

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING – Building practice excellence

Definition: Effective schools are learning communities. At the core is a culture of collaboration and collective responsibility to develop effective and consistent teaching practices and to improve student achievement. Research highlights that the quality of teaching is a key determinant of variation in student achievement.

Engaging teachers in contemporary high quality professional learning is the most successful way to improve teacher effectiveness. Effective professional learning is collaborative, inquiry focused, embedded in teaching practice and aligned with priority areas for school improvement and teachers' individual learning needs. Student outcomes data is used to evaluate the impact of professional learning on teaching practice and student achievement. Effective schools use Communities of Practice to build capability beyond the individual school and to provide professional challenge to reflect on and extend current practice.

The Essential Elements underpin FISO and provide a foundation for school improvement. They are evident (indicated by green shading) at the Evolving stage and are further articulated in the Embedding and Excelling stages in some dimensions.

Essential Element 2	School-based professional learning program developed and implemented that supports the school's identified improvement strategies		
Essential Element 7	Data collection, analysis and evaluation of student learning growth over time		
Essential Element 8	Explicit use of evidence-based school improvement strategies and teacher professional practice activities		
Emerging	Evolving	Embedding	Excelling
Professional learning is focused on student outcomes			
Teachers are aware of the FISO priorities and initiatives. They are beginning to explore what the initiatives might mean for their professional practice. Professional learning activities are usually based on teacher choice and interest, focusing on individual teacher needs rather than identified school goals and priorities.	The school has clear goals and targets that support agreed FISO priorities. The school develops professional learning aligned with their FISO improvement strategies. Teachers have a shared focus for improvement in student outcomes.	The school's professional learning has well-articulated purposes that are focused on student outcomes, derived from the analysis of student data. Teachers' individual plans have strong line of sight to the school's goals and targets. Teachers make links between students' progress data and their own professional learning needs.	A whole-school professional learning plan supports the school's identified improvement strategies. It is developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated in light of student achievement data.
Professional learning is collaborative, involving reflection and feedback			
Teachers work together in stages of learning and learning area groups to plan and review teaching and learning programs. The school encourages teachers to seek support from experienced colleagues. Teachers occasionally give and receive feedback with a focus on improving practice. The school encourages teachers to seek support from experienced colleagues. Teachers occasionally give and receive feedback with a focus on improving practice.	Professional learning teams are formalised and teachers work collaboratively to review and develop their practice. Teams monitor the impact of teaching strategies on student learning and adapt teaching to advance student progress. Teachers provide, seek out and receive feedback from peers and school leaders to improve teaching practice.	The school has explicit systems for collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and feedback. Teaching teams regularly observe and provide feedback on teaching, with support and input from leaders and input from students. Structured mentoring and coaching programs are established.	The school has established teaching teams dedicated to challenging and improving each other's practice. Student feedback is routinely sought and informs school improvement. The school's Professional Learning Plan is developmentally-focused, and designed to enable both individual and collective responsibility and accountability. The plan supports collaborative professional learning to build collective responsibility for improved student outcomes.
Professional learning is informed by the collection, analysis and evaluation of student data			
Teachers access professional learning to build their skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of student performance data to improve classroom teaching practice.	Teachers work in teams, across year levels and learning areas, to implement documented and agreed approaches to data collection, analysis and evaluation.	Teachers routinely use student learning data to diagnose their own development priorities. They review actual changes in practice following formal professional learning programs, document the impact of new approaches and plan further improvements.	Continuous improvement in teaching practice is sustained by systematically collecting, analysing and evaluating teaching practices and student achievement data. The school and its community incorporates evaluative practices and continuous improvement into its improvement cycle.
Professional learning is evidence-based and modelled on recognised best practice			
Teachers use assessment data and other evidence to evaluate student progress and identify gaps in student learning. Teachers share experiences about teaching practices and occasionally reference data.	Teachers demonstrate understanding of the link between their practice and student learning. They use student achievement data to identify their professional learning needs aligned with FISO priorities. The school periodically reviews the effectiveness of teaching and learning programs and uses this information to plan appropriate individual and whole-school professional learning.	Teachers routinely use evidence of student learning progress to diagnose their own development priorities. Individually and collectively, they engage in a cycle of inquiry to evaluate the effectiveness of their current teaching practices. The school routinely reviews its impact on students' progress and development, and incorporates findings into whole-school professional learning and school improvement plans. Exploring models of best practice from local and international contexts informs the school's professional learning.	The school routinely integrates student learning data with teacher professional development and strategic planning. The school uses its data to align teachers' individual learning needs with school priorities, goals for student learning and Annual Implementation Plans (AIP). The school trials and evaluates professional learning practices from international and local contexts which are known to have an impact.
Professional learning is ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture of the school			
A school-based professional learning program is documented and implemented. The school supports teachers to develop evaluative and assessment skills, and provides opportunities for teachers to practise these capabilities.	The school fosters a culture that values and supports ongoing professional learning to evaluate and improve teaching practice. Teachers are collectively responsible for improving instructional practices to achieve progress in learning for all students and reduce variations in learning outcomes between classes.	The school systematically builds teaching capabilities with sufficient time and incentives for continued enhancement of teacher expertise. School leaders facilitate opportunities for staff to learn from each other and model continuous learning in their own practice.	The school fosters an environment that values collaboration, trust, risk-taking, experimentation, collaborative inquiry and self-assessment. The school embeds a continuous focus on teaching and learning in its culture. School leaders support and provide ongoing opportunities for all staff to progressively reach higher levels of performance.