

LEARNING LEADERS

A Strategy For Teacher Professional Learning



Teacher Professional Learning Conversations and Reflections about Learning

April 2019

Produced by:

Education and Training Inspectorate
Education Authority
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
for the Department of Education

INTRODUCTION

These resources have been produced by the Education and Training Inspectorate, in close collaboration with the Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, on commission from the Department of Education, in support of its **Learning Leaders Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning**.

They represent a shared understanding about professional learning, reflective practice, school development and action planning, and self-evaluation (using first-hand evidence) all leading to school improvement, as seen in better outcomes for learners.

Underpinning Ideas

Shared values and beliefs underpin the resources: in a highly effective school, improvement is best advanced in an integrated and holistic way, rather than through fragmented efforts; and with synergy between the internal accountability of self-evaluation, on a continuing basis, and the external accountability of inspection; all in the best interest of the learner.

Using these Resources

These resources can be used to support conversations and reflections in a variety of different professional development opportunities designed to stimulate autonomous professional thinking. Learning through conversations promotes a greater understanding of the centrality of the learner in curriculum design and teaching, leading to better learning experiences.

The resources can be used in a variety of different contexts (individual schools, or clusters of schools, such as, for example, area learning communities and shared education hubs) and modes for learning leaders at all levels (whether student, recently-qualified, experienced teachers, middle and senior leaders).

Such conversations have the potential to grow the school's capacity to develop ideas and practices, such as:

- the centrality of the learner (the teacher and the pupil)
- reflective practice

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Teacher Professional Learning Conversations and Reflections about Learning

- GTCNI's teacher competences, code of values and professional commitments
- enquiry-based and research-informed professional learning
- implementing the Northern Ireland curriculum
- capacity building for action planning
- self-evaluation using first-hand evidence
- mentoring and coaching
- communities of practice: peer to peer; school to school

Revised March 2019

CONVERSATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

This is the integrated approach which brings together the work of the Department of Education, the Education and Training Inspectorate, the Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to support teachers, middle-leaders and senior leaders in professional learning, capacity-building, development planning, reflective practice and self evaluation leading to improvement, as seen in better outcomes for learners.

Importantly for schools, this work sits within the statutory framework of school development planning (SDP) (The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations 2010¹ (Schedule 2.d and 7) and DE Circulars 2010/22² and 2016-4).

In each of the conversations and reflections the learner remains at the centre of the work, as together you evaluate the extent, quality and impact of your arrangements for Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) on school development and improvement and the relevance of the Northern Ireland curriculum to learning in the 21st Century.

A measure of the effectiveness of the integrated approach will be the degree to which, as the Learning Leaders Strategy states, school leaders, having increasing autonomy in deciding delivery methods for professional learning, will be able to demonstrate through the SDP (including the use of first-hand evidence) that [the] school is better placed alone or collaboratively to provide professional learning opportunities for staff³.



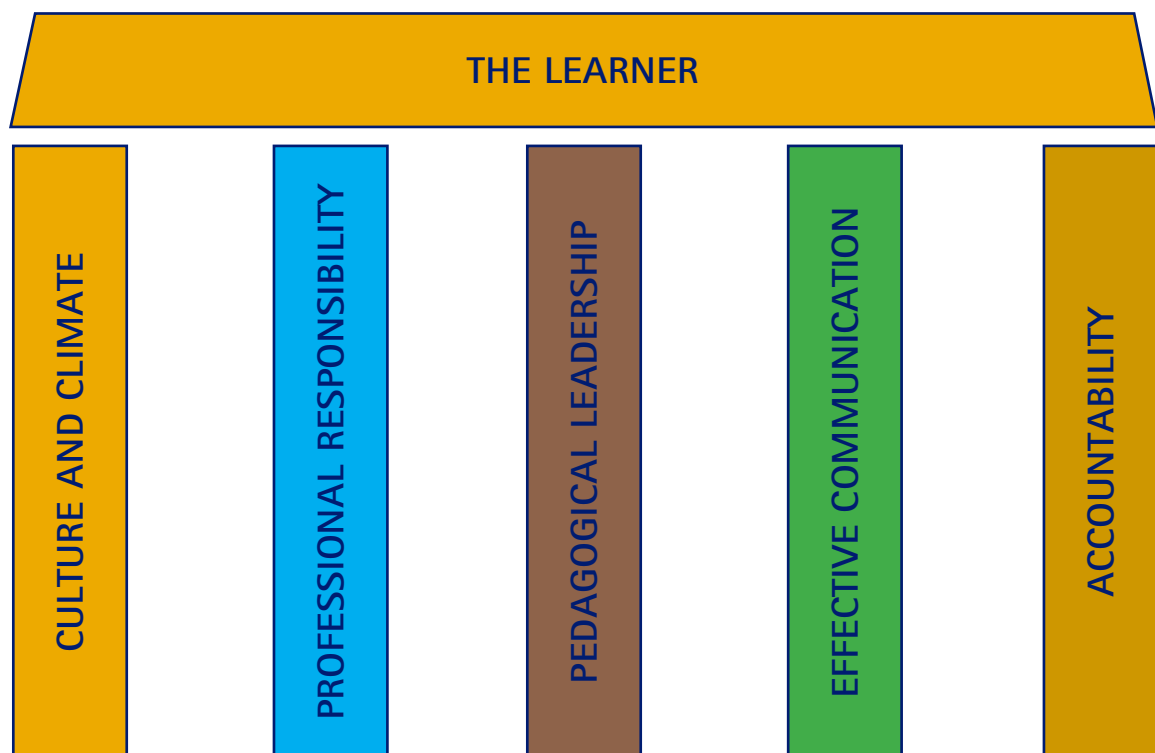
¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/contents/made>

² www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/sdp-circular-2010-22-sdp-regulations-and-guidance-english-version%20%281%29.pdf

³ *Learning Leaders: a strategy for teacher professional learning* Department of Education p.24

WARM-UP CONVERSATIONS

Click on each of the five pillars in turn to explore the context of your own school. **Click on** *The Learner* capstone to explore the idea of the centrality of the learner.



Some common grains of thinking run through the professional learning and capacity-building **conversations** set out in these resources. This part of the resource enables you to explore them as a warm-up conversation.

To read how the five pillars above were identified, and ETI's case studies of schools see the [ETI's evaluation of Learning Leaders](#).

Or go to explore the [Conversation which uses the pillars for self-evaluation](#).

CONVERSATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

Culture And Climate

- Think of your own school context at the moment.
- Explore its culture and climate in the light of these questions:



For example:

Culture and climate:

Who creates the environment in your school?

What effect does the culture of the school have on professional learning?

Where and When does professional learning take place – and with regularity or not?

Why is it undertaken – is there a shared sense of common moral purpose?

How does professional learning lead to improvement?

Impact – what difference does it make for the learners and for the teachers?

[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Think of your own school context at the moment.
- Explore professional responsibility in your school in the light of these questions:



For example:

Professional Responsibility:

Who takes responsibility for professional learning?

What form does that responsibility take?

Where is it evident in the life and work of the school?

When – with regularity or not?

Why – do we share why it is important to take responsibility for improvement?

How does it manifest itself?

Impact – what difference does it make for the learners and for the teachers?

[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

- Think of your own school context at the moment.
- Explore pedagogic leadership in the light of these questions:



For example:

Pedagogical Leadership:

Who takes the lead to create conversations about learning?

What form does reflecting on and sharing classroom practice take?

Where does it happen – in the staffroom, on training days?

When – regularly or not?

Why do we reflect on learning – do we have a shared understanding of the benefits?

How do conversations and reflections take place?

Impact – what difference does it make for the learners and for the teachers?

[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

Effective Communication

- Think of your own school context at the moment.
- Explore the effectiveness of communications in your school in the light of these questions:



For example:

Effective Communication:

Who is responsible for sharing information about professional learning opportunities?

What form does it take – is it sufficiently proactive?

Where and how is information shared and opportunities promoted – are there equal opportunities?

When – is the time that is available identified?

Why do we reflect on and talk about learning?

How do we communicate with our colleagues and peers: – both face to face and online?

Impact – what difference does it make for the learners and for the teachers?

[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

Accountability

- Think of your own school context at the moment.
- Explore accountability in the light of these questions:



For example:

Accountability:

Who is accountable and to whom – are we primarily accountable to our learners?

What form does accountability take – do we use first-hand evidence?

Where does it take place? When – with regularity or only when we have test results?

Why is it undertaken – do we think that internal accountability is more important day-to-day than any external accountability?

How does accountability happen? Does it lead us to prioritise progress for each learner?

Impact – and what difference does it make for the learners and for the teachers?

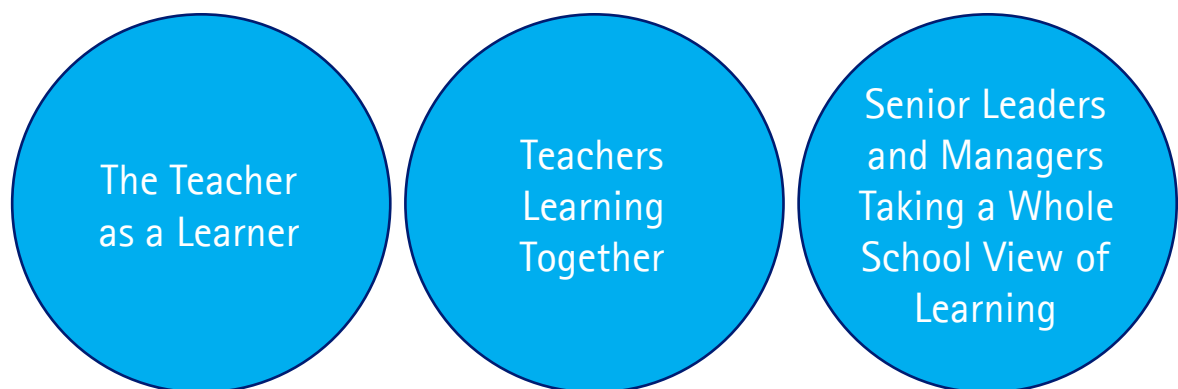
[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

CONVERSATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

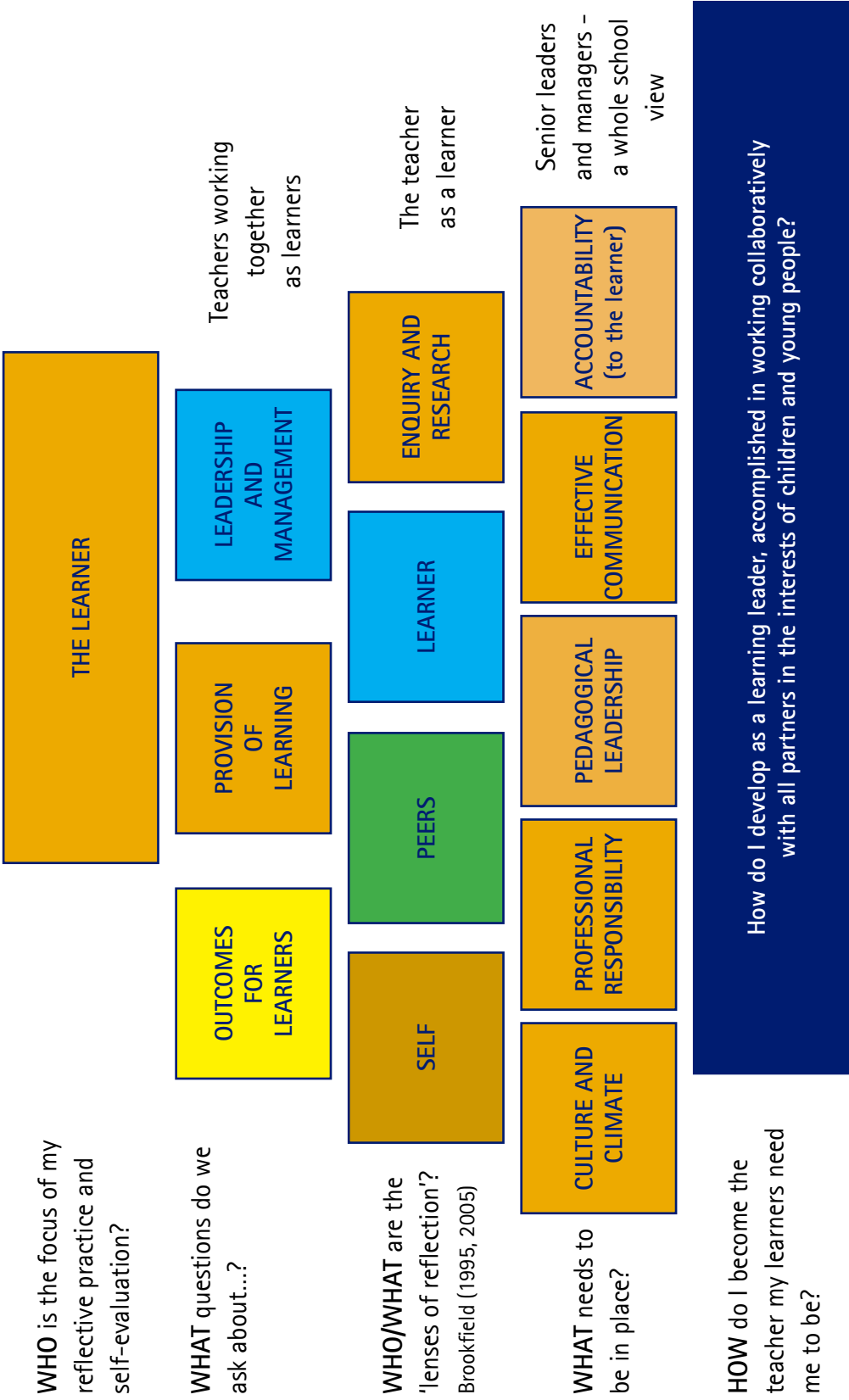
These integrated self-evaluation resources are organised into three distinct conversations which are coherently inter-related with common connecting threads. While the conversations are directed variously (i) to teachers individually, (ii) to those working in groups (and middle managers) and (iii) to those setting the direction of the organisation (senior leaders and governors) all three are relevant to all school/organisation teaching staff.

While the conversations need not take place in a specific sequence you may wish to start with *The Teacher as a Learner* – the idea which is central to the Learning Leaders strategy.

Choose a conversation and click the button



THE ELEMENTS OF EACH CONVERSATION



THE TEACHER AS A LEARNER

Defining terms (CLICK below)

[What does the Learning Leaders strategy say?](#)

[What does being reflective mean?](#)

[What does using first hand-evidence mean?](#)

[How can reflection promote school improvement?](#)

WHAT DOES THE LEARNING LEADERS STRATEGY SAY?

The strategy document **Learning Leaders**⁴ sets out the intention to create an **agreed framework** for teacher professional learning.

What does a framework mean?

A framework can be thought of a basic, conceptual, supporting structure which can support progress in one's personal professional learning.

But, to be useful for teachers and schools for the purpose of school improvement it needs to be clothed in the school development and action plans which reflect the current priorities in the unique context and circumstances of your individual school.

The Learning Leaders framework is intended to comprise:

- Clear pathways for progression based on personal learning
- Access to practice-led support at all career stages
- Tools to help teachers to determine their learning needs
- Planned opportunities to work collaboratively to share best practice
- Opportunities for nurturing and building leadership capacity, starting at initial teacher education, for all teachers

Page 9 para. 1.10

What are the expectations on teachers and beginning teachers?

Pages 22 and 23 of the Learning Leaders strategy set out the opportunities which the strategy is intended to provide for teachers and beginning teachers and the **responsibilities** which they are expected to embrace. The most relevant of these are referenced throughout these resources.

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

As a beginning teacher, I have a responsibility to understand the relevance of the Teacher Professional Learning Framework, which explains the continuity between initial, induction and career-long professional learning.

Learning Leaders page 23

What are the Department of Education's policy commitments?

The Department of Education made policy commitments (page 13) that a framework will empower 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.

The framework is also intended to:

- be underpinned by the GTCNI teacher competences;

As a teacher I have a responsibility to have knowledge of the teacher competences.

Learning Leaders page 22

As a beginning teacher I have a responsibility to develop an understanding of the teacher and leadership competences and their relevance to my work.

Learning Leaders page 23

- build on established best practice and collaboration at all stages;
- be supported, for Boards of Governors and Senior Leadership Teams, to deliver professional learning approaches;
- provide access to support from a mentor or coach which will inform the development of tailored professional learning plans.

As a teacher I will have an opportunity to contribute to professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate professional learning and to improve professional knowledge and practice.

And I have a responsibility to support colleagues to identify and achieve personal learning goals.

Learning Leaders page 22

As a beginning teacher I will have the opportunity to observe and be observed by peers and more experienced teachers as part of my professional learning and undertake joint lesson observations and access coaching and mentoring from peers and more experienced practitioners.

Learning Leaders page 23

The Learning Leaders strategy also declares a vision:

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

Learning Leaders Page 4 Para 5

Reflect on what you understand by the terms:

- learning leader?
- accomplished?
- working collaboratively?
- all partners?
- the interests of children and young people?

Do we agree that the learner is the central leader of learning?

And, if we do, what does this mean in practice for teachers?

Do we agree that it means being reflective, with the learner at the centre?

What does being reflective mean?

- Being reflective is more than an instinct.

Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning."

Reflections turning into Learning, David Boud (1985)

- Reflective practice is...

...learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice.

Reflecting on 'Reflective practice', Finlay (2008)

- and is often done through the teacher's critical evaluation of their own practice
- and by questioning assumptions of 'how things are done around here'.

But, there are different understandings of what reflective practice means:

formal or informal; on-going or at a given period in time; solitary or collegial.

All these approaches have value, but if reflection is a solitary, informal one-off exercise its impact may be limited.

To be **impactful**, for all the learners in the school, it needs to:

- use **first-hand** evidence;
- be deliberate, **evaluative**, critical and **collegial**;
- be conducted in light both of your **personal values**;
- and your understanding of **how learners learn**.

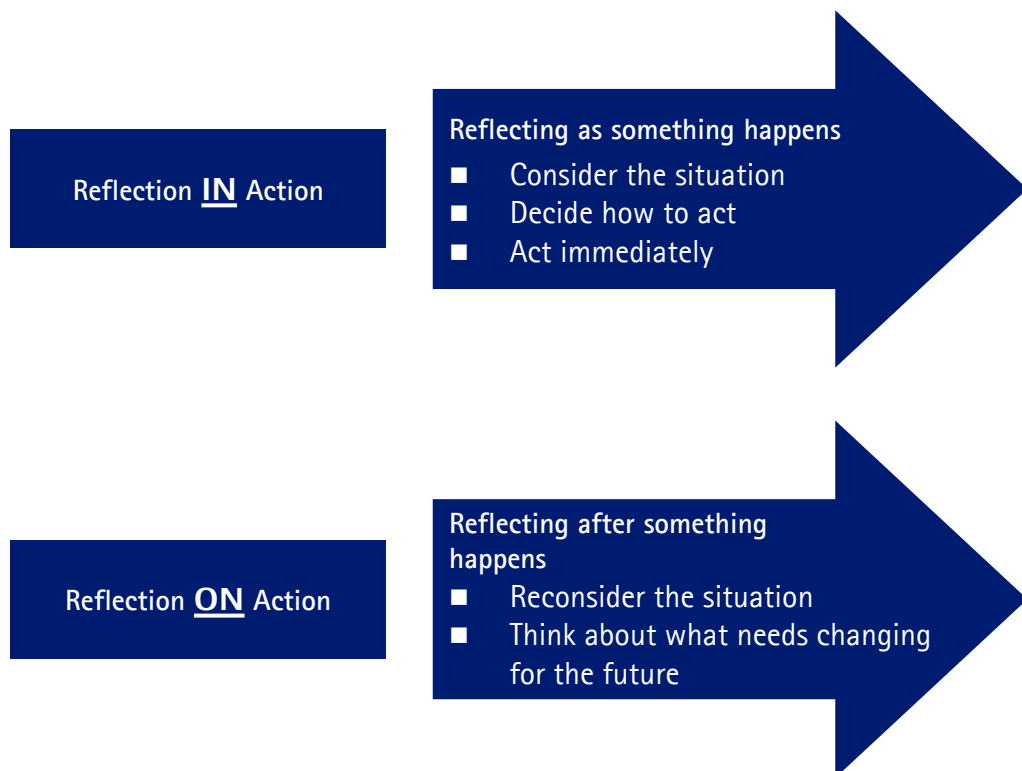
And, if successful it leads to a better – and shared – knowledge and understanding of effective learning.



Gibb R, *Big Ideas in Education* 2016

Reflective practice can be about:

- improving what you do by reflecting *as something is happening* in the class – being alert to the first-hand evidence in front of you and 'thinking on your feet';

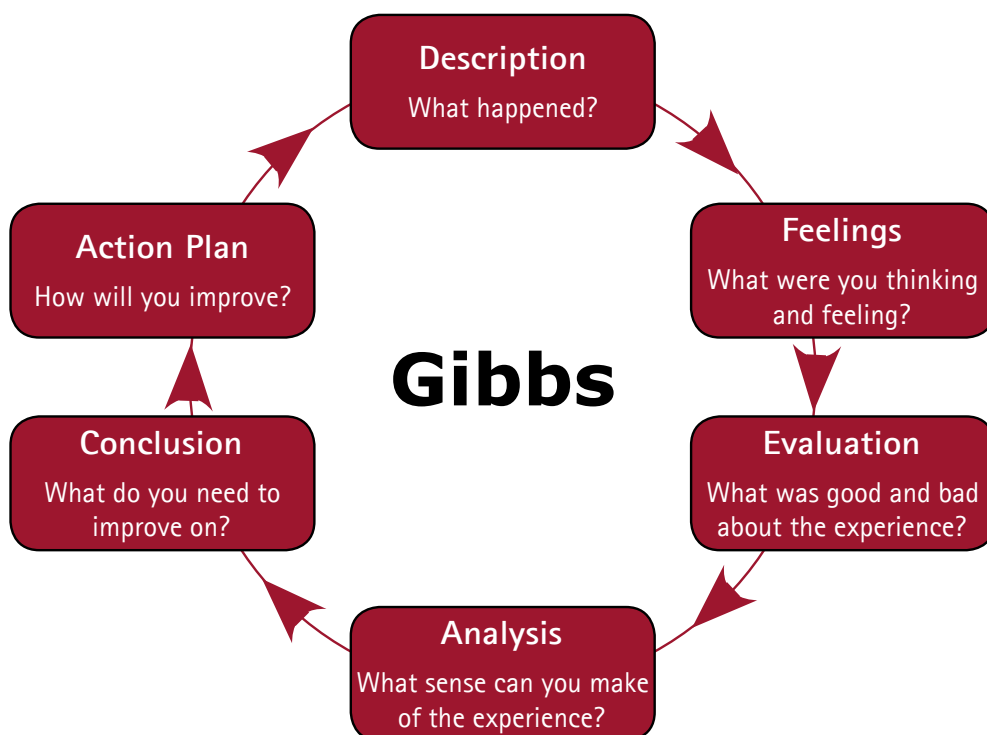


- looking back and evaluating *after something has happened* and changing for the better next time.

(Schon, 1983 The Reflective Practitioner)

Share a time when you:

- reflected in action with resulting improvement;
- reflected on action with resulting improvement.



Getting started with reflective practice' Cambridge Assessment International Education

Learn to reflect.

The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.

Sydney J. Harris

Reflection can be a **cyclical process** where a teacher evaluates current **provision** and **outcomes**, identifies the strengths and the areas that require improvement, implements new or revised ways of teaching and learning and re-evaluates the impact of change to decide if it is an improvement.

Reflective practice is core to all three areas of the 27 GTCNI Teacher Competences⁵, to GTCNI's concept of the reflective and activist teacher who is both a moral agent and an informed, knowledgeable practitioner⁶ and notably to its GTCNI's Code of Values and Professional Practice⁷ which sets out the commitment of teachers to the learner, to colleagues and others and to the profession as a whole.

The "Commitment to the Profession" states that *teachers will as reflective practitioners, contribute to the review and revision of policies and practices with a view to optimising the opportunities for pupils or addressing identified individual or institutional needs; and in keeping with the concept of professional integrity assume responsibility for their ongoing professional development needs as an essential expression of their professionalism.*

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is a process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their professional lives.

Day, C (1999) 'Developing Teachers: the Challenges of Lifelong Learning.'

For reflection to be effective long-term a teacher should be able to tease out and improve their understanding over time about....

- their personal values, views and underlying beliefs;
- the pedagogy of learning;
- the statutory curriculum requirements;
- the learners' needs, interests and abilities;
- the context of your school, families and the local community.

5 Teaching: the Reflective Profession, GTCNI Belfast

6 Ibid pages 9 and 10

7 Ibid pages 44-46



J Hattie, Visible Learning, 2012

What are the benefits of reflective practice⁸?

If undertaken honestly and effectively, reflective practice can:

- improve the teacher's self-awareness and deepen their understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their work;
- develop the teacher's understanding of the learners, how they learn and what stops them from learning;
- develop the teacher's understanding of the learning process and their ability to model learning in action, which in turn develops the learners;
- improve the teacher's capacity to learn;
- improve the teacher's effectiveness;
- improve the learners' experiences and outcomes;
- promote a collegial culture of reflective practice for improvement.

What are the challenges in reflective practice?

Reflective practice is part of the everyday business of teachers and school leaders, but there may be risks if not managed well.

We need to identify possible risks so we can avoid them.

Reflective practice can potentially:

- be challenging and risky, especially when it questions accepted beliefs, roles and behaviours (how things are done around here);
- be made time-consuming if turned into mechanical checklists viewed as an end in themselves as opposed to bringing clarity to learning;
- reinforce poor practice which is the accepted norm of a teacher or a group; and could
- leave a teacher vulnerable, if used inappropriately as part of a formalised accountability framework.

[Return to The Teacher as a Learner index](#)

WHAT DOES USING 'FIRST-HAND' EVIDENCE MEAN?

The Learning Leader strategy states that teachers should:

- develop collaboration and share best practice with stakeholders to build capacity; and
- ensure that evaluation skills, including lesson observation, are integral to developing 'next' practice.

This means that reflection and self-evaluation cannot just be your description of what you have done.

It needs to use **first-hand** evidence of the depth of learning.

Evidence may *qualitative* or *quantitative* and may include, but is not limited to:

- learners' questions and answers to your questions;
- learners' written work;
- impact of your feedback on learners' understanding and progress;
- performance data;
- first-hand observation of learning;
- video lesson observation;
- trusted colleague observation;
- learning walks;
- collaborative planning;
- action research;
- feedback from colleagues;
- feedback from learners, including from small groups;
- pupil questionnaire responses;
- feedback from parents;
- feedback from governors.

[Return to The Teacher as a Learner index](#)

HOW CAN REFLECTION PROMOTE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT?

Effective self-evaluation can happen when teachers share their reflective practice to learn more about how best learners may learn.

Grigg's rules for effective reflective practice:

1. We need to become familiar with a range of models for reflective practice, so that we can select the most appropriate for a particular purpose or a particular stage in our professional development. There is no one way to undertake reflective practice.
2. We need to understand that these models are catalysts and frameworks for the reflection process, and not something to be completed as an end in themselves.
3. We need time, support and contexts in which to try out different models.

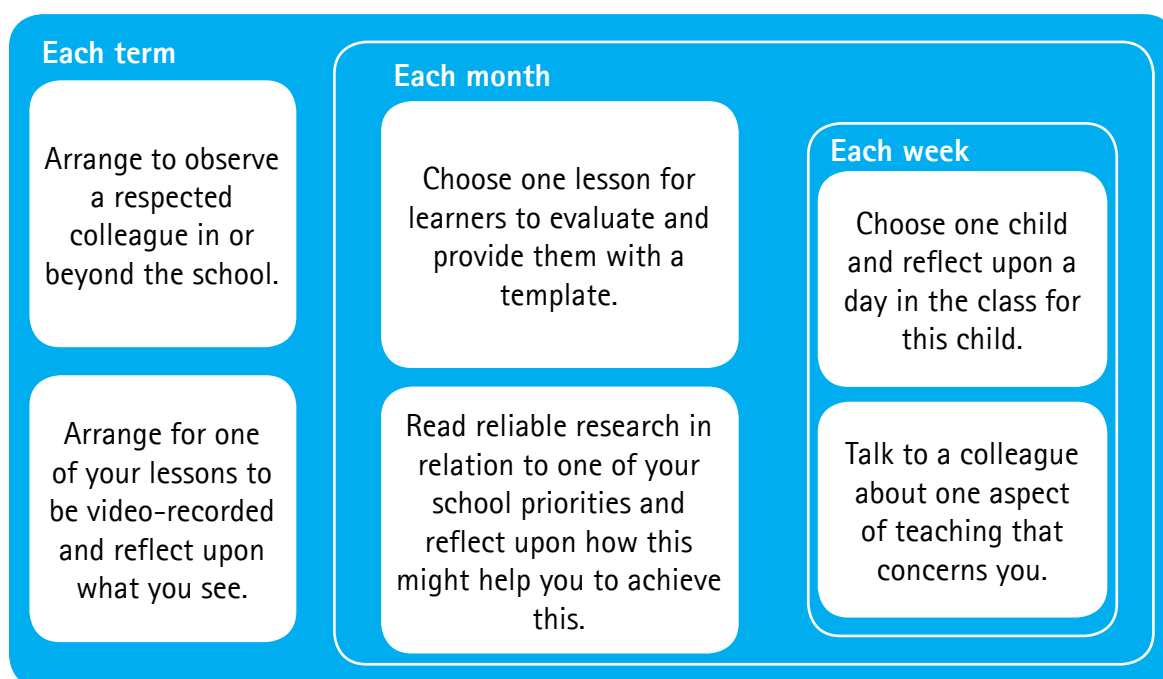
➤ Keep it **simple** – it can be made complicated and bureaucratic but if it is, then it becomes a burden and is ineffective:

- Improve the **one thing** at a time that will **make most difference**
- **If you have more than three priorities, then you don't have any**
- Decide **at the start** what success will look like
- *Better intended learning outcomes*
- And **how** you will recognize it
- *With first-hand success measures*
- Set a **short** timescale
- If it's taking too long, **stop** and try a better approach
- It doesn't have to be perfect – **move on ...**

If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

Ignacio Estrada (Director, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation)

Here is a practical approach using several of the 'lenses of reflection'⁹



Grigg R, Big Ideas in Education: what every teacher should know, Crown House. 2016

Consider the impact of each of these reflections:

- on your teaching;
- on the learners.

If undertaken by individual teachers at whole-school level, how could these actions contribute to school improvement?

[Now Change the Conversation](#)

⁹ Brookfield (1995, 2005)

LEARNING LEADERS

A Strategy For Teacher
Professional Learning

TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER AS LEARNERS

(CLICK below)

[What does learner-focused reflective practice look like?](#)

[What is the Self-evaluation Framework – ISEF?](#)

[What does learner-focused reflective practice through ISEF look like?](#)

[The Reflective Teacher: The Effective Learner](#)



WHAT DOES *LEARNER-FOCUSED* REFLECTIVE PRACTICE LOOK LIKE?

In the context of teacher professional learning, searching questions are more likely to promote effective reflection and effective self-evaluation by teachers, individually and collectively, if the conversation is directed actively:

As a teacher I have a responsibility to ensure that an integral part of any professional learning I undertake will focus on the implications for providing progressive learning opportunities for my pupils.

Learning Leaders page 24

As a teacher I have a responsibility to support colleagues to identify and achieve personal learning goals.

Learning Leaders page 24

*How well **do** I lead learning?
How well **do we** lead learning?*

However, thinking about children and young people as the **central learning partners**, it is helpful for teachers – as a means of reflection – to ask the '**How well**' questions in terms of **questions which might be in the mind of the learner**.

- Do I belong here?
- Am I important to someone here?
- Are these the right topics or the right courses for me to learn?
- What is motivating me to learn?
- Is this the best way for me to learn?
- Am I good at something here?
- Am I making the best progress possible?
- Am I growing as fully as I could as a person?
- And, as a citizen, as I mature?
- Is someone listening to me here?¹⁰
- Am I being helped to think self-reflectively and lead my own learning?

¹⁰ Adapted from David Geurin

It does not follow however, that these questions will be in the mind of the learner.

They are however, **learner-minded** questions which teachers should use as a **filter** to frame the '**How do I**' and '**How do we**' reflective questions so as to ensure that reflection remains learner-centred and learner-focused.

This approach stops the conversation drifting to focus solely on the actions of the teacher's classroom performance, and thus become disconnected from the learning outcomes.

However, it is also important for a reflective teacher to consider effective learning and in doing so to prompt children and young people to think about how they learn.

The teachers should help the learners to frame and ask appropriate self-reflective questions that will help to make their learning even more effective – and in discussing them with the teacher – to make the teacher's practice even more reflective.

In this process learning is a conversation among learners and not a monologue between teacher and learner.

Reflective practice is core to all three areas of the 27 GTCNI Teacher Competences¹¹ and to GTCNI's concept of the **reflective and activist teacher who is both a moral agent and an informed, knowledgeable practitioner**¹².

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OR

[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)

¹¹ *Teaching: the Reflective Profession*, GTCNI Belfast

¹² *Ibid* pages 9 and 10

WHAT IS ISEF (INSPECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK)?

The Education and Training Inspectorate's ISEF¹³ is designed to support continuing self-evaluation in schools – and not a once-off activity only when an inspection is due. Its use supports an ongoing process of reflective practice.

It sets out a common set of three areas – **outcomes for learners**, **quality of provision** and **leadership and management** – each in turn comprising three components. There are three cross-cutting elements one of which is **Care and Welfare**.

All 12 components are shared openly and transparently between schools and the ETI.

For each component (and specific for each phase of schooling) there are:

- characteristics of effective practice; and
- self-evaluation questions.

INSPECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK					
Overall effectiveness					
Outcomes for Learners	PL	Quality of Provision	PL	Leadership and Management	PL
Standards attained	S/AFI	Quality of curriculum (including breadth, balance and appropriateness)	S/AFI	Effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership	S/AFI
Progression		Effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences		Effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership	
Wider skills and dispositions/capabilities		Effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement/teaching/training and assessment in promoting successful learning		Effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process	
Governance (for schools)		High degree of confidence	Confidence		Limited Confidence
Care and Welfare		Level 1, C&W impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners		Level 2, C&W does not impact positively enough on one or more of learning, teaching and outcomes	
Safeguarding		Level 1: Reflects the guidance		Level 2: Reflects broadly the guidance	
				Level 3: Unsatisfactory	

¹³ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/articles/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef>

As a school leader I have the responsibility to be accountable to governors for improved outcomes for pupils as a result of investment in professional learning.

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There is both a **whole school** version of ISEF and a version for school **boards of governors** both of which are **designed to support self-evaluation in schools on a continuing basis**. Both can enable an holistic view, bringing together individual self-reflections by teachers and leaders.

Core to **effective reflective practice** is to consider the **effect** of teaching provision on the **outcomes** for the learners (their social and emotional development as well as academic) and how the school **manages and leads improvement**.

Why should we use ISEF – and if we do – how?

- ISEF is mainly designed to help schools focus on self-evaluation on a continuing basis
 - But it's not mandatory – schools may, and do, use alternative sets of characteristics and quality indicators to promote improvement
- ISEF provides a common language – in line with its commitment to transparency ETI shares the indicators it uses for inspection so that there is harmony between the process of continuing self-evaluation and inspection – to avoid inspection being a one-off event
- ISEF is not a checklist, **nor is its purpose compliance**
 - Professional learning and school effectiveness should be considered in the round
- A teacher may evaluate their provision and outcomes individually and share and collate their findings with colleagues
 - To help build a share understanding of effective learning and teaching

- Individually and/or collectively, teachers may reflect on their existing skills, knowledge and expertise
 - To identify, determine and design for themselves their career professional learning and development
- Working in teams with ISEF can help teaching areas to be more consistent in the quality and effectiveness of their provision
 - And thereby ensure more able progression and transition for the learners
- ISEF is not one-size fits all
 - It is adaptive to enable teachers and schools to focus on their first-hand priorities

But above all, any reflective and self-evaluation questions asked should be learner-centred and reflect on learner-minded questions – those **in the mind of the learner**.

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WHAT DOES LEARNER-FOCUSED REFLECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH ISEF LOOK LIKE?

The charts on the following three pages suggest learner-centred, self-evaluation questions in terms of the three main PLs in ISEF (yellow for Outcomes for Learners, peach for Quality of Provision and blue for Leadership and Management) against the background of green for Care and Welfare.

As a school leader I have a responsibility to encourage professional dialogue that is informed by current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of pupils.

As a school leader I have a responsibility to ensure sufficient time and expertise is allocated for the planning, delivery and evaluation of the impact of professional learning both annually and across the lifespan of the SDP.

As a school leader I have a responsibility to support my teachers who lead a particular aspect of pedagogy or the curriculum.

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To ask *learner-focused*, **how well** questions through ISEF means asking:

- How well do I know all of my learners?
- How well do I know my subjects/areas of learning?
- How effective is my teaching for the benefit of all of my learners?

As a teacher I have a responsibility to ensure that an integral part of any professional learning I undertake will focus on the implications for providing progressive learning opportunities for my pupils.

As a teacher I have a responsibility to demonstrate that my professional learning has improved my practice and the standards achieved by my pupils.

Learning Leaders page 22

In the next three pages of ISEF, which follow, we suggest **learner-centred** questions to be answered using **first-hand** evidence which are in **your** classrooms and your school about **how well you learn professionally** leading to improvement.

In the fourth page following, is a reminder of how to pose the questions, for the purpose of reflection, in terms of the questions that may be in the minds of a reflective learner.

Or, to put it another way

**If they're not learning the way we're teaching –
why don't we lead learning their way?**

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THE REFLECTIVE TEACHER; THE EFFECTIVE LEARNER			
OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS How well do my learners develop and achieve?	PROVISION FOR LEARNING How well does my practice meet the needs and aspirations of all my learners?	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT How well do I contribute to leading learning in my school?	
Standards attained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do I know my class as learners? How well do I adapt my teaching to the way the children/pupils learn or do I expect them to adapt to my style of teaching? How aware am I of class and individual baselines? How well do I set and share high expectations for learning? How well do my learners' outcomes compare with other groups in this organisation and against other similar organisations? How aware am I of the barriers to learning in my class? Have I the expertise and knowledge to help the children overcome the barriers? How well do I motivate, engage and enthuse the learners in my class? 	Quality of the curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do I know the statutory curricular requirements for my class? How well do I adapt the curriculum to the interests and needs of particular cohort of learners? How well is my teaching informed by research? How well do I ensure the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and TSPC are integrated with good opportunities for learners to apply these skills in a variety of contexts across the curriculum? How well do I deliver the curriculum in a relevant, engaging and creative manner? Do I promote cultural diversity and social inclusion? How well do I work with colleagues to plan shared education experiences that provide learning opportunities and promote better outcomes? 	Classroom leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do I create a stimulating, purposeful and well-organised learning environment for the learners? How well does my management of the classroom facilitate learners to become independent thinkers who have high levels of self-management and build their resilience based on considered risk and consequence? How good am I as a role model as the lead learner in my class? How well do I learn alongside my students? How well do I ensure effective communication with and management of other adults (students, classroom/learning assistants) in my classroom? 	Effectiveness and impact of collaborative working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do I support the senior leadership team in promoting the ethos, vision and aims of the school?
Progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do I identify under and low achievers? Do I know the root cause of the difficulty and what steps have I taken to address the issues? 	Effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How responsive is my pastoral care in meeting the needs of individual learners in addressing local and contemporary issues which affect their lives? 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I know what appropriate progress is for my class across a day, a week, a term and a year? • How well do I track progress in my class? Do I have a balance of qualitative and quantitative data and do I use it effectively to inform future planning? • How well do I understand how to broaden and deepen the children's/pupils' learning? • How well do I build on previous learning? • How well do I build on outcomes from interventions or withdrawal programmes? • How well do I provide detailed information (qualitative, quantitative and pastoral) about the standards and progress of individual pupils in my class to colleagues to ensure progression? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I identify any special educational needs of the learners and provide clear and agreed education plans that progress learning. How do I involve children and their parents in setting and evaluating targets? • How well do I provide opportunities for the learners to contribute their views on relevant aspects of school life, including learning and teaching? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I seek and act upon feedback on the standard of my work from SLT, colleagues and learners? • How well do I collaborate with colleagues in school and in other organisations and what impact does this have on the outcomes for the learners? • How well do I have a shared sense of responsibility for the pastoral well-being and academic outcomes of all the learners in my school? • How well do I seek and accept opportunities to provide leadership in aspects of the life and work of my school?
<p>Wider skills and dispositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How aware am I of the necessary skills, dispositions and attitudes that the learners in my class should be developing as referenced in the appropriate key stage NIC or Curricular Guidance for Pre-school? • How well do I track and evaluate progress in the skills, dispositions and attitudes? 	<p>Effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting successful learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well is my planning reflective of the statutory requirements of the NIC and consistent with school policies? • How well is my planning specific to the needs of the current cohort of learners and does it build on their interests, needs and prior learning while providing challenge and developing deeper conceptual learning? 	<p>Effective action to promote & sustain improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I accept a shared responsibility for the improvement process and actively contribute to the school development plan? • How well do I use effectively the available data to inform future learning for my class, including in interventions for those requiring additional support?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I ensure that the learners know their own strengths, what aspects of their work need to be improved and how to make improvements? • How actively and meaningfully are the children involved in setting their own personal goals? • How well do I know and nurture the wider talents and abilities of the learners in my class for example in the arts, sports, ICT, voluntary/wide community, young leadership? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I use an appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies that suit the learning needs of my current class? • How well do I continually monitor the children's understanding and provide high quality verbal and written feedback? How do I know my feedback is effective and making a difference? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I provide relevant and timely evidence to the senior leadership of standards of work and provision when required? • How well do I actively seek to extend and renew my professional capacity through research and development opportunities? • How well do I build the professional capacity of colleagues and in particular support those teachers with less experience?
<p>Care and Welfare – Impacts/does not impact positively in learning, teaching and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I ensure that behaviour for learning is positively and consistently promoted? • How well do I ensure that relationships for learning are mutually respectful, open and trusting? • How well do I ensure that working relationships with other schools and the wider community support the holistic development of the learner? • How well do I address concerns raised with me by the learners, parents or members of the school community? • How well do I ensure that all children are receiving the support needed to overcome potential barriers to learning? • How effectively do I monitor levels of attendance, punctuality and engagement by the children so that issues can be identified and addressed promptly? 		
<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do I provide a safe and secure environment for the children to learn by attending relevant training and ensure that I follow all school policies with regard to safeguarding and child protection including the learners' on-line safety? • How well do I make senior leadership aware of any breaches in safeguarding or gaps in policies in line with department regulations? 		



LEARNING LEADERS

A Strategy For Teacher
Professional Learning

SENIOR LEADERS AND MANAGERS TAKING A WHOLE-SCHOOL VIEW OF LEARNING

(CLICK below)

[How does effective improvement work across our whole school?](#)

OR

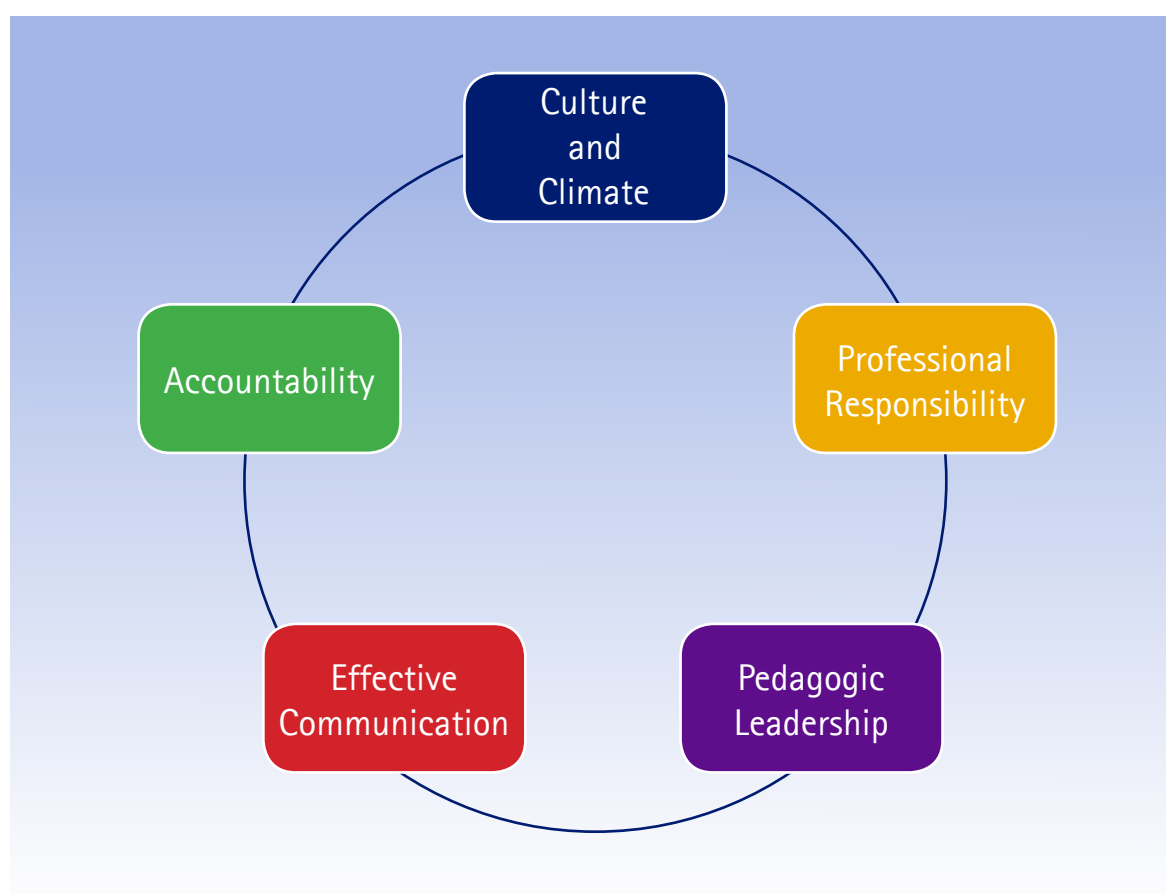
[Return to Warm-up Conversations](#)



How well does improvement work across the whole school?

This guide is a conversation to help your school reflect on, talk about, review and evaluate the effectiveness of its approach to teacher professional learning (TPL) in support of the strategy **Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning**¹⁴.

The Education and Training Inspectorate, through discussions in schools and scrutiny of next practice, has identified five common elements of leadership (below) which collectively, make a difference by successfully connecting professional learning to school improvement¹⁵.



¹⁴ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/teacher-professional-learning-strategy>

¹⁵ ETI evaluated innovative approaches to TPL in almost 35 schools and organisations. Findings are analysed and reported, along with a range of case studies, and are available at <https://www.etini.gov.uk/news/learning-leaders>

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.

As a school leader I have the responsibility to use my knowledge of the teacher competences to plan, participate and lead my own learning and the learning in my school as a research rich self-improving school community.

Learning Leaders page 24

As a school leader I have the responsibility to support my teachers who lead a particular aspect of pedagogy or the curriculum.

Learning Leaders page 24

As a teacher I have the opportunity to contribute to professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate professional learning and to improve professional knowledge and practice.

Learning Leaders page 22

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.

As a teacher I have the responsibility to demonstrate that my professional learning has improved my practice and the standards achieved by my pupils.

Learning Leaders page 22

As a beginning teacher I have the responsibility to understand the importance of career-long participation in professional networks and communities of practices to broaden knowledge and improve practice.

Learning Leaders page 23

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.

As a teacher I have responsibility to ensure that an integral part of any professional learning I undertake will focus on the implications for providing progressive learning opportunities for my pupils.

Learning Leaders page 22

As a school leader I have a responsibility to support my teachers who lead a particular aspect of pedagogy or the curriculum.

Learning Leaders page 24

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.

As a school I have the opportunity to initiate collaborative relationships and be supported in developing communities of effective practice within and beyond my school.

Learning Leaders page 24

As a school leader have the responsibility to encourage professional dialogue that is informed by current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of pupils.

Learning Leaders page 24

5. **Accountability:** for improvement, based on use of assessment evidence (not just data) to evaluate the progress being made.

As a school leader have the responsibility to be accountable to governors for improved outcomes for pupils as a result of investment in professional learning.

Learning Leaders page 24

In the context of School Development Plans ((The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations 2010 (Schedule 2.d and 7) and DE Circulars 2010/22 and 2016-4) the questions below ask Learning Leaders, at all levels including governors, to consider each of the five leadership aspects from the perspective of the learner, to evaluate the extent, quality and impact of TPL on school improvement in your school and to set targets for development.

It is **not** the purpose of this guide to lead your school to create a stand-alone TPL policy action or document in isolation from existing school development and improvement action planning arrangements.

School development planning regulations require all schools to provide an evaluative and evidence-based account of key aspects of the school's provision in order to set appropriate targets for improvement. School self-evaluation can empower a school community to take ownership of their development and improvement.

Self-evaluation can take many forms and occur at different stages and at different levels in a school. Schools have different contexts and will be at different stages of developing self-evaluative practices.

There are a range of self-evaluation tools, frameworks, models and accreditations to choose from. Many schools, support services and employing authorities have created their own tools, often based directly on the Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework (ISEF) or its predecessor Together Towards Improvement (TTI) both used successfully to identify their strengths and targets for improvement.

The use of any self-evaluative tool or framework is not an end in itself but a catalyst to support effective reflective practices across the school.

As the Learning Leaders Strategy states (4.2) *Leadership is second only to teaching as the factor most likely to influence outcomes for pupils.*

The following pages are designed as follows, building from left to right¹⁶:

The five pillars: the common elements of effective leadership derived from analysis by the ETI of next TPL practice in leading-edge schools	Learner-minded questions about effective learning as a filter for teacher's purposeful reflective practice	'How well do I' questions for teachers to consider, using the perspective of the learner, in order to reflect and improve	'How well do we' questions for middle-leaders who are responsible for team collegiality, developing a single sense of purpose and sharing effective approaches to provide for consistent learning experiences	'How well does our school' questions for senior leaders and governors responsible for directing the school, developing a growth mind-set, capacity-building and prioritising and pacing improvement in the interest of the learner
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Culture and Climate	Perspective of the pupil as the learning leader	Teacher as the learning leader	Middle leaders (i.e. subject, key-stage and curriculum managers)	School leaders (i.e. senior school staff leaders, managers and the governors)
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.	Do I belong here? Am I important to someone here?	How am I encouraged to identify my professional learning needs? How well am I meeting my professional development needs? How well do I develop my own professionalism and through working effectively with my colleagues?	How do we develop a collegial approach to gathering first evidence about our learners and using it evaluatively for improvement? How do we use our professional learning to drive school development planning for improvement? How do we know that our approaches to teacher professional learning are fit for purpose and effective?	How well does our TPL reflect the vision, ethos, values and aims of our school – and how do we know they are shared across the school and its community? How do we identify staff within our school as potential leaders/facilitators (e.g. coaches/mentors)?

¹⁶ The five pillars are derived from ETI inspection evidence and the five key areas of Learning Leaders: a strategy for teacher professional learning pp.4-5

Professional responsibility	Perspective of the pupil as the learning leader	Teacher as the learning leader	Middle leaders (i.e. subject, key-stage and curriculum managers)	School leaders (i.e. senior school staff leaders, managers and the governors)
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.	<p>Are these the right topics or the right courses for me to study?</p> <p>What is motivating me to learn?</p> <p>Is this the best way for me to learn?</p> <p>Do all my teachers model learning?</p>	<p>How well am I encouraged to think about my experiences so far, my strengths and current knowledge, my career stage and my aspirations?</p> <p>How well do we reflect on how to connect the needs of my learners to improving my teaching?</p> <p>How well am I enabled to take personal responsibility and identify my own professional learning needs?</p> <p>How clearly do I specify the best way for me to develop my professional knowledge and skills in a way which suits me best?</p>	<p>How well do all of use reflect on how to connect the needs of our learners to improving our teaching more consistently?</p> <p>And are the outcomes good enough for all of our learners?</p>	<p>How well do our approaches to TPL promote shared innovation, creativity and problem-solving – and the sheer enjoyment of learning – in practice?</p> <p>How well do the systems within our school provide clear pathways that offer coherent career-long opportunities for professional learning and capacity building for all of our teachers?</p> <p>How well do we create opportunities and give practical support for teachers to create their own learning pathways to improvement in their practice?</p>

Pedagogical leadership	Perspective of the pupil as the learning leader	Teacher as the learning leader	Middle leaders (i.e. subject, key-stage and curriculum managers)	School leaders (i.e. senior school staff leaders, managers and the governors)
<p>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.</p>	How good are my teachers at helping me to learn?	<p>How adept am I at perfecting my craft?</p> <p>How rigorous and demanding am I of myself in responding to my learners needs and in raising their expectations?</p>	<p>How do we ensure there is a focus on consistent improvement on effective pedagogy which raises standards?</p> <p>How do we ensure there is a collective understanding of how children learn (and fail to learn) and acquire new knowledge and apply new skills?</p>	<p>How do we ensure that TPL is informed by current research, including action research, on effective leadership, learning and teaching?</p> <p>How often and well do we lead conversations about effective learning?</p> <p>How well do we value pedagogical leadership in practice?</p> <p>How do we evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the learning and teaching across the whole school?</p>

Effective communication	Perspective of the pupil as the learning leader	Teacher as the learning leader	Middle leaders (i.e. subject, key-stage and curriculum managers)	School leaders (i.e. senior school staff leaders, managers and the governors)
<p><u>Effective communication:</u> 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.</p>	<p>Is someone listening to me here? How effective are my teachers in asking me about how I can learn better?</p>	<p>How often do I make and take opportunities to talk to colleagues within my school – and beyond my school (face to face and/or online) – about the challenges which I face in the classroom and how to resolve them?</p>	<p>How well do we motivate all practitioners to contribute to professional discussions in a range of forums, including online, to evaluate professional learning and improve professional knowledge and practice? How well do we share our understanding of the characteristics of highly effective classroom practice? How do we know that sharing is making a difference?</p>	<p>How well do we facilitate the development of collaborative relationships and professional learning communities within our school and between schools (including for example, through social media, online learning environments, etc)? How do our parents know that our teacher professional learning is improving our school by raising standards?</p>

Accountability	Perspective of the pupil as the learning leader	Teacher as the learning leader	Middle leaders (i.e. subject, key-stage and curriculum managers)	School leaders (i.e. senior school staff leaders, managers and the governors)
<u>Accountability:</u> for improvement, based on use of assessment evidence (not just data) to evaluate the progress being made.	<p>Am I making the best progress possible?</p> <p>Am I growing as fully as I could as a person ..and, as a citizen, as I mature?</p> <p>Is someone listening to me here?</p> <p>Do all of my teachers know that they are accountable to me for how well I learn and progress?</p>	<p>How do I evaluate the impact of my professional learning on improving the quality and effectiveness of my pupils' learning?</p> <p>How well do I use first-hand evidence to relate my professional learning to evidence of improvement in the outcomes for all of my learners?</p>	<p>How good are we as learning leaders?</p> <p>How effectively do we manage feedback to colleagues?</p> <p>Do my colleagues receive feedback on practice, observe the practice of others and change practice, through for example, coaching, mentoring and reflection?</p>	<p>As an organisation, how do we keep the learner at the centre of our strategic planning and decision-making?</p> <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>

Now Change the Conversation

OR

Return to Warm-up Conversations



**Teacher Professional Learning
Conversations and Reflections
about Learning**