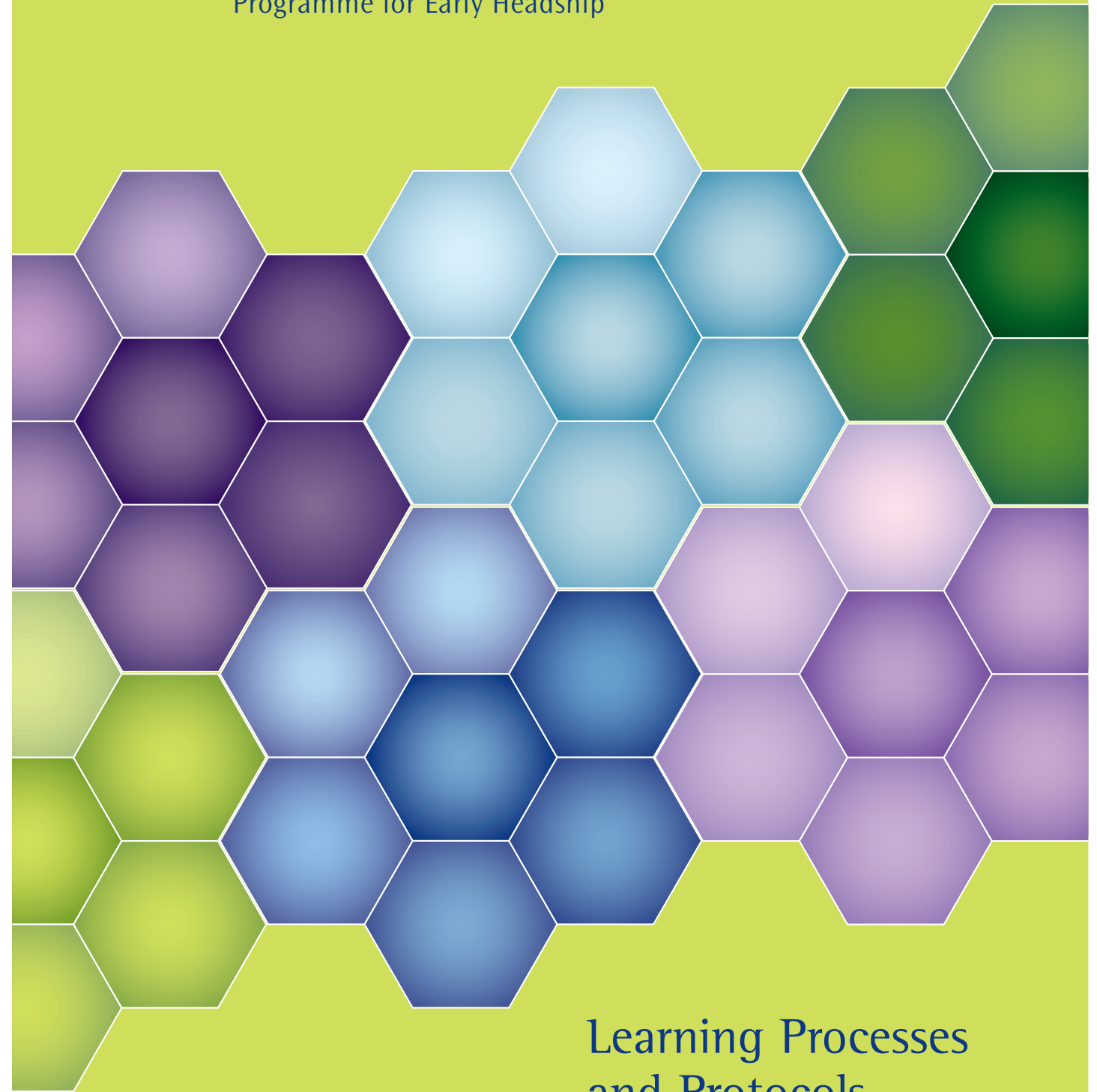


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New Visions

Programme for Early Headship



Learning Processes and Protocols

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Introduction

This document contains brief descriptions of a number of key learning processes and protocols. You will encounter many of these on the New Visions Programme for Early Headship. Some will be explored in particular depth. These have been organised to reflect the various opportunities for individual and group learning:

- **Individual and generic learning**
learning practices we engage in as individuals
- **Learning alliances**
formal or informal pairs or triads
- **Learning groups**
various forms of small group learning
- **Learning communities**
wider communities of practice, linked or networked groups

Individual and Generic Learning

Enquiry skills

Enquiry skills are those techniques used by individuals and groups to identify problems, analyse options and establish potential solutions. Supportive skills include listening, questioning, gathering and analysing relevant data, and generating and testing hypotheses.

Often in school-based enquiry there is not just one ‘right’ direction to take (as is sometimes the case elsewhere in the field of social research). While some approaches are better suited than others to tackling specific issues, effective enquiry will often involve the selection of a range of approaches, used to address specific aspects of an enquiry programme.

The enquiry skills used to support research undertaken using these differing approaches vary. For instance, listening and reflective skills are particularly important when interviewing, while analytical and numerical skills are more appropriate for the interpretation of quantitative data. Planning and organisational skills, written and oral communication, and the ability to reflect critically on the findings of data, meanwhile, are all essential enquiry techniques.

As part of an enquiry into a specific identified concern for a school, a leader may choose to use a variety of methods. For instance, they might undertake an enquiry to assess the extent to which bullying occurs at their school and explore ways in which this issue can be addressed. One approach to this enquiry would be to start with a review of reported instances of bullying, assess the statistical information held by the school and obtain the views of teaching staff via interviews or a focus group. Group discussions with students might then be held to identify the extent of the problem, its causes and potential solutions. Meanwhile a questionnaire may be developed to allow pupils to express their views in confidence. The enquiry process may be further supported by a review of existing knowledge and experience outside of the school, for example the Kidscape Organisation, in order to determine future policy and practice to address the issue of bullying.

To find out more about enquiry skills you might try the following website: Guide to Social Research Methods <http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/>

An accessible, practical and very useful text is:

Robson, C, 2002, *Real World Research*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers

Reflection

Reflection is the structured, critical and analytical review of practice that helps to clarify understanding and inform future action. It is supported by all strategies listed in this document and is often assisted by the use of a learning journal – a reflective narrative that supports systematic review and planning. Reflection is based upon developing professional-, perceptual- and self-awareness.

Leadership learning journals provide a framework for reflection, enabling leaders to trace their unfolding understanding of leadership and share their development with others, allowing leaders to examine the impact their own learning has on the learning of students and the practice of others in school.

Reflection integrates what is already known from experience with what needs to be known to bring about development. Through the process of reflection, individuals are encouraged to examine their own learning in response to experience. It is not, however, solely an internal activity. It can be carried out alone or in dialogue with others. Reflection is also a means of initiating action, for example when new understanding results in a change in practice. It is also rooted in, and follows, action, reviewing the outcomes of a change in practice, for example.

In reviewing the way an exchange with an aggressive parent was handled, for instance, a leader might reflect at a number of levels. This might be done through dialogue with a colleague or mentor, or be supported through a written process. Initially, the range of feelings experienced during the incident and how the conflict was defused might be considered in order for the issue to be explored. It would be important to explore the reasons for the incident, and the range of different perspectives that might apply. This reflection will encompass professional and ethical issues raised by the incident. A final phase would be to consider the implications for handling similar scenarios in the future.

Reflection is central to the programme’s learning model, and is supported by all the strategies listed in this section.

A practical text is:

Boud, D, Keogh, R, & Walker, D, 1985, *Reflection: Turning Experience Into Learning*, Kogan Page

ERIC provides a useful digest of reflective practice literature at this site:

www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed449120.html

The following site provides a useful protocol for self-reflection:

www.orst.edu/instruction/ed555/zone1/mezirow.htm

Source References

Hatton, N, & Smith, D, 1995, Facilitating Reflection: Issues and Research, *Forum of Education*, **50** (No.1), 49–65

Paterson, ASF, & Myles, J, 1991, *An Evaluation of Video Stimulated Reflective Dialogue*. Used as a Tool for Developing Primary Teachers’ Understanding of their own Literacy Hour Practices. Paper presented at BERA conference 2002, University of Leeds, 13 September.

Action enquiry

Action enquiry is a continuous process of learning and reflection that entails a systematic review of our own practice in order to improve and develop. Rooted in real practice and often collaborative in nature, action enquiry is a study of leadership that provokes perspective shifts and promotes new behaviour and action.

In an action enquiry, a school leader identifies a subject of professional concern and then carries out a study on the topic which helps to improve practice. The topic for development is identified by the leader, along with others, according to the needs of the school.

Action enquiries follow a cycle of learning, such as: plan, act, observe, reflect or do, review, learn, apply. Once one cycle is completed another begins.

In addressing specific problems it is important that the leader remembers to address their own leadership role within the reflection or learning phase of the cycle.

For example, through discussion with parents, one headteacher realised that parents were as dissatisfied with parent-teacher evenings as the staff. She wanted to ask both groups what could be done to improve parent-staff dialogue and consider how suggestions could be implemented realistically. This was achieved through a staff meeting and a focus group with parents. After implementing many of the suggestions, a further review stage identified further actions, which resulted in increased levels of satisfaction amongst both staff and parents.

To find out more about action enquiry you might try the following website: Collaborative Action Research Network www.uea.ac.uk/care/carn/

A practical text is:

Pearce, D, 1991, Appendix 1: Getting Started: an action manual. In Pedler, M, ed, 2d edn, *Action Learning in Practice*, Vermont, Gower.

Kemmis, S, & McTaggart, R, 1982, *The Action Research Planner*, Deakin University Press.

Learning Alliances

Diagnostic instruments

Diagnostic instruments are used to stimulate and support reflection and enable the analysis of personal and organisational effectiveness. An example is the Leadership Styles Inventory, which is available on the NCSL website.

The focus of diagnostic instruments ranges between formative and summative. Commercial diagnostic instruments are available to address specific leadership interests, such as emotional style and leadership competencies. Other instruments include interviews, questionnaires, self-diagnostic written instruments, document analysis, observations, tape or video recordings, profiles, diaries and journals.

It is often the use of a number of these methods in combination that will provide a comprehensive understanding. For example, when considering how teams are led and managed, a school leader may undertake a self-analysis of leadership style and compare this with the perceptions of staff, determined through the use of a questionnaire. Through this process, development needs are identified and addressed.

Within the context of New Visions, the purpose of the diagnostic instrument is formative in nature and will focus upon the leader's work within the context of their own school.

Practical texts

Elliott, J, 1991, *Action Research For Educational Change*, Milton Keynes, Harlow, Open University Press.

MacBeath, J, & Myers, K, 1999, *Effective School Leaders: how to evaluate and improve your leadership potential*, Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

There is a BBC interactive tool on the NCSL website to enable leaders to reflect on their leadership styles. Go to www.ncsl.org.uk and click on Leadership Development, which is in the green box on the left hand side of the screen. Next, in the blue box underneath the Learn More heading click on 'see the e-learning module – "Perspectives On Leadership" by the BBC.'

Learning alliances

The learning alliance, a concept developed by David Clutterbuck, promotes collaborative, peer-assisted learning. A learning alliance is a formal or informal pairing or triad, created to facilitate professional learning. It provides a scaffolded opportunity for peer learning that can be structured in a variety of ways. The distinctive feature of the process is the specific role assigned to the listener/supporter. For instance, their role may be to listen only, to respond only with questions that clarify, or to offer challenging questions to extend their peer's thinking. The success of the approach depends upon the level of deep listening and the questioning skills of those involved. It is important, therefore, that the listener/supporter is learning and developing their own interpersonal skills, and the skills of analysis and critique, whilst the narrator is reflecting on their problem or issue. The dialogue is truly interactive and offers a learning opportunity at both content and process levels for all involved.

A practical text is:

Clutterbuck, D, 1998, *Learning Alliances: Tapping into Talent*. London, Institute of Personnel and Development.

Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are terms often used interchangeably to describe a professional relationship that spans the continuum between challenge and support. The role of the coach/mentor will range from directive target setting, through critical friendship, to role modelling, to less directive forms of assistance, according to context and need.

The role of a coach is active, directive and challenging, usually focused upon a specific leadership task or role. For example, a teacher taking up a curriculum management post may be observed when running their first staff meeting, and then provided with feedback on that individual’s performance.

The mentor’s role will span directive and non-directive behaviours, and range between challenge and support. The effective mentor needs, therefore, to have skills as a coach and sounding board, role model and catalyst. In the scenario described previously, the mentor’s emphasis would lie in encouraging self-reflection and exploring with the mentee their underlying professional values, how these values influence behaviour and their links with wider professional issues.

A skilful mentor moves within the range of behaviours of both coach and mentor according to the needs of the mentee and their situation.

Coaching and mentoring within the New Visions programme is experienced in the form of peer coaching and is described in the following section of the guidebook.

References

West-Burnham, J, 1993, *Mentoring and management development*, in Smith P & West-Burnham J, eds, *Mentoring in the effective school*, Harlow, Longmann.

Barnett, B, 1995, *Developing reflection and expertise: can mentors make the difference?* Journal of Education, (No. 5), 1995, 45–59.

Southworth, G, Clunie, R, & Somerville, D, 1994, *Headteacher Mentoring: insights and ideas about headteacher development*, in Bradley, H, Connor, C, & Southworth, G, eds. *Developing Teachers, Developing Schools*, London, Fulton Books.

Peer coaching

Peer coaching involves a coach who is a colleague with similar expertise or status.

Peer coaching involves peers working together in an ongoing process. Two or more individuals work together to provide mutual support and guidance. A primary goal may be for leaders to enhance their decision-making process, to promote reflection on current practices, share ideas and develop problem solving. Effective peer coaching can reduce the isolation often felt by leaders.

A similar benefit is reported by Dale Lick, 1999, who describes co-mentoring relationships between peers that reflect the roles associated with mentoring (rather than coaching).

References

London, H, 1999, *Peer coaching: a hands-on form of administrative staff development*, NCA Quarterly, volume 73, (No. 3), winter 392–395.

Lick, D, 1999, ‘*Proactive Co-mentoring Relationships: Enhancing effectiveness through synergy*’, in Mullen CA (ed), *New Directions in Mentoring: Creating a Culture of Synergy*, London, Falmer Press.

Learning Groups

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning starts with a work-based issue which is generated by the group or its facilitator. It emphasises a collaborative approach to the development of solutions, using methods that are inter-disciplinary in nature. Proposed solutions are often enacted as a rehearsal to actual application in the workplace.

The learning always begins with the presentation of a problem rather than with presentation of conceptual content. School leaders learn how to solve work-related problems by rehearsing workplace performance within scenarios that simulate the school environment.

For instance, a school leader addressing the reorganisation of the staffing structure might write a memo to the chair of governors in collaboration with fellow learners, and then make a ‘mock’ presentation to the group acting as the board of governors. The leader may draw on expertise within the group relating to employment law, organisational change theory and negotiation skills.

Hallinger, P, & Bridges, E, 1997, *Problem Based Leadership Development: Preparing Educational Leaders for Changing Times*, Journal of School Leadership (Vol.7) 592–608.

Appreciative enquiry

This is a futures-orientated approach to transformational change and organisational development. It is located in the key concepts of valuing (appreciative), exploration and discovery, asking questions and seeking new potentials (enquiry). Its primary originator is David Cooperrider. The approach is frequently described as a four stage process.

Stage 1 – Discovery, ie identification of important topics or common themes

This stage involves interviews or data gathering of stories of best practice. Recall a time when you worked with someone who inspired you as a leader; describe the situation; for example, what did the leader do? This stage may also involve gathering benchmarking data.

Stage 2 – Dream, ie envisage an image of an ideal future.

Participants gather in groups of about six to share important topics and common themes. They then envisage an image of an ideal future grounded in reality and based on actual examples of excellence. This image is captured in a provocative proposition.

Stage 3 – Design

In this stage the dreams, or provocative propositions, are converted into tangible projects, actions or experiments.

Stage 4 – Delivery/Destiny

Propositions are translated into programmes for implementation. Appreciative enquiry identifies and actualises the values that lead to improved performance.

Useful References

Cooperrider, DL, & Srivasta, S, 1998 *An Invitation to Organisational Wisdom and Executive Courage*. In Srivasta, S, & Cooperrider, DL, eds, *Organisational Wisdom & Executive Courage* 1st edn, 1–22. San Francisco. CA: The New Lexington Press

Magruder Watkins, J, & Mohr, BJ, 2001, *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer

Websites

Appreciative Inquiry Commons:
<http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/>
Taos Institute; <http://www.taosinstitute.net>

Action learning sets

Action learning sets are small groups of four to six people whose work is based on the belief that there is no learning without action. Through a standard protocol that promotes a problem-solving approach, the set works on leadership development or organisational improvement issues identified by an individual. The protocol emphasises supportive yet challenging questioning as the set works through shared analysis, problem-framing, problem-solving and knowledge creation. Questioning and critical reflection upon action and experience provide insight that determines future action. Set activity incorporates both the planning and review of the implementation of solutions.

A significant amount of the learning and development of leaders is informal learning drawn from experience. Action learning builds on this experience by formalising it into a more conscious and directed activity. An action learning group (or set) takes action on real problems and issues while explicitly seeking to learn from the action taken and the process involved. Learning is facilitated through questions and dialogue, which help participants to develop informed insights as they work collaboratively to answer their questions. The process develops an attitude of questioning and reflection that helps individuals and organisations change themselves in a rapidly changing world.

An action learning set is usually a small group with consistent membership that meets regularly, and provides challenge, support and a protocol which focuses on mutual questioning of problems or issues identified by an individual. Time is shared within the group so that each participant in turn becomes the sole focus. There are three roles in an action learning group or set: presenter, supporter and facilitator. The presenter offers their issue or problem, which is worked on by the whole group in order to reflect on it and to design new ways of progressing with it. The outcome is a set of action points, which the presenter will act upon before the next set meeting. During this time the presenter controls what happens. The other group members act as supporters: listening, observing, commenting and questioning the presenter in order to promote the exploration of the issue at hand and form new action points. Everyday group interaction rarely concentrates on one issue at a time or on one person’s perspective. The facilitator is skilled in using the collective experience of the group members to create learning opportunities. Their role is to make sure that this process remains focused on that which is most useful to the presenter.

A useful site to visit:
The International Federation for Action Learning (IFAL).
www.ifal.org.uk/ifalhomesi5.html

A practical text:
Weinstein, K, 1995, *Action Learning: A journey in discovery and development*, Harper Collins.

Revans, R, 1998, *ABC of action learning*, Lemos and Crane.

Questioning for understanding

This is a useful variation of action learning protocols that develops questioning skills and provides a powerful experience of learning how to learn from information fragments. This process is best conducted in groups of three or four people so that everyone can be questioner and questioned. The process is managed using a clear set of protocols. In this learning process the questioner is the initiator and controls the agenda, but with the objective of helping the person being questioned to gain deeper understanding and insight into their own issue, problem, event or enquiry. The questioner invites the questioned to share their story through careful, sensitive and insightful probing and supportive challenge, helping them to dig deeper, in order to make meaning, gain more perceptive understanding and give coherence and consistency to their experience, in relation to what they already know about themselves. The process ends with the person questioned sharing reflections on their learning and the group sharing the meta-learning relating to the development of questioning skills and the power of this methodology.

Narrative as text

Narrative as text uses processes similar to action learning but has a different protocol. Like action learning, narrative as text supports a collaborative view of learning. It is based upon the premise that school experiences can be a powerful source of learning providing that there is opportunity for reflection and processes that enable the creation of insight and understanding. The idea is that a member of the group presents a carefully prepared narrative account of an incident, issue, event or situation. The group members then treat this narrative as an oral think-piece and engage in an in-depth exploration of it using study group protocols, as if the presenter were not present. The presenter listens to the discussion as a fly on the wall and does not participate. It works best if the whole process including the narrative is depersonalised and conducted in the third person. In the final stage of the process the presenter shares his or her learning gained from listening to the discussion.

This process legitimates the telling of personal stories, within a crafted, considered and disciplined structure which transforms it from anecdote into a powerful source of learning. The process enables people to access some of the deeper hidden layers of their own stories. It provides the whole group with a way of framing experience so that it becomes a rich source of learning. It illustrates the power of a fragment of experience to reveal a much larger and deeper area of meaning and understanding.

A practical text:
Leiberman, A, & Miller, L, 2001, *Teachers caught in the action: Professional development that matters*.
Teachers College Press

Study groups
including New Visions readings

A study group is formed by peers who meet together to reflect on practice and to consider contributions from theory and research. Study groups use readings as a starting point and stimulus for reflection, analysis and interaction. A study group is a collaborative approach that enables and empowers leaders by raising difficult professional issues and articulating common solutions. Participation in such a group is designed to promote the confidence to engage critically with theory, literature and practice.

The study group process is underpinned by protocols such as ensuring that all group members have the opportunity to participate equally in discussion. Whilst individual members bring their personal knowledge, experience and insight to the group, the power of the process lies in the critical engagement with literature, and the new knowledge generated by the interaction of group members.

Nancy Mohr (1998) states that “Members each bring wisdom and knowledge to the table, and the group’s task is to build on that. They learn more by reflecting upon their own learning than by getting others to change their ideas.”

A practical text is:
Mohr, N, 1998, *Creating Effective Study Groups for Principals*, In Educational Leadership ASCD, April 1998, vol. 55, (No. 7), 41–44

Readings will support each of the four New Visions themes. They will include specially commissioned think-pieces, extracts from books and articles, summaries of research, case studies and resources to support the learning process

Study visits

Study visits are characterised by a defined focus, engagement with practice and practitioners, and strategies for implementation. They may have a local, UK or international focus on institutions or systems. Study visits provide an opportunity for professional discourse between institutions about systems of provision, development, delivery, management and appraisal. They can also form the basis for partnership working, and the exchange of best and innovative practice.

For example, representatives from Durham LEA visited schools in Illinois, USA to assess their approach to school leadership issues.

The visit saw representatives from the LEA speak to a number of teachers from several schools about their practice. Lessons and staff development activities were also observed.

This study visit sought to examine the cultures and ethos of school leadership, how teachers worked together and developed collective responsibility for learning in their schools. It also explored the shift in emphasis from teaching and management to an emphasis on learning and leading.

For instance, the Teachers' International Professional Development Programme (TIPDP) is focused on developing world-class standards in education. It is concerned with enhancing teacher skills through focused study visits and exchanges, enabling a breadth of understanding about the alternative pedagogies employed in different countries.

TIPDP provides an opportunity for teachers to act as reflective practitioners, engaged in critical dialogue over the skill sets and methodology for enhancing classroom performance and school improvement. The study visits enable groups of teachers and an LEA facilitator to examine a specific theme, such as special educational needs or primary maths in a specific country.

The group visits schools, meets key workers and engages in a detailed review and assessment of pedagogy in practice. Team teaching and participating in seminars may also be a feature of these visits. TIPDP also facilitates teacher exchanges, enabling teams of two teachers from the same school to take part in exchanges with colleagues across the world.

A New Visions group from cohort 1 of the programme, who made intervisitation a significant focus of the New Visions experience, and continued with it after the end of their face-to-face days, has undertaken a British Council study visit to Australia.

A practical text is:
Tuckman, B, 1994, *Conducting Educational Research*. Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Intervisitation

Intervisitation is a structured and focused programme of visits by members of an established group to schools or other organisations in which there is a clear agenda and a protocol to support investigation, data collection, synthesis and application.

Intervisitation is a broad term used to embrace a range of specific activities such as study visits, representational visits, mutual exchange and peer coaching. Critically, they are built around a sense of reciprocity and a mutual obligation amongst the participants to develop and share knowledge. Intervisitation can occur at local, national and international levels.

In the context of New Visions, intervisitations are structured visits, with a clear, defined focus, that support the host headteacher in pursuing specific lines of enquiry. For example, a headteacher enquiring into the extent to which the school’s statement about values was manifest in day-to-day life might invite trusted peers to observe and give evidence-based feedback which would lead to further development. These intervisitations form part of the learning commitment of the New Visions Programme.

A practical text is:
Tuckman, B, 1994, *Conducting Educational Research*, Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Case studies

Case studies usually involve the study of a particular leader, group or institution. By illuminating key themes and issues, case studies generate propositions about development, relationships, practice and its impact. This facilitates comparative review and the identification of alternative and innovative practice.

The case study approach focuses on one particular instance of the area to be investigated, for example how an organisation has implemented its staff development policy. This focused approach allows a more in-depth exploration of subtleties and complexities, thus increasing the potential for the development of greater insight.

Information is gathered from a range of sources. In the example given above, this might include teaching staff, teaching assistants, support staff, and staff development providers. This information would be gathered through a variety of methods: interviews, observations, documents and questionnaires.

The analysis of this data aims at painting a picture or creating a narrative that is illustrative or illuminates particular themes, the aim being to present data in a readily accessible way. Its basis in reality often resonates with the experience of the reader, enabling them to relate both experience and future decision-making to the case study.

In the New Visions programme, case studies have been commissioned for use in different themes. A few of these have come from high profile schools, but increasingly the New Visions resource bank of case studies is located in the schools of the New Visions consultant headteachers and participants.

Issue one of *Ldr*, NCSL’s in-house magazine, featured a case study of practices at George Green’s School in Tower Hamlets, London. Entitled ‘All Different, All Equal’, it is the story of a school in a challenging context that has approached the interconnected elements of leadership, teaching and learning behaviours in a coherent and purposeful way.

Ldr ref: www.ncsl.org.uk/ldr

To find out more about case studies you might try the following website: Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership www.ucea.org/cases/past.html

A practical text is:
Bassey, M, 1999, *Case study research in educational settings*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Learning communities

Some educators consider that a learning community extends classroom practice into the community, utilising community resources, both material and human. For others, it suggests bringing community personnel into the school to enhance the curriculum and learning tasks for students. For still others, it means having students, teachers and administrators reciprocally engaged in learning.

New Visions is part of NCSL’s Networked Learning Group. Each regional group is itself a learning community (community of practice, see over), but is also part of the larger community of the National New Visions Cohort.

See www.sedl.org/pubs/change34/2.html and www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc

Learning Communities

A community of practice

A community of practice is a professional network that shares a commitment to action learning and school improvement. It aims to develop its capacity to support learning, promote the development process, and disseminate meaningful outcomes and practical applications. In a community of practice, such as the school or the New Visions cohort, learning is considered to be an integral part of activity. Participants share understandings about what they are doing and what meaning that activity has for them.

Learners participate in communities of practitioners and undertake tasks which contribute to the purposes of the enterprise and become co-creators within it. Any newcomer is not simply an observer, but a participant who gradually absorbs, and is absorbed into, the 'culture of practice'. Talk and interaction with supportive peers move learners beyond their current range of ability to function at higher levels. The environment in which the learner engages in learning activity is also seen as an integral part of their experience. Learning cannot be separated from its context, which, necessarily, either supports or interferes with learning within it.

Networked learning communities are purposeful social entities that are characterised by a commitment to quality, rigour and a focus on outcomes. They are also an effective means of supporting innovation in times of change. In education, networked learning communities promote the dissemination of good practice, enhance the professional development of teachers, support capacity-building in schools, mediate between centralised and decentralised structures, and assist in the process of restructuring and re-culturing educational organisations and systems.

For more information about Networked Learning Communities visit: www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc

Wenger, E, 1999, *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity*, Cambridge University Press.

[Acknowledgement to Manchester Metropolitan University, Institute of Education Masters Materials]

E-learning

The NCSL learning experience is one of blended learning, which means that development activities are underpinned by a mix of private study, e-learning and face-to-face interaction. E-learning is a critical part of this blend. E-learning provides opportunities to enrich learning in the workplace and to network with distant colleagues. E-learning can support a personalised approach to learning and provide anywhere, anytime engagement in learning.

New Visions has several online learning elements. These are currently based within talk2learn, part of the NCSL Learning Gateway. All New Visions participants, facilitators, consultant headteachers and programme designers are members of the New Visions online communities within talk2learn. In the overarching New Visions community, texts and materials are available and it is possible to continue dialogue with everyone currently engaged in the programme.

Each regional New Visions group also has its own smaller online community in which participants can continue dialogue with their colleagues and facilitation team and can access the online activities which form part of the programme.

A model of six core online activities has been designed to fit with the 6 face to face programme days. The 6 online activities consist of 1 pre-programme online activity which takes place prior to the first face-to-face meeting, 4 intersessional enquiry activities and one 1 summarising activity following day 6.

The online activities are linked to the content of the face-to-face days, and are designed to form a bridge between the face-to-face days, and to encourage participants to work as part of a learning community.

Alongside the core activities, additional online opportunities and resources will be made available to groups who wish to pursue their learning further through this medium. Group facilitators are able to add additional items and dialogue to their regional community as requested by a group. It is also possible for participants to create their own spaces for dialogue during the programme.

Help and support with e-learning is available from NCSL e-learning facilitators. The BT helpdesk is also available to answer queries on **0845 601 3032**

A practical text is:

Porter, I, 1997, *Creating the Virtual Classroom*Distance Learning with the Internet, John Wiley & Sons.

