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What are we
learning about...?

Establishing a network of schools

Building leadership capacity for a networked landscape

Networked Learning Communities

learning from each other   learning with each other   learning on behalf of each other

Building leadership capacity for a networked landscape

Collaboration between schools is now a significant feature of the educational landscape. Networks have demonstrated that they can make a positive difference for both pupils and adults in schools – and LEAs can play a crucial role in supporting them. The question is no longer 'why networks?' but 'when, how and where?' We have gathered the best learning from networks in the UK and abroad to construct the learning opportunities this landscape demands.

Promoting and developing learning networks with LEAs

These programmes examine the challenges posed by a network-based system. The first is particularly relevant for the Primary National Strategy Learning Networks, as a strategic opportunity to explore and problem-solve the brokerage role of the LEA, analysing the key features of learning networks and the skills, processes and structures that are likely to support their development.

The brokerage role of the LEA

- brokering relationships
- brokering membership
- brokering partnerships beyond the network
- brokering access to resources
- brokering knowledge exchange between and beyond networks

Networking For Learning Simulation (NFS)

Facilitating Collaborative Leadership Learning (FCLL)

Futures thinking

Promoting and developing learning networks with LEAs

The Network Brokerage programme is designed to help LEAs to consider the new opportunities and challenges posed by the facilitation and co-ordination of a network-based system. It focuses on the Primary Strategy Learning Networks as being a strategic opportunity to explore and problem-solve the brokerage role of the LEA. The programme seeks to build awareness and understanding of the key features of learning networks and the skills, processes and structures that are likely to support their development. The three day programme also aims to help LEAs to problem-solve and plan to build their capacity to establish, extend or support networks and foundation partnerships.

The programme offers the opportunity to learn more about the brokerage, co-ordination and facilitation approaches that are effective in supporting learning networks. It draws on knowledge about networks as well as understandings about the evolving context in which LEAs are operating.

Who is it for? The events are for LEA personel, although groups including key headteachers from existing networks will particularly benefit. We strongly recommend that this includes those who are in a position to influence whole-LEA strategy in this area.

Leading learning networks

Leadership of networks is critical to their success and is distinct from other traditional leadership roles in schools and LEAs.

The Network Leadership programme aims to build upon and consolidate network leadership as a new discipline. This four day programme, for two to four network delegates is designed to:

- Explore a range of facilitation models which support the strategic development of networks.
- Understand the leadership required to sustain capacity in network development.
- Investigate how the pace and travel of learning in networks can be enhanced.
- Provide an opportunity for the development of leaders of learning networks.

The programme offers an opportunity for those leading networks to deepen their understanding of how they might develop and sustain a successful learning network. It also provides an opportunity to address issues of leadership succession and the distribution of network leadership. The focus of each day is:

1 Leadership to develop learning networks.

2 Leadership learning.

3 Collaborative enquiry in learning networks.

4 Sustaining learning networks to make a difference.

Who it is for? This programme is for those involved in the leadership of school networks. It should include network leaders, but will also be of value to lead learners, school leaders, teacher enquirers, network mentors or other members of strategic network groups. All delegates may attend all four days or they may engage on different days.

Leading learning networks

Leadership of networks is critical to their success. These programmes build and consolidate network leadership as a new discipline.

Network Leadership programme

Day 1 Leadership to develop Learning Networks

Day 2 Leadership Learning

Day 3 Collaborative Enquiry in Learning Networks

Day 4 Sustaining Learning Networks to make a difference

Facilitating Collaborative Leadership Learning (FCLL)

This is a four-day programme to enable potential facilitators of CLL groups to understand their role in facilitating a leadership learning group.

Building leadership capacity for a networked landscape

Distributing network leadership

Networks which become *more* effective in solving problems collectively, and improving learning for pupils and adults than their individual schools could alone, do not do so by accident. They do it by engaging in critically important processes to ensure they capitalise upon:

- networking, enquiry, innovation and sharing learning
- strategic development and widespread participation

Through such disciplined collaboration, the leadership of the network becomes distributed across its professionals – strengthening the network's capacity for learning.

Networking, enquiry, innovation and sharing learning

The following approaches have been developed with networks, drawing upon the best available knowledge in the UK and internationally. They provide robust models which networks can use to help ensure they are maximising their potential for capturing the knowledge they create and transferring it effectively. They do this by engaging practitioners in motivating, evidence-based and learning-focused practices which operate across network schools and classrooms.

● *Networked Learning Walks*

Adapted from the Pittsburgh Institute for Learning's highly effective model which is contributing to raised levels of pupil attainment and professional development across the US, the Learning Walk is tight-knit, inclusive of professionals at all levels, and cost-effective. Opportunities for professional and network learning are opened up by this sharply focused networked process.

● *Research Lesson Study*

Research Lesson sequences are opportunities for teams of teachers in a network to problem-solve, innovate, sharpen and transfer practices across and between schools – increasing the repertoire of techniques available to teachers in the network. It is adapted from highly effective practices in the Far East.

● *Collaborative Enquiry*

Recent studies have repeatedly concluded that professional development which improves teaching and learning takes place in and around classrooms, involves collaboration and classroom enquiry. Networks in England which are making progress, are harnessing Collaborative Enquiry. Beginning with coaching and action enquiry, this component adds to the models offered by Learning Walks and Research Lessons.

Strategic development and widespread participation

● *Building Capacity for Sustaining Networked Learning*

This facilitated two-day process brings a critical group together from across the network. It will help them focus on the core purpose, aspirations and goals of the network. The group then uses the multiple perspectives generated to create opportunities, focus, time and leadership capacity to help ensure direction, momentum and success for the network.

● *Networked Pupil Involvement*

That pupils have a perspective about their learning to contribute, is no longer a matter for debate. Where pupils are involved in developing classroom practice, or contribute leadership to school or network improvement, the quality, depth and reach of the network is strengthened. Networks in the UK lead the world in these approaches. Some of the most effective models are shared through this learning component. □

Distributing network leadership

Learning networks require distributed leadership. *'Supporting distributed leadership is key – not just to helping schools make use of all the leadership resource they have, but also to developing the school leaders of the future.'* (Excellence and Enjoyment, DfES 2003). These learning components can work separately and in combination, to develop skills which distribute leadership and learning across networks.

Networking, enquiry innovation and sharing learning

- Networked Learning Walks
- Research Lesson Study
- Collaborative Enquiry

Strategic development and widespread participation

- Building Capacity For Sustained Networked Learning
- Networked Pupil Involvement

> **" There is no blueprint for an effective network. No one set of arrangements or one particular type of organisation is necessarily better than another. However, we do know about some things that seem to work.**
>
> **Considering some of these factors, in the process of beginning to plan for establishing a network, will help to ensure that future development is built from the best of what is known from current thinking and practice. "**

To find out more about how to access these learning components, either through central NCSL events or through locally negotiated solutions – please visit **www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc**

What are we
learning about…?

The 'What are we learning about…?' series is designed to make public the learning that has emerged from NLCs in the last two years.

The first six titles in the series will focus on:
What are we learning about…?

- LEA involvement in school networks
- **Establishing a network of schools**
- The impact of school networks
- Professional development within school networks
- Leadership within school networks
- Sustaining a network of schools

To order a copy of this publication and others in this series, please email **nlc@ncsl.org.uk** quoting the reference **WAWLA/Establishing a network of schools**

NCSL National College for School Leadership