Website:https://worldsiencepub.com/index.php/Imc Volume:6,Issue 01,October-2026

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A MECHANISM FOR ALIGNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Mashkhura Tursunova
Doctor of Philosophy in Philological Sciences (PhD)
British Council in Uzbekistan, Project Coordinator
Email: mashkhura03@gmail.com

Abstract. This conceptual paper examines how instructional leadership can align English language teachers' autonomous professional development (CPD) choices with school improvement priorities. Using a focused synthesis of research on school leadership, effective teacher learning and CPD evaluation, it identifies a management tension between individual professional agency and institutional responsibility for instructional quality. The paper proposes a four-action coordination cycle: identifying learning needs, negotiating shared objectives, enabling classroom application and reviewing evidence of change. In the context of Uzbekistan's continuing professional development reforms, the cycle is presented as a school-level analytical framework rather than a validated intervention. The argument is that school leaders can support coherence without prescribing teachers' course choices, provided that professional learning is connected to collaborative planning, subject-specific expertise and proportionate evaluation.

Keywords: instructional leadership; English language teachers; continuing professional development; teacher autonomy; school improvement; educational management.

Introduction. Teacher professional development contributes to school improvement only when opportunities to learn are meaningfully connected to instructional practice. English language teachers may need to develop language proficiency, communicative pedagogy, assessment literacy, inclusive teaching and digital-pedagogical competence. These diverse needs cannot be adequately addressed by monitoring certificates or hours of attendance alone. The management question is therefore not simply whether teachers participate in CPD, but how school leaders can support its relevance and classroom application while respecting professional autonomy.

This question is particularly pertinent to Uzbekistan, where Presidential Resolution No. PQ-231 (21 June 2024) and Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 867 (20 December 2024) provide a regulatory context for continuing professional development in preschool and school education. The present paper does not assess the implementation of these acts; rather, it considers a school-level leadership response to increasingly differentiated professional learning pathways.

Method and conceptual basis. The paper uses conceptual analysis and a focused narrative synthesis of three complementary strands of scholarship: instructional leadership and student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008), features of effective teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and evaluation of professional learning (Guskey, 2000). It develops an analytical proposition, not a causal claim or an account of completed fieldwork.

Robinson et al. (2008) identify leaders' promotion of and participation in teacher learning and development as an important dimension of leadership associated with student outcomes. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasise content focus, active learning, collaboration, models of practice, coaching, feedback and sustained duration. Guskey (2000) distinguishes multiple levels at which professional development may be evaluated. Read together, these contributions suggest that leadership should connect teachers' learning choices with conditions for enactment and with evidence of change. They do not, by themselves, establish that any particular school-level cycle will be effective in Uzbekistan.

The leadership challenge: autonomy and institutional coherence. Teachers' autonomy enables them to select learning that responds to their professional interests and classroom needs. School leaders, however, are accountable for creating conditions conducive to coherent instructional improvement.

© 2026 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Applications . All Rights Reserved.

Treating these objectives as competing alternatives produces an unhelpful choice between top-down compliance and disconnected individual learning. A more productive interpretation positions instructional leadership as a coordination function: the leader negotiates priorities, allocates time and support, and helps colleagues examine whether new learning is used in lessons.

For English language teaching, this function requires subject-sensitive collaboration rather than managerial claims to specialist expertise. For example, a teacher interested in formative assessment might agree with a school leader and English department colleagues to trial clearer success criteria and feedback routines. The teacher retains control over the chosen learning activity; the school provides opportunities for peer observation, reflection and review of relevant learner work.

A proposed four-action coordination cycle. First, teachers and leaders identify a focused professional learning need through self-assessment, discussion, lesson observation and appropriate learner evidence. Second, they negotiate a specific objective that is meaningful to the teacher and relevant to a school improvement priority. Third, the school enables application through protected collaboration time, mentoring, peer observation or lesson study. Fourth, teachers and leaders review a limited set of classroom artefacts, reflective accounts and suitable learner indicators before agreeing on subsequent steps.

The proposed cycle is an analytical mechanism for the instructional-leadership aspect of CPD management; it is not intended to replace or reproduce the wider five-stage ALIGN model developed elsewhere in the dissertation. Its distinctive emphasis is the negotiated connection between autonomous learning choices and school-level support for transfer into practice. The cycle should be tested empirically before claims are made about its effectiveness.

Implications and conclusion. For general secondary schools in Uzbekistan, the practical implication is to move beyond attendance-based oversight towards enabling structures for purposeful professional learning. School leaders could facilitate jointly agreed goals, access to subject mentors and brief evidence-informed review without turning CPD into excessive reporting. Such arrangements also require attention to workload, trust and the limits of available school resources.

Instructional leadership may therefore provide a coherent way to reconcile teacher agency with responsibility for school improvement. The contribution of this paper is a narrowly defined conceptual coordination cycle for English teachers' CPD, grounded in established literature and situated within Uzbekistan's reform context. Further research should examine its feasibility, teacher perceptions and observable changes in classroom practice before broader effectiveness claims are warranted.

References

1. Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2024, December 20). Resolution No. 867 on improving the system of continuous professional development for preschool and school education personnel. https://lex.uz/docs/-7271575
2. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. Learning Policy Institute.
3. Guskey, T. R. (2000). Evaluating professional development. Corwin Press.
4. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2024, June 21). Resolution No. PQ-231 on additional measures to improve the continuous professional development system for preschool and school education personnel. https://lex.uz/docs/-6981085
5. Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(5), 635–674. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321509

© 2026 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Applications . All Rights Reserved.