

3 networks... 9 participants... 3 levels of learning

Phase 3

30 minutes

- Participants move again. They reconvene in their network groups. This part of the open learning set can be managed in a structured or informal way, but each member of the group should have an opportunity to relay the ideas they have gathered during Phase 2.
- As a group they use the new ideas gathered to look again at the discussion focus: "Primary teachers grumble that children merely repeat Year 6, while secondary teachers say they are not yet securely grounded enough to move ahead." *Professor Ted Wragg (TES, 30 May 2003)*
- During Phase 3, networks will use a fresh recording sheet (see below).
- Now they put together their own ideas and activities with those they have heard about during Phase 2 to suggest new perspectives and approaches to the shared focus that are relevant to them, their schools, and the rest of their network.
- They reflect on how these new ideas might work in the context of their own schools/network, and how they might form part of a plan for change: a future possible scenario.
- During this phase the group should also consider both the operational detail of their suggested plan (timescales, roles and responsibilities, resources) and the strategic requirements of their specific recommendations for action, asking, "how can we make this future possible scenario a reality?"

Plenary

This final part of the open learning set may be managed in a structured or informal way.

- Recording sheets from Phase 3 might be copied and distributed
- A spokesperson from each network might present their future possible scenario on behalf of the group
- Share timescales and recommendations for action
- Make commitments to share scenarios with key members of the network
- Make commitments to follow the progress of the scenarios on a network-to-network basis

PossibleFutureScenarios

Network	Focus	Discussion starter...
Network A		"Primary teachers grumble that children merely repeat Year 6, while secondary teachers say they are not yet securely grounded enough to move ahead". <i>Professor Ted Wragg (TES, 30 May 2003)</i>
Pupil		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent approach across the network Yearly visits - a low key Y3 visit - up to the secondary school Buddy visit from Y7 secondary pupils to Y6 primary pupils Teachers from secondary having at least 1/2 a day in middle Transition day (days for SEN) Book exchange/transition units using same text books Thematic way of planning in the first term of year 6 Friendship pairing to move up with recommendations SENCOs visit primary schools to meet Y6 pupils
Adult		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common, easily maintained transfer details Good liaison between subjects co-ordinators Liaison between secondary schools and feeder primary schools Well established process of pastoral transfer - pupil feedback Male teachers from the secondary schools to visit feeder schools
School-to-school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEA transition schemes for at least Maths and English Text book links Common format for diary for all schools Improved communication between schools Data transfer - trusting professional judgement/accountability Seamless process on transfer Professional trust

Network C

Pupils as young as Y3 visit secondary school for design lessons, to use the equipment and resources.

Network B

Buddy visits from Y8 upper schools pupils to Y7 middle school pupils.
Upper school books sent down to middle school so Y8 can start working on transition units in them during the summer term.
Liaison curriculum groups meet once every half term to share ideas and resources on teaching and learning.

Network D

Teachers from secondary school visit primary school and team teach with primary colleagues.
Thematic planning in Y7.
SENCO from secondary school visits primary school pupils during Y6 to begin to build relationship.

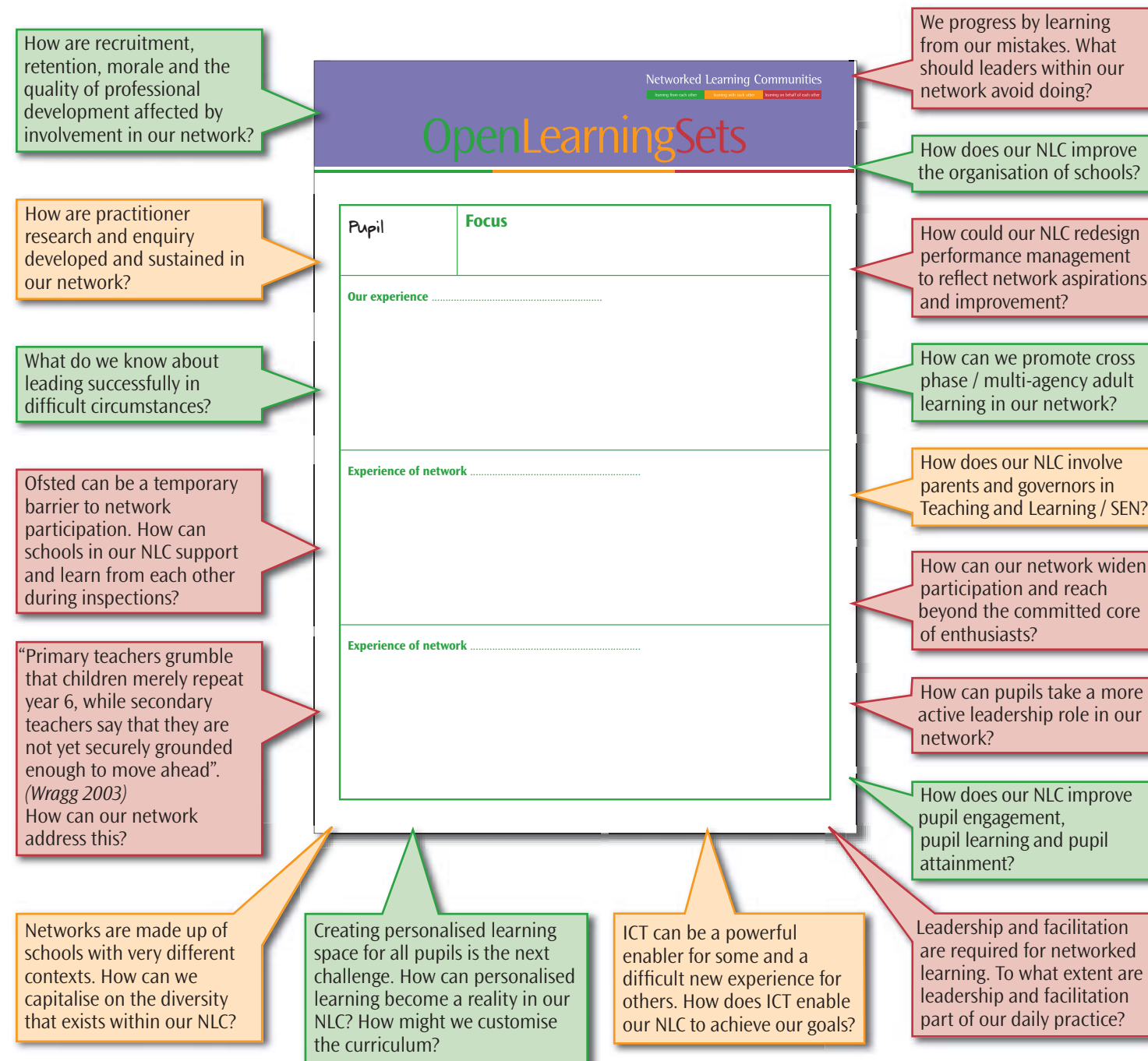
Network E

Male teachers from middle schools to visit primary schools with no male teachers.

Network F

All the schools in the pyramid have the same diary format.

Suggested discussion starters



Open learning sets

A tool for discussing real examples of practice and joint problem solving within a gift culture

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Open learning sets

What is open learning?

“The transparent and collaborative process of knowledge creation, whereby all participants have a moral commitment to sharing learning (failure and success) and to the continual and full acknowledgement of their sources.”

(Martin and Hill, LDR magazine 2003)

Open learning is more than simply sharing good or best practice, or sharing the things that you and your school are most proud of. Open learning is a way of learning on behalf of others. By working together through a process of questioning, challenging and sharing thoughts, ideas and reflections, participants gain a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges that affect pupils and teachers in the network.

During open learning sets

- Participants (pupil or adult) co-design a topic or focus for discussion. This might be arranged before the event, or it might be the result of an introductory activity. The focus should reflect the aspirations and concerns of those present and be relevant to their network colleagues on whose behalf they are learning.
- Participants (pupil or adult) create a trusting and respectful space in which it is safe to talk about aspects of teaching and learning, that are not working well. In order for the activity to work, participants must be willing to talk with each other about failure and to listen, without judging, to their colleagues talking about ‘failure’.
- Participants (pupil or adult) should understand the strategic importance of the activity. The idea is not to create utopian visions, but to exchange examples of real practice within a focussed discussion, and develop from this discussion specific recommendations for action.

Following open learning Sets

- It is imperative that headteachers / lead learners create space across the network for these recommendations to be turned into action.
- In the same way that participants in the activity are responsible for learning on behalf of their colleagues during the activity, they are also responsible for sharing the outcomes of the activity with their colleagues subsequently.

What is gift culture?

Gift cultures are older than capitalism. They rely on the circulation of gifts between individuals and kinship groups and occur in situations where resources are plentiful. Networked learning communities are beginning to develop cultures of open learning where knowledge, ideas and expertise are the plentiful resources they have to share, giving and receiving freely.

Why operate in this way?

Participants in gift cultures are motivated to work in this collaborative way because it allows them to accrue a kind of social status which is based not on what you have, but what you give away. This activity has been designed to support networked learning communities throughout their development. Participants will be able to work together to share successes and failures co-constructing strategies to deal with common issues.

Why should we do this activity?

By engaging in this activity participants will:

- experience open learning
- establish common ground and share experience
- have opportunities to discuss shared challenges
- listen to examples of others’ professional practice
- place equal importance on both failures and successes
- reinforce existing relationships and make new, productive associations with network colleagues
- learn and problem-solve on behalf of colleagues, discussing and developing ideas together.

Who should be involved?

This activity is appropriate for all adults within your NLC and can be an effective way to engage pupils in identifying and solving shared issues within your network eg school and inter-school councils, pupil research / enquiry projects. However, the basic principle of sharing and problem solving is applicable to pupils of all ages and hence young pupils could take part in a modified version.

This activity could be carried out at a launch conference, as part of a networked headteacher meeting, or as part of a networked teacher /co-ordinator meeting. Schools could even engage in the activity as a whole school. Hopefully this document will help you to decide on the best approach for involving colleagues within your network.

How many participants can be involved?

This activity will support learning most effectively when used with multiples of three people, ideally more than nine participants. There is no maximum number. The activity guidance has been developed with reference to this triad structure. The benefits of working in groups of three are:

- where possible, groups (pupil or adult) can be cross-phase
- where appropriate, groups can discuss and problem solve a shared issue whilst focussing on different levels of learning (eg pupil, adult, school-to-school).

Who should facilitate this activity?

- a pupil
- a co-leader, network-to-network consultant, or associate consultant
- a headteacher from within your network
- an NLC facilitator
- a colleague from outside your network
- an HEI consultant

How long will the activity take?

The activity has been designed to last for approximately two hours. A detailed indication of timings is included in the activity guidance.

Phase 1

20 minutes

Participants start off in network, or perhaps school groups of three. They sit together and each take a recording sheet. Then they start to discuss their chosen focus, one that they agree will establish common ground between them.

Eg “Primary teachers grumble that children merely repeat Year 6, while secondary teachers say they are not yet securely grounded enough to move ahead.” Professor Ted Wragg (*TES*, 30 May 2003)

At this point, they may wish to choose different perspectives (or levels of learning) that will help them explore this focus. Networks might come together to discuss issues on a particular subject: transition, and would, as in the example below, probably choose pupil, adult and school-to-school learning as a way to shape and articulate their collective experience. However, it is not necessary to choose different levels of learning for the open learning set to work. The discussion might refer only to pupil learning if it were appropriate.

- A group reflects as a network on activities that are taking place in their schools at three levels of learning, for instance pupil, adult and school-to-school.
- Each participant takes responsibility for one of the levels of learning (where appropriate).
- They record the ideas of the group on three separate, but identical, sheets (see below).

Phase 2

45 minutes

Participants move to another table. If they have chosen to organise their discussion in relation to levels of learning, those who are responsible for pupil learning within their network move to the table for pupil learning. Those who are responsible for adult learning within their network move to the table for adult learning, and so on. Each table now discusses the shared issue with reference to their chosen level of learning.

The discussion is structured in blocks of 15 minutes as follows.

- The first person shares the ideas from their network. At this stage there are no interruptions and no questions from the other participants. Both listen, and one takes notes, using the recording sheet (see below) - 5mins.
- The second person asks questions about what they have heard, asking for clarification and confirmation where necessary. The third person may wish to amend their notes during this time - 5mins.
- The third person shares the notes they have taken on behalf of the group during the last five minutes, while the second person makes their own copy - 5mins.
- When 15 minutes is up, each person in the group should have noted down the examples of real practice and ideas which have been given by network A. During the next 15 minutes, roles are rotated so that examples and ideas from network B can be shared in the same way. The final 15 minutes is time for network C to do the same.
- At the end of 45 minutes, each person in the group will have completed their recording sheet, and have collected ideas about pupil learning eg from two other people representing two other networks.