RESPOND

Sustaining the professional development of teachers within schools as professional learning environments

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The RESPOND framework for mentor and peer-to-peer support guidelines

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1. The RESPOND framework for mentor and peer-to-peer support guidelines

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In this chapter, we introduce a framework for mentor and peer-to-peer support in schools, developed as international guidelines. As a tool, the guidelines focus on the roles of and interactions between different actors in school, with reference to mentors, newly qualified teachers, experienced teachers, and school leaders.

These guidelines are prepared against the backdrop of a global recognition that, around the world, education systems must be transformed if we are to reach the lofty aspirations set out in Sustainable Development Goal 4 to, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). This includes a specific recognition that at the heart of any educational transformation, we must emphasize and prioritize the role that teachers play. If teachers themselves are to be empowered as agents of change, then it is essential that we lift-up the teaching profession in our societies and ensure that teachers are provided the necessary support for professional development and enabled to take the action within their work to innovate and improve on the status quo.

1.1 The mentor and peer-to-peer support guidelines

The principal aim of these guidelines is to build a framework for developing action areas and specific actions to promote contexts and conditions that facilitate the interdependence between professional development and school development and the sustainability of both. The tool provided by the guidelines aims to create a homogeneous scaffolding for teacher professional and school development and the avoidance of sectoral approaches which risk fragmentary and unsustainable outcomes. The four dimensions focused on are key features of any teacher's professional profile and resonate with international priorities for teacher professional and school development.

These guidelines are essential for various groups involved in education. First and foremost, they are for school leaders and the teachers under their supervision. The guidelines

provide school leadership with valuable strategies for structuring and facilitating an environment where the learning and development of both newly qualified and experienced teachers are prioritized. Second, these guidelines offer insights for teacher educators regarding their ongoing role in bridging the gap between teacher training and professional practice. This includes their engagement in research and development alongside schools, as well as their support for teachers' continuing professional development. Lastly, these guidelines could be beneficial for educational authorities. Decisions related to time management and educational policies should prioritize continuous teacher development and the collective role teachers play in school development. A clear framework, along with the necessary opportunities and expectations for professional growth, must be established at all levels of the education system.

The intended impact of the mentor and peer-to-peer support guidelines is at the level of ongoing professional learning for all teachers, curriculum renewal and delivery to promote global learning and competence, and that of planning for overall school improvement. The levels of participation and dissemination foreseen mean that this product is a key part of the overall RESPOND project and can enable it to impact in terms of intersecting local, regional, national, and international levels by fostering a collegial professional culture throughout all the organisations that play a role in educational systems.

The development of the action areas and their corresponding steps is grounded in educational research. This foundation ensures that the proposed areas are not based solely on the experiences, perspectives or biases of the authors but are supported by research demonstrating their potential effectiveness in fostering learning and professional development throughout a teacher's career. It is crucial that users of these guidelines approach them critically, making necessary adjustment to their local context – there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, the guidelines provide a common starting point for reflection and discussion within each school. To promote transparency, the following section offers a brief overview of the key literature that informed the development of these guidelines, with the hope of encouraging readers to explore these areas further. Additionally, the reference list includes sources that are not explicitly cited in the main text but were actively used in shaping the action areas presented in the guidelines. As the guidelines as a whole draw on various sources across different areas, it would not have been meaningful to directly link specific sources to individual action steps. This allows interested readers to delve deeper into the research and broaden their understanding of the underlying concepts.

1.1.1 Collective teacher efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy is commonly defined as teachers' shared perceptions and beliefs regarding their possibilities to create a good and productive learning environment for all students. It is about the conviction individual teachers have regarding the collective capacity within their school community. This belief is tied to the idea that the collective effort of teachers can result in positive and meaningful outcomes for all students (Goddard et al., 2000; Klassen, 2010). The term originally stems from social cognitive theory, and Bandura's theories regarding efficacy. "Collective efficacy beliefs are a group shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given level of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). The concept encapsulates the shared belief in a school about the potential of teachers to positively steer students' growth and development (Adams & Forsyth, 2006). This shared belief includes all students, also those who are unmotivated or for various reasons could have disadvantages in their learning and development. Through collective teacher efficacy, changes are created that counteract with conditions, with the students, and/or in their environment that could otherwise lead to challenges for the student's progression (Donohoo, 2018).

Collective teacher efficacy beliefs are an area that has received increasing attention as a field of educational research, especially in the last 30 years. A big part of this research has been concerned with detecting connections between collective teacher efficacy and student's achievement. Findings show that factors strengthening collective teacher efficacy could have an impact on the student's achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). The connection between collective efficacy and students' academic achievements is seen in how the belief in their collective abilities can direct the energy teachers put into teaching and how unwavering they are when facing students with diverse academic or social difficulties (Salloum, 2022; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2014). The correlation between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement have been positively quantified through meta-analysis, which led to Hattie (2023) putting it at the top factor to influence student achievement (Donohoo, 2018; Eells, 2011).

Collective teacher efficacy shapes how a school operates and how teachers work together. It's about how a school uses the combined ability of its teachers to reach shared goals. This shared belief affects many aspects of teaching, like instructing, managing classrooms, encouraging students, and dealing with problems (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2014). The stronger the belief in collective efficacy, the better teachers can tap into and use the resources within their community. This is because strong relationships based on trust create a supportive community, which is essential for a group to work effectively together (Goddard et al., 2000).

1.1.2. Social cognitive theory

A central concept within the social cognitive learning theory is human agency. In brief, this concept revolves around the idea that all individuals can exert some form of control over their own lives through the actions they choose to take. A key factor associated with human agency is individuals' self-efficacy. Within the social cognitive theory, human agency is developed because of a reciprocal, causal relationship between three areas: behaviour, interpersonal personal factors, and the external environment. The interplay between these factors will vary depending on the situation and will determine individuals' actions and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

1.1.3. Cultural-historical activity theory and expansive learning

In the 1920s, Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1980) initiated the development of cultural-historical activity theory by introducing the idea of the cultural mediation of actions. This theoretical framework uniquely added society and culture as an additional unit of analysis in considering the relationship between human activity and an individual's thinking and feelings. Vygotsky believed that learning happens when existing complex cognitive structures that are internalized by a child through activities shared with adults and which are situated in the cultural context of the child. Aleksei Leont'ev expanded on this by adding the concept of a collective activity system, which moved this theory beyond a focus on the individual as sole unit of analysis and helped to explain how social groups through collective actions have a mediating role on activities.

From 1978 Yrjö Engeström (1999, 2014) has built on cultural-historical activity theory by introducing Expansive Learning and Activity Theory. This work proposes that learning new forms of activity is a process in constant creation, not based on fixed, existing knowledge and skill. Expansive learning is focused on collective transformation in the collective system, recognising that this is initiated by individuals. Engeström explained that this can happen when individuals start to question the established norms in an activity system, and this can escalate into collaborative and deliberate collective change Expansive learning also focuses on horizontal development as complementary to vertical development. Vertical development explains that human learning is aimed at developing higher levels of competence. Horizontal development comes about when knowledge concepts are challenged by the lived experience of these concepts, thus bringing about a change in the individual.

In expansive learning, learners learn something that is not yet there. In other words, the learners construct a new object and concept for their collective activity and implement this new object and concept in practice (Engeström, 2014, p. 74).

Engeström (1999) detailed an expansive learning cycle based on seven consecutive actions. The first action in the cycle is questioning or challenging aspects of existing knowledge, understanding or practice. This is followed by the second action of analysing these aspects to find out how and why this applies in practice and what is the systemic explanation of the situation. This action involves a transformative step in collective understanding, discourse or practice in relation to the situation. The third action involves the modelling of the new explanatory relationship that was identified in a way that can be publicly transmitted. "This means constructing an explicit, simplified model of the new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation" (Engeström, 1999, p. 383). In the fourth action, the model is tested, examined and experimented with to grasps it dynamics, capabilities and limitations. This is followed by the fifth action which is the actual implementation, application or extension of this new model. The sixth action involves reflection on and evaluation of the process, and the seventh action involves consolidating the outcomes of this process and integrating into a stable form of practice.

Expansive learning initiates the zone of proximal development, as defined by Vygotsky (1980), and is often stimulated by the need to address contradictions that arise during interaction with the collective activity system. In addition, Engeström and Sannino (2017) also explain the importance of expansive learning as a boundary crossing process in which collective concept formation takes place due to engaging with unfamiliar situations or domains that require new conceptual resources to adequately address or encounter them. This process in turn strengthens network building and the potential for further engagement and collaboration among the group to address further development and undergo subsequent expansive learning cycles.

1.1.4. Communities of practice

The social learning theory "Communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) provides a valuable concept for understanding the important learning opportunities that exist at a community-level. The concept of communities of practice is postulated on three common aspects: *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, and *shared repertoire*. The concept starts with the idea that people group together to complete activities, and in doing so they must negotiate the meanings of the actions they engage in with one another. "Membership in a community of practice is therefore a matter of mutual

engagement. That is what defines the community" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73). The second aspect, joint enterprise, accounts for the fact that this type of mutual engagement must be a negotiated experience in which both purpose and relationships of accountability are developed. This leads to the community establishing its own unique form of practice. The mutual engagement and joint enterprise of a community of practice leads to the development of the third aspect – a shared repertoire. Through a history of negotiation and practice, a common set of resources are established that allow the members of the group to interact without having to constantly re-examine shared understandings.

The concept of communities of practice has gained support as a valid approach to *situated learning.* "The overall apparatus of situated learning is a significant rethink of learning theory of value to anyone wanting to take learning beyond the individual… Part of its appeal is that a seemingly natural formation which enhances learning can be consciously developed, which is important for those implementing change" (Barton & Tusting, 2005, p. 3). The learning process in communities of practice is dynamic in that renegotiation and change are a continuous part of such practice. *Reification* and *participation* are key aspects to this learning process as the two main ways in which participants can influence the process of practice. In the process of community practice, *reification* is the act of bringing concrete meaning to abstract concepts through their regular application and codification. *Participation*, on the other hand, is the process through which diverse ideas and concepts can be deliberated over to reach common understanding to structure practice on (Wenger, 1998, pp. 88-93).

2. Part A: The RESPOND Mentor and Peer-to-Peer Support Framework

This tool focuses on the roles of and interactions between different actors in school, with reference to mentors, newly qualified teachers, experienced teachers, and school leaders, and defines Mentor Support Guidelines for formal institutional support and Peer-to-Peer Support Guidelines for informal support between colleagues.
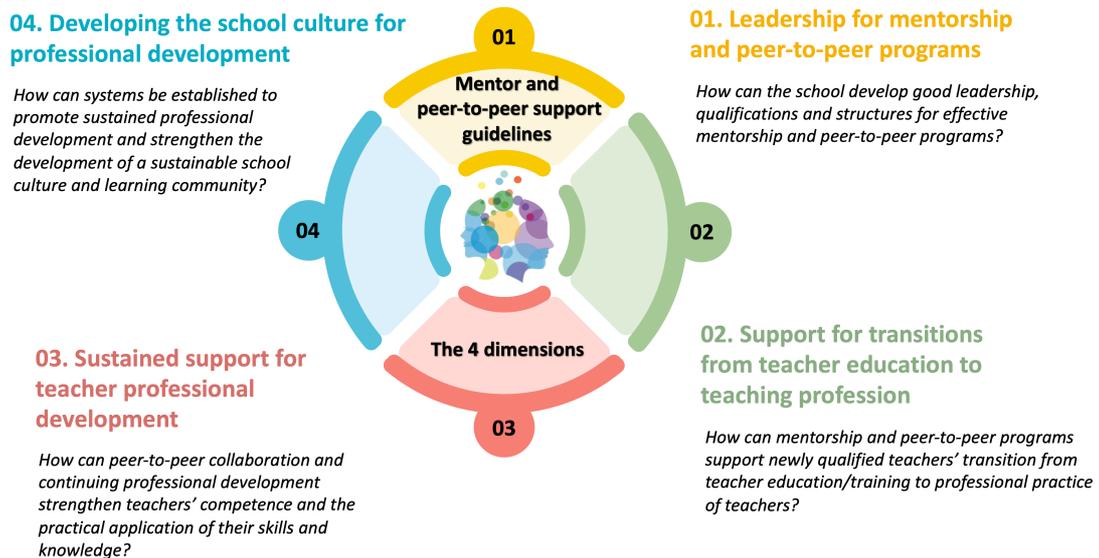
04. Developing the school culture for professional development

How can systems be established to promote sustained professional development and strengthen the development of a sustainable school culture and learning community?

01

Mentor and peer-to-peer support guidelines

04

02

03

The 4 dimensions

01. Leadership for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs

How can the school develop good leadership, qualifications and structures for effective mentorship and peer-to-peer programs?

03. Sustained support for teacher professional development

How can peer-to-peer collaboration and continuing professional development strengthen teachers' competence and the practical application of their skills and knowledge?

02. Support for transitions from teacher education to teaching profession

How can mentorship and peer-to-peer programs support newly qualified teachers' transition from teacher education/training to professional practice of teachers?

Figure 1 – The 4 Dimensions of Mentor and Peer-to-Peer Support

Table 1 – Overarching values, attitudes and competencies that guide mentorship and peer-to-peer programmes

Values	Attitudes	Global competencies
• Authentic leadership and coaching • Trust building and empowerment • Culture of continuous improvements • Communication and cooperation • Recognition of teachers' role and impact	• Responsibility • Awareness and empathy • Self-reflection and critical thinking • Adaptive and flexible practice • Openness to others' points of view	• Global and Local Issues and Multiple Perspectives • Intercultural Communication and Interaction • Individual and Collective Wellbeing • Acting for Sustainability

Table 2 – Leadership for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs

Dimension 1	Guiding Question
Leadership for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs	*How can the school develop good leadership, qualifications and structures for effective mentorship and peer-to-peer programs?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Identify the purpose and vision for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs	• Clarify the reasons for building a mentorship and/or peer-to-peer program(s). • Involve participants in the process of creating a strong vision. • Communicate the vision for the program to all involved. • Set measurable short-term targets and long-term goals for the mentorship program. • Create a roadmap for the program's vision, including a plan for achieving the goals. • Identify and support varying individual mentoring needs across specific learning goals, preferences, and professional needs.
Integrate evidence-based management practice in systems and structures	• Ensure to keep updated on relevant research literature and policy documents. • Stimulate cooperation with other institutions and establish opportunities for sharing experiences across schools and regions. • Share experiences and practices within and between schools. • Motivate continuous professional development and lifelong learning. • Conduct observational- and evidence-based reflection on outcomes and impacts.

Enhance teachers' professional competence by developing a school culture for action, reflection, and sharing of competence	• Facilitate arenas for sharing and critical discussions of personal practice and experience, by promoting:
	    ◦ Knowledge acquisition – creation of new insights, skills and relationships.
	    ◦ Knowledge sharing – dissemination of such learning within and among members of the organization.
	    ◦ Knowledge utilization – integration of learning to make it broadly availability, its generalization to new situations, and its practical application.
	• Provide space for dialogue and reflection regarding teaching practice.
	• Develop strategies for dealing with difficult situations supported by a professional repertoire of practice.

Provide clear opportunities and strategies for career development and advancement	• Establish model pathways/guidelines for teachers' career advancement and link to opportunities for professional development. • Encourage teachers to take on new responsibilities and leadership roles linked to their career advancement pathway. • Supervise individual teachers to develop their own pathways for career advancement and facilitate its achievement through regular review and provision of necessary opportunities.
Establish systems for training and qualification of professional mentors and peer-to-peer guides	• Identify if training of mentors will be through an individual school-based program or a common mentor education program (e.g., led by a Teacher Education Institution or professional training organization). • Establish accredited training programs for mentors and peer-to-peer guides. • Support experience-based reflection and learning for continued enhancement of mentors and guides.

Table 3 – Support for transitions from teacher education to teaching profession

Dimension 2	Guiding Question
Support for transitions from teacher education to teaching profession	*How can mentor and peer-to-peer programs support newly qualified teachers' transition from teacher education/training to professional practice as teachers?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**

Implement sustainable mentorship programs	• Implement an induction phase where mentoring is prioritized in a systematic way during the first years of teaching, based on:
	   ○ *A co-designed plan between the mentor and the newly qualified teacher.*
	   ○ *The encouragement of building personal skills and competence.*
	   ○ *The promotion of new skills and competence.*
	   ○ *A trustful relationship between the mentor and the mentee.*

Design personalized mentoring plans for the mentees	• Assess the mentees' current competences. • Identify the mentees' needs for professional development. • Set development targets for mentees according to the schools' eco-systems. • Facilitate a continuous meta-reflection on the process and outcome.
Enhance social and academic membership and engagement in the learning community, and strengthen cooperation between school and teacher education	• Include and recognize the newly qualified teachers as important resources and contributors in the professional community. • Establish forums for reflexive dialogue where newly qualified teachers can share their knowledge on issues such as new teaching methodologies, the use of technology in education, interdisciplinary perspectives, and action-based research-initiatives to strengthen the quality of teachers' own teaching.
Establish and distribute in-depth knowledge about school culture, the teaching profession, and transitions from teacher education to professional practice	• Create spaces for reflecting on connections between qualification in teacher education and further professional development in professional practice. • Facilitate opportunities for collaboration and joint planning between newly qualified teachers and more experienced colleagues.
Cultivate professional flexibility and resilience	• Motivate newly qualified teachers to further develop and stay in the profession. • Provide and initiate programs where newly qualified teachers can further develop their competence. • Reduce the experience of isolation by newly qualified teachers and increase their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Table 4 – Sustained support for teacher professional development

Dimension 3	Guiding Question
Sustained support for teacher professional development	*How can peer-to-peer collaboration and continuing professional development strengthen teachers' competence and the practical application of their skills and knowledge?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**

Develop sustainable mechanisms for peer-to-peer support and ongoing learning opportunities for teachers	• Equip the teachers with tools and methods for different forms of peer-to-peer-support, including
	   ○ *Observation of others, being observed, and mentoring each other – structure the school day to give teachers time for activities.*
	   ○ *Joint problem solving: a problem for one teacher, is a problem for the whole school.*
	• Facilitate opportunities for the staff to meet and work with common issues regularly and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.
	• Reduce the teacher`s isolation through peer-coaching.
	• Stimulate teacher collaboration to internalize new practices.

Stimulate active and engaged participation in school leadership	• Communicate clear expectations for individual and collective professional development.
	• Prepare individual development plans for all teachers which follow the overarching school goals and have clear expectations for further advancement.
	• Show interest and motivate teachers to focus on development, by:
	   ○ Having an overview of all development projects and follow-up on the progress and results.
	   ○ Creating a shared vision of the school goals and operationalize these visions to create ownership among the staff.
	   ○ Being open to pilot and experience new learning innovations.
	• Lead by example, by:
	   ○ Providing personal follow-up, showing concern and being responsive.
	   ○ Encouraging openness to feedback and willingness to learn from mistakes.
	   ○ Investing in personal growth, new knowledge, and self-development.

Create genuine practices for teacher collaboration and unity	• Develop a school culture where the staff trust each other, discuss challenges and successes, share experiences, observe and reflect over each other`s practices, including:
	   ○ Planning and problem-solving as a collaborative activity.
	   ○ Regular meetings to discuss student work, plan lessons and discuss research.
	   ○ Teachers take advantage of each other's knowledge and skills to create a coherent culture where the collective capabilities of the whole teaching staff are greater than the individuals.
	• Appreciate and value all staff for their unique experience, competence, and opinions by allowing all voices to be heard and supporting the work of each individual.
	• Use reflective dialogues to develop and enhance teachers' meta-view on their own and collective practices.
	• Support teachers in establishing good routines and structures for their own work, set limits for their roles and responsibilities, and develop teachers' resilience and adaptability to stay in the profession over time.

Encourage critical reflection and create systems for teacher feedback and appraisal	• Dare to be critical of one's own and peers' practices – be able to reflect and understand this as an opportunity for continuing development. • Understand teaching as a learning profession – all teachers should develop their skills and knowledge throughout their whole career. • Share reflections regarding students' results from mapping surveys, standardized tests and classroom observations as a basis for further planning and teaching, and assess if current practices are achieving the desired outcomes. • View feedback as a tool for teachers' improvement, not as an assessment to locate the weakest. • Recognize professional learning as a part of the day-to-day practice.

Develop awareness and understanding of current research and evidence on effective teaching practice	• Organize time and space for teachers to explore research literature by:
	  ○ Making current research available (and makes it mandatory reading) as a foundation for staff meetings.
	  ○ Reducing hours earmarked to teaching and giving more time to professional development.
	• Ensure access to research literature through:
	  ○ Demonstrating how to search for relevant research literature.
	  ○ Making printed copies of research available.
	• Create a culture of talking about research findings.
	• Provide time and space for critical reflections by teachers to identify their schools` challenges and assess how current research could support their specific situations, including:
	  ○ Creating an understanding that effective teaching requires regular development and improvement, that experience alone is only part of that development, and that opportunities for professional development should be valued.
	  ○ Providing opportunities for critical discussions about relevant research and what can be an inspiration for the teachers' further development and their practices.

Expect and encourage teachers to continuously build bridges between theory and practice throughout their careers	• Support teachers to conduct practice-based research about student and teacher learning, testing new work methods and measuring the effect of innovative practices, by supporting:
	  ○ Lesson study.
	  ○ Action research.
	  ○ Publication of practice-based research work for other teachers and researchers to use.
	  ○ Provision of necessary resources for teachers to conduct practice-based and design-based research.
	• Apply current research and experience as a basis for constantly developing teaching practice and promote an openness towards testing new solutions, which can be strengthened by:
	  ○ Instructional experimentation.
	  ○ Trust and help seeking.
	• Share and celebrate teachers' experiences with the rest of the teaching staff – both positive and negative.

Table 5 – Developing the school culture for professional development

Dimension 4	Guiding Question
Developing the school culture for professional development	*How can systems be established to promote sustained professional development and strengthen the development of a sustainable school culture and learning community?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Promote collective ownership of the schools' mission, values and goals	• Conduct a shared assessment and evaluation on the current status of the school -- which responds to the key questions: Where are we now? & Where do we want to go? • Provide opportunities for cooperative dialogue and deliberation on the schools' mission, values and goals. • Encourage active participation in identifying forward looking improvements and/or targets for the school's development and in developing strategies to achieve them. • Promote the responsibility of teachers (both individually and collectively) for the achievement of these targets and goals. • Build strong collaboration with parents and guardians around the development of a holistic learning community. • Strengthen and embed the school's role in wider society by establishing a strong network with external stakeholders and local actors. • Establish processes for regular review and renewal of the school's vision and/or mission.
Enhance a culture of continuous improvements	• Pilot and test new approaches and alternative practices on a regular basis and evaluate outcomes in relation to professional contexts. • Incentivize and reward innovative teaching practice. • Promote creative approaches and recognize that valuable learning comes from both what worked well and what did not work. • Provide opportunities for critical reflection and discussion on current teaching practices, habits and presumptions. • Utilize research-based evidence to inform and enhance continuous improvements.

Create a structure and process for sustained professional learning and development at an organizational level	• Support processes for knowledge acquisition, sharing and utilization. • Coordinate and routinely arrange opportunities for exchange, sharing and collaboration among staff and students. • Provide defined and differentiated roles and responsibilities for school staff to implement and achieve collective initiatives. • Ensure time is given to staff to work collectively as a professional learning community. • Facilitate opportunities for school-based professional development. • Promote competence development between colleagues through conversations and observation of professional practice.
Integrate intuitive knowledge processes into management procedures	• Establish structures for supportive leadership that facilitate organizational learning and development. • Enhance opportunities for decentralized leadership and stronger engagement. • Embed organizational learning within daily processes in order to acquire, share and utilize knowledge within and across the school. • Integrate a systematic structure for review, reporting and feedback that supports collective knowledge generation.
Implement the mentorship and peer-to-peer programs in school development plans and strategies	• *Following guidelines under dimension 2 and dimension 3 respectively.*

3. Part B: Additional documents

In this section, we present supplementary documents to accompany the guidelines. First, we introduce an example of an agreement for mentors and leaders involved in peer-to-peer programs (3.1). Next, we provide an example of a peer-to-peer support agreement (3.2) before presenting a development plan for teachers (3.3). Finally, we highlight the importance of observation and suggest various tools that may support teachers in their professional development (3.4).

3.1 Draft agreement for mentorship

Name of Mentor: Name of Mentee:

As mentor/leader you agree to:
1. Provide an induction phase where mentoring is prioritized in a systematic way during the first years of teaching.
2. In the first academic year, design a personalized mentoring plan for the mentee (including an assessment of current competencies, needs for professional development, targets for development, and opportunities for continuous meta-reflection on process and outcome).
3. Introduce the mentee to the institution in ways that acknowledge the mentee as an important resource and contributor in the professional community.
4. Create spaces that secure professional opportunities for the mentee to collaborate and engage in joint planning with more experienced colleagues.
5. Facilitate opportunities for the mentee to participate in further professional development programs.
6. Meet with the mentee regularly, if possible, at least once a week, for discussions, support, feedback, advice and guidance.

Signed (Mentor/leader) Date:

3.2 Draft agreement peer-to-peer support

Name of Mentor: Name of Mentees:

As mentor/leader you agree to:
1. Provide tools and methods for peer support, including observation, mentoring, and joint problem-solving activities. Allocate dedicated time during the school day for these activities.
2. Prepare individual development plans for all teachers which follow the overarching school goals and have clear expectations for further advancement.
3. Facilitate opportunities for joint teacher collaboration to internalize new practices and implement practice-based research practices.
4. Organize time and space for the mentees to read and discuss research literature as a basis for practice and professional development.
5. Create opportunities for the mentees to participate in further professional development programs.
6. Arrange regular meetings and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities for staff to address common issues and share experiences.

Signed (Mentor/leader) Date:

3.3 Individual teacher development plan

Name:
Date:
Position:
Organization:

Timeline: This plan is designed for implementation over a one-year period

Goal: To improve professional competence and expand knowledge and skills in teaching practices

Review and adjust: The development plan should be reviewed at regular intervals (e.g., each quarter) and adjusted as needed based on assessments and changing professional development goals or needs

Use: The plan should be filled out individually and adjusted/discussed with a supervisor. The plan should be followed up collectively.

Action Steps:
1. Identifying Areas for Improvement: Identify specific areas that need development or improvement. This could include classroom management, curriculum development, student assessment, or use of technology in teaching. What have I not been able to identify, and why? What can I do to change this?
2. Enrolling in Professional Development Courses: Identify relevant professional development courses or workshops that focus on these identified areas. These could be online courses, seminars, or workshops offered by educational institutions or organizations. What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?
3. Seeking Peer Observation: Identify a schedule for peer-to-peer observation. This includes observing other teachers' classes to gain insights into different teaching strategies and classroom management techniques. Constructive feedback from peers can also provide valuable insights. What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?
4. Seeking Mentorship: Identify possibilities for receiving guidance from a mentor or a more experienced teacher. A mentor can provide personal insights, advice, and feedback to help improve teaching competence. What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?
5. Continuing Education: Consider and identify further formal education such as advanced degrees or certification programs related to the field of teaching. What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?
6. Enhancing Self-Learning and Self-reflection: Identify educational literature, research articles, and books to stay up to date with the latest trends and advancements in education. What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?
7. Implementing Changes: Describe your application of new learning and techniques in the classroom. Reflect on their effectiveness and potential adjustments. Which challenges have I faced in implementing these strategies, and why? What can I do to overcome these challenges in the future?
8. Assessing, reviewing, and adjusting: Identify achieved competence development and implemented measures from the development plan in the past year. What has given me new competence? What agreed-upon measures have I

been able to implement? What have I not been able to implement, and why? What can I do to change this?

9. Contributions in peer-to-peer guidance: Describe and reflect on your role, involvement, and contributions in peer-to-peer relationships. Which aspects have I not been able to follow up, and why? What can I do to change this?

10. Contributions to overall school development: Describe your role and contributions to the development of a professional learning community at the school. In which areas have I not been able to contribute, and why? What can I do to change this?

3.4 Observation forms

Peer guidance can take many forms based on needs, culture and the people involved. The forms presented here are very general frameworks that can be used as a starting point for observation as a method for working with academic and professional development of teachers. The forms must be adjusted based on local conditions and the actual needs of the individual teacher and the individual situation to be observed, and they must be reviewed both before and after the observation by all parties involved. Furthermore, this must be part of a greater focus on professional development for the individual teacher and as a school as a whole. Individual observations without a larger purpose mean little or nothing if they do not have a concrete target in the short and long term for school development on an individual and organizational basis.

Working with peer guidance in the form of observations requires careful planning and implementation. The following overview can be a general approach to areas that are important to work on before, during and after observations in order to ensure to a greater extent, firstly, that the observations are a good experience for those involved, and secondly, that the observations have a purpose for the individual teacher and for the development of the school as a whole. Ultimately, the focus must be on how teachers' pedagogical practice affects the student's academic learning and development, what awareness teachers have of this and how they adjust their pedagogical practice based on evidence and empiricism in order to moderate the students' needs and thus facilitate as much as possible for their learning and development.

Before the observation:

1. Planning: Agreement on time and place for the observation. There should be an agreement on what is to be observed and what the objective of the observation is
2. Transparency: It is important that the person to observe and the person to be observed are comfortable with the process. Discuss the purpose and process of the observation in advance
3. Preparation: All parties must prepare for the observation. The parties involved must be familiar with the observation form. The person to be observed should prepare their teaching as usual

During the observation:

1. Objectivity: The observer should be as objective as possible and focus on the agreed points in the observation form
2. Notes: Take detailed notes during the observation that can be used to provide constructive feedback afterwards

After the observation

1. Debriefing: After the observation, there must be a debriefing where the observer shares his observations and gives feedback
2. Reflection: The person who was observed must be given the opportunity to reflect on the feedback. It can also be useful for all parties to reflect on the process as a whole
3. Action plan: Based on the feedback, it can be useful to create an action plan based on what was observed and what is the focus for further development. This should have a concrete time frame, and preferably an agreement about a new observation at a later time or a reflective conversation about how the development work has gone.

Observation and peer guidance in general consist of characteristics and knowledge that must be developed and learned over time. It is strongly recommended that all schools have some teachers who have taken courses and/or education that provides formal competence in the role of supervisor. These should further function as key persons who both observe and supervise in their schools, but who also work to secure and assist colleagues in this type of development work.

Unseen observation

Unseen observation can be described as a method that doesn't require a third-party observer to be physically present in the class for "live observation". Instead, it's a process that requires the teacher to engage in self-evaluation and introspection, along with reflection and discussion with their "collaborator", both before and after the lesson (O'Leary, 2022). Unseen observation shifts the focus from traditional evaluation-based observation methods, moving from proficiency checking to valuing in-depth reflection on teaching and learning through collaboration and group reflection. This happens through discussions about the teacher's preparations, instruction and the impact of this. By removing the performance aspect usually associated with evaluation-based observations, unseen observation allows teachers to view observation as a pedagogical tool to enhance their professional development, rather than just assessing their performance (O'Leary, 2022).

Peer-to-peer observation

About the form:
1. Information about the observation: Date, time, place and name of the person observing, and the person being observed, and the purpose of the observation.
2. Observation points: A list of specific points to be observed. These points must be clear, measurable and relevant to the purpose of the observation.
3. Notes section: An area where the observer can take detailed notes during the observation.
4. Feedback section: An area to give constructive feedback based on the observations. This may also include a section for the observed to reflect on the feedback.
5. Action section: An area to create an action plan based on the feedback. This may include specific steps for improvement, resources that may be helpful, and a schedule for when those steps will be implemented.

Observation of:	Subject:			
Observer:	Date:			
	Class/group:			
Purpose of the observation				
Sub-areas/assessment criteria	Very good	Good	Less good	Notes
Observation point 1				
Observation point 2				
Observation point 3				
Observation point 4				
Comments				
Actions				

Logbook

Observations can also be carried out using a logbook. This can be an effective way of making observations, but there are some aspects that are essential:

1. Distinguish between description and interpretation: A description is a neutral rendering of what actually happened, while an interpretation is an explanation or analysis of the meaning of what happened. It is important to keep these two types of information separate to ensure that the interpretations do not colour the descriptions

2. Objectivity: Descriptions should be as objective as possible, based on observable facts. The interpretation part is naturally more subjective, but try to keep the interpretations as neutral and based on the observations as possible

3. Respect: The interpretation part should always be respectful and constructive. Remember that the aim of the observation is to support the colleague's professional development, not to criticize or judge them

4. Communication: When giving feedback, it is important to communicate both the descriptions and interpretations clearly and in a supportive way. Explain how you arrived at the interpretations based on the descriptions, and be open to dialogue. Remember that interpretations can be wrong. Therefore, try to be open to feedback also from the person being observed, so that the observer can learn and develop his observation skills.

	Subject:
	Date:
	Class/group:
Purpose of the observation	
Description	Interpretation

4. Conclusions

The principal aim of the guidelines for mentorship and peer-to-peer programmes is to build a framework for developing action areas and specific actions to promote contexts and conditions that facilitate the interdependence between professional development and school development and the sustainability of both. The tool provided by the guidelines aims to create a homogeneous scaffolding for teacher professional and school development and the avoidance of sectoral approaches which risk fragmentary and unsustainable outcomes. The four dimensions focused on are key features of any teacher's professional profile and resonate with international priorities for teacher professional and school development.

The intended impact of the mentor support and peer-to-peer support guidelines is at the level of ongoing professional learning for all teachers, curriculum renewal and delivery to promote global learning and competence, and that of planning for overall school improvement. The levels of participation and dissemination foreseen mean that this product is a key part of the overall RESPOND project and can enable it to impact in terms of intersecting local, regional, national, and international levels by fostering a collegial professional culture throughout all the organisations that play a role in educational systems.

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