

LEARNING LEADERS

AN EVALUATION OF

Department of Education's Strategy on
Teacher Professional Learning

YEAR ONE 2015-16

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



The following Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) papers, published separately, are associated with this report of work by ETI in 2015-16:

❖ TPL NEXT PRACTICE CASE STUDIES PAPER

(The 'Next Practice' paper will have further case studies added to it during 2016-17)

❖ AN ETI PAPER ON LESSONS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FROM OTHER PROFESSIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION JURISDICTIONS

1. Introduction

Launching the Department of Education's (DE) strategy for Teacher Professional Learning¹ (TPL), *Learning Leaders* in March 2016, the Minister of Education stated that he wanted to see three changes:

- *the development of an agreed Teacher Professional Learning Framework based on revised teaching and leadership competences and linked to improved outcomes for pupils;*
- *using everything that is good in our current system to encourage and promote collaboration and sharing of best practice through professional learning communities; and*
- *strengthening leadership capacity in our schools.*

In response, DE's strategy, in light of the stated vision that

*every teacher is a **learning leader**, accomplished in working collaboratively with all partners in the interests of children and young people,*

sets out to empower the teaching profession to strengthen its professionalism and expertise to meet the challenging educational needs of young people in the 21st century through supporting objectives to:

- *provide a structured framework for teacher professional learning;*
- *develop the leadership capacity of teachers; and*
- *provide practice-led support within communities of effective practice.*

The strategy focuses on five key areas:

- I. *Teacher professional learning framework*
- II. *Development and dissemination of good practice*
- III. *Building professional learning communities*
- IV. *Building leadership capacity*
- V. *Progress in the strategic policy commitments is to be taken forward by engaging with practitioners and other stakeholders across the system.*

¹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/teacher-professional-learning-strategy>



Key Areas: from **Learning Leaders**, figure 3 page 12

The strategy sets out 15 policy commitments across the five key areas, illustrated above, which are spelt out in detail in the DE strategy document (see appendix 2 for the policy commitments in full).

The challenge of change

DE's TPL strategy is ambitious. The extent of the challenge of change is well-documented.² A *transformational* shift is needed in professional learning. The strategy summarises, shown below, some of *the gaps in the current system and desirable changes for the future*, including the need to review how effective professional development in schools is at present.



Issues to be addressed: from **Learning Leaders**, figure 2 page 8

² Amongst others by: Shewbridge C. et al. Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education in Northern Ireland, OECD 2013; the Report of the Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate 2012-14; Preparing School Leaders to be Effective Principals, ETI, 2013 and An Evaluation of the Induction Programme for Beginning Teachers, ETI, 2011.

Change depends upon major cultural changes in the thinking and practices of leaders and practitioners in schools, in initial teacher education organisations, in the Education Authority and other service/support agencies and in teacher unions. It is challenging on many fronts. It draws, radically, on new concepts and unfamiliar language but it is not about describing traditional practices in new words.

ETI evidence demonstrates that the new thinking and the *next* practice set out in DE's strategy, is supported and illustrated well by some examples of innovation being led by some education practitioners who have already moved well ahead of the field.

2. The Education and Training Inspectorate's work

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is commissioned by DE to evaluate innovative practice in professional learning and its relationship to school improvement.

During 2015-16 a team of inspectors and associate assessors visited schools and a number of other projects/initiatives and considered a wide range of examples of developing and innovative practice; some were identified through inspection activity and others through schools' self-nomination (following an email invitation to schools from DE).

In total, 36 case studies were considered and evaluated by ETI. In addition, consideration was given to approaches towards professional learning in a number of other professions and jurisdictions³³.

Broadly, ETI found three kinds of activity which can be related to the new TPL strategy:

- Those (very few) which are well developed. The school and teachers know, and are able to explain how they know, that professional learning is leading to improvement and to better outcomes for learners. These are the schools where teachers take full responsibility for professional learning leading to improved outcomes for all learners. **These schools would provide the base for a number of important DE-commissioned pathfinder projects (as set out in the strategy), going forward.**
- Those (many more) which are aspirational. They display promising aspects of innovative agency on the part of teachers and schools. However, they have not yet linked changes in professional practice, through self-evaluation, to improvement.

³³ An analysis of the approaches to a teacher professional learning in a number of other professions and jurisdictions are available in a separate ETI paper.

- Those (few) which, while couched and presented in terms of the conceptual language of the DE strategy, do not represent any radical change. Their approach to teacher training is based on dependency models of teacher in-service training and superficial, even tokenistic, school improvement actions - *old wine in new bottles*.

A number of the innovative case studies are summarised concisely in an initial **TPL Next Practice Paper**, attached to this report. The case studies will continue to be added to by ETI during 2016-17 and may provide material for the virtual centre of excellence (DE Policy Commitment 5 (see appendix) containing best practice examples and useful resources based on consultation with practitioners and mapped to DE's vision and characteristics

Analysis by ETI of the 2015-16 evidence has led to five outcomes, which are reported here:

i) **A 'quadrant' model** (section three of this paper) which illustrates the **two most important shifts** evident in the more innovative practice observed, namely

(a) a stronger emphasis on learning and teaching (pedagogy) in school-based professional learning and

(b) an increased emphasis on a collegial and/or a collaborative approach to professional learning.

ii) The quadrant model has been used to index the case studies published in a separate but associated **TPL Next Practice Paper**.

iii) **Five characteristics** are identified which underpin commonly the more innovative practice observed, these are: (a) culture and climate; (b) professional responsibility (agency); (c) pedagogic leadership; (d) effective communication and (e) accountability.

Based on the five common characteristics, we have provided a draft of a **TPL self-evaluation guide for schools** (appendix 1 of this paper) for further discussion. In light of the publication of DE's TPL strategy, schools may wish to review their own approach to continuing professional learning, to ensure that it is well connected to their school development priorities and to develop their professional learning practice to be more strongly self-evaluative in its effective contribution to school improvement. It is *not* the purpose of a Guide to lead schools to create a stand-alone TPL policy document.

iv) An evaluation of some necessary **structural changes** in education which may help effect the **cultural change** in professional learning which underpins DE's strategy (section four of this paper).

(v) ETI has also produced a separate paper which reviews case studies of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons; the Royal College of General Practitioners; the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and from the North Devon Teaching Alliance; the Welsh New Deal for Professional Learning; the Weatherhead Alliance in the Wirral, England and the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney, Australia which illustrate how continued professional learning and development is implemented as a continuing process, beyond formal undergraduate and postgraduate training, to enable individual practitioners to:

- support specific changes in their practice in order to improve their knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions; and
- sustain high levels of capability and confidence in their professional work.

There are many lessons which these case studies of professional learning beyond the education system in Northern Ireland offer for the teaching profession here. The common characteristics include a professional learning framework which:

- is set out within a time-bound accreditation framework, overseen by a well-established and highly respected professional body that is responsible for auditing, assessing, and quality assuring professional codes of conduct and standards of competence;
- is used to change professional practice in order to improve learner/patient/client satisfaction, and which is demonstrated through evidence of that improvement;
- is a non-negotiable and integral part of appraisal and revalidation of recognition linked to performance; and
- provides authentic and up-to-date provision for a workforce, that has a variety of learning and skills needs, through the use of a diverse range of learning activities and methods of delivery, including online provision and assessment, to suit the circumstances of each professional workforce

3. Quadrant Model of Teacher Professional Learning Transformation

An analysis of the case studies observed for this survey, a selection of which are included in the associated TPL Next Practice case studies paper, led ETI to create a model (figure 2) to help:

- organise and provide access to the case studies in a systematic way; and
- help understand the key processes of TPL transformation observed.

The model makes clear that we observed two predominant dimensions of change. Changes in both dimensions are core to the cultural and structural transformation necessary for DE's TPL strategy to be effective, based on the innovative practices which are already evident in a few schools.

The main transformations may occur through a greater emphasis on pedagogic-informed professional learning, or through greater collegiality and/or collaboration in professional learning, or, more often, both. Where case studies in ETI's **TPL Self-Evaluation Guide** illustrate change on both dimensions, we have indexed them in both quadrants.

Transformational change

Where change is both pedagogic and collaborative, the case studies demonstrate *an increasing capacity for professional autonomy and greater teacher agency* (Figure 1: Kennedy, 2015) and can be described as *transformative*.

While not the only model of continued professional development (CPD) in the research literature, Dr Aileen Kennedy's *spectrum of CPD models* complements ETI's quadrant model and her language has been incorporated into the quadrants.

Purpose of Model	Examples of models of CPD which may fit within this category
Transmissive	Training models Deficit models Cascade model
Malleable	Award-bearing models Standards-based models Coaching/mentoring models Community of practice models
Transformative	Collaborative professional inquiry models

Figure 1: Dr Aileen Kennedy's 'Spectrum of CPD models' (University of Edinburgh, 2015)

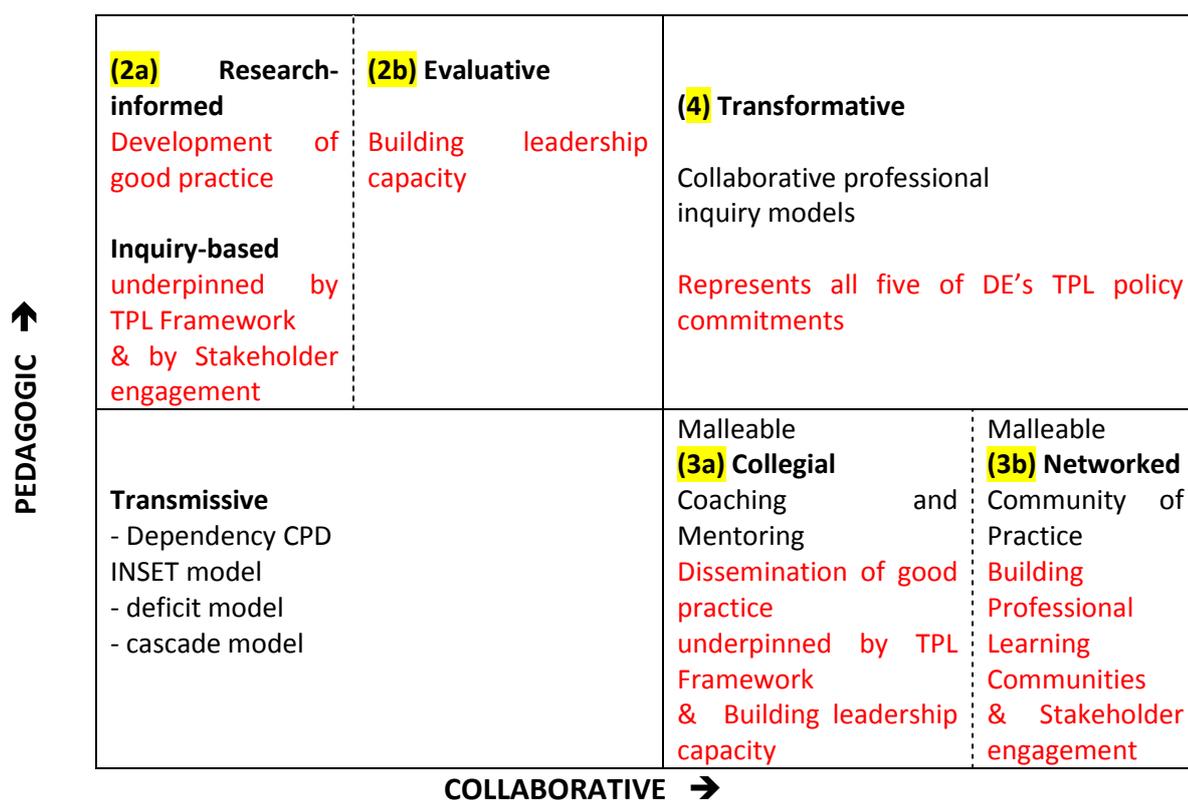


Figure 2 The ETI's quadrant model of TPL transformation

The language used in the quadrant model above is drawn from **two** sources: the text in black is from Dr Aileen Kennedy¹ Spectrum model (figure 1) and the text in red is taken from the five policy commitments set out in DE's strategy, pages 12-15.

The **Pedagogic** change (x axis) quadrant involves **(2a)** either reflective practice by practitioners (an inquiry -based approach such as, for example, a lesson research study) or the development of good professional practice which is significantly informed and infused with a profound understanding of pedagogic research, or it may comprise both.

The quality and effectiveness of pedagogy is enhanced and rises to a higher level **(2b)** when the initiatives taken in the school to improve teaching and learning are evaluated rigorously through effective leadership, reflecting on learning gains and evidence of a rise in the standards of attainment. In these schools, they know that what they have done has made a difference, and why.

The **Collaborative** change (y axis) quadrant involves initially, **(3a)** collegial action *within* the organisation where there a sharing and dissemination of effective practice; coaching and mentoring practices may be applied, for example. When that collegial practice steps

outside the school and (3b) is shared and tested through professional learning communities, often facilitated online, it is described as networked and is fully collaborative.

Figure 3 (below) of the quadrant model shows the likely dynamics involved in transformation from a transmissive, **dependency model** of CPD to one of **professional teacher autonomy and agency** which can be released through effective pedagogic leadership.

The movements illustrated below **are neither prescriptive nor mandatory**, in other words it is not *necessary* for an organisation to step in a linear way through each quadrant; some school case studies illustrate action in several places at once in the quadrant and are developing in several ways at once, often in response to leadership personalities.

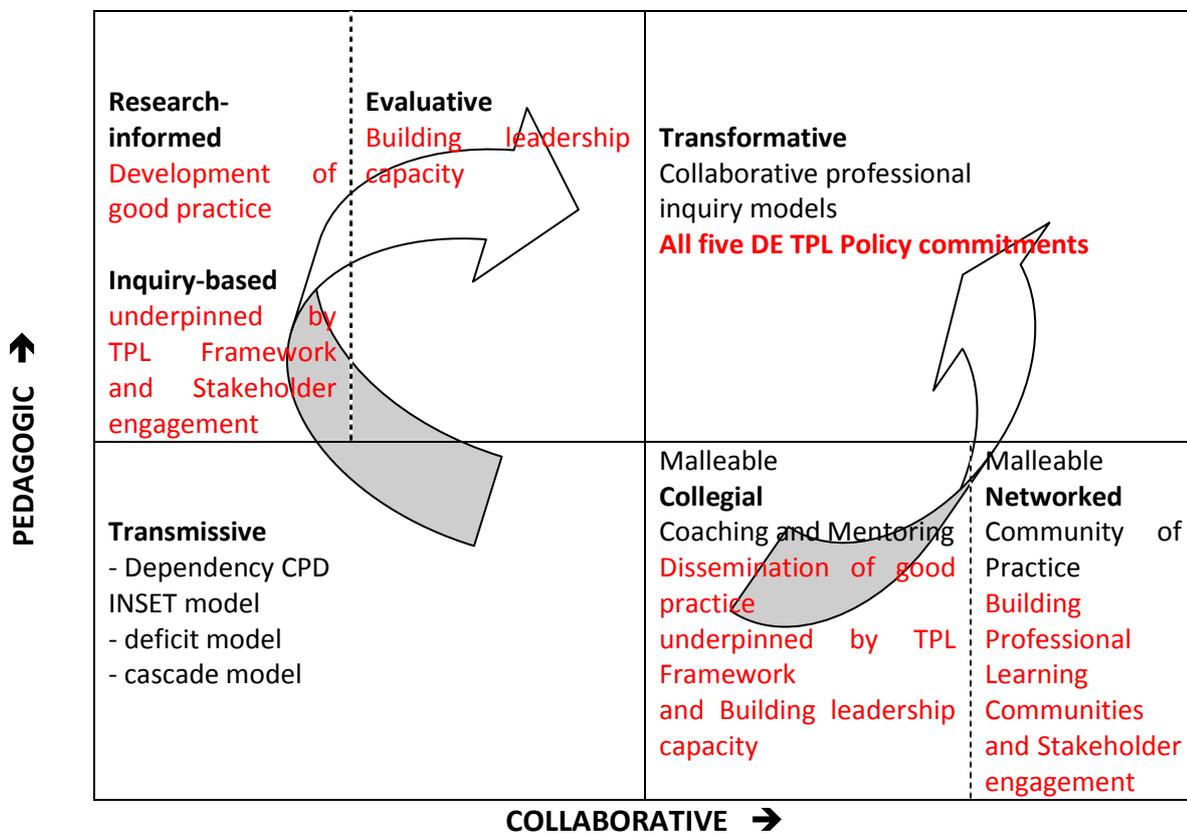


Figure 3 The dynamic of change within the ETI’s quadrant model of TPL transformation

3. Taking teacher professional learning forward: structural change promoting cultural change

DE set out its views in its TPL strategy about the cultural changes that it believes are necessary to take forward its policy commitments and to stimulate school improvement.

The case studies considered for this report, point to a number of necessary **structural changes** which would assist considerably in effecting the desirable characteristics of effective practice and the underlying **cultural changes** on which the DE strategy is founded.

The characteristics, which the case studies illustrate, are organised below in terms of:

- (i) **cultural changes**, which comprise the behaviours related to teacher professional learning and school improvement, and the
- (ii) **structural changes** which are necessary to enable the cultural changes to take hold.

Structural and cultural change has been observed most effectively in the case studies where there is direct and immediate control over both culture and structure. For example, if, over time, the strategic leaders of a school identify the need to change in order to improve, the school shows itself able to act on both fronts. At times, it has also been possible for a group of organisations to enact change by acting collectively to a common moral purpose shared across a whole community.

The ETI recommends that DE should consider promoting *structural* changes at system level in order to facilitate structural and *cultural* change across schools more generally.

Cultures do not change by mandate. The process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modelling the new values and behaviour that you expect to displace the existing ones.
Elmore, R (2004) School Reform from the Inside Out (Harvard University Press)

Actual improvement also depends on the effectiveness of the strategic leadership in effecting both cultural and structural change at local (school and community) levels. However, school level leadership does not work in isolation. Innovative schools in this study have outpaced authorities and government departments. Strategic leadership at system level needs to provide incentive and long-term stability. Short-term 'new' initiatives, withdrawal of current initiatives, budget decisions taken and then revised are not always conducive for schools that wish to innovate and improve consistently over time.

The table below sets out a number of the key cultural change needed in learning leadership and associates them with some of the necessary structural step changes.

Key cultural changes needed	Necessary structural step changes
<p>1. Vision and values: a secure, shared vision and moral purpose within which teachers have personal and professional accountability for the well-being, progress and fulfilment of all of the young people for which they are responsible.</p> <p>A vision needs to be based firmly on understanding the relationships between professional learning, educational improvement, pedagogy, organisational effectiveness and the wider progress and successful achievements of learners through school improvement.</p>	<p>1.1 An holistic school development plan which implements the vision by encompassing teacher professional learning, the curriculum plan, learning and teaching policy and school self-evaluation and improvement may bring coherence to often fragmented approaches: building for example, on DE Circular 2016/04.</p> <p>1.2 Strengthening of the implementation of the CPD requirements already set out in the DE strategy <i>Every School A Good School, 2009</i> and subsequent <i>School Development Planning Regulations 2010</i> which make reference to professional development as a means of improving standards for young people and as a necessity for effective leadership.</p>
<p>2. Choice: high levels of teacher expertise, based on their specialist qualifications and pedagogic practice, is enabled through offering choice in the nature of TPL activities which meet their needs individually and collectively.</p> <p>Professional learning is situated in the context of knowledge about the needs of the learners, in the context of the specific educational setting. Choice does not mean 'voluntarism' (in other words, choice does not include the <i>choice to do nothing</i>).</p>	<p>2.1 The promotion of a range of a variety of research-informed, enquiry-based professional learning opportunities (through both professional networks and resources) which facilitate choice to suit the needs of teachers, as learners, at their different stages of development as teachers.</p> <p>2.2 Opportunities for teachers to engage in the design, as well as the delivery, of professional learning opportunities.</p>

<p>3. Taking professional action (agency) and acting collegially: represents a shift:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • away from compliance models of “INSET” based on passive interpretations of performance management, transmission of abstracted knowledge and the dissemination of packages of ‘best practice’ in one-size-fits-all models • towards agency (taking responsibility for their own development and action) by the school and by the practitioner in focused collaborative environments where knowledge about ‘what works’ is co-constructed between teachers and learners. 	<p>3.1 A budget of time and resources for TPL for which teachers take responsibility and are individually and collectively responsible, as and when appropriate (DE Circular 2016-04).</p> <p>3.2 Interactive and online: continual sharing, dialogue and communication, which energises the innovative model of TPL and can be facilitated online through a variety of social networks where knowledge is co-constructed through collaborative learning.</p>
<p>4. Collective and personal: collective insight by teachers – peer-reviewed and peer-validated – by teachers engaging in dialogue about pedagogy and sharing their effective practices openly.</p> <p>Professional development is personalised (annually) and drawn up by the teacher in discussion with their peers.</p>	<p>4.1 A career-long, progressive continuum /framework/charter of teacher professional learning comprising clear statements in the standards of learning leadership expected at the levels of student-teacher, beginning teacher, teacher, curriculum leadership⁴ and strategic leadership.</p> <p>4.2 A career-long, annual professional learning plan and profile through which teachers identify their own personal and professional needs in the context of the needs of the organisation and the community in which they work and through which they record their engagement in professional</p>

⁴ Curriculum leaders include: subject leaders; curriculum co-ordinators; key stage co-ordinators; year heads; and thematic co-ordinators..

	<p>learning for any agreed rhetorical and presentational purpose.</p> <p>4.3 Evidence of engagement recognised: any provider of TPL opportunities needs to provide some form of certificate or recognition (or digital badge⁵) of engagement or completion, where the programme itself does not already offer accreditation.</p> <p>4.4 The need for most schools to renew the implementation of PRSD as it was originally intended and designed for development and growth purposes rather than for supervisory performance management. A view of the quality and effectiveness of PRSD should be included in ETI school inspections.</p>
<p>5. Trust and ownership: which represents recognition that development in learning leadership is neither linear nor age- or career-stage related and does not have to follow a set accredited pathway. Through professional equality there is recognition that the professional contribution of every educator (teachers and other classroom staff) is equally important and valid and that improvement is a collective and mutually supportive responsibility.</p> <p>Teachers can be supported in their role as learning leaders to explore and advance their practice, strategically and innovatively, rather</p>	<p>5.1 The responsibility for coordinating TPL in a school should be taken forward primarily by those who have the appropriate communication skills for coaching, mentoring and/or buddying regardless of their seniority in the school.</p> <p>5.2 The identification of the respective skills for coaching, mentoring and buddying and the provision of opportunities to develop those skills is built into the standards framework.</p>

⁵ An open digital badge is an representation of a skill developed and evidence verified through a credible organisation: www.openbadges.org

<p>than to merely <i>implement faithfully</i>.</p>	
<p>6. Altruism: an apparent appetite for some schools which have been evaluated by ETI as outstanding to develop a school development programme supporting colleagues in other schools by sharing their approaches and practices. While not ‘teaching schools’ as such, there are a small number of schools which have reached a development phase where they could manage and run improvement development programmes which are bespoke to the needs of struggling schools in NI. These schools are also keen to explore accreditation avenues, with the higher education providers, for the teachers carrying out research-based pedagogic projects within their schools.</p> <p>There is a need for more clarity in the role of HEIs in providing a partnerships with schools in helping them to connect research-informed innovation authentically to the situated needs of specific schools seeking to improve.</p>	<p>6.1 Schools with leading-edge practice to lead school improvement initiatives as a pathfinder project (with a focus either mainly on (i) pedagogy or (ii) pedagogic leadership) to turn their leading, holistic practice into a resource which may benefit other schools.</p>
<p>7. Effective self-evaluation and external evaluation of professional learning: is fundamental to validate the benefits arising from TPL engagement.</p>	<p>7.1 Provide a TPL self-evaluation guide with identified evidence measures. At the moment, many of the innovative practices observed by ETI are not evidence-proved.</p> <p>7.2 Include specific TPL evaluations in inspection reports when they are key findings.</p>

	7.3 Explore a competency-based model for the selection and appointment of teachers and leaders which requires candidates for appointment to provide of their engagement in and impact of their continuing professional learning.
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The cultural and structural factors set out here are exemplified through the collection of the short case studies in the ETI's TPL Next Practice case studies paper, published separately.

External pressure and support are not enough. Broad and sustained success requires: intrinsic motivation; a confident and demanding professional culture; scope to take key decisions; open relationships; and inspired and inspiring leadership.

G Donaldson, Teacher Education and the Improvement Trap. University of Glasgow, 2016.

Schools may wish to consider this draft guide, in whole or part, to review, to challenge thinking and to evaluate the appropriateness and impact of their approaches to teacher professional learning (TPL). The guide is informed by the experience of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and by a range of international practices. It is designed to support the Department of Education’s (DE) 2016 publication **Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning**. An evaluation by ETI of innovative approaches to TPL in almost 40 schools and organisations carried out on behalf of DE during 2015–16 found evidence of five common leadership aspects (as shown below) which collectively, make a difference by connecting professional learning to school improvement.



1. **Culture and climate:** organisational leadership, with the vision and inspiration to create and sustain a **culture and climate** which links professional learning to school improvement.
2. **Professional responsibility:** learning leadership shown by teachers who regard **professional responsibility** for improvement in pedagogy as an entitlement, as well as an obligation, and act in ways which lead to improvement in the outcomes for the learners.
3. **Pedagogical leadership:** research-informed and inquiry-based approaches to professional learning, which recognise that an intrinsic focus on **pedagogy** is the main means of improving the quality of learning and teaching.
4. **Effective communication: collegial and collaborative approaches** which, through effective communication both within and beyond the organisation, including through the use of social environments and e-portfolios, leads to professional sharing through communities of professional practice.
5. **Accountability:** for improvement, based on use of assessment evidence to evaluate the progress being made.

When considering the school's response to Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning, in terms of the School Development Plans (DE Circular 2010, Regulations 2.d and 7) and in light of DE Circular 2016-04, this guide encourages schools to look at each of the five leadership aspects, to consider the analysis in the ETI report on TPL for 2015-16, the associated case studies and to evaluate the extent, quality and impact of TPL and to set targets for development. . It is *not* the purpose of this guide to lead schools to create a stand-alone TPL policy document in isolation from existing school development and improvement action planning

Culture and Climate	Impact of what have we done: summary of evidence	Notes for next steps
To what extent is TPL reflected in the shared vision, ethos, values and aims of our school?		
How is TPL informed by current research, including action research, on effective leadership, learning and teaching?		
What do we identify as the areas for development in TPL in our school?		
What approach or range of approaches do we use to facilitate teacher professional learning?		
To what extent is there an existing culture of collegial approaches to evaluation and improvement?		
How do we identify staff within our school as potential leaders/facilitators in any areas, e.g. coaches/mentors?		

Professional responsibility		
How do the systems within our school provide clear pathways for progression that offer coherent career-long opportunities for professional learning and capacity building for all teachers?		
How do our approaches to TPL promote innovation, creativity and problem-solving in teacher and leader practices?		
How are individual practitioners in our school encouraged and enabled to identify their own professional learning needs that reflect the needs of the learners and whole-school priorities for improvement?		
To what extent is there a bespoke, differentiated approach to teacher professional learning that enables all staff to engage in a way which best suits their own experiences, strengths current knowledge, career stage and goals?		

Pedagogic leadership		
How does our leadership ensure there is a collective understanding of how children learn and acquire new knowledge and skills?		
How does our leadership ensure there an intrinsic focus on pedagogy as the main means to improve the quality of learning and teaching?		
How do we ensure that there is shared understanding of the characteristics of highly effective classroom practice?		
<p>How do we quality assure our evaluation of the quality of the learning and teaching across the school?</p> <p>How rigorous and demanding are we of ourselves?</p>		

Effective communication		
<p>How does our leadership facilitate and support the development of collaborative relationships and professional learning communities within the school and between schools (including for example, through social media, online learning environments, etc.)?</p>		
<p>What systems are in place to ensure all practitioners have opportunities to contribute to professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums, including online, to evaluate professional learning and improve professional knowledge and practice?</p>		
<p>How are parents informed of, involved in and advised about the outcome of teacher professional learning and how it improves our school?</p>		

Accountability		
<p>How does our programme for professional learning promote the involvement of teachers and leaders (including governors) in its design, its development and its evaluation?</p>		
<p>What systems are in place to allow staff to receive feedback on practice, observe the practice of others and change practice, through for example, coaching, mentoring and reflection?</p>		
<p>What arrangements are in place to evaluate the impact of the professional learning programme on improving the quality of learning and teaching?</p>		
<p>How do we connect our professional learning to evidence of improvement in the outcomes for all of our learners?</p>		

<p>How has TPL over the past period made a difference to the quality of learning and teaching and outcomes in our school?</p>	
<p>What are our next targets and steps with TPL?</p>	

Key area: Teacher Professional Learning Framework	
Empowering teachers to build on their strengths and access additional support, through combinations of learning approaches geared towards personal learning and career preferences and reflecting the needs of their pupils	
Policy commitment 1	Teachers will have access to a coherent and career-long professional learning framework underpinned by revised teacher competences and built on established best practice and collaboration at all stages.
Policy commitment 2	The Department will review current arrangements, which provide up to five additional staff development days ⁶ , to ensure they support Boards of Governors and Senior Leadership Teams to deliver professional learning approaches that align with the Strategy's vision and characteristics.
Policy commitment 3	Teachers will have the opportunity to access support from a mentor or coach to identify areas for improvement and their individual learning needs. This will inform the development of their tailored professional learning plans.

Key area: Development and Dissemination of Good Practice	
Supporting the identification and harnessing of innovative practice in professional learning already in the system in order to effect improvement and develop 'next' practice.	
Policy commitment 4	Learning drawn from research and ETI evaluations will inform the development of 'next' practice pathfinder projects at all levels of professional learning.
Policy commitment 5	Teachers will have access to a virtual centre of excellence. Best practice examples and useful resources will be developed based on consultation with practitioners and mapped to DE's vision and characteristics. This will build on and expand work already carried out by EA, HEIs, CCEA and others.

⁶ <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/circular-2011-21-school-development-days-2011-12-to-2014-15-english-version.pdf>

Policy commitment 6	Teachers at all stages of their careers will have opportunities to develop their skills in action research, through closer partnership arrangements between schools and the EA, HEIs and GTCNI.
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Key area: Building Professional Learning Communities

Supporting closer collaboration between practitioners, schools and school clusters and professional learning providers.

Policy commitment 7	Support will be provided for the ongoing development and sustainability of professional learning communities and/or self-directed learning networks where schools or groups of teachers can demonstrate the capacity to deliver clear educational benefits.
Policy commitment 8	Where teachers and/ or schools demonstrate the capacity to do so they will be encouraged and empowered to lead their own and/or other schools' professional learning. Achievement will be measured through the inspection process.
Policy commitment 9	Teacher tutors in schools and university tutors will have opportunities to work alongside each other. This will enable them to support and assess the progress of student teachers in ITE and beginning teachers during induction and EPD.

Key area: Building Leadership Capacity

Strengthening the current support and professional learning for school leaders.

Policy commitment 10	Leadership skills will form an integral part of all competence development from ITE and throughout a teacher's career. Support and professional learning for school leaders will be strengthened by developing a pathway to leadership, underpinned by new leadership competences.
Policy commitment 11	School leaders will have opportunities to access extended professional learning – this may take the form of additional study or placements in other organisations including within and beyond the education sector.

Policy commitment 12	Where there is evidence of underachievement in a school, the EA will provide support in strategic leadership, leading change, and coaching to assist in improving pupil outcomes.
Key area : Engagement	
Engaging with practitioners and other stakeholders across the system on the actions arising out of this Strategy	
Policy commitment 13	Teachers and school leaders will have the opportunity to contribute to designing, developing and evaluating all funded programmes related to the Strategy. Providers of professional learning programmes will establish focus and/or advisory groups to demonstrate how programmes can improve standards.
Policy commitment 14	The Department will engage with the teaching profession on the most effective ways to maximise the use of technology to design and deliver professional learning for the twenty-first century.
Policy commitment 15	The Department will use teacher and stakeholder input to review the Strategy and modify and/or adapt planned actions on an ongoing basis.

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YEAR ONE 2015-16

