

A tool for thinking about the impact of teacher leadership

This document was an appendix to an article published in 2002, but it has been used in many different ways since that time to help teachers to plan for impact, to reflect on the progress of their development projects and to assess their impact as part of an overall evaluation.

Appendix **The impact of teacher-led development work** ***A conceptual framework***

The term ‘teacher-led development work’ is used to refer to strategic action initiated and sustained by teachers with the express purpose of improving teaching and learning.

The document consists of five sections each containing key factors or ideas which together provide a comprehensive framework for thinking about impact.

Summary

- A. Factors which can affect the impact of development work**
 - a) The focus of the development work
 - b) The context of the development work
 - c) The process of the development work

- B. Impact on teachers**
 - a) Classroom practice
 - b) Personal capacity
 - c) Interpersonal capacity

- C. Impact on the school as an organisation**
 - a) Structures and processes
 - b) Culture and capacity

- D. Impact beyond the school**
 - a) Critique and debate
 - b) Creation and transfer of professional knowledge
 - c) Improvements in social capital in the community

- E. Impact on pupils’ learning**
 - a) Attainment
 - b) Disposition
 - c) Metacognition

- F. Evidence of impact**
 - a) Evaluation and monitoring
 - b) Building capacity

The framework can be used as a guide in the design of tools, instruments and workshop activities aimed at the enhancement of planning or monitoring and evaluation of development work.

A. Factors which can affect the impact of development work

The factors are set out under the headings of 'focus', 'context' and 'process'.

a) The focus of the development work

- * relevance to the teacher
- * relevance to the school development plan
- * relevance to improving teaching and learning
- * the degree of leverage

b) The context of the development work

- * synergy in relation to other policies, agendas and initiatives
- * the pattern of interests, values and aspirations of key protagonists
- * the structure and quality of leadership in the school
- * the structure and quality of external frameworks of support and challenge
- * organisational structures and processes within the school
- * the organisational culture(s) within the school

c) The process of the development work

- * the quality and appropriateness of information and evidence on which proposals for change are based
- * the effectiveness of presentation and dissemination of information and evidence
- * the extent and intensity of the participation of relevant members of the school community
- * the quality and appropriateness of strategic action plans
- * the effectiveness of leadership and support
- * the effectiveness of co-ordination between development activities
- * the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of the development work in progress

B. Impact on teachers

The impact of teachers' development work on themselves and their colleagues is set out under the headings of 'classroom practice', 'personal capacity' and 'interpersonal capacity'.

a) Classroom practice

- * the adoption of new practices by the teacher
- * the adoption of new practices by the teacher's colleagues
- * the improvement of the effectiveness of established practices on the part of the teacher
- * the improvement of the effectiveness of established practices on the part of the teacher's colleagues

b) Personal capacity

- * increase in pedagogical knowledge and skills
- * increase in professional knowledge (eg micro-political literacy)
- * development of new strategies for professional learning (eg engaging in enquiry)
- * development of personal attributes (eg reflexivity, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-confidence)
- * enhanced clarity of purpose and commitment

c) Interpersonal capacity

- * enhanced level of participation or involvement
- * the development of skills in building and maintaining professional relationships

C. Impact on the school as an organisation

The impact on the school as an organisation is set out under the headings of 'structures and processes' and 'culture and capacity'.

a) Structures and processes

- * more effective structures for deliberation and decision making
- * improvements in the structure of leadership
- * greater degree of shared leadership
- * more collaborative working patterns

b) Culture and capacity

- * increase in the use of evidence
- * improved collegial relationships
- * improvements in the quality of professional discourse
- * high level of consistency in practice
- * greater level of coherence in beliefs and values

D. Impact beyond the school

- * contributions to debate within the research community
- * contributions to policy formation or critique of policies
- * dissemination of evidence-based practice
- * collaborative development work with other teachers and schools
- * improved levels of social capital in the local community

E. Impact on pupils' learning

The impact on pupils' learning is set out under the headings of 'attainment', 'disposition' and 'metacognition'.

a) Attainment

- * improved test results
- * learning in other curriculum areas (eg citizenship)
- * discernible increases in subject knowledge, understanding and skills
- * improvements in transferable and key skills

b) Disposition

- * the development of more positive attitudes to school and particular subjects
- * increased motivation to learn
- * increased confidence and self-esteem
- * improvement in the quality of relationships

c) Metacognition

- * development of pupils' self-awareness
- * increased capacity to reflect on and evaluate their own learning
- * increased ability to take responsibility for their own learning

F. Evidence of impact

The gathering and use of evidence plays a key role in maximising impact. Impact is likely to be higher when:

- * evidence generated for other professional purposes is analysed to determine impact (eg assessments of pupils' work);
- * monitoring and evaluation is part of the framework of support and challenge for development work provided by senior staff or external agents;
- * evidence is gathered deliberately and systematically to inform and sharpen the development work;
- * the gathering of evidence of impact and collaborative reflection on it helps to build organisational capacity.

Reference

Frost, D. and Durrant, J. (2002) Teachers as Leaders: Exploring the Impact of Teacher Led Development Work, *School Leadership and Management*, 22(2), 143-161.