

**A strategic approach to
enhancing teacher quality
through professional review and
development**

**Challenges in Educational
Leadership**

- Creating and sustaining a culture which supports continuous learning for employees.
- Creating and maintaining a high reliability organization while providing for development of employees.
- Supporting employees in the implementation of the school's vision.

Focus on areas that really make a difference

Research now demonstrates these major variances related to student's achievement:

Students abilities 50%

Home background 5-10%

School effectiveness and leadership 5-10%

Peers influence 5-10%

Teachers (what they know, do and care about) 30%

Hattie, 2003

Being strategic about developing and supporting employees in changing their practice

“... challenges of shifting organisational culture, (involves) setting the strategic intent while the organization builds an understanding both of the nature of the change and the capability to undertake it, is the only way to achieve sustainable transformation.”

Davies B, 2001

Professional Review and Development - The four stage process

Developing a professional review and development program

- A policy framework which sets the school's priorities and expectations
- A review process which affirms employee's work
- An agreed annual learning plan which outlines the development activities
- A structured approach to professional development

Stage 1: Policy Framework

A framework which defines standards of good practice in the school's core areas of curriculum, teaching and learning, leadership and management, pastoral care and professional development is developed collaboratively by practitioners in the school.

All position descriptions should define the school's expectations about values and attitudes, relationships, communications, leadership, managing performance and reporting, staff development, developing, implementing and evaluating strategies, in addition to the tasks associated with the role.

Policy Framework

Curriculum Policy
Principles of Learning and Teaching
Principles of Leadership and Management
Principles of Pastoral Care
Position Descriptions
Professional Development Policy
Professional Review Process

Stage 2: Professional Review – current trends

- Few research studies in the field of appraisal
 - WA; Vic; NZ; US; UK
- Some related to beginning teachers, advanced status teachers, promotion or under achievement;
- Continuous cycle of teacher appraisal and development from award restructuring has not materialised
- Current literature appears to concentrate on professional standards and the development of the profession.

Positive aspects of performance appraisal

- Teachers find reflecting on their practice and developing portfolios useful;
- Appraisal can encourage and recognise teacher development;
- Appraisal supports continuous improvement;
- Appraisal provides information to support appropriate planning and development.

Negative aspects of appraisal

- The name “appraisal”;
- Inadequate resources allocated;
- Inadequate training for participants;
- Inconsistency of judgements;
- Lack of resolve or competence of principal;
- Time involved for senior managers;
- Resistance or apathy by teachers;
- No link to professional development;
- Little impact for experienced teachers;
- No discernable outcomes.

Purpose of Performance Appraisal

It is important to link performance appraisal to ongoing professional development as these two summaries highlight.

- Appraisal linked to Professional Development
- Appraisal linked to Organizational Accountability

Appraisal linked to professional development

- Celebrates what an employee is doing well;
- Identifies development areas for improvement;
- Assists career development;
- Integrates school and employee – mutual interest;
- Agrees the support needed to secure progress.
- Characteristics: Genuine two way process, trust and confidentiality, self-appraisal stressed.
- Requires people to be: Open, honest, self-critical, able to accept constructive criticism and to act upon it.

Appraisal linked to organisational accountability

- Identifies under-performing employees;
- Detects weaknesses in performance;
- Assesses performance for pay and promotion;
- Provides evidence for disciplinary matters.
- Characteristics: Defensiveness, blame management, self-interest stressed, unchallenging;
- People will: Be less inclined to reveal areas for development, tend to inflate achievements, maximize their own position.

Using a 360 degree professional review process

The benefits of the 360-degree process include:

- the use of the employee's personal reflection against the agreed principles as a basis;
- gaining useful feedback information from a wide variety of sources thereby reducing the risk of discrimination;
- opportunities for team development and support;
- provides for personal development within the organizational context;
- provides opportunities for management to support staff;
- training and development needs for the individual and the organization can be highlighted and planned.

Using a 360 degree professional review process

The pitfalls of the 360-degree process relate to:

- the possible lack of involvement of participants in the design process,
- the preparedness to invest organizational time and
- the need for expert training of the reviewers and employees.

The importance of effective feedback

- When the skills for receiving feedback are learned, useful information can be conveyed.
- Feedback is readily available to us all of the time, in various forms and from a variety of resources.
- People intrinsically desire to do a good job and improve.
- Feedback is most effective when solicited by the receiver through a reflective process.
- People need feedback to grow, improve and develop.
- Leveraging strengths is often a more effective improvement strategy than correcting weaknesses.
- Improving systems and processes to support reflection and feedback improves performance.

Implementation steps in the review process

Implementing the professional review program involves:

- Training the reviewer and employee in the process;
- The employee's written Reflective Report against agreed guidelines (position description and policies);
- Data gathering through interviews or surveys (6 interviews from employees in appropriate areas of the school);
- Writing the feedback report by the reviewer;
- Providing feedback to the employee and allowing for employee responses;
- Developing an Annual Learning Plan to address the recommendations;
- Involving the Principal in an interview with the Reviewer and the employee.

Stage 3: The Annual Learning Plan

The important link between review and development involves:

- The employee preparing a plan for professional development activities in the coming year;
- The plan forming the basis of the next review process and the development of subsequent plans;
- The plan being used in an annual professional conversation with the supervisor;
- The plan incorporating:
 - Recommendations arising from the review;
 - Individual plans for continuous improvement;
 - Activities linked to departmental and/or school goals.

Stage 4: Professional Development Planning

A planned approach to professional development supports the development of a learning culture through:

- Setting the school's development goals;
- Recording and analysing employee's development priorities;
- Managing the implementation of the annual PD program;
- Evaluation of individual participation in activities;
- Annual evaluation of professional development against the school's and the individual's goals;
- Annual review of the effectiveness of the professional review process.

Professional Development

Effective Professional Development occurs when:

- There is a supportive cooperative ethos, at least at some level – school department or classroom – but preferably at all levels;
- Those responsible for development have a genuine understanding of the context in which teacher's work – as teachers perceive it;
- People see some advantage for themselves;
- Teachers are recognized as people at different stages in their personal and professional cycle;
- The activity is context sensitive, participative, ongoing, reflective, analytical and useful;
- It is connected to other aspects of school change;
- Quality assurance is everybody's business.

Evaluating Professional Development

- Participants' reactions – to improve program design and delivery;
- Participants' learning – to improve program content, format and organization;
- Participants' use of new knowledge – to ascertain the degree and quality of implementation;
- Improvements in student learning outcomes – to focus and improve all aspects of curriculum design, implementation and follow up.

Anecdotal feedback by participants

- Writing the reflective report was hard at first but honestly it was the most useful thing I have done professionally this term.
- Having the review done by a senior member of staff gives the process much more credibility.
- The key benefit of the Review process for me is that now the management know that I am doing a good job and what my career aspirations are.
- I like being one of the review participants because while I am thinking about the feedback I will give I am sharpening my own performance.
- I think that Mary is doing a great job with her Year 11 classes and I have to ask myself why I have waited until the review to tell her this.
- We talk to one another more about teaching practice and new ideas now and we are prepared to congratulate one another on a job well done in the staffroom and in the department.

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