

The Teachers' Professional Learning Framework

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What is professional learning and development?

Professional learning and development is an entitlement and responsibility for all teachers. It is an important way of supporting and recognising teachers' expertise.

Learning runs right through a teaching career. It takes place every day, formally and informally, through a wide range of learning experiences, deepening and revitalising teachers' skills, abilities, values and knowledge. It is a process of enquiry supporting teachers to:

- develop the learning of their pupils
- develop a common language for understanding the processes and outcomes of teaching and learning
- engage in improvement in teaching and learning.

What is the Teachers' Professional Learning Framework?

The Teachers' Professional Learning Framework (TPLF) reflects the commitment of the General Teaching Council for England (GTC) alongside partners to continuing professional development (CPD). It outlines a professional development entitlement for all, irrespective of where teachers work and in what capacity. It is based on in-depth consultation with teachers, teaching associations and unions, teacher educators, LEA advisers and others who support teachers' learning.

The TPLF offers a map of professional development experiences, encouraging access to a diverse range of opportunities and activities. It is designed so that all teachers, through performance review and other ways, may choose a route that matches their professional needs. It is not a blueprint for action but a tool, for the school and individual teacher, to help plan professional learning.

It reflects and recognises the spectrum of opportunities and activities outlined in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) CPD strategy *Learning and Teaching* and found in provision at school, network, LEA and Higher Education Institution (HEI) level.

“Professional learning offers teachers the opportunity to take a leading role in school improvement and developing practice.”

How does teacher learning support pupils?

Teachers' commitment to developing their own learning directly affects levels of school and pupil performance.

Investing in professional development is the key to ensuring that schools become whole learning communities where teachers work together, learn from each other and share best practice on effective teaching and learning.

How does teacher learning support school improvement?

Professional learning offers teachers the opportunity to take a leading role in school improvement and developing practice. It is only through the collective work of teachers, and by creating a shared professional knowledge, that sustained school improvement and raised standards will be secured.

Why is professional learning important to teachers?

Evidence demonstrates that teachers who collaborate, learn together, share ideas and model best practice are more likely to remain in teaching. They feel valued and supported in their development and in their work.

The GTC is committed to a system of learning and development through which teachers can enhance, develop and extend their teaching. The TPLF reflects this and demonstrates that investment in teachers' professional development is an important investment in education.

How you can use the Teachers' Professional Learning Framework

Teachers can use the TPLF to plan their own professional development pathway and needs. It encourages diversity and differentiated programmes of development.

The TPLF can be used in performance review meetings between team leaders and teachers to help create individual learning plans. The whole staff, teams and CPD co-ordinators can also use it to draw up team, departmental or school learning plans. It can be used to identify and support progression and continuity at different career stages.

The Framework



What does an entitlement to professional learning look like?

Teachers need the opportunity to:

- have time to engage in sustained reflection and structured learning
- create learning opportunities from everyday practice such as planning and assessing for learning
- develop their ability to identify their own learning and development needs and those of others
- develop an individual learning plan
- have school-based learning, as well as course participation, recognised for accreditation
- develop self-evaluation, observation and peer review skills
- develop mentoring and coaching skills and their ability to offer professional dialogue and feedback
- plan their longer term career aspirations.

How does professional learning support teachers' practice?

Guided, planned and structured participation in professional learning will support teachers in:

- reflecting on and enhancing practice
- identifying and addressing areas of pupil under-achievement
- career development
- working with evidence to exercise their creativity and judgement
- discovering, evaluating and embedding effective new approaches to teaching and learning, planning, assessment and the curriculum
- exploiting all the opportunities to learn from other teachers
- producing, interpreting and managing classroom and pupil data
- developing team working
- developing behaviour management strategies
- promoting inclusion
- discovering the further potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for pupil learning and teacher learning
- recognising improvements in their own practice.

What supports professional learning?

Teachers enhance their subject and specialist professional knowledge and practice by:

- working within a learning team (in a department, Key Stage or on a cross-school theme)
- working with a mentor or coach
- collaborative teaching, planning and assessment
- planning, study and evaluation of lessons and other learning experiences with colleagues
- observing colleagues teaching
- sharing teaching approaches with teachers from other schools
- taking an active part in self-evaluation processes
- engaging in peer review
- collecting, interpreting and applying pupil feedback, data and outcomes
- observing and analysing children's responses to learning activities
- developing resources and projects with colleagues
- participating in collaborative enquiry and problem-solving
- leading or contributing to staff meetings and in-service training

- engaging with subject or specialist associations
- reading educational, academic and professional journals and texts
- participating in courses, online learning opportunities and higher education study
- accessing National College of School Leadership (NCSL) programmes
- taking secondments and sabbaticals.

Teachers are supported in making judgements and leading change in their practice by:

- accessing evidence of effective practice to inform teaching
- designing and conducting classroom-based research activities, including:
 - collecting, analysing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data
 - keeping and analysing a log of their own or learner activity
- developing the collective knowledge base of teaching and learning.

What opportunities are there beyond schools to share and develop professional practice?

Networking opportunities include:

- working across phase or within a cluster / consortium / partnership / network on common research or development work
- taking part in teaching exchanges locally, nationally or internationally
- undertaking development with higher education partners
- Networked Learning Communities
- contributing to workshops, conferences and seminars
- being a member of a subject, specialist or teaching association
- participating in local and national steering or working groups
- leading or contributing to running professional development courses
- developing or moderating examinations or tests with boards
- participating in national and local policy development
- developing, testing and publishing materials and resources
- participating in professional online communities.

Useful weblinks

Association for Teachers and Lecturers
www.askatl.org.uk

Best Practice Research Scholarships
www.teachernet.gov.uk/research

British Educational Research Association
www.bera.ac.uk

Department for Education and Skills Teachernet pages
www.teachernet.gov.uk/Professional_Development

The Farmington Institute
www.farmington.ac.uk

Headteachers in Industry
www.hti.org.uk

National Association of Head Teachers
www.naht.org.uk

National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
www.nasuwts.org.uk

National College of School Leadership
www.ncsl.org.uk

National Union of Teachers
www.data.teachers.org.uk

Networked Learning Communities
www.networkedlearningcommunities.org.uk

Professional Association of Teachers
www.pat.org.uk

Research of the Month
www.gtce.org.uk/ResearchOfTheMonth

Secondary Heads Association
www.sha.org.uk

Teachers' International Professional Development
www.britishcouncil.org/education

Teachers' Professional Learning Framework
www.gtce.org.uk/TPLF

Teacher Training Agency
www.canteach.gov.uk

Universities Council for the Education of Teachers
www.ucet.ac.uk

‘Teachers understand that maintaining and developing their skills, knowledge and expertise is vital to achieving success. They take responsibility for their own continuing professional development, through the opportunities available to them, to make sure that pupils receive the best and most relevant education...’

‘Teachers continually reflect on their own practice, improve their skills and deepen their knowledge. They want to adapt their teaching appropriately to take account of new findings, ideas and technologies...’

‘Teachers support their colleagues in achieving the highest professional standards. They are fully committed to sharing their own expertise and insights in the interests of the people they teach and are always open to learning from the effective practice of their colleagues.’

General Teaching Council’s Statement of Professional Values and Practice for Teachers
www.gtce.org.uk/code

“We welcome the production of the Framework and hope it helps teachers to identify and undertake relevant, focused and effective professional development.”

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

“Defining teachers’ entitlement to professional development is at the heart of the GTC’s work. This publication provides a helpful guide to the professional development that teachers have a right to expect during their lives in teaching.”

Doug McAvoy, National Union of Teachers (NUT)

“The Teachers’ Professional Learning Framework is a timely reminder that professional development should be all teachers’ entitlement. ATL welcomes its role in prompting all schools to take a more strategic approach to managing time for collaborative learning, encouraging the skills of mentors and coaches, and funding teachers’ individual development creatively.”

Meryl Thompson, Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

“The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers is pleased to express its support for the Teachers’ Professional Learning Framework. The work of members of UCET in a range of partnerships with teachers has been directed at providing a variety of structured pathways for teachers’ professional development. The Framework provides opportunities for developing still further these partnerships in ways that teachers find connect well to their own professional development needs.”

Mary Russell, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)

“NCSL developed its leadership development framework to give all school leaders access to continuous, lifelong, professional learning. We welcome the GTC’s Professional Learning Framework and the further impetus and commitment it gives to enabling teams and individuals to be the best they can be. Every child has the right to a well-led school and every teacher an entitlement to inspiring and challenging learning opportunities throughout their career.”

Heather Du Quesnay, National College of School Leadership (NCSL)

Promoting professional learning

“It is important to move from individual to collective professional development”

Professional learning is most effective when it is planned with support and draws upon the advice of peers, school leaders, mentors, coaches, advisers and/or teacher educators. Schools, and other education settings, can provide and evaluate these opportunities.

Time to plan, act, evaluate, reflect and modify practice and encourage risk taking and innovation and further learning are all features of schools which are focused on pupil and teacher learning.

What is the role of schools in enabling professional learning?

There is a responsibility on school leaders and employers to work with their staff to ensure that equality of opportunity and entitlement to learning and development is a reality for all staff. Some schools and LEAs are creating models of entitlement to coherent professional learning, which address the aspirations and development of teachers at different career stages.

For some school leaders the TPLF will present an opportunity to:

- extend the range of opportunities on offer or commit to the principle of entitlement for all teachers
- take a more strategic approach to the support and coherence they offer to teachers' development
- enhance the funding committed to releasing time and creating opportunity
- develop the culture of exploration, collaboration and evaluation in the school
- promote the extent to which teachers are enabled to act as leaders of learning
- evolve the ways in which teams of adults work and learn with teachers in support of pupil learning.

For smaller schools the challenge may be to work within a network of other schools to facilitate the entitlement of their staff to professional learning. Different schools will find different emphases they wish to take in the TPLF.

How can teacher learning be organised?

Examples of the ways in which schools and other settings are organising access to professional development include:

- professional time, where teachers are given the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues
- planned and shared deployment of supernumerary teachers
- the thoughtful allocation of INSET days
- timetabling mentoring activities.

Why collective teacher learning?

Evidence from school improvement research and testimony from teachers highlights how important it is to move from individual to collective professional development, to place collegial learning at the heart of professional development.

Learning with and from other teachers allows teachers to examine how their own expertise can move forward. This drives the development of the school and pupils' learning.

Why are both school-based and higher education-based teacher learning important?

Teachers need continuing engagement with the intellectual base of their practice, testing it against the latest evidence on:

- how learning occurs
- cognition and intelligence
- pedagogy
- subject knowledge
- teaching approaches / learning styles
- the social and cultural context in which these are applied.

HEIs offer extended opportunities for critical engagement with new knowledge, for informed dialogue and for reflection on practice, vision and values.

Why do teachers support the learning of other teachers?

Teachers play a crucial role in supporting their colleagues' initial training, induction and continuing learning. In doing so teachers are able to exemplify best practice. They develop others and develop themselves, impacting directly and positively on the classroom, where it matters most of all.

Thanks to ...

- the teachers who have shared their professional learning and development experiences with the GTC
- the teachers, advisers and teacher educators who have helped develop this document
- all those who have responded to consultation, including individual teachers, teaching associations and unions, teacher educators, advisers, LEAs, and a wide range of subject, specialist and national education organisations.

Looking to the future ...

The GTC will be working to support schools and LEAs to use the TPLF. It intends to produce practical examples of the experiences described in the TPLF.

As part of our ongoing consultation with teachers and others, we would like to know how you are using the TPLF. E-mail us on tplf@gtce.org.uk

For more copies of the TPLF, download from our website at www.gtce.org.uk/TPLF or telephone 0870 001 0308.

Discuss the TPLF on our online community of teaching professionals at www.gtce.org.uk/community