

#2 STIMULATING TEACHER LEARNING

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This card provides tools for practical questions like

- How to move my team forward?
- How do I get my teachers excited to learn?
- How do I support my teachers in using the right interventions?

Why is it important to promote teacher learning?

In order to develop *whole child learning* and all *children learning*, teachers need to learn. Teachers need to feel the individual and collective urge to become better teachers every day. School leaders' impact is indirect, via the learning of teachers and building a psychologically safe learning environment for all. Teachers affect their students in their classrooms, whereas school leaders impact the learning of all. School leaders can support teachers to teach in an evidence-informed manner, using successful interventions (for suggestions see *Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF | educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk*).

How can school leaders stimulate their teachers' learning?

You must carefully examine teachers' learning needs and offer them sufficient learning opportunities. If teachers experience that their learning processes contribute to better education of their students, they are eager to work on their own professional development.

As a school leader you can develop a learning culture by:

- building a shared vision, inspiring teachers getting the most out of students and themselves;
- creating high-performance expectations to students and teachers and challenging them intellectually;
- being a critical friend by asking teachers reflective questions;

- providing opportunities and time for teachers to collaborate. Peer collaboration contributes to professional learning and school development, for example in Professional Learning Communities (for information see for example *What Is a "Professional Learning Community"?* – ASCD)
- providing lots of feedback and feed forward
- enabling mutual class visits;
- developing a safe learning environment based on mutual trust (see Megan Tschannen-Moran's book *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools*);
- respecting, celebrating and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity: let teachers use each other's perspectives (and those of the students).

THREE STEPPINGSTONES: suggestions for action

Steppingstone 1) Promote collaboration in your team

Give teachers the opportunity to reflect on their biggest concerns. Which learning outcomes do they consider their greatest challenge? What's the most urgent topic to address?

Use the HEADSTART cards that will be published in autumn 2022 on the ESHA website.

esha.org/headstart

Make sure teachers are given enough time to collaborate and learn. Let them contemplate on the following questions:

- What do we need to learn to do to promote improved student outcomes?
- Which teaching and pedagogical practices should we develop further?
- What knowledge do we need to achieve our goals? What sources of evidence and knowledge can we utilize?

Steppingstone 2) Support in identifying the learning needs of your team members

Teachers differ. To determine their learning needs, look at what every teacher needs to learn to reach the intended student outcomes. Teachers can take agency for their own learning processes. You can use the different stages of teacher development to inspire teachers to learn from and with each other.

As a school leader, you can ask the following questions:

- Where does each teacher stand in their development?
- How comfortable, experienced and skilled is each teacher?

- Does the teacher use the necessary teaching and pedagogical practices?
- What knowledge does the teacher need?
- Where does every teacher want to be in their development?
- What does every teacher need to make the next step?
- Who and what does the teacher want to develop into?

Steppingstone 3) Support in conducting learning activities for teachers

Teachers can try out various learning activities in a more or less formal setting. Some suggestions are listed below.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS	PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AS A SCHOOL LEADER
KEEPING UP TO DATE; KEEPING UP WITH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide access to professional development opportunities, e. g. a conference or course or participating in professional learning communities.• Ask experts to provide targeted information.• Provide access and discuss educational literature.
LEARNING THROUGH THE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOUR OF OTHERS. GETTING IDEAS FROM OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let teachers share their knowledge by having them give presentations to each other.• Have teachers share their lesson plans with each other.• Let teachers observe 'the art of teaching' by visiting each other's classrooms.• Design the staff room in such a way that it facilitates teachers talking together.
LEARNING BY DOING AND EXPERIMENTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have experimental projects set up, give room for try-outs.• Give teachers new challenging tasks.• Stimulate teachers to try and implement experiments.
LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After work sessions, ask teachers to write down what they have learned.• Allow time to reflect by having teachers talk to each other or asking them to keep a log.• Encourage mutual class attendance and allow teachers to ask each other questions.• Use video coaching and ask teachers questions on basis of the shots taken.• As a school leader, give feedback and feed forward.
LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulate mutual class visits and giving each other feedback and feed forward.• Have teachers prepare lessons together.• Let teachers conduct research together.• Stimulate lesson study.

Steppingstone 4) Monitor the progress of your teachers' learning processes

Teachers can be the agent of their own learning processes. However, they often allow themselves insufficient reflection time to check their professional growth. More time is needed to answer the questions: where am I, where do I want to be?

As a school leader, you can plan time for this during

work meetings. Allow time for teachers to evaluate whether what they have learned has contributed sufficiently to achieving the student outcomes. Teachers are responsible for their own learning processes. The main question is how we can contribute to optimizing student learning and what this requires regarding our own learning processes.