Designing a research-informed collaborative, professional learning resource to develop and enhance impactful teacher leadership

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Innovate session

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Knowledge animation

anima – from the Latin = breath, life, soul

animate – bring to life, put in motion

Suggests action and movement, dynamism and vibrancy, invigoration and innovation

Ways of making knowledge accessible and mobile to promote learning connections and use

Stoll (2009)
Animating external research knowledge

- helps practitioners encounter research in manageable units of meaning and in accessible, varied formats
- presents evidence in ways that:
  - capture interest and deepen engagement
  - stimulate exploration of topics and issues
  - challenge thinking
  - aid reflection
  - help people articulate tacit knowledge, beliefs
  - help social processing by feeding conversations
  - stimulate collaborative learning and enquiry
  - move them to generate new knowledge that will enhance their practice

Based on Stoll and Brown (2015)
People’s existing knowledge and experience

New knowledge for practice created together through learning conversations

Knowledge from elsewhere, research and other evidence

Tools, protocols and facilitation

Knowledge animation

Nine strong claims about great professional development that leads to great pedagogy

1. It starts with the end in mind
2. It challenges thinking as part of changing practice
3. It is based on assessment of individual and school needs
4. It involves connecting work-based learning and external stimulation
5. Opportunities are varied, rich and sustainable
6. It uses action research and enquiry as key tools
7. It is strongly enhanced through collaborative learning and joint practice development
8. It is enhanced by creating professional learning communities within and between schools
9. It requires leadership to create the necessary conditions

Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012)
Catalyst: an evidence-informed, collaborative, professional learning resource for teacher leaders and other leaders working within and across schools

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Based on findings of an ESRC Knowledge Exchange project: Middle leaders as catalysts for improving teacher practice: developing a knowledge exchange and impact network for Challenge Partner Schools

Project goals

- To share research and practice-based knowledge effectively across schools about excellent middle leadership practice and professional development

- To develop evidence-based tools and processes to track ways in which middle leaders change and enhance their practice as a result of knowledge sharing

- To have mechanisms to track the impact of middle leaders’ knowledge sharing and changed professional practice on changed teacher practice

- To be able to share the outcomes of applied project work more widely to benefit a broader range of educators
Middle leaders as catalysts for improving teacher practice

Project questions

1. What do we know about effective middle leadership within and across schools that changes teachers’ practice?

2. What are powerful ways to share knowledge about excellent middle leadership practice within and across schools?

3. What evidence-based tools can be designed collaboratively between Challenge Partners middle leaders and academic partners to track changes in teachers’ practice as a result of middle leaders’ interventions?

4. What leadership conditions in schools help develop and embed cultures of shared outstanding practice?
1. Start with the end in mind – shared understanding

2. Research-informed earning conversation, to identify baseline, clear goals and strategies

3. Colleague tries out new approaches – experimenting

4. Check-in conversation mid-intervention, about successes, barriers etc

5. Colleague refines approaches – adapting for greater impact

6. Evidence of change learning conversation – has colleague changed their practice to increase impact?

7. Impact – on student learning experiences and outcomes

Collaboration

Co-ownership

Sustainability

Reflection

Middle leader’s impact tracking cycle

(Stoll et al 2018)
Contents

Research Findings cards
- 4 sets of 7 findings, corresponding to the 4 research questions
- Short summary (2-3 sentences) of the findings

Professional Learning cards
- 9 different professional learning processes

Facilitator Guide
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Professional learning cards informed by research and findings of an R&D project with Challenge Partners, an informal network of 350+ schools. Designed to:

- help develop better understanding of and skills in teacher leadership and middle leadership within and across schools
- stimulate evidence-informed conversations that lead to deep and meaningful learning
- support skilled facilitation of these conversations
- encourage enquiry, improve problem solving and enrich decision-making through collaboration
- enhance knowledge sharing within schools and across networks and school-to-school partnerships

Includes research findings cards and professional learning process cards

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