Professional Learning Policy

Updated: December 2018

Contents

What we mean by "professional learning"

Professional learning (sometimes referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL)) is:

> *the formal and informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improve their professional practice and the school's collective effectiveness as measured by improved student engagement and learning outcomes* (Cole, 2012a).

Professional learning culture

In Eyemouth High School, we aim to develop a **professional learning culture** (as part of a wider learning culture for all) in which professional learning is a part of everyday work, with teachers working collaboratively to help improve both individual practice and practice across the school, in the pursuit of improved student outcomes.

In developing such a culture, we believe that the following day-to-day activities are important:
- Making use of agreed **evidence-based teaching practices**, as set out in our *Teaching and Learning Policy*;

- Following agreed **classroom protocols and procedures** (e.g. in relation to the student Planner and how this links to the starts and ends of lessons);

- Teachers **observing each other teaching**, with professional learning as the core purpose, supported by the school *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*;

- Teacher **self-evaluation of lessons**, supported by the school *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* and *Teaching and Learning Policy*;

- Teachers **sharing practice** with others (e.g. using our EHSTeaching website, at faculty meetings, or through the professional learning noticeboards in the staffroom);

- Teachers **jointly planning and reviewing** the success of lessons and *Programmes of Study*;

- Teachers **mentoring** less experienced colleagues.

We have a philosophy of continuous improvement: no matter how good things are or how experienced someone is in their work, we should constantly be evaluating our practice and striving to make it better. We believe that this improvement happens best when our day-to-day work is grounded in collaboration, rather than individualism.

Effective Professional Learning

Educational research is consistent in its message that it is through a focus on teaching and learning improvement that schools are most likely to impact positively on student outcomes. Put simply: **teaching and learning improvement is the most important focus for our school**.

Accordingly, teacher professional learning should typically focus on the following areas:
- Subject knowledge and understanding;
- Pedagogy which links directly to our school *Teaching & Learning Policy* and *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* (e.g. effective questioning);
- Pedagogy which is specific to the subject being taught (e.g. in Maths, the best way to teach fractions).

We see the purposes of professional learning as supporting teachers to:
- Acquire new knowledge and skills (i.e. the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching);
- Implement new teaching practices;
- Refine practices through self-evaluation and feedback;
- Share practices through discussions, observations and workshops;
- Assist others to implement improvements and refine each other's practice e.g. peer observations, discussions, team planning, and coaching and mentoring.
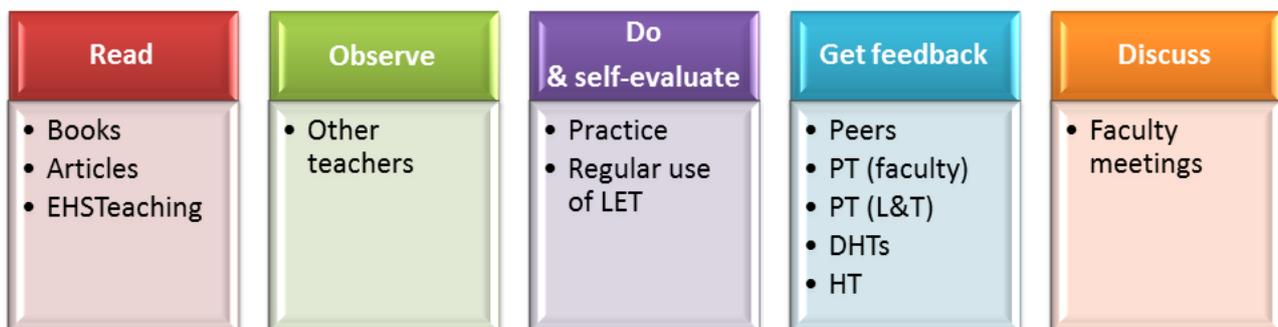
Research into the effectiveness of professional learning consistently highlights that there is often poor transference between professional learning and improvements in teaching and student outcomes. Attending external courses has been shown to have a limited impact on teaching practice and improving student outcomes. Rather, professional learning is more effective when it is school-based and school-managed.

In Eyemouth High School, we offer a wide range of in-house teaching and learning-focussed professional learning for teachers. Much of this is planned by our Learning and Teaching Improvement Group. In-house professional learning opportunities include:
- Workshops and presentations (including at CAT sessions and In-Service days);
- Peer Observation Weeks;
- Lesson observation programmes, including via Faculty Review Fortnights;
- Professional Reading Group;
- Professional Reading Library;
- EHSTeaching.wordpress.com website;
- Displays on noticeboards in the staffroom;
- Discussions at faculty meetings.

We strive to share and discuss practice at both faculty and whole-school levels. Accordingly, faculties are encouraged to share the minutes of their faculty meetings with other faculties, to facilitate this sharing of practice.

Our school *Self Evaluation & Professional Learning Model* summarises the types of professional learning activities that we believe are the most important for staff to focus on:

Read	Observe	Do & self-evaluate	Get feedback	Discuss
• Books • Articles • EHSTeaching	• Other teachers	• Practice • Regular use of LET	• Peers • PT (faculty) • PT (L&T) • DHTs • HT	• Faculty meetings

Our model is informed by the national General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) model for professional learning:

B. Robertson, December 2018

A model of **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Lesson observations

The principal purpose of lesson observations is to support teacher professional learning through feedback, sharing practice and conversations relating to a teacher's self-evaluation of their lesson.

Peer Observations

In faculty
Each faculty have their own *Learning and Teaching Calendar*, with "peer observations" included as part of these. It is at the discretion of the Principal Teacher, in consultation with their faculty, as to when these observations will take place in the faculty.

Out-with faculty
Each year, three Peer Observation Fortnights are included in the school calendar. Specific arrangements for these are discussed and agreed by the Learning and Teaching Improvement Group. They are an opportunity for teachers to observe other teachers from out-with their own faculty.

Sharing practice
Regardless of whether a lesson observation takes place within or out-with a faculty, teachers should arrange to meet together following an observed lesson to discuss teaching and learning from it. The person who observed the lesson should share what they saw as good practice with their own faculty (e.g. at a faculty meeting) and with others in the school, using the Sharing Practice Noticeboards in the staffroom.

Middle and Senior Manager Observations
Principal Teacher observations should be included in faculty *Learning and Teaching Calendars*. Senior Manager observations take place as part at various times in the year, including as of our whole-school Faculty Review programme.

Our whole-school expectations regarding Middle and Senior Manager lesson observations are as follows:

1. It is good practice for a lesson plan to be shared with the observer in advance of the lesson to be observed. A template is included in Appendix 1.

2. During or immediately after the lesson, the person observing the lesson should use the school *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* to record notes and evaluate the 20 elements which make this up, using our green/amber/red system.

3. Following the lesson, the teacher whose lesson was observed should complete a self-evaluation using the *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit,* recording notes and using our green/amber/red scale to evaluate the 20 elements. A copy should be forwarded to the person who observed the lesson before having a meeting with them to discuss the lesson.

4. There should be a meeting to discuss the teaching and learning from that lesson. During this meeting, the teacher whose lesson was observed should be asked to talk through their self-evaluation. Elements which were strong and areas which were less strong (or didn't happen) should be discussed.

5. Following the meeting, the person who observed the lesson should complete a *Lesson Feedback Summary* form and forward a copy of this to the teacher who was observed, their Principal Teacher, and the DHT: Teaching & Learning (B. Robertson).

6. The person who observed the lesson should share what they saw as good practice with others in the faculty (e.g. at a faculty meeting) and others in the school, using our whole-school systems.

Summary:

Person observing the lesson	Teacher whose lesson was observed
1. Use LET for notes and evaluation	1. Use LET to complete self-evaluation
2. Meet teacher to discuss lesson	2. Send completed LET to observer
3. Complete *Lesson Feedback Summary*	3. Meet to discuss lesson
4. Send *Lesson Feedback Summary* to teacher, PT and DHT: T&L	4. Use *Lesson Feedback Summary* to update PLP
5. Share good practice with others	

Professional Learning Plans (PLPs)

Teachers are expected to maintain a *Professional Learning Plan* (PLP). Informed by professional learning and self-evaluation over the course of a term (including feedback from observed lessons), PLPs should be reviewed in discussion with a teacher's line-manager **once a term** (i.e. about once every 10 weeks). Review points should be built into faculty *Learning & Teaching Calendars*.

Following the review of PLPs, a copy of the updated plan should be forwarded to the teacher's line manager and the Depute Headteacher (Teaching & Learning).

Self-Evaluation of Impact

Over the course of the school year we collect a wide body of data and evidence which supports us to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This includes via:
- Senior Management Team lesson observations
- Principal Teacher lesson observations
- Learning Walks
- Student Learner Experience Surveys
- In-faculty surveys and evaluations
- Whole-school focus groups
- In-faculty focus groups
- Teacher self-evaluation of lessons

Once a year (usually in May), teachers are asked to complete a detailed three-part self-evaluation of practice, comprising:
1. A traffic-light evaluation against the 20 elements of our *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*;
2. A short report covering the impact of self-evaluation and professional learning on practice over the course of the year;
3. Updating their *Professional Learning Plan* (as part of our model whereby teachers do this three times a year).

Professional Review and Development (PRD)

Following the self-evaluation activity in May, teachers are expected to have an annual Professional Review and Development (PRD) meeting with their line manager. This should focus on teaching and learning, linking clearly to the school *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* and *Teaching and Learning Policy*, as well as to the teacher's self-evaluation.

In preparation for their PRD meeting, teachers may also find it useful to self-evaluate additional areas of their work against the *GTCS Professional Standards*.

Key References

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Appendix 1: *Lesson Plan template*

Lesson Plan

Couse *e.g. National 5 Biology*	
Date (D/M/Y) *e.g. 2nd November 2018*	
Period(s) *e.g. 1 & 2*	

Learning intention(s) (WALT)	
Success criteria (WILF)	

Outline of lesson structure	

Appendix 2: *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit*

Teachers as "activators of learning" and "evaluators of impact":
Typical elements in a very good lesson - supporting self-evaluation and peer-discussion

Teacher:	Observer:
Date:	Class observed:

	Notes
1. The **purpose** (**learning intention**) of the lesson is clear.	
2. Appropriate **success criteria** are shared / used.	
3. Assessment is used to **find out what students already know / can do** i.e. where students are in their learning.	
4. **Communication (explanations and instructions)** is clear - verbal and visually.	
5. **A number of different learning strategies** are used in the lesson, including opportunities for practice.	
6. **Digital technology** is used to support learning.	
7. There is an appropriate teacher/student **balance between talking, listening and doing.**	
8. **Active learning strategies** are used to engage students, stimulate interest and make them think.	
9. **Questioning** is used skilfully to engage all students and to make them think (including high-order thinking).	
10. **Feedback** is high quality and advances learning.	
11. Students **learn from each other** and **support each other's learning** i.e. there is discussion and/or collaborative / co-operative learning.	
12. A **variety of assessment approaches** are used to gauge student learning and adjust teaching during the lesson.	
13. There is **appropriate challenge and support** for all students – everyone is included in the learning.	
14. **Students take responsibility for their learning** - they are motivated, focused and show resilience.	
15. Students have **opportunities to lead their own learning and the learning of others** e.g. through choices, self-assessment or peer-teaching.	
16. The lesson is **well paced**, including in relation to timescales and use of the available time.	
17. There is a **positive ethos**, where students are motivated, enthusiastic and engaged.	
18. There is meaningful **recognition of effort, progress and achievement,** with any **behaviour issues managed appropriately.**	
19. **Students evaluate their learning and progress** from the lesson, supported by learning intentions and success criteria *(a summary should be recorded in Planners)*.	
20. The **teacher evaluates the impact of the lesson on student learning**, based on evidence.	

Lesson Feedback Summary

A summary of key points following a meeting to discuss and observed lesson

As a school, we are committed to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Teachers are asked to maintain an up-to-date *Professional Learning Plan* **(PLP),** the focus of which is informed by feedback from a variety of sources, including Middle and Senior Manager Lesson observations.

The purpose of this document is to record key points following a meeting to discuss an observed lesson, completed by the person who observed the lesson, to help inform the teacher's PLP when it is next reviewed. **PLPs should be reviewed roughly every 10 weeks**.

Name:	Faculty:
Lesson observed:	Date of lesson:
1. Elements from LET which were strongest:	**2. Elements from LET to focus on developing:**

3: Suggested professional learning activities to support development of these elements:
 	
Could include:
  1. Reading
  2. Observing others
  3. Others observing you
  4. Discussions
  5. Practising specific things
 	
Try to <u>be specific</u> e.g. *who* should you observe? *What* should you read?	

4. Review When do you plan to meet to review progress based on this feedback (e.g. by meeting to discuss it or by observing a different lesson)?	

A copy of this feedback should be shared with the faculty Principal Teacher and DHT: Teaching & Learning

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Appendix 4: *Professional Learning Plan*

Professional Learning Plan
A plan for teaching- and learning-focused Professional Learning

As a school, we are committed to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. This plan is designed to support professional learning which leads to improvement in one or more areas of practice, supported by self-evaluation, which is based on evidence.

Name:	
Date of review:	Faculty:

WHAT? **List elements** from our Lesson Evaluation Toolkit that you will focus on improving *e.g:* • *9. Effective questioning;* • *19. Students reflecting on learning.*	
HOW? Describe **professional learning activities** that you will engage in to develop these areas. As a rule, there are five key themes: 1. **Reading** (EHSTeaching website, articles, books etc.); 2. **Observation** (of other teachers); 3. **Feedback** (from others e.g. peers, PT, PT L&T, DHT, HT) 4. **Discussion** (at faculty meetings, with peers); 5. **Practice and self-evaluation** (using our *Lesson Evaluation Toolkit* or supporting toolkits e.g. our Effective Questioning Toolkit). Try to <u>be specific</u> e.g. *who* are you going to observe? *What* are you doing to read?	
BY WHEN? When will progress with this plan be reviewed? This should be within 10 weeks.	

This plan should be shared with your line-manager and DHT (Teaching & Learning)

B. Robertson, December 2018