

Teachers as Learners

Ensuring all students learn is a responsibility that requires collaborative and collective effort. Effective schools have teachers who are learners. When teachers engage in professional learning, reflection, and collaborative inquiry, it informs all the work of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

As a member of a PLC, teachers answer four key questions:



What do we want students to learn?

How will we know if they learned it?



What will we do if they didn't learn it?

What will we do if they already know it?



(Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many & Mattos, 2016)

Through collaborative examination of instructional practices, teachers develop knowledge and skills to enhance instructional practices and respond to student needs. Reflecting on practice and student learning data, as well as considering questions generated during collaborative inquiry, leads to the development of meaningful learning goals for professionals.

Administrators who engage in learning:

- are visible in the learning environment;
- are reflective practitioners, open to receiving and using feedback;
- provide feedback on classroom instruction; and
- promote and participate in teacher learning opportunities.



Teachers who engage in learning:

- are innovative and willing to try new things;
- seek professional learning and share promising practices; and
- are reflective practitioners, open to receiving and using feedback.



Reflection Practices

Self-reflection can be considered as thinking carefully about the meaning of an experience to reflect on learning and personal growth. Reflective dialogue can be considered as conversations that require teachers to expand their thinking beyond familiar practices or daily experiences. These conversations develop shared understandings related to students, learning and pedagogical practice. Self-reflection informs reflective dialogue and helps teachers think critically about their teaching practice.

Collaborative Inquiry

Collaborative inquiry is a process in which participants come together to examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully using techniques of research. Collaborative inquiry is a powerful design for professional learning and for increasing collective efficacy as it recognizes the role of teachers in ongoing school improvement.



Collaborative inquiry may include educators interested in addressing a school, department, division, or classroom issue driven by the consideration of student learning needs. Teams work together to narrow the question, gather and analyze evidence, determine action steps, and share their findings and recommendations. ([Collaborative Inquiry: A facilitator's Guide.](#))

Characteristics of collaborative practices include:

- regularly scheduled, facilitated meetings with a focus on student learning;
- discussion and analysis of student achievement data to inform instruction, assessment and evaluation;
- implementation of Teaching and Learning Action Plans;
- reflective dialogue on instructional strategies and sharing of instructional practices; and
- ongoing discussions that extend beyond scheduled meeting times.

([Collaborative Inquiry: A facilitator's Guide.](#))

Reflection

The following data sources and questions can be used to guide the group's discussion.

Performance Measurement Framework Report:

Outcome 2: Students experience a safe, caring and inclusive school environment.

- Indicator 2.2: Positive School Climate - Staff

Outcome 3: The education system is responsive to students' strengths and needs.

- Indicator 3.1: School Engagement: Student
- Indicator 3.3: Self-Efficacy - Teacher

Reference Documents

Responsive Teaching
Learning Policy.



School Development Survey Scales: these results are reported separately from the PMF Report

- Professional Learning (Staff Survey)
- Feedback and Coaching (Staff Survey)
- Learning Strategies (Student Survey, Grade 5-6 & Grade 7-12)
- Valuing of School (Student Survey, Grade 5-6 & Grade 7-12)

Additional Evidence:

- Staff PL requests
- School based Professional Learning plans
- Action Plans
- Evidence of feedback related to instructional practice/leadership
- Teaching and Learning team meeting minutes



Questions to Consider



Use evidence of current practices to support your discussion points, strengths and opportunities for growth.

- What collaborative structures and practices exist in your school community (see examples of collaborative practices above)? How do these structures facilitate individual reflection, reflective dialogue and adjusting teacher practice?
- How are your learning goals connected to student learning needs?
- How are opportunities for professional learning related to your growth plan promoted and supported?
- How do you and your colleagues monitor your learning on teaching practice to determine if it is having an impact on student learning?
- How does the school development process inform your school's professional learning needs?

References:

Learning Forward Ontario & MISA London Professional Network. (2011). *Collaborative Inquiry: A facilitator's Guide*.
<https://www.scribd.com/document/438804944/Collaborative-Inquiry-Guide-2011-pdf>