National College for
School Leadership

NCSL

Booklet 3

Network leadership in action:

Networked Collaborative Enquiry tools and templates

Development tools and templates designed to explore Networked Collaborative Enquiry in action.

Networked Collaborative Enquiry tools and templates

This booklet provides a practical development tool and templates designed for groups to use in exploring the practice of Networked Collaborative Enquiry (NCE) in action together. This tool is designed to enable staff groups within a school or network to reflect together on collaborative enquiry in their particular setting and to plan for future development.

The tool contains two pairs of linked activities, each of which can be used flexibly – either together or individually – to support those involved in collaborative enquiry at different stages of its development.

The first two linked activities in the development tool use an approach to mapping enquiry activity known as a 'network-o-gram'. This two-part activity involves participants creating a picture and a chart detailing the organisation of, and opportunities for, enquiry activity in their network. It can be used to support participants to build up a detailed picture of their enquiry work, the opportunities it provides and its organisation across a network of schools.

The third and fourth linked activities provide a framework for participants to use in thinking about the stages of developing enquiry in their school or network, and the strategies they might wish to employ to develop NCE further. In these activities, participants are first asked to evaluate the practice of collaborative enquiry in their network by using a short questionnaire. Following this, they are asked to categorise their network according to its stage of development – emergent, engaged, enmeshed – and the strategies used in undertaking collaborative enquiry within schools, in cross-school teams and network-wide.

By reflecting on the outcomes of this activity, participants are encouraged to think about the ways in which Networked Collaborative Enquiry is being developed in their setting, and to consider together what action could be taken to overcome any obstacles which might stand in the way of providing further opportunities for NCE in their context.

Networked Collaborative Enquiry: activity guidance

Activity 1 Mapping enquiry activity
Network-o-gram picture

20 mins

- Invite participants to work in pairs or small groups of three or four.
- Using flip chart paper, ask participants to draw a picture or diagram which represents the organisation of, or opportunities for, enquiry in their context.

Notes...
✓ Distribute flip chart paper and pens to each group.
✓ Indicate that the activity does not require beautiful drawings – words, symbols, diagrams, charts etc can be used.

Activity 2 Mapping enquiry activity
Network-o-gram chart

40 mins

- Using their network-o-gram picture as a reference point, ask participants to complete the 'Network-o-gram chart' giving details of three examples of the different sorts of enquiry opportunities which exist in their context. (30 minutes)
- Invite each pair/group to share the outcomes of their network-o-gram activities with another pair/group – encourage them to discuss the thinking behind their picture and chart. (10 minutes)

Notes...
✓ Ensure that all groups have a copy of the 'Network-o-gram chart' task sheet which should be copied on to A3 paper from the template provided on pages 4–5.
✓ Details under the heading boxes should be completed for each of the three examples given.

Activity 3 Evaluating enquiry
Questionnaire

30 mins

- Bring participants together in pairs or small groups of no more than four. Using the questionnaire record sheet, ask them to score collaborative enquiry practices in their network on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=lowest score, 5=highest score) in response to each of the statements provided. (15 minutes)
- Invite each pair/group to share the outcomes of their questionnaire evaluation with another pair/group – encourage them to discuss the reasons for their scores. (15 minutes)

Notes...
✓ Give everyone a copy of the 'Evaluating enquiry in your network' questionnaire record sheet which can be copied from the template on page 6.
✓ If it is intended that groups of more than two work on this activity together it may be helpful to enlarge the template on to A3 paper.

Activity 4 Enquiry stages and strategies
Assessment and action tool

45 mins

- Bring participants together in their original pairs or small groups. Using the outcomes of their questionnaire evaluation (from Activity 3) as a reference point, ask them to use the 'Enquiry stages and strategies' recording sheet to decide together which of the categories is a 'best fit' for their network right now. (15 minutes)
- Ask groups to identify the obstacles they perceive to be standing in the way of progressing collaborative enquiry further within their network and the action that should be taken to overcome these obstacles. (15 minutes)
- Invite feedback from each group and use a 'quick fire brainstorm' to establish agreement across the whole group as to the means by which proposed actions will be carried forward following the activity. (15 minutes)
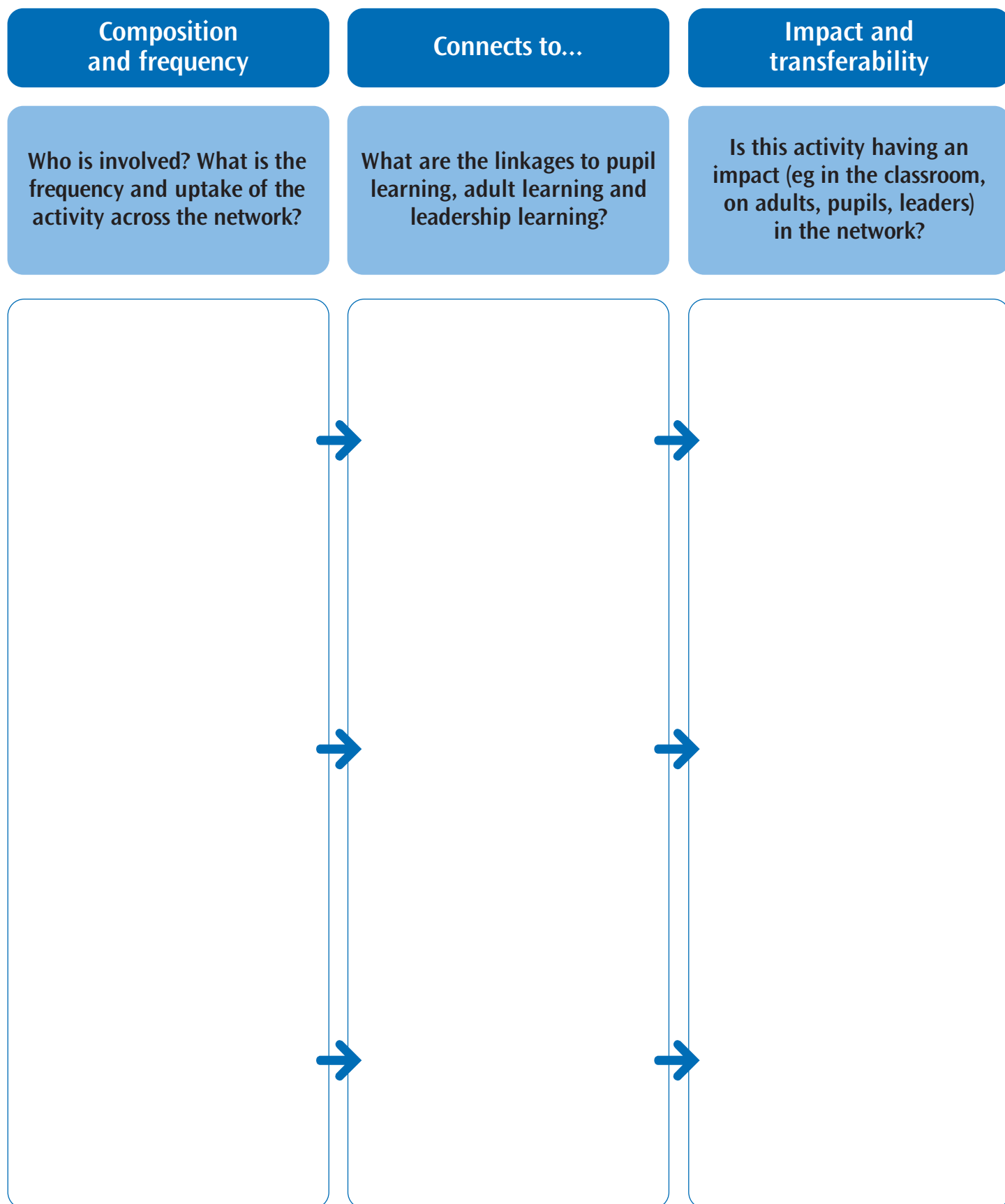
Notes...
✓ Give everyone a copy of the 'Enquiry stages and strategies' recording sheet which can be copied from the template on page 7.
✓ Use flipchart paper to record the outcomes of the group brainstorm, reproduce these outcomes in a summary and circulate to participants following their involvement in the activity.

Mapping enquiry: network-o-gram chart

Complete the chart below giving details of three examples of the different sorts of enquiry opportunities which exist in your network context.

Context	Structure	Scope
What are the different types of enquiry opportunities/activities available in your network?	What is the nature and structure of the enquiry activity involved?	What is the scope of the enquiry activity – network-wide, between schools, within schools?
Enquiry opportunity/activity 1		
Enquiry opportunity/activity 2		
Enquiry opportunity/activity 3		

Photocopy these pages on to A3 card or paper

Composition and frequency

Who is involved? What is the frequency and uptake of the activity across the network?

Connects to...

What are the linkages to pupil learning, adult learning and leadership learning?

Impact and transferability

Is this activity having an impact (eg in the classroom, on adults, pupils, leaders) in the network?

Evaluating enquiry in your network questionnaire record sheet

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Complete the questionnaire below, responding to the statements provided by circling the score on a scale of 1-5 depending on which you think is the 'best fit' for your network right now.

Scale

1= Only a few people in the network know about this and it is not very clear to them.
3= People in the network who are involved in enquiry know this and agreement is starting to emerge about what to do.
5= Most people in the network know about this and there is clear understanding about what is happening.

Statements [1]

	Circle the score which you think is the 'best fit' for your network right now
1. There is a clear idea of what enquirers want to find out – a question, issue or hypothesis to explore.	1 2 3 4 5
2. There is a strategy for building on what is already known – for example, by reading relevant research reports about the issue being explored.	1 2 3 4 5
3. There is a plan for collecting useful and manageable evidence systematically and on a sustained basis.	1 2 3 4 5
4. There is a means of ensuring that evidence collected will help answer the enquiry question or address the issue under investigation.	1 2 3 4 5
5. There is a means of ensuring that evidence from one source can be checked against another (often called triangulation).	1 2 3 4 5
6. There is a plan for analysing evidence that looks for things that both confirm and contradict the question, hypothesis or analysis of the issue identified.	1 2 3 4 5
7. There is an account of what went on, that enables other enquirers to try it out for themselves and/or understand the basis of any outcomes or conclusions.	1 2 3 4 5
8. There is an account that indicates conclusions, so that others can interpret the evidence for their own context.	1 2 3 4 5
9. There is a strategy for sharing resources and expertise between schools, including external experts such as university consultants/HEI partners.	1 2 3 4 5
10. There are opportunities built into the enquiry process for joint working between network schools.	1 2 3 4 5
11. The network has considered how to share findings and outcomes of enquiry with schools across the network.	1 2 3 4 5
12. A cross-network team of enquirers has been given the opportunity to work with a range of people, including network leaders and practitioners across the network.	1 2 3 4 5

Scoring: A predominant score of 1-2 indicates a network which is 'emergent' in its use of NCE. A predominant score of 3 indicates a network that is likely to be at the 'engaged' stage of developing NCE. A predominant score of 4-5 indicates a network which has an 'enmeshed' approach to developing NCE. See Activity 4 for definitions.

[1] Adapted from *What can research do for staff development/CPD co-ordinators?*, National Teacher Research Panel, 2003

Enquiry stages and strategies
– recording sheet

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Using the outcomes of your questionnaire evaluation (from Activity 3) as a reference point, use the matrix below to decide together which of the categories is a 'best fit' for your network right now.

Stages → ↓ Strategies	**Emergent** The potential worth of enquiry is only just being established. Enquiry activity is often limited to advocates and those directly involved, with few practical applications beyond this group.	**Engaged** Enquiry is accepted and used by groups, eg departments, schools. A core team of enquirers has been identified and is making an impact but there is unevenness across the network in the take-up of enquiry approaches	**Enmeshed** Enquiry is established as an approach the network feels comfortable with and it is impacting on both pupils and adults. There is a focus on how enquiry can achieve reach and depth across the network.
From within schools working outwards… A small group of enquirers in each network school. Groups usually work in isolation and get together for some shared activity with other schools, but often this is at one-off events.			
Creating a cross-school team of enquirers… A cross-school group of enquirers who receive training/support in enquiry. They are the 'research arm' of the network and their work is fed through to others at a variety of levels.			
Starting from a network perspective… Multiple enquiry approaches are used across the network. Network-wide data collection and analysis projects are undertaken. These are increasingly sophisticated and informed by previous network-wide enquiries.			

Obstacles

Please use this space to record the three major obstacles which stand in the way of progressing NCE in your context.

1.

2.

3.

Actions

Please use this space to record three actions which could be taken to overcome these obstacles.

1.

2.

3.

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