RESPOND

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

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The RESPOND framework for school development as a professional learning environment

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In recent years, a substantial body of literature has focused on the need for school development as way to improving learning outcomes for students (Day et al., 2016; Sammons et al., 2014). In the RESPOND project we have been particularly concerned with linking the ultimate goal of the achievement of students as learners to that of teachers as professional learners and investigating how in this respect the school can envisage itself as both a learning environment for students and a professional learning environment for teachers. As Smylie (1995) affirms:

We will fail ... to improve schooling for children until we acknowledge the importance of schools not only as places for teachers to work but also as places for teachers to learn (p. 92).

This involves building collaborative structures and practices within the school community based on a process of collaborative inquiry in which teachers work together to research systematically their own educational practice. The structures should facilitate reflection both as individual thinking and dialogue between colleagues leading to adjusting teacher practice. This involves teachers monitoring their teaching practice to determine if it is having an impact on student learning and drawing conclusions that become the occasion for professional learning. It also requires a school development process that informs, promotes, supports and satisfies individual and collective professional learning needs.

The tool described in this chapter focuses on developing action areas and specific actions steps that schools and their teaching communities can undertake in the endeavour to achieve this.

1. School development as a process of enquiry

Hopkins (2007) defines school development as being a process of enquiry that unites promoting student achievement with continuous improvement based on leadership, planning, and professional development. Such a process requires the building of a reflective

school environment in which all members of the school community take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their individual and collective action and performance and for planning change that can bring about improvement where it is deemed necessary. This involves collecting data containing information that enables an evidence-based review of current and ongoing features of the school concerning both the whole-school experience and learning outcomes related to diverse aspects of learner achievement.

This will enable building an overall picture of the quality of educational provision within the school as it evolves over time and permit the participation of all members of the school and its community in a process of assessment of how well learners are performing and the educational goals that the school poses for itself are being achieved. This should in turn lead to identifying strengths, in terms of good practices that can be shared and promoted throughout the entire school as well as weaknesses that can be analysed and improvements that can be envisaged as part of a school development plan that emphasizes its nature as a professional learning environment.

A development plan of this kind involves deciding on priorities for particular areas that need to be improved and defining the intended outcomes that should ensue, as well as showing how all the members of the school community will have a role in contributing to their achievement. The emphasis must be on promoting medium- and long-term sustainable solutions, rather than on realizing quick fixes (Dinham, 2016; Zepeda, 2013). This requires specifying the action steps to be undertaken and the resources needed in order to achieve those outcomes. Planning also entails establishing a realistic timescale for putting into practice the action steps and achieving the outcomes. Responsibility for leading and carrying out each phase of the plan and the action steps, as well as monitoring, assessing and adjusting action steps and outcomes and evaluating the plan as a whole must be clarified and recognized by all.

Such a process of school improvement is clearly complex and challenging, requiring a high level of coherence in its conception and coordination in its realization (Day et al., 2016; Hopkins & Craig, 2015; Robinson et al., 2017; Sammons et al., 2014). Above all, it necessitates working together to build a shared vision of the school, its mission, goals and expectations for learners and teachers who are people with needs and aspirations, and ongoing participatory involvement in assessment of the outcomes of school improvement efforts (Zepeda, 2013).

Leadership plays a very important role in providing a common framework that can guide all the choices made in terms of the coherence between objectives, action steps and outcomes during school development (Robinson, 2007) so that they contribute to moving in the same direction towards the medium and long-term sustainable goals, rather than

aiming at finding quick fixes (Dinham, 2016; Zepeda, 2013). Coherence is described by Murphy (1992) as being:

One of the most powerful and enduring lessons from all the research on effective schools is that the better schools are more tightly linked – structurally, symbolically, and culturally – than the less effective ones. They operate more as an organic whole and less as a loose collection of disparate subsystems (p. 96).

Hopkins (2013) argues that many efforts at implementing school development fail because leadership focuses on discrete aspects of development, rather than on a whole-school perspective involving intersecting and complementary aspects with collective engagement. In the same way, if schools embark on multiple initiatives that are not part of a coordinated overall plan, this is highly likely to create incoherence and lead to undesirable outcomes such as increased teacher stress (Robinson et al., 2017). In this respect, Day et al. (2016) also emphasize the need for school leaders to promote school improvement "through the combination and accumulation of various relatively small effects of leadership practices" (p. 238), while Hopkins & Craig (2015) and Taylor et al. (2001) argue the need for professional learning for school leaders as well as teachers.

It is fundamental that school development plans should be context-appropriate and relevant to school needs (Dinham, 2016; Taylor et al., 2001; Zepeda, 2013). Zepeda also underlines the need to pay attention to combining individual and organisational needs. Balancing satisfying teachers' personal and relational needs with promoting school improvement requires paying careful attention to both without overly prioritizing either one of them (Liljenberg & Blossing, 2021). This means that planning must be evidence-informed (Taylor et al., 2001; Van Der Voort & Wood, 2014; Yatsko et al., 2015) and based on data collection and consultation with all members of the school community though examining, discussing and interpreting data in order to identify needs, objectives and action steps.

Defining a positive school culture is also clearly a key factor in school development (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis & Lee, 2016; Park et al., 2019). However, while there is wide agreement on this there is no commonly accepted definition of what constitutes a school culture. This means there is no clear idea of how school cultures may be built or changed so as to ensure a positive impact on teacher professional learning and thereby student learning outcomes (Louis & Lee, 2016).

Changing a school's culture is complex and requires time (Dinham, 2016; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Leithwood et al., 2004). It can be argued that school culture necessarily precedes other changes in the school (Zbar et al., 2008), or that it can be built through the

action steps involved in implementing school development plans. Louis et al. (2016) consider building a school's culture as being a question of "supportive structures, social relationships, politics, and reinforcing the norms and values that constitute a school's organization" (p. 320).

In this respect, Louis & Wahlstrom (2011) argue that changing a school culture requires distributed leadership based on interconnectivity and teamwork whereby responsibilities are shared among various individuals and widespread involvement is encouraged. Moreover, there has been increasing recognition of the interrelatedness of student and professional learning achievements with social and wellbeing outcomes. Hopkins & Craig (2015) argue that supportive structures are particularly critical in facilitating changes in school culture and that if such structures are not built and maintained, it is unrealistic to expect the achievement of a positive school culture able to sustain teacher professional and school development and render them mutually sustaining.

As underlined in Chapter 1, environmental disturbances encountered trigger change, but do not determine it. It is the overall context of the school as a professional learning environment that determines what can and what cannot be a trigger and what can and what cannot be triggered. Change in professional learning environments and in the teachers themselves depends on the characteristics of that environment at a given point in time and the extent to which these characteristics can facilitate or impede certain kinds of change or create certain predispositions to change. Any attempt to promote teacher professional development or school development that fails to take account of this will be unsustainable.

2. The Four Dimensions of School Development as a Professional Learning Environment

This section highlights some of the key research literature in the field and explores how these works can be viewed in relation to one another. It is not intended as an in-depth introduction but rather as a brief overview. This is by no means a comprehensive literature review; instead, it offers insights into key discussions within the field and how research can contribute to fostering professional development for teachers. A complete reference list is also provided, allowing further exploration of topics that may be relevant and of interest to your school.

2.2.1. Building educational values and leadership

Collaboration plays a crucial role in creating effective teaching and learning environments. Schools that prioritize collaborative practices benefit from shared responsibility and collective problem-solving. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) highlight that schools with collaborative cultures foster a sense of collective responsibility and pride. This demonstrates that collaboration is not just a tool for problem-solving but a cornerstone of a thriving educational community. This aligns with DuFour and Marzano's (2011) assertion that shared responsibility within collaborative cultures enhances collective capacity and distributed knowledge. They argue that these collaborative dynamics drive greater improvements in both teaching quality and student outcomes.

Marzano and Hefleblower (2016) emphasize that sustainable professional learning is built upon strong collaborative structures. Vescio et al. (2008) further support this by demonstrating that collaboration empowers teachers to develop more student-centred approaches, ultimately improving student achievement. This underscores the principle that investing I teacher collaboration is a prerequisite for enhancing student learning and development.

Effective schools prioritize collaboration. Darling-Hammon et al. (2017) argue that high-performing schools leverage the collective knowledge and skills of their teachers to ensure coherence and unified practices. In such environments, failure is seen as an opportunity for collective reflection and growth (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

While teacher collaboration is vital, the role of school leadership cannot be overlooked. Leaders play a pivotal role in fostering and sustaining collaborative environments. Ontario Principals (2009) emphasize that continuous student improvement relies on school leaders who systematically promote collaboration. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that clear and supportive leadership fosters teacher commitment and resilience by establishing solid foundations and clear expectations. Dunn and Hattie (2021) highlight the importance of adaptive leadership, where leaders continuously examine teaching and learning practices and adjust collaborative structures to meet their schools' evolving need. This iterative approach ensures that leadership remains responsive and dynamic.

Fullan and Sharratt (2022) underline the importance of leadership that empowers teachers to view student data as a catalyst for growth. They argue that such leadership fosters a culture of continuous learning for both students and teachers. By establishing clear standards and building consensus around them, schools can more effectively assess whether current practices align with desired outcomes (Ontario Principals, 2009). Hattie (2009) asserts that for learning to occur, students must experience cognitive change, and

teachers must understand how to facilitate this process. This requires not only access to data but also the competence to interpret and apply it effectively. DuFour and Marzano (2011) emphasize that ensuring continuous student learning requires teachers to engage in an ongoing learning cycle. They argue that the best way to achieve this is by strengthening teachers' collective capacity through structured professional learning communities, where active participation is expected and valued.

2.2.2. Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment

A positive learning environment is crucial for both student success and teacher development. However, designing such an environment requires careful consideration of the diverse and complex needs of individual teachers and the collective teacher staff as well as the student's needs. As Dunn and Hattie (2021) point out, balancing these needs is a significant challenge for school leadership with developing professional learning frameworks. In facilitation teachers' professional development as part of the leadership's effort in school improvement, it is crucial that teachers act as drivers of this work than merely being its target. A comprehensive system for development work relies on school leadership and teacher jointly exploring and reflecting (Donohoo & Velasco, 2016). To foster such a developmental environment, it may be advantageous to have a school leadership that emphasizes instructional leadership, grounded around some core practices. These include fostering active and participatory learning among staff, actively utilizing student data to inform subsequent instructional planning as a response to identified learning outcomes and engaging in collaborative reflections and systematic observations of classroom practices (Jenssen & Paulsen, 2024).

Student's academic and social development is shaped by the prevailing culture within each school. This culture establishes normative guidelines for how teachers perceive and practice their profession. As a leader, it is crucial to be aware of the powerful influence of these cultural norms, to understand which types of cultures are more beneficial for students' learnings, and to establish a framework and expectations for the desired culture and its associated values within the school. Collaborative cultures, where trust and respect among teachers have been cultivated over time, play a vital role in developing teachers' professional capital and in enabling students to reach their learning potential (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). While such cultures have several defining characteristics, a particularly central and impactful one is teachers working within professional learning communities. Research consistently highlights the value of PLCs in improving student outcomes. According to Marzano and Hefleblower (2016), "A growing research base supports the claim that PLCs lead to improved student outcomes" (p. 11). PLC provide a structured

platform for teachers to collaborate, share practices, and reflect on their teaching strategies, fostering a culture of collective improvement.

The field of education is inherently complex, with multiple factors interacting and influencing conditions within schools and their learning cultures. In addition to professional learning communities, it is also relevant to discuss collective teacher efficacy, as these concepts strongly influence each other, and, together, provide significant insights into a school's culture (Voelkel, 2011).

In addition to providing benefits for teachers and students, professional learning communities (PLCs) benefit school leaders by increasing their ability to support teacher development and student achievement (Marzano & Heflebower, 2016, p. 12).

Hord (1997) affirmed that a professional learning community (PLC) engages teachers in a cycle of looking at what is happening in their school; determining if they can make it a better place by changing curriculum, instruction, or relationships between community members; and assessing the results – all with the goal of enhancing their effectiveness as professionals. Similarly, Stoll et al. (2006) stated that the term "suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way". Fulton and Britton (2011) identified the goal of a PLC as "focusing teachers on improving their practice and learning together about how to increase student learning", As mentioned previously, one of the best-known articulations of PLCs comes from DuFour et al. (2008): "We define a professional learning community as educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (Marzano & Heflebower, 2016, p. 6). Moreover:
"As a by-product of enhancing teachers' instructional prowess, PLCs can also help establish a culture in which teachers feel more empowered in their work" (Marzano & Heflebower, 2016, p. 9).

One of the most powerful factors in creating a positive learning environment is collective teacher efficacy. Collective teacher efficacy has emerged in recent years as a crucial predictor of school culture and has been shown to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Goddard, 2001; Salloum, 2022; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Donohoo (2016) emphasizes that "When a school staff shares the belief that through their collective actions, they can positively influence student outcomes, student achievement increases" (p. xv). CTE can be defined as the collective belief of teachers in a school that

they together have the necessary competence to execute actions to creating positive learning experiences for all students (Goddard et al., 2004). The relationship between high levels of CTE and student academic achievement has been consistently demonstrated through studies conducted over the past 30 years across various contexts. This makes CTE a critical component in the development and maintenance of sustainable learning environments that place all students' learning and development at the core of their practice (Donohoo, 2018; Eells, 2011; Hattie, 2023; Hattie et al., 2021). Teachers with high CTE demonstrate persistence, experiment with new teaching methods, and focus on meeting the needs of all students, particularly those who are struggling. This belief also translates into higher expectations for students and encourages greater parental involvement.

When a sense of collective efficacy is shared, teacher behaviours are favourable to actions that impact students results, including setting more challenging goals, increasing parental involvement and time on task, and decreasing disruptive behaviour to name a few. At the same time, when efficacy is in doubt, teachers spend less time on academics and are more likely to give up on students who do not learn quickly. Clearly, efficacy matters. Fostering collective efficacy is a timely and important issue if we are going to realize success for all students (Donohoo, 2016, p. 25).

An effective learning environment not only supports teachers but also empowers students. Donohoo (2016) argues that "Educators with high efficacy encourage student autonomy" (p. 22). By adopting a student-centred teaching approach, educators allow students to take responsibility for their learning, make decisions about their learning paths, and pursue their interests. While curriculum standards remain a guiding framework, teachers can create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful, self-directed learning experiences (Donohoo, 2016).

2.2.3. Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs

Professional development is essential for improving teaching quality and student outcomes. School leadership plays a crucial role in designing and sustaining effective development programs. This is emphasized by DuFour and Marzano (2011), who state that at school cannot be successful unless the leadership is well-functioning and efficient. When the school leadership focuses on the development and growth of the teachers, they indirect influence classroom practices and by that, have an impact on student's academic achievements. This kind of influence and accountability is crucial to be able to organize and lead a school toward their said goals.

Professional development not only improves individual teachers' skill but also has a profound impact on students and the overall school culture. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) emphasize that well-supported and dynamic school environments increase teacher retentions and motivation. They argue that such schools foster a belief in student success and shared eagerness among staff to keep improving, regardless of experience level. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) highlight the importance of providing teachers with continuous opportunities to hone their skills and take on new responsibilities, ensuring ongoing professional growth.

High-performing educational systems focus on improving teaching practices to directly impact student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Donohoo (2016) identifies collective teacher efficacy as a key factor, enabling teachers to work together to tailor teaching to students' need and improve learning results. A strong professional culture is essential for creating sustainable improvement. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) note that a culture centred on collaboration and learning enables both experienced and new teachers to thrive. Marzano and Hefleblower (2016) argue that professional learning communities (PLC) provide an effective structure for fostering shared responsibility and continuous development within schools

Dunn and Hattie (2021) emphasize that school leaders who adapt evidence-informed approaches to their unique school context achieve the most significant impact for both teachers and students. This highlights the need for professional development to address the specific challenges and opportunities within each school. To achieve this effective school leaders continually collect and analyse data about their schools to inform ongoing development effort. Such data provide critical insights into how pedagogical practices align with the school's goals (Dunn & Hattie, 2021). DuFour and Marzano (2011) similarly stress the importance of establishing systems for monitoring instructional practices and the student achievement. They argue that understanding the impact of teaching practices is essential for aligning them with school objectives. For meaningful change to occur in student learning, school leaders must foster an awareness among teachers that changes in teaching structures and content could be necessary (Dunn & Hattie, 2021).

Developing frameworks that balance individual teacher needs with consistency across classrooms present a significant challenge for school leaders (Dunn & Hattie, 2021). Professional learning framework should prioritize three key conditions: providing opportunities for teachers to innovate and refine their methods, creating spaces for observing and discussing different practices, and implementing systems to monitor and evaluate instructional approaches (Dunn & Hattie, 2021). In some cases, it may not be necessary to implement new systems for monitoring because the existing system in the school already has this information. Time to assess what kind of data the school already collects, why it

is collected and if it serves its purpose is important for both leaders and teachers. Dunn and Hattie (2021) also highlight the importance of valuing the time teachers spend outside the classroom preparing and collaborating, as these activities are crucial for professional growth. Teachers need opportunities to reflect on their practices, collaborate with peer, and participate in meaningful professional learning. DuFour and Marzano (2011) emphasize that school leaders should actively engage teachers in discussion on improving student learning and take part in designing curriculum, instruction and assessment.

In summary, school leaders play a pivotal role in professional development by tailoring initiatives to their context, using data to guide improvement, and supporting teachers' collaborative work outside the classroom. Supporting teacher professional development requires leaders to implement diverse strategies tailored to the unique needs of their schools. Research highlights several effective approaches, including collaborative activities, structured opportunities for reflection, and data-driven evaluation of teaching practices. One approach to collaborative and reflective practices is peer coaching, which involves teachers observing each other's teaching and reflecting together to improve their practices. Dunn and Hattie (2021) highlight how peer coaching fosters awareness of the impact of various teaching strategies on students. Through open discussions on both challenges and successes, teachers develop their methods collaboratively. For such practices to thrive, a school culture based on trust and openness is essential.

Another critical strategy is providing teachers with time and space for professional growth. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of engaging teacher in evidence-based research to inform their practices and enhance their ownership of teaching. To achieve this, schools must prioritize collaboration and create conditions where teachers can explore and apply research in their work. Setting aside time signals its importance and reflects the values underpinning the school's practices. Dunn and Hattie (2021) further note that leadership plays a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of continuous learning by setting high yet realistic expectations for both teachers and students.

A third strategic focus is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices. This involves creating a shared understanding of how teaching impacts student learning and ensuring alignment with the school's goals. Dunn and Hattie (2021) emphasize the importance of using student learning data to guide development efforts. Similarly, DuFour and Marzano (2011) stress the need for systems that track the impact of teaching and enable continuous adjustment to practice. These approaches should focus on collective improvement rather than singling out individual teachers, fostering a unified vision for learning and development.

Effective professional development requires a balanced focus on multiple strategies. Leaders must remain attuned to their school's unique challenges and opportunities, continuously evaluating and adapting to the needs of their staff and students (Dunn & Hattie, 2021). This underscores the importance of leadership that is both responsive and proactive, ensuring sustained growth within the school community.

2.2.4. Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts

Evaluating the outcomes and impacts of professional learning is a critical step in ensuring that initiatives lead to meaningful change. While previous sections have highlighted the use of data to guide development, this dimension focuses on evaluative thinking as a tool for reflection and continuous improvement.

Dunn and Hattie (2021) describe evaluative thinking as a systematic process of questioning, evidence gathering, and reasoning. This approach allows school leaders and teachers to move beyond simply measuring results to understanding the underlying causes of success or failure. For example, rather than asking whether a professional development initiative increased student outcome, evaluative thinking prompts questions such as: What specific practices contributed to the change? How can these practices be sustained or adapted to other contexts?

By embedding evaluative thinking into school culture, leaders can foster an environment where learning is continuous and iterative. This aligns with earlier dimensions on data use but shifts the focus towards interpreting and learning from evidence to guide future strategi. Such an approach ensure that professional learning is not a one-time intervention, but part of an ongoing cycle of improvement.

Central to such evaluations is a strong and genuine culture of collaboration among staff, where the shared goal is always learning for all students. When such a culture and mindset permeate the staff, it fosters a positive environment for both teachers and students, which is essential for teachers' professional development processes (Wright, 2022). This involves teachers taking collective responsibility for student learning through collegial reflections on teaching practices, challenges, and successes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). These reflections enhance awareness of how teachers' actions directly impact student learning and emphasize that changes in practice lead to changes in learning outcomes.

By fostering such awareness, it becomes evident that improving learning outcomes requires a robust framework for teacher evaluations and a systematic approach to collecting evidence on how various practices contribute - or fail to contribute - to learning. These

processes can be sensitive, as they often involve questioning classroom practices. To prevent evaluations from becoming overly personal, a culture focused on how "we" teach and understanding learning – rather on individual teachers – is crucial. In practice, this requires teachers to show mutual respect and consideration for one another as professionals and colleagues (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Donohoo (2014) illustrates how these processes can challenge and, at times, necessitate adjustments to existing understandings of learning. Leadership plays a vital role in recognizing the challenges inherent in such changes and supporting teachers throughout these processes (Ontario Principals, 2009). How teachers navigate these changes is often reflected in their levels of collective efficacy.

This collective efficacy can be fostered through the development of professional learning communities within schools. Leadership holds the responsibility for establishing and maintaining the framework and expectations for these communities, ensuring that requirements are clearly articulated and consistently followed. Over time, systematic practices foster a shared culture where teachers collectively explore learning and development – for both students and for themselves. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) elaborate that such communities focus on examining student learning and identifying effective teaching principles. They further note that this process presupposes an organized approach where teachers develop problem-solving skill and engage in constructive discussions about good and bad practices, enabling collective decision-making for the advancement of teaching.

Building on this foundation, Donohoo (2014) emphasizes the importance of structured data collection processes to support evaluation efforts. She suggests structuring this work through a plan addressing three key questions: 1) What evidence should be collected? 2) How should it be collected? And 3) When and by whom? She further outlines a five-step cyclical process for analysing data – organizing, reading, describing, categorizing and interpreting – to ensure that evidence and research-based practices are promoted. Establishing fixed systems for evaluation creates expectations for teachers' practices and fosters an evidence-based culture that supports effective teaching.

In addition to creating systemic processed, these frameworks also shape practical aspects of school operations, such as meeting structures. This includes determining the types of collaborative meetings teachers engage in, how time is allocated, and how learning is discussed. Strong leadership is critical, providing exemplary practices and active engagement in teachers' professional growth.

3. Part A: The RESPOND School Development as a Professional Learning Environment Framework

The four dimensions of the tool are intended to permit a focus on four key areas related to educational values and leadership, a positive learning environment, teacher professional development needs, and learning outcomes and impacts.
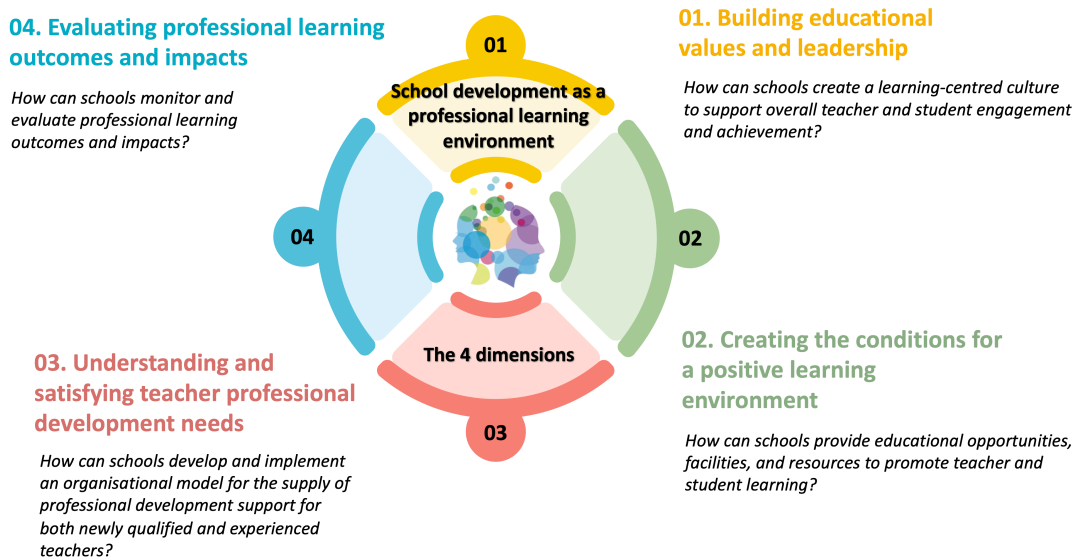

04. Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts

How can schools monitor and evaluate professional learning outcomes and impacts?

01. Building educational values and leadership

How can schools create a learning-centred culture to support overall teacher and student engagement and achievement?

03. Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs

How can schools develop and implement an organisational model for the supply of professional development support for both newly qualified and experienced teachers?

02. Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment

How can schools provide educational opportunities, facilities, and resources to promote teacher and student learning?

01
School development as a professional learning environment

04

02

The 4 dimensions

03

Figure – The 4 dimensions of school development as a professional learning environment

Table 1 – Overarching values, attitudes, and competencies for school development as a professional learning environment

Values	Attitudes	Global competencies
• Learning centred environment for teachers and students • Culture of innovation • Competent community • Sustaining diversity	• Empowerment • Engagement • Responsibility • Reflectiveness	• Global and local issues and multiple Perspectives • Intercultural communication and interaction • Individual and collective wellbeing • Acting for sustainability

Table 2 – Building educational values and leadership

Dimension 1	Guiding Question
Building educational values and leadership	*How can schools create a learning-centred culture to support overall teacher and student engagement and achievement?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Developing a mission statement that makes clear the school's educational values.	- Designing, in cooperation with all the actors involved in the school, easily accessed and user-friendly surveys to collect specific needs from the community, families, teachers, students, staff in school with various functions, educational authorities and policy makers. - Creating tools for collating and analysing the information obtained through administering the surveys. - Conducting focus groups to use the results of the surveys and other literature sources to identify key educational values (democratic ideals, inclusion, cooperation, sustainable education, equity, multicultural, state of wellbeing, valorise of everyone's ability, lifelong learning, diversity, active learning …) that should characterize the school. - Editing, publishing, and disseminating the school's mission statement.
Setting realisable targets for school improvement and staff development, supported by overall performance review and self-evaluation processes.	- Analysing the information obtained from the surveys to identify gaps between the current situation and the educational values contained in the mission statement. - Formulating specific targets to bridge the gaps identified and establishing sub targets as waystages. - Defining an action plan with an order of priority and specific steps to undertake. - Establishing measurable parameters and a timeline of process evaluation. - Building a progressive process of continuous evaluation (monitoring and adjusting before, during and after the action taken).
Ensuring adequate human resources for intersecting management, teaching, and support roles	- Creating an overview of existing collective competence within the school community. - Establishing an outline of the areas of competence that need to be developed in the future. - Analysing the extent to which the current allocation of human resources is consistent with the chosen targets for school improvement and staff development. - Organizing the existing human resources in the most flexible and efficient way, including engaging in networking with other schools. - Providing professional learning and development pathways to promote specific roles equipped with the necessary competences.

Promoting a school culture that is learning centred and fosters empowerment, responsibility, reflectiveness, innovation and engagement for teachers and learners.	• Promoting the membership of professional learning communities by facilitating access to and understanding of various models of • learning and teaching processes ("when there is no right way but there are possible ways, there is less resistance against change"). • Creating contexts for discussing issues and presenting points of view and procedures for resolving conflicts. • Providing teachers with a toolbox of ideas and strategies for use in developing their professional profiles (see RESPOND Development Focus 1: Teacher Professional Profile). • Developing systems and expectations for teacher self-assessment and reflection on one's own practice in collaboration with • colleagues (see RESPOND Development Focus 1: Teacher Portfolio).

Table 3 – Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment

Dimension 2	Guiding Question
Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment	*How can schools provide educational opportunities, facilities, and resources to promote teacher and student learning?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Designing and publishing a school curriculum that is clearly described in terms of global competence for learners and teachers and easily accessible to teachers, students, and families.	• Establishing global competence as a key framework for defining learning objectives and driving pedagogical innovations. • Building educational plans that allow for teachers' freedom and creativity in their delivery while also providing dynamic and flexible • learning opportunities for students. • Providing opportunities for active learning, community engagement, and decentralised curriculum to support the application and transfer of knowledge, skills, and competence. • Developing school contracts for teachers, students and families with a focus on the values, behaviours, and attributes they agree to uphold in an effort to foster a positive, respectful, and inclusive learning environment.
Developing learning pathways to take account of recognising and respecting diversity and supporting individual learning needs and well-being for all students and teachers.	• Developing adapted curricula and individual learning plans for students tailored to meet their specific learning needs, support their well-being, and provide them with targeted learning achievements to strengthen their sense of autonomy and inclusion. • Providing opportunities for effective collaboration and cooperation in learning and school activities to promote students' efficacy • and belonging. • Supporting positive relationships of respect and self-expression in the classroom through active communication, democratic dialogue, and restorative approaches. • Integrating approaches to advance inter- and pluri-cultural competencies in teaching plans, and incorporate pluralistic, multicultural and cross-disciplinary perspectives in teaching to facilitate different ways of learning, knowing, and understanding.

Developing school premises that create a positive learning environment for students and teachers and provide adequate learning resources to support delivery of the curriculum.	• Assessing the key attributes of the physical learning environment to consider how it facilitates the school's pedagogical aims and • learning objectives and to identify its current limitations. • Elaborating a strategic vision for long-term transformation that the school would like to achieve, oriented towards the fundamental principles of enhancing a safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment. • Prioritising key actions for incremental improvements that can be taken to work towards this strategic vision and establish a structured implementation plan. • Identifying opportunities to acquire necessary resources to implement these improvements.
Providing specialist resources and facilities to support active learning and diverse opportunities for curricular contents in areas such as art and design, music, languages, ICT, physical education, and the sciences.	• Promoting the use and integration of open educational resources that can be flexibly applied to meet the differentiated learning needs of individual students. • Employing digital learning technologies both to enhance students' ICT skills and strengthen opportunities for active, inquiry-based learning, self-discovery, and creative expression. • Inspiring students' love of learning through the development of rich opportunities for hands-on, applied, and experiential learning that allow students to deeply explore those areas in which they hold a personal passion or interest. • Providing for a balanced development of specialist resources and facilities across all subjects, and over time ensure all subjects have the opportunity to create critical learning moments where knowledge, skills and competence can be transformed into practical • actions and behaviours.

Table 4 – Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs

Dimension 3	Guiding Question
Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs	*How can schools develop and implement an organisational model for the supply of professional development support for both newly qualified and experienced teachers?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Developing and implementing methods and tools in the process of collecting data on teachers' professional needs.	• Promoting a democratic approach based on bottom-up processes through encouraging group discussions, focus groups, debates, and interviews with the management team. • Creating a school culture for engaging in data use focused on improvement rather than accountability and based on data teams for collection and discussion groups for analysis of data in a climate of trust and respect. • Developing a methodology for collecting data with tools such as questionnaires and interviews which encourage involvement, maintain the option of anonymity, and establish a grading mechanism for the information gathered such as a Likert scale. • Promoting an intergenerational dialogue whereby there can be an exchange of practices and opinions between experienced and newly qualified teachers, professional needs can emerge, and lasting relationships can be built.
Establishing a process whereby professional development priorities can be identified in terms of their coherence with overall school development.	• Promoting a shared vision of the school as an eco-system in which individual teacher needs and interactions are related to the overall professional learning environment. • Identifying factors within the school organization and functioning that impede or facilitate teacher professional development. • Helping individuals to work together to identify their strengths and weaknesses and work together in a process of co-emerging whereby reciprocal needs manifest themselves. • Aligning teacher professional profiles to educational plans and creating processes whereby reciprocal feedback and feedforward between profiles and plans can take place and personal goals and school goals merge.

Identifying effective collaborative approaches to promoting and supporting teacher professional development.	• Promoting a culture of intellectual stimulation and dissemination and sharing of educational research through means such as participatory platforms and digital libraries. • Keeping up to date on the range of teacher professional development approaches and opportunities available. • Creating structures for co-specifying whereby reciprocal answers to professional needs define themselves and can set in motion a process of co-learning within given spheres of professional action and co-construction of competences within professional learning and development communities. • Developing support strategies to encourage teachers to participate in professional learning and development activities and building teacher programmes and timetables to provide adequate time to enable participation.
Offering a range of types of professional development activities that can be engaged in.	• Creating a balance between participation in teacher education programmes at national and international level and specific school- embedded professional development projects. • Providing information about and facilitating attendance of educational conferences and seminars as well as courses and workshops related to a range of education-related topics. • Participating in school network-based teacher professional development initiatives. • Promoting action research-based projects for groups of teachers. • Ensuring the constant availability of mentor and peer-to-peer support services.

Table 5 – Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts

Dimension 4	Guiding Question
Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts	*How can schools monitor and evaluate professional learning outcomes and impacts?*
Areas of actions	**Specific steps of action**
Monitoring and evaluating student learning outcomes with clear feedback and feedforward into teaching and learning strategies.	• Ensuring involvement of all staff in defining and carrying out monitoring and evaluation procedures for professional learning outcomes. • Establishing objectives with short-, medium- and long-term professional learning outcomes in terms of transversal and specific skills (see RESPOND Development Focus 1: Teacher Professional Profile) to match teacher professional profiles and school educational plans. • Monitoring the level of correspondence between developing teacher professional profiles and school education plans. • Defining indicators of feedback and feedforward to teaching practice in terms of understanding contexts and action and envisaging potential change.
Establishing tools for monitoring and evaluating the impact of professional development activities.	• Establishing tools that ensure monitoring and evaluation procedures in which teachers will be able to give and receive feedback with respect, openness, fairness, equality, and dignity. • Evaluating outcomes of professional learning experiences and relative impact of formal, non-formal and informal contexts (see RESPOND Development Focus 1: Teacher Portfolio) in terms of ongoing teacher professional development. • Relating professional learning outcomes to both existing experience and problem solving and future experience and problem posing for teachers as individuals and members of a professional community. • Monitoring participation rates and levels of satisfaction relative to different types of professional development activities.

Giving value to professional development outcomes in relation to schools as institutions that promote the professional learning of their members.	• Promoting an institutional culture whereby sharing and understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses and successes and • difficulties creates bonds, builds trust, and empowers individuals and relationships. • Establishing channels for sharing experiences, outcomes, strategies, resources, opportunities, and ideas both as mutual exchange and avoiding duplicating in order to lighten individual and team workloads. • Creating opportunities for job shadowing within the school, in school networks and international contexts, co-teaching, team teaching and other peer-to-peer experiences. • Ensuring there is ample community acknowledgment of the efforts of all members of staff and their contribution both to classroom practice and overall school development.
Identifying alternative ways in which unsatisfied need for professional development can be best addressed.	• Understanding reasons why professional learning experiences may have been unsatisfying both in terms of the experiences themselves and the ability of the school environment to facilitate the application of their outcomes. • Identifying alternative professional learning experiences that can rectify the weaknesses identified in previous experiences. • Implementing changes in the school environment to overcome eventual obstacles to applying the outcomes of professional learning experiences. • Updating knowledge of types and availability of professional learning experiences for individuals, groups and the teaching community at school, network, national and international level.

4. PART B: Reflection sequences

Part B of the RESPOND tool The Four Dimensions of School Development as a Professional Learning Environment proposes reflection sequences that aims to give indications for possible key questions related to a systematic approach to specific aspects of each of the four dimensions. The questions posed are intended to permit an assessment of the current situation in a school and consider action steps that can be taken in the light of what emerges.

The focus of the reflection sequences is particularly on:
1. systematic monitoring, identifying and evaluating evidence for positive feedback achieved through current practice
2. establishing ways in which improvement can be achieved through devising and implementing specific action steps.

The reflection can create the basis for assessment of the level of satisfaction regarding the current situation in the school on the basis of the following scale:

(1) Very dissatisfied

(2) Dissatisfied

(3) Slightly dissatisfied

(4) Neutral

(5) Slightly satisfied

(6) Satisfied

(7) Very satisfied

Table 6 – Building educational values and leadership

Level of satisfaction regarding the current situation of the school		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1	To what degree does our school have a consensus on what constitutes a learning centred school culture relevant to our specific context, based on a shared pedagogical language and a way of systematically monitoring that our practice as a school is coherent with creating that culture?							
1.1.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
1.1.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
1.2	Do we have a way of systematically promoting cohesion of purpose among the teaching staff?							
1.2.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							

1.2.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							
	Step 1								
	Step 2								
	Step 3								
1.3	Do we have a way of systematically providing opportunities for all members of the teaching staff to actively participate in developing school policies and making decisions?								
1.3.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?								
1.3.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							
	Step 1								
	Step 2								
	Step 3								
1.4	Do we have a way of systematically monitoring and acknowledging when the school fails to meet the standards it sets for itself?								
1.4.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?								
1.4.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	

Table 7 – Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment

	Level of satisfaction regarding the current situation of the school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.1	Do we have a way of systematically providing opportunities for teachers and learners to actively participate in developing the school curriculum?							
2.1.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
2.1.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
2.2	Do we have a way of systematically creating a positive climate of belief in the ability of learners and teachers to achieve their goals?							
2.2.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							

2.2.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							
	Step 1								
	Step 2								
	Step 3								
2.3	Do we have a way of systematically monitoring and acknowledging achievement by learners and teachers based on data collected that is related to the instructional, personal and social domains?								
2.3.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?								
2.3.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							
	Step 1								
	Step 2								
	Step 3								
2.4	Do we have a way of systematically considering different and potentially better ways of doing things to promote continuous development in these domains?								
2.4.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?								
2.4.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**							

	Step 1	
	Step 2	
	Step 3	

Table 8 – Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs

Level of satisfaction regarding the current situation of the school		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.1	Do we have a way of systematically opening and maintaining lines of communication to ensure the flow of information and build trust between school management and all members of the teaching staff, thereby encouraging teachers to engage actively in collegial communities, fostering a culture of self-reflection and improvement aimed at enhancing teaching to benefit all students?							
3.1.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
3.1.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
3.2	Do we have a way of systematically encouraging members of the teaching staff to express evidence-based diverse opinions on specific aspects of teacher practice and professional development, as well as clear follow-up procedures ensuring feedback for change?							
3.2.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
3.2.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							

	Step 2								
	Step 3								

3.3	Do we have a way of systematically promoting discussion on current empirical research on effective schooling and critical reflection on this as an opportunity to challenge and refine their own practices to adapt to changes and new challenges related to leaners and their needs?							

3.3.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?	

3.3.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**
	Step 1	
	Step 2	
	Step 3	

3.4	Do we have a way of investigating the potential correlation between significant personal issues of teachers, their professional performance, and needs for professional development?							

3.4.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?	

3.4.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**
	Step 1	

	Step 2	
	Step 3	

Table 9 – Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts

Level of satisfaction regarding the current situation of the school		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.1	Do we have a way of systematically monitoring the relationship between specific teaching and learning strategies and student learning outcomes, and encouraging and facilitating adjustments in teaching practices?							
4.1.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
4.1.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
4.2	Do we have a way of systematically helping teachers to monitor the impact of their professional learning experiences on their achievement as teachers and promote teachers' individual and collective efficacy beliefs, motivation and resilience?							
4.2.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
4.2.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						

	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
4.3	Do we have a way of systematically acknowledging the contribution of all members of staff to successful learning outcomes and overall school development?							
4.3.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
4.3.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						
	Step 1							
	Step 2							
	Step 3							
4.4	Do we have a way of systematically recognizing unsatisfactory professional learning issues and potential obstacles to this recognition that should be addressed before they lead to negative outcomes, and setting expectations for teachers in a way that aligns with a learning centred school culture while also preserving positive professional relationships?							
4.4.1	To what extent and what way does this generate positive feedback for our school?							
4.4.2	**What steps could we take to build this?**	**Why we can assume this step will contribute to the overarching theme, informed by a knowledge and evidence base.**						

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	

5. Conclusions

Building a positive school culture for school development as a professional learning environment capable of facilitating teacher professional necessarily involves change. However, change must not threaten, or be perceived to threaten, the integrity of the overall organization and risk causing disintegration. At the same time, while not everything can or should be changed, change that occurs in any of its parts must involve and be integrated into the whole organization. Otherwise, it risks being isolated and short-lived, unsustainable because of not being sustained by the various intersecting relationships within the organization.

To achieve this, a school culture must be based on a system of shared values and attitudes together with collaborative and cooperative professional learning that derives from reflective dialogue, conversing and exchanging. Key questions to be posed are always to what extent is a given school culture able understand situations and devise and implement change, ascertain and make provision for teacher professional development needs, and evaluate the degree to which such provision does actually meet those needs. In this respect, it is fundamental to understand to what extent the school facilitates the functioning of groups that share competences, resources and responsibilities, plan and undertake action and assess its validity and efficacy in terms of the way it has been put into practice and the outcomes achieved.

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