

LEARNING LEADERS

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

NEXT PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



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TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

Next Practice Case Studies

1. Introduction

This paper comprises a compilation of case study summaries to provide access to the selection of the schools and other organisations visited by ETI during 2015-16 in connection with the Department of Education (DE) strategy, *Learning Leaders: Teacher Professional Learning (TPL)*¹.

The case studies should be read in connection with the 2015-16 ETI TPL report which summarises trends and findings arising from ETI's work in 2015-16².

Further case studies will continue to be added during 2017, providing material for the *virtual centre of excellence* (DE TPL Policy Commitment 5, page 13) containing best practice examples and useful resources, based on consultation with practitioners and mapped to DE's vision and characteristics for TPL.

The case studies included here have been indexed to illustrate the quadrant model, which is explained in more detail in Section 3 of the ETI TPL report for 2015-16 (pages 8-10) (*ibid*).

The quadrant model illustrates the two most important shifts evident in the more innovative practice observed by ETI which are:

- (a) a stronger focus 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.

The case studies which follow in the appendix are tagged in connection with the detailed elements of the quadrant model.

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

² <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/learning-leaders-evaluation-department-educations-strategy-teacher-professional>

2. Case studies

TPL CASE STUDY: Strandtown Primary School, Belfast

MAIN APPROACH: A facilitated programme for teacher professional learning

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrants 2a, 2b research-informed, evaluative

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3b networked

Context:

Strandtown Primary School is a large controlled primary school in East Belfast providing for almost 1000 children in years 4 to 7 and comprising eight or nine classes in each year group.

Research-informed:

The impetus for Strandtown's focus on learning and teaching was the London Challenge Secondary School Improvement Programme, a model later also used by primary schools, nationally and internationally. As an integral element of the programme, Ravenswood School, Bromley, developed the OLEVI Collaborative Learning Model – a framework to support the sharing of professional knowledge across schools and improve the quality of teaching and learning through reflection. Central to this research-informed model is the training of school facilitators who deliver the bespoke OLEVI resources within and across school communities. The six key themes in the OLEVI programme offered a practical structure for teacher professional learning in Strandtown's context.

Evaluative:

Why?

While there was a cycle of observation, including PRSD, operating in the school, the principal evaluated the observations as inconsistent and, consequently, limited in being able to inform whole-school improvement. The following key questions arose: was the observational evidence merely subjective, or was it based securely on a shared understanding of objective indicators of high-quality learning and teaching?

In this context, the leadership identified the need to establish a common approach to self-evaluation and reflection, linked to a facilitated process and based on a shared understanding of key pedagogic language and approaches. This firm foundation in theory and practice would enable teachers to develop consistently high-quality learning and teaching throughout the school. The first step was to identify and harness the existing effective practice.

How?

In order to model the most effective learning and teaching, the school identified the vice-principal as an outstanding classroom practitioner and a gifted facilitator of colleagues'

learning. She would undertake the OLEVI programme as a participant and be trained as a facilitator. The senior leaders invited six other schools to form a steering group and a representative from the OLEVI programme came to train the facilitators from the six schools in order to bring the programme to the Northern Ireland context.

What?

As a first step, the schools constructed internal audits based on the quality indicators in the OLEVI programme and in Together Towards Improvement (TTI) as a baseline of the teachers' attitudes, levels of professional confidence and understanding of pedagogy.

An internal mentoring process for teachers within the schools established 'learning threes', the optimum number for mutual reflection, support and challenge. Through this process, the teachers were enabled to reflect on their own practice and understanding; then visit other classrooms to aid review of key features and take part in a facilitated discussion where the facilitator models the approach and questioning required in this process.

How?

A crucial building block in the successful implementation of the programme was the professional development of all those involved in classroom observations to look for the learning, rather than focus predominantly on teacher performance. In this model of adult learning, teachers move through reflection into action and on into further reflection on the changed action, with a sustained focus on key pedagogic skills.

As the programme rolls out across a very large teaching staff, some of the teachers who develop as reflective and highly effective practitioners will become facilitators for others

The approach is curriculum neutral. That is, it is entirely grounded in pedagogy, not dependent on subject or key stage, and focused on the learning.

Collegial:

Why?

Sharing best practice across the teaching staff within a single school will lead to a better shared understanding of pedagogy and greater consistency in the children's experiences.

What? How?

See comments under the heading 'Evaluative' for the extent of collegial work undertaken by the teachers and school leaders.

To what effect?

Results of teacher surveys and, importantly, a 'Shifting Balance' questionnaire, indicate that the teachers' professional confidence has grown, especially in their understanding and use of engaging starters, high-level questioning and plenaries to assess the extent of the children's learning. In their comments the teachers appreciated being 'pushed out of their comfort zone' and for getting their 'professional buzz back'.

Involvement in the programme has also enabled teachers to access and respond more effectively to the children's voice at class, whole-school and curricular levels, to inform planning and future practice. The teachers also report that the children are more able to identify and discuss their own learning.

First-hand evidence from senior leaders joining curricular and pastoral team meetings indicates strongly that there is a higher level of professional dialogue about the children's learning, allied with a greater willingness to share with, and learn from, one another.

Networked:

Why?

From the beginning of the programme, the partner schools shared a commitment to the professional development of staff from their own and all the other schools.

What? How?

When the OLEVI model was introduced in Strandtown Primary the school formed a cluster or hub of primary and post-primary schools to implement the project.

In line with the model, there were two trained facilitators per hub, so 12 teachers altogether benefited from this shared professional development. The cluster initiated a programme of six sessions, hosted each time in a different hub school. Each session took a theme from one of the programme's six key elements – starter and plenary, differentiation, challenge, engagement, assessment and questioning.

To what effect?

Collaborative benefits include reciprocal visits between schools to share expertise in, for example: reciprocal reading; the use of ICT in the classroom; and, at leadership level, middle leaders and senior leaders sharing expertise in the analysis and use of data.

TPL CASE STUDY: Rathmore Primary School

MAIN APPROACH: Northern Ireland Teaching and Learning School

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2a research-informed

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3a coaching and mentoring

Context:

The case study is based on the concept of a teaching /learning school to deliver continuing professional development (CPD); similar to teaching hospitals and the recognition of the need to create and develop self- sustaining communities of good practice in schools

Research-informed:

The principal and vice principal investigated CPD models, notably coaching. As a consequence of their involvement in the DE-funded Transition Project, senior leaders recognised the importance of developing a teaching school model for intentional CPD development and a network of collaborative links in our immediate proximity.

Evaluative:

Why?

- The senior leaders recognised that the school needed to improve its assessment outcomes, its pastoral care and its classroom provision. A model for staff development was created, availing of the training and support of the former SEELB, which improved the learning outcomes for all pupils.

What?

- Three full days for coaching and mentoring with the Regional Training Unit (RTU) was provided for the Bangor principals. The principals in the cluster now have capacity to coach and mentor each other.
- The challenges of acting as a coach in one's own school were acknowledged as there is a need for objectivity regarding the issues faced.

How?

- Year group teams, including classroom assistants, worked closely with the SENCO and benefited from training linked to the children's learning.

To what effect?

- Rathmore has a freshly invigorated vision for establishing a Learning and Leadership Centre.
 - ✓ As a direct result of the facilitation model, the staff in Rathmore Primary are enthusiastic about their CPD and want to take on new opportunities.
 - ✓ The new model for CPD is firmly rooted in the classroom, focused on learning and complemented by professional debate
 - ✓ SLT dropped "discussion grenades" into conversations and then left working groups to debate the implications for teaching and learning.

- ✓ The management structure has been flattened and teachers and coordinators have a greater voice. They decide the priorities for teaching and learning in the school development plan.
- ✓ Key questions: Are we developing curriculum or developing people? Are we teaching a subject or are we teaching children? The emphasis is on the learners.

Collegial:

What? How?

- The network of principals has met, including three full days of coaching and mentoring training, with a representative of RTU. The Emergent Leadership Programme (as described above) has 26 graduates (2014-2015) and is currently running with 25 delegates facilitated by the principal and vice-principal of Rathmore, in partnership with RTU. A new facilitator from St Columbanus' College has been appointed to help sustain the development work.
- The cluster continues to communicate with schools that are not yet ready to participate in this form of CPD. The challenge facing Rathmore PS, as the lead partner, is how to move the process forward without financial support and recognition as an awarding body / teaching/learning school for CPD.

To what effect?

- It was challenging to shift teachers' focus to the pupils' learning processes and away from curriculum planning within the school development planning process.
- Working across phases was completely new and OLEVI training gave the principal insight into the fact that regardless of the phase – nursery, primary, post primary - the objective of focusing on the learning was the same.
- Lack of funding for CPD; how does the current education system enable the programme to grow? Time, money and facilities are needed to develop this model.

Networked:

- The future of the CPD project depends on other schools coming on board and assisting in the delivery of the programme as it is not sustainable in its current format for Rathmore Primary to continue as the lead.
- The vision of this CPD model is that children in the Bangor area will have a team of leaders working together at all stages of development for the benefit of the pupils in each phase of their educational lives.

TPL CASE STUDY: Markethill High School

MAIN APPROACH: Advancing professional discourse on teaching and learning:
research lesson study

PEDAGOGIC/COLLABORATIVE DIMENSIONS: Quadrant 2a and 3a

Context:

Markethill High School is an 11-16 non-selective controlled school situated in the rural town of Markethill in County Armagh. It has 500 pupils and 30 members of staff. In 2013 the school was identified as 'Very Good' in all areas by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Research-informed:

From 2012-2015 the school attempted a range of research lesson studies (RLS) and found that it led to a more collaborative approach to teacher professional development, much greater professional discourse on learning and teaching, and heightened awareness of potential issues. In 2015-2016, based on very positive and effective experiences, the school took the decision to undertake a whole-school shift to RLS as the main driver for professional development. Further detail appears below.

Why?

Professional development occupied a key place in the School Development Plan, but the school was keen to move from 'top down' models of CPD towards research lesson studies (RLS)), arising from organic professional discourse amongst staff about high-quality learning and teaching in the classroom and how it links to student outcomes.

What?

In September 2015, the school embarked upon revising its learning and teaching policy. The school identified six principles for inclusion: stretch and challenge; effective questioning, effective modelling, practical activities to scaffold learners, independent practice, and formative assessment.

How?

The school leadership afforded staff an exceptional closure day to read aspects of evidence-based research including the work of Dweck, Didau, Allison and Tharby and the Sutton Trust Report. The school read research lesson studies (RLS) which had been undertaken in England: the Ascend Model involved a large scale RLS programme in the greater London area; the Anthecology Model outlined the RLS approach used in the Samuel Whitbread Academy in England. The intention was to deepen knowledge of the principles and to allow staff the opportunity to formulate their own professional views and consider how they may apply within their own subject-specific discipline.

This day was the pre-cursor for a six-month period in which staff, in professional RLS hubs of three or four members, would discuss the evidence-based research, and identify a linked issue for exploration and development within the classroom. For example: the use of questioning strategies as a tool for effective differentiation within the Science classroom.

The RLS model was learning-focused. Teachers planned a lesson together and then observed each other teaching the lesson, therefore evaluating it 3-4 times to produce a final outcome paper, documenting conclusions.

In line with the Sutton Trust Report recommendations, each RLS hub was assigned a 'critical friend' as an observer; either a member of the senior leadership team or an external adviser, as a means of embedding further 'challenge' into the process. Within lessons, which were taught by each member of the RLS hub in turn and observed by the others, 3 pupils were also identified for close observation, including a high / moderate and low achiever. The teaching process is broken down so that all aspects of the pedagogy are seen clearly in the context of their impact on learning.

To what effect?

The RLS method is enabling teachers to take control in identifying their own classroom needs.

Staff are engaging in activities which build capacity and independence, including at middle and senior leadership levels.

Collegial:

To what effect?

- The strategic, collaborative approach to teacher professional development has been welcomed by staff.
- There has been much greater professional discourse on key elements of evidence-based research on learning and teaching. Teachers willingly share and discuss research and literature with each other.
- There has been a significant shift in meetings in school away from managerial issues to core discussions on learning, teaching and student outcomes.
- The notion of the school as a professional learning community has been enhanced.
- It is viewed as a horizontal, collaborative approach to teacher professional development within an atmosphere of mutual support and challenge.
- Visits to classrooms for lesson observations have been focused on the pupils as learners.

TPL CASE STUDY: Markethill High School

MAIN APPROACH: Flipped Classroom Mastery Model

PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSION: Quadrant 2a

Context:

Markethill High School is an 11-16 non-selective controlled school situated in the rural town of Markethill in County Armagh. It has 500 pupils and 30 members of staff. In 2013 the school was identified as 'Very Good' in all aspects by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Research-informed:

In August 2015, Markethill High School hosted training by an external provider, focusing on: Effective Differentiation in the Classroom and the merits of the Flipped Classroom Mastery Model, to allow for effective differentiation within the classroom. The ICT teachers within the school had already piloted the Flipped Classroom as a model for deepening pupils' knowledge of theoretical concepts linked to the course specification.

Why?

Staff Questionnaires, as part of School Development Planning consultation, indicated that the pupils' ability to develop as independent learners was one of the greatest challenges facing the school. The school identified that strategies to enhance pupils' independent learning skills were needed. A move to non-streaming at key stage 3 also necessitated a renewed focus on effective differentiation. The school had identified a set of principles that would form the heart of its new learning and teaching policy, including: *"Effective Learning and Teaching must be embedded within a constant and unrelenting framework of Stretch and Challenge."* it was suggested that the Flipped Classroom Mastery approach would assist with achieving these goals.

What?

The Flipped Classroom Mastery Model is an enhancement of the Flipped Classroom model, where 'surface' learning of knowledge and concepts is undertaken in the pupils' own time at home, paving the way for the development of high-challenge activities within the classroom, which focus on deep learning. Pupils, within the classroom, have the opportunity to develop at their own pace, individually or in small groups. The teacher formatively assesses pupils and gauges pupil understanding. Pupils demonstrate mastery of objectives on summative assessments. For pupils who do not master a given objective, remediation is provided.

How?

The modern languages department is currently adopting a Flipped Mastery approach. The department has recognised that the broad array of media-rich resources now available to pupils at home, including YouTube, podcasts and other resources, means that pupils have access to native French speakers pronouncing and relaying vocabulary with the aid of images and / or animation. Pupils are able independently to maximize learning through a pause and rewind approach to these resources.

The challenges of attempting to implement the Flipped Classroom Mastery model were identified as:

- the need for highly effective preparation;
- the implications of asynchronous learning in the classroom;
- the implications of pupils working at different paces, including for classroom management; and
- the need for intrinsic motivation on the part of pupils.

The shift to surface learning at home as opposed to the classroom is allowing teachers in the department to focus on high-quality scaffolding activities in the classroom, which support pupils in reaching high-quality learning outcomes and success criteria.

Formative assessment takes place on a regular basis, particularly through a bank of randomised assessment questions using the Moodle assessment tool. Pupils have unlimited attempts at these formative assessments. When pupils feel that they have mastered a challenge through formative assessment and feedback, in negotiation with the teacher, they undertake a final summative assessment before they are allowed to move on to the next challenge.

To what effect?

Feedback has been positive, both in terms of pupils' attitude and progression:

- a greater sense of accountability on pupils' part for their learning;
- homework as an integral, vital part of the learning process;
- a heightened sense of intrinsic motivation;
- a sense of achievement when formative and summative assessments are passed;
- deeper, higher-level thinking in the classroom; and
- more advanced outcomes in pupils' learning.

TPL CASE STUDY: Heads of English and Literacy Co-ordinator Cluster
Belfast and South-eastern Regions

MAIN APPROACH: ‘bottom up’ capacity building

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2b evaluative

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3b building leadership capacity and networked
community of practice

Context:

In this setting, teachers set their own agenda for continuing professional development (CPD) and access support from outside agencies as appropriate. It is a non-threatening ‘bottom up’ model and could be shared with other areas or adapted to form new regional clusters. Teachers attend the cluster in their own time – once a term, from 3.30-5:00pm - with schools taking turns to host meetings. Staff involved in the group are leading on staff development in whole-school literacy and are supporting and mentoring other colleagues.

Why?

- As the role of the Education Authority (EA) School Development Service continues to evolve, there have been fewer CPD opportunities for English and literacy practitioners in post-primary schools yet standards in English and literacy remain priorities for school development.
- With changes in the EA structures, there have been fewer opportunities to facilitate the sharing of effective practice in English and Literacy between schools and networking across the sectors.
- Following an “Excellence in English” conference in June 2015 facilitated by EA and attended by more than 60 heads of English and literacy coordinators from the post-primary schools in Belfast and the South-east, practitioners requested that a forum be established where English teachers could share practice and resources, and could discuss developments in the teaching of English and Literacy.

What? How?

- EA English and literacy Advisory Officers established the group with a vision for sharing practice, networking and disseminating information for transformative improvement in teaching and learning in these areas.
- Forty teachers signed up for the cluster with an agreement that group members would all be required to host meetings on a rotational basis, contribute resources and share practice. An ETI specialist English and Literacy inspector agreed to join the group in an advisory capacity and ETI have facilitated sessions on “Self-evaluation in English and Literacy” and “Developing a Whole School Approach to the Promotion of Literacy Skills.”
- The group set up a Fronter room where resources and presentations from the meetings are shared.
- The cluster meeting agendas are rooted in classroom practice and teachers showcase their work to the rest of the group. Examples of practice included marking for

improvement strategies, developing skills in speaking and listening across the curriculum, and developing a whole-school literacy policy.

- A key to the cluster's success has been the focus on learning and self-evaluative procedures and the firm establishment of the terms of reference for the group at the outset.

To what effect?

- Teachers have opportunities to network and share practice with a view to raising standards in English and literacy.
- Newly appointed literacy co-ordinators have sought out experienced mentors in the group to coach them in their work.
- Teachers identify their own needs for further professional learning and set the agenda for the meetings; EA staff then broker support from external bodies such as ETI and CCEA as appropriate.
- The group has built capacity and independence in up-skilling themselves. There is now a culture of professionals engaging with the latest thinking in teaching and learning in English and literacy and using it to inform classroom practice.
- Participants are empowered and enabled to develop capacity, be up-skilled and develop their thinking and practices in the teaching of English and literacy. Show-and-tell sessions to the whole group, networking and dissemination of good practice form the basis of the meetings.
- Participants and school leaders report that this group has brought a new dynamic to learning and teaching in English and Literacy.

Focus on raising standards

- The group has created an environment of trust and it is notable that schools support each other in pre- and post-inspection stages. Teachers network, avail of training/mentoring in one-to-one or whole-group contexts.
- The practice shared is immersed in the classroom.
- EA guidance and advice are delivered effectively and efficiently in a collaborative setting.
- Teachers have scope to discuss the new specifications in English and collaborate on the preparation of resources.
- Teachers value opportunities to hear from others, discuss leadership roles and present to other schools at the cluster to extend their knowledge.

Networked:

To what effect?

- The cluster facilitates the subject-specific TPL which can be difficult in school, including capacity-building to bring about purposeful change in policy and practice.
- The cluster has grown as members invite other colleagues from their own schools - and beyond Belfast and the South-east to attend.
- This model could be shared across regions quickly and effectively.

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Stranmillis Primary School

MAIN APPROACH: “*Beyond Outstanding*” peer observations and support

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2a inquiry-based/research informed - professional discussions centered upon an agreed pedagogical framework

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3a coaching and mentoring

Context:

In this school the teachers plan collaboratively in year group partnerships. Each teacher is a member of at least one and no more than two curricular teams. The teams are led by the curriculum co-ordinator. Each team is responsible for monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching in its area, reporting annually on its strengths and areas for development, and making recommendations for the future. These reports feed into whole-school action-planning meetings, helping the staff to establish appropriate priorities for ongoing development.

Research-informed:

- Involvement in the OLEVI programme enabled teachers to observe colleagues in other schools and engage in professional, high-level discussions of pedagogy.

Why?

- As the school approached the point where almost all the teachers had been through the OLEVI programme, they identified the drawback that this level of professional engagement was facilitated for only one term. As a consequence, the school explored ways in which this approach could become embedded in school life so that teachers be given the opportunity to observe each other regularly, enhancing reflection on pedagogy and meeting more effectively the needs of the children.

What? How?

- After each cycle of visits, the teachers meet to exemplify the effective teaching and learning they have observed.
- During term three, the teachers participate in a whole-school facilitated feedback session when each team shares examples of effective practice with first-hand evidence of impact and sustained effectiveness.
- Teams also share any common development needs that they would like support with during the next academic year.
- An essential part of this approach is that observations are confidential and only effective practice is shared outside the team; the process is about professional development, not accountability.

- At present the majority of the teachers are working within internal trusted colleague teams.

Evidence of benefits for the children:

- At this early stage, informal observations across the school indicate that children are more engaged in a greater variety of creative and highly effective learning tasks.
- The school monitors the quality of teaching and learning at the end of each year. This review includes the analysis of data, classroom observations, feedback from staff, parents and pupils, book looks, and staff discussions.

Collegial:

What?

- The school has developed and agreed a vision for future developments for the next five years. One aspect of this states that by 2020:

teachers, within agreed trusted colleague networks, will be supporting and challenging each other by:

- ✓ *identifying their own strengths;*
- ✓ *sharing good practice;*
- ✓ *identifying their own development needs; and*
- ✓ *continuing to learn from the strengths of colleagues within and beyond Stranmillis.*

How?

- In the pursuit of this goal the school has developed a 'Trusted Colleague Network Agreement'.
- To ensure consistency, the staff have discussed and agreed the key characteristics that constitute effective teaching and learning. A shared language and common understanding of effective learning have become the basis for all observations and professional discussions.
- Teachers have agreed to work in trusted colleague teams. For some, the team comprises teachers solely from Stranmillis, while for others it includes teachers from partner schools.
- Teachers within each team visit each other's classes during term one and again in term two.
- The visits are short in nature and focus on an agreed area of effective teaching and learning.

To what effect?

- The teachers reported that they felt reinvigorated because they were much more aware of their own strengths and areas for development.
- Teachers also commented that the time given to facilitate reflection ensured that there was a meaningful impact upon classroom practice.
- Teachers felt valued and reported in turn that they valued the programme as having a very positive effect upon themselves and their professional practice.

Challenges to the implementation of the strategy:

- The teaching staff at Stranmillis, like all teachers, are anxious about other adults observing their practice. Moreover, the cost of substitute cover to facilitate the sharing of practice could be a real barrier. Several factors are currently helping them to overcome these challenges:
 - ✓ the strong mutual trust and collegiality between the teachers;
 - ✓ the existing partnership between the four schools;
 - ✓ the emphasis on professional development and mutual support rather than accountability;
 - ✓ the teams' freedom to choose their own areas for focus;
 - ✓ the autonomy given to teams to organise observations at mutually convenient times when substitute cover is not an issue;
 - ✓ the school principal covering classes whenever necessary; and
 - ✓ cross-school teams being facilitated for observations and debriefing sessions.

Networked:

The aim is that, by 2020, the majority of teachers will be working in teams that span the four schools in a shared education partnership (Stranmillis PS, Christ the Redeemer PS, Oakwood PS and Pond Park PS) allowing them to share more effectively the good practice that already exists within each of the schools.

TPL CASE STUDY: Iveagh Primary School

MAIN APPROACH: Micro-teaching

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2a research-informed and self-evaluative

Context :

Iveagh PS, Rathfriland has an enrolment of 250 pupils with one-third entitled to FSM. One-fifth of the children are on the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Register, eight of whom have statements of SEN. Three-quarters of the current teaching staff have taught in the school for more than 10 years. For almost one-half of the teachers, Iveagh PS has been the only school they have taught in on a permanent basis. The school has a culture of self-evaluation. Staff are reflective practitioners and use evaluations to ascertain the success of an initiative and identify areas for improvement or further development.

Research-informed:

At the start of each academic year, staff have access to a prepared professional reading document. This document is an anthology of research summaries and educational articles which focus mainly on the area of development identified in the SDP. This document is used as a stimulus for professional discussion and reflection resulting in a consensus of what the anthology means for the individual teacher, the school practices and learning experiences for the pupils. Key point here – is there a way of providing an on-line library of work focused on effective learning?

Evaluative:

Why?

Due to the restructuring of the Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS) throughout NI, there were few opportunities for staff to attend in-service training on teaching methodology. Many of the staff at Iveagh PS attended the RTU Summer School in their own time, but this too is no longer available. Teachers in the school work collaboratively to plan and senior teachers observe lessons, resulting in a joint evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching.

The school recognised the need to develop a system whereby individual teachers could become more reflective of their practice and take ownership of the areas for improvement in their classrooms. It was important this process of evaluating practice was linked to the priorities within the school development plan and that there was a strategic and systematic approach to identifying need.

What? How?

In term 2, the staff set up the school camera on wide angle lens to film a lesson on the identified school theme. Each teacher reviews their own lesson against a school-designed document that lists key points for observation. As a result of this self-evaluation, each teacher identifies an element within the chosen theme to develop further. After a period of

consolidation, teachers invite a colleague to observe a lesson. The colleague in turn provides formal feedback on the area of focus.

The themes for the video exercises and supporting discussion documents have included Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities; Problem-Solving and Investigative Mathematics; the use of plenary; reading; self-esteem and the ability to empathise.

To what effect?

Teachers taking ownership for their own area of focus within the overall school themes has worked very well. Staff have also reported incidental learning about their teaching as a result of viewing the video of themselves. Feedback from the reviewer clearly shows how each teacher has addressed the area of focus and how this has become embedded in classroom practice. The quality of learning and teaching has been enhanced throughout the school.

Staff completed anonymous feedback proforma. These indicated the professional reading and school-designed video exercises were very beneficial. All staff engage in the process.

Overall this innovative approach is used effectively to build the capacity of all staff within the school.

CASE STUDY: Continuous Professional Development at South East Regional College (SERC)

MAIN APPROACH: A standards-based, collegial approach which provides coaching (facilitating with support) and mentoring (providing support and direction).

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2b

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3a

Research-informed:

What?

- The programme is designed as a dynamic, tailored, personalised continuing professional development which also addresses the digital literacy and pedagogical skills of the staff.
- The teachers engage in action research and embed technology-enhanced learning (TEL) in their teaching.

Evaluative:

Why?

- Evaluation of staff development previously carried out over one or two closure days had shown it to have had an inconsistent impact in terms of gaining the knowledge and skills that are retained and used in the weeks following the training.
- The conclusion was that a different approach was needed for training to be not merely the transmission of abstract and de-contextualised knowledge, but social process whereby knowledge is co-constructed through peer collaboration.

What?

- A model was developed round the Japanese Lesson Study model and piloted in 2008 and then rolled out across the college in 2009
- “Information and Learning Technology (ILT) and Pedagogy mentors” were seconded from a range of curriculum areas, and appointed following interview and an observed lesson.
- They identify and respond to the ILT and pedagogic development needs of selected programme teaching teams and teachers. They work closely with colleagues to map the appropriate technology and teaching and learning strategies to meet curriculum and student needs in specific lessons.

How?

- SERC has developed a range of formal and informal learning opportunities for all staff as part of the SERC Learning Academy. The Learning Academy includes:

- ✓ staff induction which has been flipped (i.e. training is provided online prior to meeting face-to-face and followed up with an observation to identify immediate individual training and support needs);
- ✓ online learning modules through the Learning Engine portal;
- ✓ ILT Pedagogy Mentoring programme - Mentors teach in their colleague's classroom environment, using demonstration lessons, team-teaching and peer observation to inspire change. Targets are tracked and monitored at each stage of the mentoring progress. Students provide feedback at each stage of the process and this feeds forward in the development of a continuing training plan for the teacher. Teachers share good practice from their classroom through Webinar Wednesday and at team level. The ILT Pedagogy Manager quality assures the mentors by observing them teaching and also training their mentees;
- ✓ Moodle Monday (online webinars, provided every Monday, focus on developing the blended learning skills of teaching staff);
- ✓ Webinar Wednesdays, 'live' recorded webinars, each Wednesday, where staff talk about, show and share good practice;
- ✓ Social learning via Yammer and Skype, which provides 'just in time' support.

To what effect?

- The professional development process is integrated within the College Development Plan and aligned with each departmental policy. There is programmatic engagement with set goals.
- The ILT Pedagogy Mentoring Programme has changed classroom delivery as evidenced in the new strategies and technologies adopted and as observed in a final peer observation.
 - ✓ Over 400 staff have completed the mentoring programme with over 1600 classroom observations (2008 to 2016).
 - ✓ Students provide feedback in every classroom session and this informs the next training session.
 - ✓ Post-mentoring survey of the mentees indicates their satisfaction. (93% say their confidence in the use of TEL has grown, 90% indicated their students continue to engage with the technologies introduced, 98% said they would recommend the mentoring process to others).
- From 2009 to 2014 achievement rates have increased by 13%.
- 51 staff have completed the *Certificate in Technology in Learning Delivery* (Level 4 from City and Guilds). Some of the work that the tutors have done as part of this project has been cited in case studies produced by JISC.
- Moodle Monday and Webinar Wednesdays: In the last year there have been more than 1000 'views' of the webinars and 600 views of "Good Practice" videos. Moodle was accessed by staff and students over 4.1 million times in 2014-15. 26% of these were from outside of the College. SERC has the highest usage of eBooks in the UK.
- Learning Engine: The learning engine manages the refresh dates of training and records the staff performance in completing the training. 15,843 learning activities have been complete by June 2015.

- Awards achieved – this example has been shortlisted for the TES eLearning team award (2011), the JISC Innovations in Learning and Teaching award (2012), has won the Beacon Award (2015)

Collegial:

Why?

- To encourage the development of Communities of Practice through the organisation's social media platform.

What?

- The peer mentoring model promotes a collaborative professional enquiry-based approach characterised by relevant, collaborative and reflective professional learning with regular 'classroom encounters' where the teaching, curriculum and students intersect;
- Student feedback feeds forward in the interactive model where progressive understanding grows;
- The coaching / mentoring model is personalised and adaptive.

How?

- By developing a mentoring and coaching framework;
- By using the GROW model, the mentoring has allowed teachers to identify their own goals (with assistance if needed from the mentor) and align those with the curriculum and the College's priorities;
- The mentor guides and trains the mentee, enabling them to achieve the goals and targets set.
- Generating 'buy in' means that the mentor needs to teach the mentee's class, to demonstrate the approach and give credibility and context to the training;
- Students feed-forward in the process, indicating at the end of each lesson what strategies and approaches were helping them to learn;
- Working with small groups and individual staff facilitates a collaborative approach with shared experiences, enabling staff to reflect on their learning and teaching, harnessing feedback from their peer mentor and students;
- Peer support - as well as 'trying' new approaches in class with the mentor, have scaffolded support to leverage change;
- Post-observation reflection takes place between the mentor and mentee and provides an opportunity to reflect more on the lesson and learner feedback.

To what effect?

- The most effective approaches are disseminated to curriculum teams at team level and then across the organisation through Webinar Wednesdays.
- A series of 'Know and Show' events for curriculum managers have encouraged them to develop the vision and exemplify the approaches advocated as they have taught lessons to their peers and to the College management team.
- Managers have themselves chosen to go through the mentoring programme.

- Teachers who have completed the mentoring programme have been encouraged to influence change within their teams and many have led workshops within the team; sharing the strategies and approaches they have developed and providing staff training.
- Mentees have also gone on to successfully apply for and become mentors.

CASE STUDY: St Louise's College

MAIN APPROACH: Continuous professional development and school improvement

TRANSFORMATIVE: Quadrant 4

Context:

The key commitment at St Louise's is to invest in quality and in supporting every person in our learning community to achieve the highest possible standards. This is not only with regard to student learning and achievement, but also with regard to leadership and the personal and professional development of all staff. Quality outcomes from students are directly linked to the quality of leadership at all levels of the school and the investment in staff as the most important resource. A whole school culture of self-evaluation is the key to ongoing improvement.

Research-informed:

What?

- Provide the forum for teachers at all levels within and across schools to complete Masters Programmes linked to the Leadership of Learning in partnership with University of Ulster;
- Develop an Action Research Module for the implementation of new initiatives and the development of practice (focused development 2016-17);
- This will involve all staff embarking on an Action Research Module for their Personal Learning Journey supported by a series of professional development modules developed by the CPD team;
- Use a range of research documentation to inform the development of 'next' practice.

Evaluative:

Why?

- Schools excel at what they do in a consistent manner.
- They have strong values and high expectations.
- Their achievements do not happen by chance but through highly reflective, carefully planned, strategies.
- There is a high degree of consistency.
- Leadership is well distributed and ambitious in order to move the school forward.

What?

- The inner belief and commitment to realizing excellence by those who lead schools is the starting point.
- The excellent school is a first choice for families and an employer of first choice for staff.

- Academic standards reflect the fact that, whatever their starting points, children and young people make very good progress through their school years, and achieve as well as they can in public examinations.
- Children feel good about themselves within the school; and that their talents and gifts, whatever they may be, are spotted and nourished.

How?

- Ensure that the teacher's evaluation skills are clearly developed, including the use of four sources of first hand evidence to measure impact – performance data, lesson observation, quality of student work, use of the 'voice' with all stakeholders – student, staff, parent and community.

To what effect?

- CPD within St Louise's is clearly focused on the measurement of impact and planning for improvement. This is augmented by on-going development of staff not only internally but at an external level.
- The processes for Continued Professional Development are part of the ethos and culture of the school and are not stifled by course overload or one day sessions, rather they are rooted in on-going development of staff through daily conversation, meetings, staff development opportunities, quality staff development days linked to priority areas aligned to SDP priorities and external support.
- The next stage of the professional development journey will be to present to staff a new CPD Programme rooted in pedagogy and the on-going improvement of classroom practice which will bring great benefits to the learner.

Collegial:

Why?

- Develop collaboration within and across schools and share best practice in order to build capacity – this is extremely successful in the 'Trusted Colleague Networking' activity that takes place within the school and across schools at both primary and post primary.

How?

- The Personal Learning Journey will allow staff to identify their own areas for development and plan for their professional learning journey. The staff will engage in individual action research based on their area of choice.
- The Personal Learning Journey will be supported by the development of effective CPD modules.

To what effect?

- Through the development of the most important resource, the staff, schools can become centres of excellence where all young people can grow and develop into future citizens who will make an impact on our society.
- The professional learning community within St Louise's and beyond allows

teachers and leaders to take control of shaping and developing their learning.

- St Louise's, with its partners, is moving towards a self-sustaining system of professional learning based on the four sources of first hand evidence.

CASE STUDY: St Patrick's High School, Keady

MAIN APPROACH: Professional learning groups

TRANSFORMATIVE: Quadrant 4

Context:

St Patrick's High School, Keady, is an 11-16 non-selective voluntary maintained school, with over 1,000 pupils and approximately 60 teachers.

Research-informed:

How?

The principal started to research other models of professional learning and was enthused especially by examples from Australia and from Scotland.

The expectation was that as a 'growth school' (reflected in the new TPL model), each member of staff would get better at their job each year. Objectives:

- to be in a school that facilitates your growth as a teacher/ member of support staff;
- to receive support from your colleagues to help you grow;
- to contribute to the learning and knowledge base of your colleagues; and
- to be in charge of your professional growth.

Evaluative:

Why?

- The school recognised that a new approach to Professional Learning was needed. There was increasing dissatisfaction with the traditional 'one-size fits all' approach to continuing professional development.
- Career-long Professional Learning is each teacher's entitlement; it is about teachers as professionals taking responsibility for their own learning; it is a continuous process from student teacher to retirement and models life-long learning for pupils.
- The school was highly focused on meeting the diverse needs of learners, but was failing to meet the diverse needs of staff.
- The needs of the school had changed; the school had moved to mixed-ability class groupings and the major focus in the SDP was to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to meet the needs of all pupils.

What? How?

The school revisited the question of 'what professional learning actually means', and agreed it was based on the concept of teachers, as professionals, who engage in deep enquiry, based on their own classroom experiences.

- Staff reflected on their current classroom practice to enable them to select an area where they would like to improve.
- These reflections were collated and informed the creation of a menu of

professional learning opportunities; each one was directly related to classroom practice. Staff indicated their preferred areas of focus.

- Several professional learning groups (PLGs) were created and relevant professional reading material was given to every member of staff. All staff played an active role on the PLGs.
- 'Traditional' staff days ceased; instead, groups were given time to meet and share ideas and experiences. Teaching cover was provided for peer observations.
- Minutes of monthly meetings were passed to the SLT, but the process was really in the control of the teachers.
- At the end of the year, teachers presented what they had gained from the year's commitment.

To what effect?

There has been a culture shift in relation to professional learning; listening to and learning through structured observations from colleagues across departments and across teams embracing new pedagogies to ensure deep learning.

- The culture in the school is now founded on personalised professional learning. Each teacher creates a unique professional learning plan.
- Teachers survey their classes to evaluate if the pupils have noticed any improvements in their learning as a result of what their teachers had changed.
- The school has listened to staff; one teacher commented: *'This has been the best initiative in which I have ever been involved. I have become a better teacher through listening to colleagues facing the same challenges.'*
- Practice is dynamic, for example: the principal team-teaching with an English teacher in the learning support centre.

Collegial:

How?

- Establish a school set of 'Agreed Steps in Professional Learning' for all staff.
- Identify a focus for enquiry.
- Find colleagues with a similar focus. Frame a question on the focus.
- How can we use "Group work" more effectively to promote pupil learning?
- How can we use Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities to improve pupil learning in the classrooms?
- How can we meet the needs of every pupil in the classrooms?
- How can we manage challenging behaviour even more effectively in our classrooms?
- Review and discuss relevant research material.
- Plan a research strategy e.g. as a group, using the research, agree on a change in practice & decide on evidence collection.
- Implement change over a specified period.
- Collect evidence of impact through observations/assessments/pupil questionnaires.
- Share findings with the group and agree next steps.

Networked:

Arising from and through the work, the school has developed learning communities with its feeder primary schools. For example: engaging in paired observations to learn from primary colleagues who have expertise in teaching mixed ability groups; and to avoid repetition in mathematics provision between primary and post-primary.

The school is seeking to have the teachers' research accredited as part of a post-graduate qualification, similar to the situation in Scotland.

CASE STUDY: Literacy and Numeracy KS2 and KS3 CPD Project (EA South and West Regions)

MAIN APPROACH: Building Bridges to Better Learning KS2 & KS3

PEDAGOGIC DIMENSION: Quadrant 2a and 2b: research informed; evaluative

COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION: Quadrant 3a and 3b: collegial and networked

Context:

Why?

The project began in January 2015 in direct response to evidence from DE which indicated a dip in pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy when transferring from primary to post-primary school:

'Schools and other organisations need to strengthen transition links in order to build effectively upon pupils' prior learning and address the regression that can occur.'
(Chief Inspector's Report, 2012-14, p13.)

How?

- To provide CPD for teachers of English and mathematics at KS2 and KS3 (mainly KS3), focused on the development of high quality teaching and learning; to provide this CPD within ALCs.
- To bring together KS3 teachers with KS2 teachers from partner primary schools, for at least part of the CPD programme, in order to facilitate sharing of practice and to improve transition for pupils from KS2 to KS3.
- To utilise, as fully as possible, the potential of I.C.T. available in schools to support the CPD programme and to facilitate on-going sharing of practice.

Research-informed, collegial and networked

Action to promote improvement – how:

The project team was established, and plans for a five-day programme of training for principals and teachers of literacy/English and numeracy/mathematics at key stages 2 and 3 were drawn up. The training was informed by current, innovative, effective practice and was guided by the teachers' own identified professional needs. It focused on improving pedagogy, therefore the facilitators modelled effective practice, and on building communities of learning, therefore opportunities for discussion were built in.

Teachers of Key Stages 2 and 3 undertook three days of cross-phase professional development. Primary and post-primary schools worked together to identify priority areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy which were pertinent to their own context. They drew up action plans to effect improvement in these areas, which ranged from aspects of reading and writing to agreed vocabulary around the teaching of mathematics.

As Year 1 of the project was a pilot year, the team explored other avenues to support the five day training programme and additional actions for improvement evolved over the course of the project, including:

- Development of a video resource documenting the transition of a group of pupils from primary to post-primary school, from their perspective;
- Cross-phase training of student teachers;
- Key Stage 2 and 3 Literacy and Numeracy TeachMeet;
- Video resources on ESAGS TV;
- A regional pilot project for the mathematics resource Izak 9.

Research-informed, collegial and networked

Impact:

From January 2015 this project has helped to improve the quality and impact of teacher professional learning to the benefit of all learners. While teachers already have highly-developed professional skills, this project continues to develop new knowledge, understanding and practice. The training programme content and activities are dedicated to helping teachers understand how pupils learn, e.g. active learning, skills-based, independent learning, etc. The training programme builds upon and develops the skills articulated in the NI Curriculum in an explicit way and models effective classroom practice. The project has taken stock of emerging and innovative practice in teacher professional learning and has endeavoured to show how sharing of good practice, educational partnerships between schools, and the potential of ICT, can help to achieve positive outcomes.

Outcomes:

The project has been successful on three fronts:

1. Teacher Professional Learning (TPL)

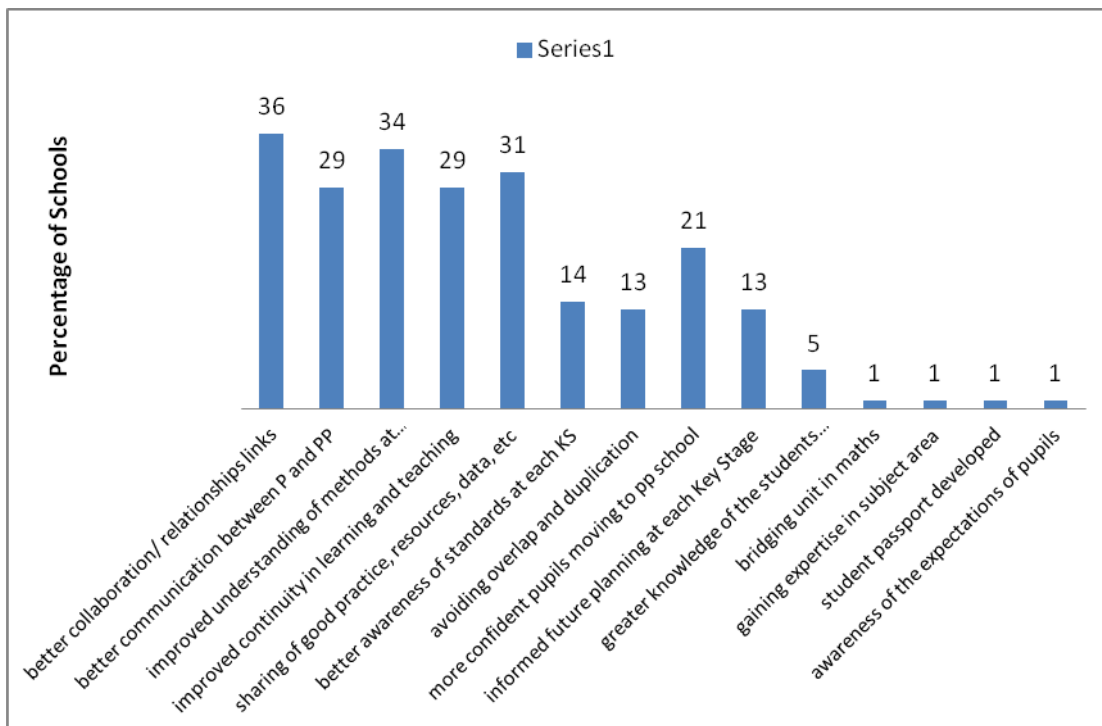
- The TPL Units are based on a collaborative approach to the development and delivery of training which focuses on pedagogy and innovative practice. New strategies and resources are sourced and used to develop existing good practice. Teacher capacity building is a key outcome of the project with opportunities for reflection and analysis built into the programme to bring about and embed changes in classroom practice.

2. Professional Learning Communities

- The project provides an opportunity for teachers in primary and post-primary to work collaboratively, engage in peer learning and share best practice in learning and teaching. As a result of the project school partnerships, school clusters and Area Learning Communities are collaborating across primary and post primary to improve learning and teaching in Literacy and Numeracy and transition arrangements. The project also provides an opportunity for schools to discuss standards and the most effective transfer of data from primary to post-primary schools.

3. Building Capacity and Raising Standards

- The Project Team has adopted a “Coaching” model throughout the programme by demonstrating strategies and resources that teachers can embed immediately into their classroom practice.
- The CPD Project Website on C2K’s Fronter contains resources used on the teacher professional learning days with supplementary resources created and sourced by the CPD Project Team, including resources from leading practitioners from worldwide educational communities. The website is available to all teachers across Northern Ireland, including student teachers from the four teacher training institutions. Teachers are also contributing to the website site by providing examples of effective practice to the Project Team to add to the site. The Project website also contains ready-made Teacher Professional Learning Units for teachers, middle and senior leaders on Literacy, Numeracy and Transition from KS2 to KS3.
- Teachers surveyed from the 553 schools involved to date identified the following key benefits of the project in improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning at transition from KS2 to KS3:



PEDAGOGIC →

<p>(2a) Research-informed</p> <p>Strandtown Primary School Iveagh Primary School Markethill HS (Flipped Mastery) Literacy and Numeracy KS2 and KS3 CPD Project</p> <p>Inquiry-based Markethill HS (Lesson Study) Stranmillis Primary School</p>	<p>(2b) Evaluative</p> <p>Strandtown Primary School Iveagh Primary School Heads of English and Literacy Co-ordinator Cluster Continuous Professional Development at South East Regional College (SERC) Literacy and Numeracy KS2 and KS3 CPD Project</p>	<p>(4) Transformative</p> <p>St Patrick’s High School Keady St Louise’s College Belfast</p>	
<p>(1)</p> <p>Transmissive</p>		<p>(3a) Collegial</p> <p>Rathmore Primary School Stranmillis Primary School Continuous Professional Development at South East Regional College (SERC) Literacy and Numeracy KS2 and KS3 CPD Project</p>	<p>(3b) Networked</p> <p>Strandtown Primary School Heads of English and Literacy Coordinator Cluster Literacy and Numeracy KS2 and KS3 CPD Project</p>

COLLABORATIVE



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