and reflecting, supported by (provided) content



TAG structure



Our review of TAGs

- TAGs in six countries
- Small and large-scale
- Analysis of reports
 - Benefits to teachers
 - Challenges
- Recommendations



Benefits of TAGs

It is clear from the evidence discussed that TAGs are positively viewed by ... teachers, facilitators and ... local educational authorities. (p.23)



A new approach to CPD

Before this project we only met twice a year for those official meetings. Somebody would give a presentation ... and that was it ... We never had the chance to discuss, to share ideas.



Multiple teacher benefits

Confidence

I discovered I was not the only one dealing with these issues ... the support I got from the group helped me regain my self-confidence.



Motivation

Teaching skills

Autonomy



Resources

Awareness

Openness

Relationships




It became clear to me that my students were not robots ... they were individuals whose needs, abilities and feelings should be taken into consideration.

Not to be afraid of admitting that ... you might be wrong ... admitting failure, not being ashamed of it ... this is what we have all gone through.

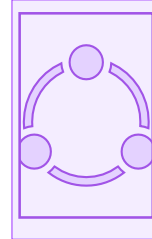
Before this project we did not have an active network of support and advice between co-workers. This is the first time when teachers managed to come together as a network and offer each other support.

Challenges and solutions




ORGANISATION

- Structure
- Understanding of model



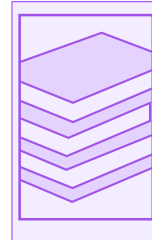
PROCESS

- Collaboration
- Reflection and inquiry



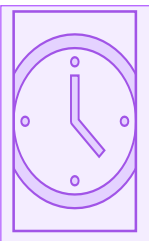
SUPPORT

- Facilitators (trained)
- School leadership



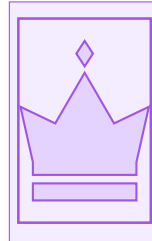
CONTENT

- High-quality
- Relevant



CONDITIONS

- Time
- Incentive



ADMINISTRATION

- Logistics
- Evaluation

Conclusions

- TAGs do support CPD
- Multiple areas of teacher growth
- Stronger teacher relationships
- Improved student motivation
- Various barriers can limit what TAGs achieve
- Systemic support, facilitator training, teacher reflection and inquiry



Final words

TAGs for me meant a lot ... a community of teachers where I could express my doubts, my questions, my failures, it was also a community where I have learnt what it means to be a teacher ... the ways of becoming an inspiration for your students and working on their behalf ... TAGs were the most significant teacher development group I have ever attended.

Find out more in the full report

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/professional-development-through-teacher-activity-groups>



TeachingEnglish

Professional development through Teacher Activity Groups

A review of evidence from international projects

Simon Borg, Amy Lightfoot and Radhika Gholkar

