

Putting Professional Development at the Heart of Quality Assurance in ELT

Sustainable, relevant, and context-specific professional development (PD) opportunities are essential for ensuring high-quality English language provision. However, access to such opportunities varies widely, and many teachers lack the support they need to address the diverse challenges they face in the classroom.

In the absence of sustainable support systems, this inequality undermines broader quality assurance efforts and leaves many teachers professionally isolated. This raises a critical question: how can institutions, ministries, and quality assurance bodies overcome the 'PD challenge' and support teachers in ways that truly enhance classroom learning?

Drawing on a decade of experience working with national and institutional policymakers in Türkiye, I will share insights and reflections from British Council projects that have aimed to address this challenge. I will argue that robust QA processes must place professional development at their core—not as a one-off intervention, but as part of a sustainable, long-term model.

This model must begin with deep contextual insight, offer adaptable and scalable forms of support, and needs to be grounded in the principles of communities of practice. This model empowers teachers and has the potential to create meaningful, systemic improvements.