

Professional Learning & Development Toolkit



PPTA national office, PO Box 2119, Wellington 6140 | ph 0800 630 400 | email piu@ppta.org.nz

PLD is an integral part of all teachers' professional practice. Schools have an obligation to support the professional development of their staff. PLD is a negotiated process that needs to be flexible enough to meet a range of PLD requirements for staff within each school.

This toolkit provides PPTA members and branches with ...

A suggested [audit process](#) and overview to guide any branch/school PLD review.

A [rationale](#) for PLD.

Some [principles](#) by which to judge the school's decision-making processes about professional learning and the quality of professional learning made available in the school.

Information about [appraisal](#), [teaching as inquiry](#) and [student voice](#).

[Templates](#) for staff survey, discussion with and letter to the principal.

A [checklist](#) to help you keep track of who, what and by when, through a PLD audit process.

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A quick discussion: what is PLD?

PD, PLD, inquiry, action research, an extra meeting... what is teacher professional learning and development? For years we've talked about PD or professional development for teachers and, for most of those years, it's meant going to a conference or attending a course, before returning to the chalkface – possibly (but probably not) transformed.

More recently the terms teacher professional learning – or professional learning and development – have become more widely used. Do the changes in title reflect any changes in expectations, practice, process or outcomes?

PD and PL might be compared like this: "Professional development has become a rather negative term in the eyes of many due to the poor opinion many teachers have of many of the professional development programmes they encounter..."

"Professional learning, on the other hand, is a more recent term that 'implies an internal process through which individuals create professional knowledge'."

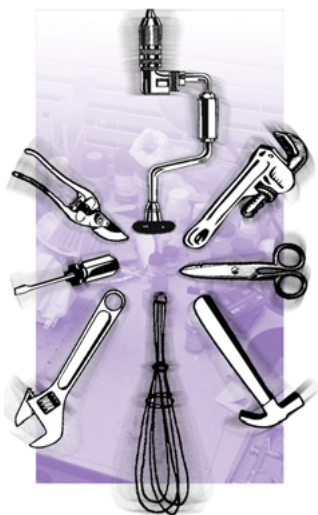
And, finally, "professional learning communities... are characterised by collaborative work and discussion, a focus on teaching and learning and the use of data to evaluate progress over time."

Perhaps by choosing the catchall title of PLD we're hedging our bets, but it is safe to say that teacher PLD is considered more important than ever and in its preferred form has little to do with one-day courses or holiday conferences. This does not mean to say that these are not useful, but acknowledges the increasing pressure on teachers and school leaders to develop and participate in embedded cycles of professional learning, discussion and evaluation.

This toolkit tries to summarise some of the current thinking about these things – and to offer branches a toolkit comprising information and an audit process that can be used to support improved practices and outcomes for teachers and learners in New Zealand secondary and area schools.

It can be used in at least two ways: Firstly, we invite staff responsible for leading and managing PLD to use the toolkit as a guide and measure to support the establishment and maintenance of good policy and practice. Secondly, the toolkit is a resource for branches to use where their school's PLD processes are not transparent, perceived as unhelpful or ineffective, or in need of a thorough review.

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Introduction

Teachers need opportunities throughout their careers to learn about new approaches to teaching, to share ideas for good practice, and to acquire new knowledge about their specialist areas. Any major change in practice, whether initiated locally or nationally, must include provision for the learning needs of the professionals required to implement it.

Teachers have prime responsibility for the learning of their students, yet the learning needs of those teachers are poorly resourced in New Zealand. While individual schools may endeavour to meet the learning needs of their teaching staff, unless the whole education system places a high priority on this, and adequately resources teacher professional learning, teachers will not have equitable or sufficient access to it.

PPTA has been campaigning over many years and in many different ways for improved access to professional learning for secondary teachers. In the 2007 Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) claim, there was a section entitled 'Professional learning support'. It sought the following:

- 100 study support grants of 0.16 (4 hours per week) time and up to \$500 for course fees reimbursed upon successful completion.
- Entitlement of \$1,000 per teacher per annum to reimburse costs of on-going professional learning for use by individual teachers as agreed through the annual performance appraisal process.
- Increases in the value of the Service Increment and removal of the restriction for those who hold units.
- An increase from 30 to 60 in the number of sabbaticals available.
- Entitlement to reimbursement for the cost of subscription to a subject association.

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Only the first of these was achieved.



Branch PLD audit process



Policy

Does your school have a PLD policy?

Where is it located?

When was it last reviewed/updated?

Does it match current PLD practice in your school?

Leadership

Who has overall responsibility for PLD in your school?

How do they communicate with staff about PLD planning and provision?

Is there a PLD committee?

How often does it meet?

How is its membership determined?

Resourcing

What is your school's annual PLD budget?

Who determines this?

How often is it reviewed?

Who determines how the budget is allocated?

How is PLD resourced in the school?

Time for staff to learn

Implementation time

Other resourcing

Does your school maintain subscriptions to relevant subject and teacher associations?

How are relevant readings (eg, set, curriculum matters, PPTA professional issues update, etc) made available to staff?

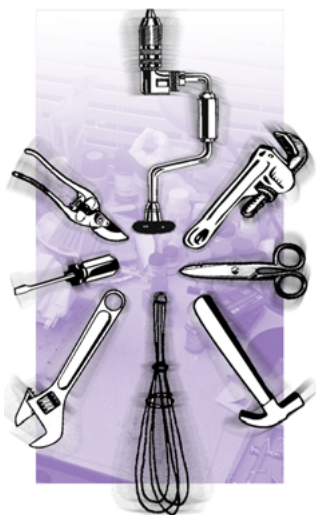
Staff library

Contents pages of journals circulated to staff

Circulation lists for different books, journals

Professional reading bookgroup (an example of an optional PLG)

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Differentiation

Does the school differentiate between different types of PLD?

Whole-school

Departmental

Individual

PLGs

Other

Are staff able to attend relevant conferences?

Teachers' refresher Course Committee (TRCC)?

Subject associations?

PPTA professional conferences?

Planning and review

Is there a clearly articulated and understood PD cycle?

Does it match the goals in the school's annual plan?

Is it consistent with flexibility and choice (based on staff goal-setting and appraisal)?

What mechanisms are used to ensure that knowledge and skills gained through external PLD can be shared with other staff?

Is PLD evaluated?

By whom?

What mechanisms are used for this?

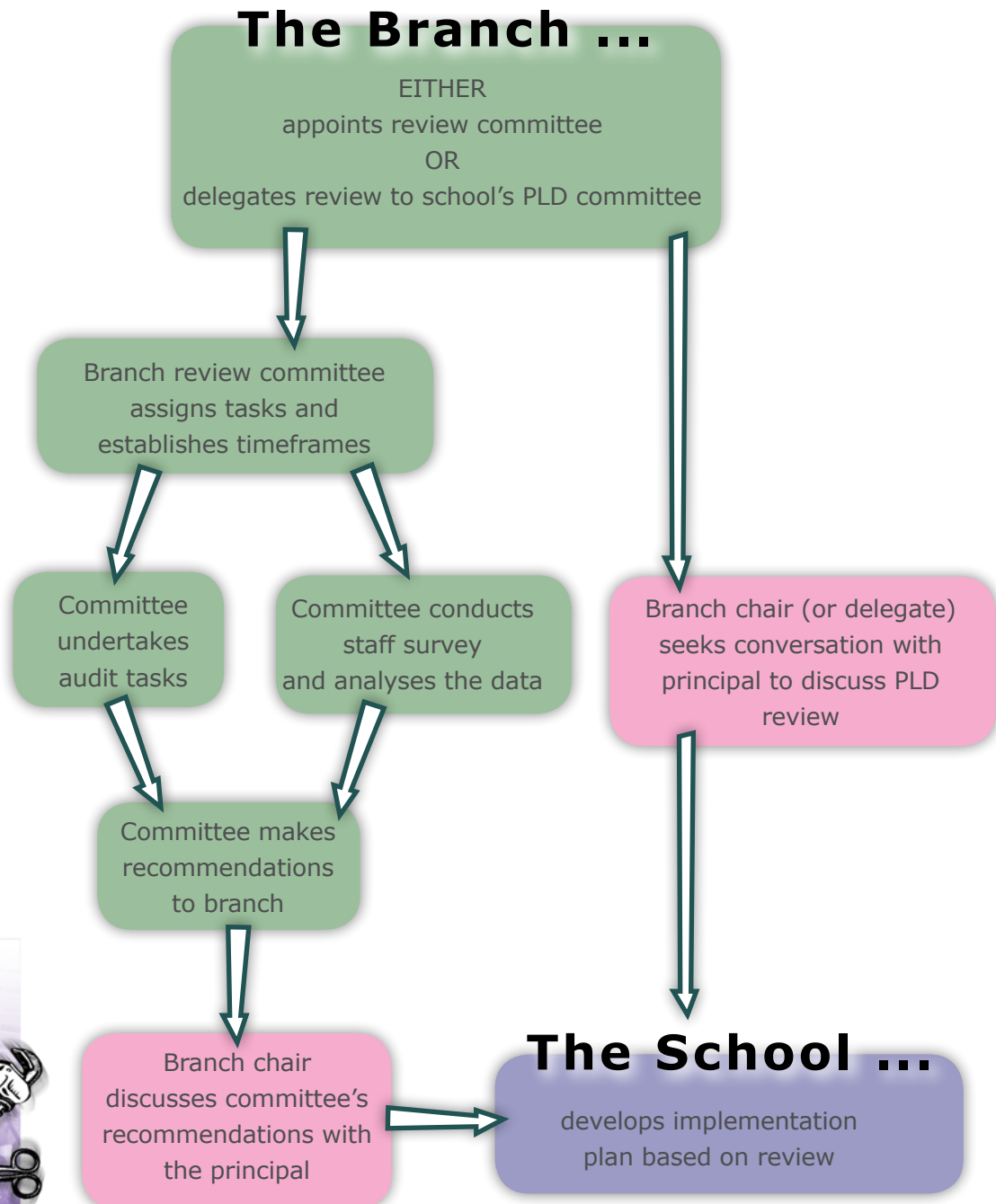
How are staff and the school community included in the evaluation and resulting next steps?

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A suggested process

The map below lays out a process your branch could employ to review its professional learning and development policy.



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Rationale



STCA provisions

The Good Employer provisions require every employer to “operate a personnel policy that complies with the principles of being a good employer” including “Opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees” (3.1.1).

Under Teacher Competence, the employer “shall provide reasonable opportunities for appropriate and effective professional development for all teachers” (3.3.1).

Under Duties When Schools Are Not Open For Instruction, the employer “may require teachers to participate in professional development opportunities at times when the school is not open for instruction provided that no teacher shall be required to attend for more than five days or equivalent per annum and provided also that the needs of the individual teacher are taken into account and that the teacher’s own initiatives in undertaking professional development during time when the school is not open for instruction are considered” (5.4.1).

Under Study Leave, “Teachers who are awarded study leave as part of the 75 full-time equivalent study leave positions available national each year to all teachers shall be granted leave on pay for the period of the study” (6.6.6).

Professional standards for teachers

These are found in the [STCA and ASCTA](#).

Registered Teacher Criteria

The Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC) require that teachers maintain their PLD as part of their teacher registration. Criterion 4 asks teachers to “demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning and development of personal professional practice”, while several other criteria relate to sharing good professional practice with colleagues (RTCs 1 and 5), maintaining an understanding and commitment to akonga (RTC 8), and using “critical inquiry and problem-solving effectively in... professional practice.” (RTC 12).

The Registered Teacher Criteria are “both aspirational and achievable” and, ideally, will inform each school’s PLD and appraisal cycle so that the process of working towards and maintaining full teacher registration will form a normal part of teachers’ working lives (and schools’ planning and staff development cycles).

Visit the Teachers’ Council website for [supporting information about RTC](#).

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Research findings

The Education Review Office (ERO), in its [2009 evaluation report *Managing professional learning and development in secondary schools*](#), was critical of how secondary schools in the sample were planning for professional learning, building a culture in which teachers learn and develop, and monitoring the effectiveness of teachers' learning and development. Only 27% of the 44 sampled schools were deemed to be in the 'most effective' group. 30% were deemed to be managing aspects well but to have at least one significant area that needed strengthening. The other 43% demonstrated "significant weaknesses in the way they managed their teachers' PLD [professional learning and development]".

This bottom 43% of schools were criticised as placing excessive emphasis on attendance at one-day courses and teacher conferences, at the expense of school-wide professional learning. This reflects a significant tension which these guidelines try to address. Because secondary teachers are subject specialist teachers, they may well feel that school-wide professional development does not meet their subject needs. On the other hand, carefully planned and delivered school-wide PD that aligns with school and department goals can be valuable.

In addition, there is good evidence that one-off courses, while useful for information sharing at a relatively superficial level, are not able to help teachers to make profound shifts in their learning. The [Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis \(BES\) on Teacher Professional Learning and Development](#) sets out seven contexts for effective professional learning:

- Extended time for opportunities to learn – necessary but not sufficient
- External expertise – typically necessary but not sufficient
- Teachers' engagement in learning at some point - more important than initial volunteering
- Prevailing discourses challenged
- Opportunities to participate in a professional community of practice - more important than place (i.e. may be school-based or external to school)
- Consistency with wider trends in policy and research
- Active school leadership.

It also described four aspects of the content of effective professional learning:

- Different aspects integrated, e.g. integration of theory and practice, and integration of pedagogical content knowledge, assessment information, and information about how students learn particular curricula
- Clear links between teaching and learning and/or student-teacher relationships established

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- Assessment used to focus teaching and enhance self-regulation
- Sustainability – achieved by teachers acquiring in-depth understanding of theory and the skills of inquiry to judge the impact of teaching on learning and to identify next teaching steps.

In addition, the following activities were deemed to promote effective professional learning:

- Content and activities clearly aligned
- A variety of activities provided to enable teachers to understand the content – listening to experts was not in itself sufficient to change practice
- Content conveyed through the activity was more important than any particular activity
- Professional instruction sequenced, typically as a rationale/catalyst to engage, instruction in key theoretical principles, then opportunities to translate theory into practice and deepen understanding of theory
- Understandings discussed and negotiated, including by engaging teachers' existing theories in order to help them understand new theories
- Student perspective maintained, i.e. the activities served to develop teachers' understanding of the relationship between their teaching and student learning.

The [Timperley et al BES](#) has been a powerful influence on the way that School Support Services and other PD providers have delivered services in recent years. Under the [INSTEP](#) project, professional developers engaged in action research around working more intensively with schools and teachers.

The most recent [BES, on school leadership](#) , emphasises the need for school leaders to promote teacher learning and development, and also to participate in it: "... the leader doesn't stop at supporting or sponsoring their staff in their learning, they actually participate in the learning themselves – as leader, learner, or both. They do this in structured situations, such as staff meetings and professional development workshops, and in informal situations, for example, corridor discussions about specific teaching problems" (p.101).

When the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) surveyed secondary schools in 2003, the bulk of professional learning teachers were doing was, not surprisingly, NCEA-related.

NZCER reports that, according to secondary teachers, the most consistent barrier to achieving curriculum change, is lack of time (2003, 2006, 2009).

Teachers report that poor student behaviour has not increased, but there has been a slight increase in perception that the wrong kind of PD is being offered (14% in 2003; 22% in 2009).

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NZCER's 2009 survey also found that the types of PD which have made the greatest impact on their thinking and practice are: learning area conference or similar (77%), higher study such as M Ed or similar (74%), literacy or literacy across the curriculum (69%), inquiry learning (68%) and action research of similar with an outside research (65%).

Teachers' perceptions of the impact and value of their professional learning (n=870)

No response
 Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neutral/Unsure
 Agree
 Strongly agree



SOURCE: NZCER, 2011

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Principles

These principles are designed to guide judgements about a school's policies and procedures on professional development, and to guide decisions about participation in school-based initiatives that may involve research and development components, teacher inquiry, action research, etc.

PLD is ongoing

- School-wide professional learning goals are established in a transparent and consultative process, are realistic and achievable, are aligned to school goals and are relevant to teachers.
- Time is allocated to enable teachers to absorb and put into effect new learning. This includes time for teachers to reflect with colleagues about new ideas, for peer observations, and to plan collaboratively.

PLD involves flexibility and timelines

- Ongoing PLD is reviewed and evaluated, with findings reported to staff, board of trustees, students and the community.
- Systems are in place to review PLD for effectiveness and relevance, and staff are consulted about progress and next steps.
- Next steps for PLD are aligned with school goals and annual plans, and implemented so that they support teaching and learning planning and priorities.

PLD uses a mix of internal and external leadership

- Decisions to make use of external expertise are carefully considered by a team of teachers, eg, the PLD committee, to ensure that this meets the schools' agreed PLD focus and is money well spent.
- School leaders actively engage with professional learning alongside teaching staff.
- Teachers have access to expertise to support them in their learning. In many cases, this will involve external expertise.
- Professional learning opportunities include provision for teachers to participate in communities of practice, both within the school and externally. (Subject associations are one example of external communities of practice, and schools can support the participation of their staff in the relevant associations.)
- Teachers with responsibility for leading professional learning in the school have access to support, generally externally.

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PLD remains relevant and enables staff to move forward

- The school's performance appraisal process includes identification of appropriate professional learning for individual teachers, and resourcing is available for these.
- Resourcing is available for PLD as teachers undertake new roles, eg, teaching a new subject or taking on a new responsibility.
- PLD for new teaching and learning needs is resourced, eg, curriculum change, new pedagogies, new technologies, etc.

Individual PLD is often complementary to other school PLD but is not necessarily sufficient

- Legitimate and reasonable individual PLD needs are met within two years of their being identified, eg, through the performance appraisal processes.
- While access to one-off seminars and courses is not removed altogether, because they do have a role in information-sharing, the majority of the school's professional learning funds are likely to be allocated to ongoing PLD that engages teachers at a deeper level.

PLD resourcing and decision-making

- Board of Trustees decisions as to the proportion of the schools' operations grant allocated to PLD are transparent and based on agreed principles.
- The school develops, in consultation with staff, a transparent policy and procedure about how PLD funds will be allocated, and this is reviewed regularly. This would normally involve a Professional Development Committee with staff representation, published agendas and open meetings.
- A school's decision to participate in an externally funded professional learning initiative follows consultation with all affected staff.
- Funding is allocated to PLD at the level of the whole school, the department/faculty, and the individual. (PPTA recognises that this requires achieving a really tricky balance, which is why transparency of school decision-making is so important.)
- Decisions to engage with a new initiative, whether school-initiated or externally-initiated, include provision for resourcing (money and time) for PLD required.
- Heads of department/faculty have a role in identifying priorities for professional learning in their area.

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PLD and appraisal



Cartoon used with permission from the author

How can these work positively?

[Eileen Piggott-Irvine](#) argues that appraisal can only work effectively if the following values are integral to the process: “objectivity, fairness, honesty, openness, transparency, respect, trust and non-defensiveness.”

This means that good appraisals are quite hard to do – especially given that these values need to be embedded into workplace practices and culture and not just “turned on for appraisal.”

In short, appraisal only works effectively if all parties have some shared understandings about why it happens and what impact it is expected to have. For this reason, some schools approach appraisal with the assumption that competency is a given and therefore do the paper work and spend more energy on teacher development. This can be a good thing.

Where there are clearly understood and valued teaching and learning practices in the school and a culture that promotes collaborative work based on the school’s goals the appraisal process will reflect these and be structured accordingly.

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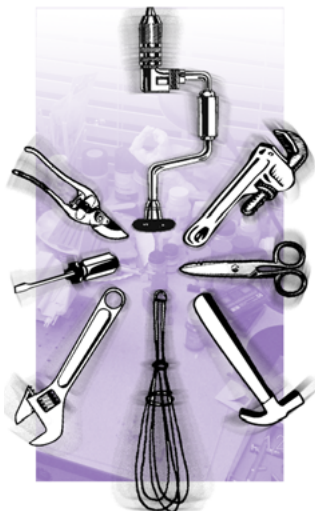
Ideally, an appraisal system might align with the model of “open-to-learning conversations” described by Viviane Robinson, following on from the [BES on professional leadership](#).

What if they don’t?

“No surprises” constitutes a reasonable description of an appraisal meeting’s bottom line. Any concerns about a teacher’s performance in relation to agreed appraisal goals and priorities need to be signalled well in advance of any scheduled appraisal meeting.

Just as teachers try to deal with students and their families in ways that are fair and reasonable, so the appraisal process needs to work for staff.

In the first instance a teacher with concerns about the appraisal process itself, or a particular event within the process, can talk with their branch representatives, head of department/line manager or other senior management team member. It may be useful to have support from a colleague.



If there are general concerns about the nature of a school's appraisal process, a branch meeting, followed by contact with the principal, offers a good mechanism for discussion.

The role of observation/classroom visits

These can be a useful PLD tool – including shared peer observation and reflection – and are also part of the appraisal process. It is really important that the purpose of a particular observation is made clear, so that a teacher knows what the observer is there to look at, for example, teaching practice, learning tasks and activities, to observe particular students, or a combination of these, and the purpose of the observation (PLD, appraisal, as part of a whole-school development project, etc).

Any planned observation will involve prior discussion between observer and teacher to determine the focus of the observation, a time for discussion and agreed process following that. For example, there might be agreement that the focus will be on questioning techniques or transition points through the lesson. Each of these could lead to a different type of observation.

It is increasingly common for the 'four-minute-walkthrough' to form part of middle- and senior- leadership practice in schools. Although these can help to promote greater understanding of classroom practice and are a useful tool to build awareness about teaching and learning across the school (as well as to support implementation of agreed school priorities), these are not specifically linked to appraisal and, unless agreed prior, should not feed directly into the appraisal process.

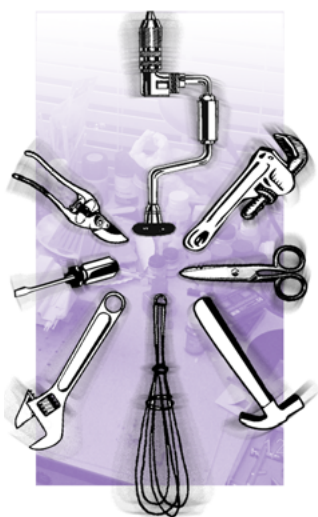
In a school where values of trust, openness and respect are embedded, classroom walkthroughs are more likely to be welcomed and accepted as part of regular practice.

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Professional conversations

Is appraisal a professional conversation? Don't professional conversations happen in schools already? One key difference is that some conversations are more over the teacups, whereas others are planned, or grow out of the teacup discussions.

Appraisal meetings should be professional conversations, but possibly the most valuable professional conversations are those that focus on PLD and on teaching and learning, and which focus on maintaining and improving good practice.



Teaching as inquiry in schools



What might it look like?

Here's what [Te Kete Ipurangi](#) (TKI) says about teaching as inquiry:

"The fundamental purpose of the Teaching as Inquiry cycle is to achieve improved outcomes for all students. Less obviously, but very importantly, the cycle is an organising framework that teachers can use to help them learn from their practice and build greater knowledge."

TKI also carries a range of ["learning stories"](#) about teachers' experiences of using the teaching as inquiry approach to inform their work. There are a number of ways in which schools can support teachers to use the teaching as inquiry cycle – some are listed below:

Action research

For teachers, the way action research might differ from other kinds of inquiry or reflection is nicely captured in this definition

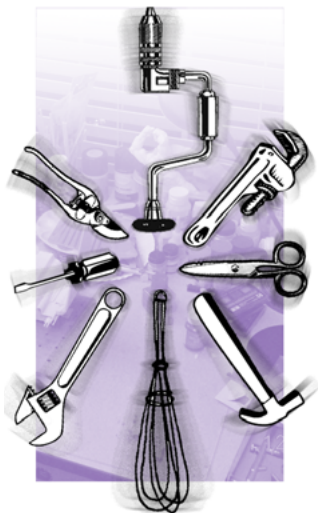
"[Action research](#) is a reflective process of progressive problem solving led by individuals working with others in teams or as part of a "community of practice" to improve the way they address issues and solve problems."

Here's another useful description:

"The word 'action' in action research is key. It is an approach that always involves participants making or implementing change, rather than just investigating an issue.

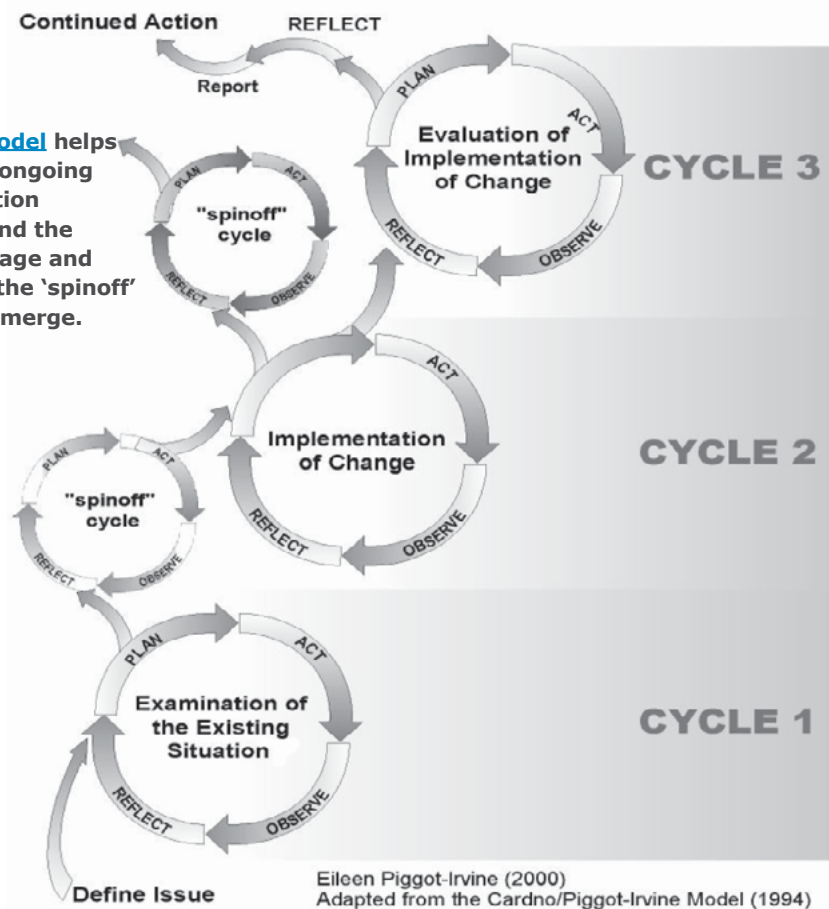
"The word 'research' in action research is also important. Rather than making ad hoc decisions, the participants in projects make informed decisions about what and how they are going to implement change. They fully research the current situation (a 'reconnaissance') and potential changes before implementation. They also collect valid data to evaluate the changes they have made." (Piggot-Irvine, 2002, p. 9)

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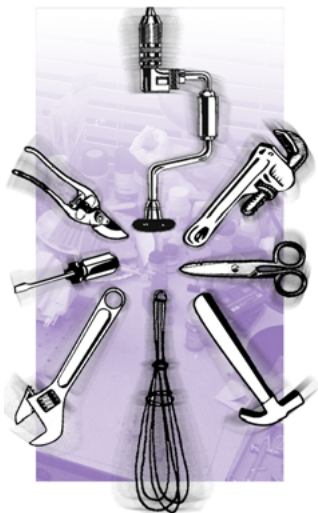
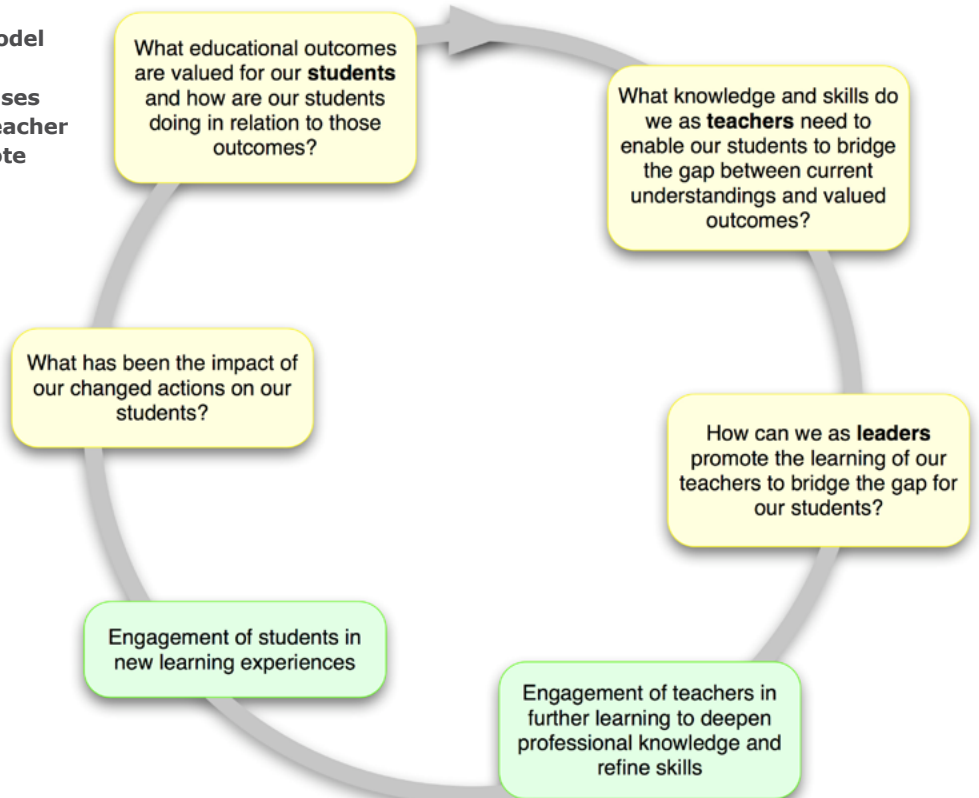
THE PROBLEM RESOLVING ACTION RESEARCH (PRAR) MODEL

The PRAR model helps to show the ongoing nature of action research – and the need to manage and incorporate the 'spinoff' cycles that emerge.



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The following model (from the [BES team, MOE](#)) focuses specifically on teacher inquiry to promote student learning outcomes.



Reflective practice

What is [reflective practice](#)? Moon defines reflective practice as:

“a set of abilities and skills, to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem solving or state of mind”. (1999: 63).

This encapsulates the wide range of activities associated with thinking about your teaching and learning. Cowan suggests that learners are reflecting in an educational sense “when they analyse or evaluate one or more personal experiences, and attempt to generalise from that thinking” (1999: 18).

However, as Biggs points out, “a reflection in a mirror is an exact replica of what is in front of it”.

Reflection in professional practice, however, gives back not what it is, but what might be, an improvement on the original”. (1999: 6).

Ako: “Describes a teaching and learning relationship where the educator is also learning from the student and where educator practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective. Ako is grounded in the principle of reciprocity and also recognises that the learner and whanau cannot be separated”. ([Ka Hikitia, p.20](#))

PLGs and PLCs (and discussion groups)

Professional learning groups (PLGs) and professional learning communities (PLCs) are increasingly common in secondary schools. These are sometimes organised as vehicles for structuring ongoing PLD, or sometimes emerge as discussion and reflection groups that teachers choose to join.

There are some user-friendly [web stories](#) about schools’ experiences of using these – if you are thinking of starting one, or are being asked to participate, or if you’re not sure that the group you’re part of already really resembles a PLG/C, it’s worth checking them out on the [New Zealand Curriculum \(NZC\) pages](#) at [TKI](#).

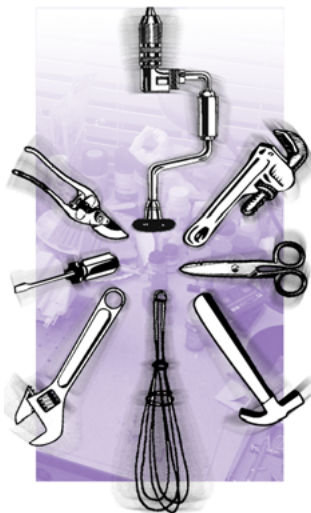
- Voluntary

Sometimes PLGs are voluntary, so it’s up to individual teachers to decide if they want to go along. Often these are reading groups, where members choose articles relevant to their professional interest, which they discuss. Other PLGs offer a forum for staff engaged in inquiry approaches or action research to share findings, reflect with others, and offer support.

- Compulsory

Some schools use PLGs as a model for differentiated whole-school PLD. Each group will have a different focus (although all will relate to the school’s vision and goals) and staff are able to choose the group that best meets their PLD

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interests and needs. It is possible, using this differentiated model, to offer space for new PLGs to develop, based on staff interests and suggestions. The attached PLG guidelines offer advice about ensuring that even compulsory PLGs are structured to enable choice, to value a range of contributions and outcomes, and to maximise their usefulness.

Things to keep in mind when planning and running [PLGs](#)

Respect adult learners

- Be a co-learner, not a teacher.
- Connect the group to a real-life issue in the school.
- Set individual goals and a group goal/mission statement (term-/year-long?).
- Have a relevant product in mind, one that each participant can use (eg, a set of lesson plans, new teaching approaches, ideas for learning intentions).
- Revisit the goals and timeline at the start of each session, allowing participants to give an update. Amend plans to accommodate new ideas.

Incorporate choice

- If possible, allow teachers to join voluntarily.
- If the study group is going to read, offer several choices of texts; allow the group to make the final decision/s on readings.
- If the group is ongoing and mandatory, provide choice in the object and/or method of study.

Plan for voice

- Structure the time for the meetings and, where needed, offer alternative times.
- Assign individual or paired tasks that are then shared.
- Refer often and objectively to the goals of the group.
- If the group has a focus on students, make sure some sessions include students.

Plan for personal connections

- Construct open-ended guiding questions for discussions.
- Adopt rules for discussing student achievement data, etc.

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Accept reluctance

- Accept that teachers have different levels of commitment and motivation to engage in a PLG.
- Accept that teachers come to study groups with personal sets of strengths and weaknesses.
- Make personal connections with teachers to facilitate engagement.
- Plan strategies for accomplishing homework during the study group if necessary.
- Where possible, offer refreshments, think about finding a comfortable space, generally aim for as pleasant an environment as possible.

Can inquiry teaching approaches work?

There's plenty of research to suggest that student achievement, as well as collegiality and connectedness, can be improved due to ongoing use of inquiry teaching approaches and building learning communities.

A feature of the [digital stories](#) on the NZC website is that teachers share their learning and interests with students, so that the learning is reflected between teachers and students – and even across clusters of schools.

Other data suggests that teachers enjoy having time and space to collaborate with colleagues – the PLG model in particular can offer flexible and social frameworks to support PLD.

The Lesson Study approach, where teachers work together to plan a lesson, observe a group member teach the lesson, then run a debrief through which improvements and next steps are formulated, is described in an Education Gazette article. *

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Why bother?

The [registered teacher criteria](#) (RTC) and most school appraisal processes require evidence of ongoing PLD. Linking at least some of your professional learning to what's going on in your own school makes sense. Sharing good practice within and across subject departments also allows more coherence in development and delivery of teaching programmes and builds collegiality.

Teacher-led PLGs, action research partnerships and inquiry groups, support teachers to build and share their knowledge, and offer frameworks for opening up our classrooms to share practice. They also place value on teachers' knowledge and skills.

* Lawrence and Sawyer (2010). Strong Teacher Inquiry, Education Gazette, 19 April, 89, 6, PD insert, p. 4.



What to do if it's NOT working

If your branch has already used the audit and survey documents to evaluate PLD in the school, you should know clearly whether the existing policy and practices are working (for most of the people, most of the time).

If not, now might be the time to raise this issue at a branch meeting. Teachers have a right as well as an obligation to maintain PLD. If you think that the PLD system in your school is working well for others, but not for you, this is an issue to raise with your head of department and/or your appraiser.

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Student Voice

The 2010 [NZCER report](#) titled: Better than a professional? Students as co-contributors to educational design is a great introduction to the hows and whys of incorporating student voice into school planning and review of teaching and learning.

As well as offering insights into a process by which teachers can work with students as part of inquiry process about curriculum, the report also addresses some of the tensions and further issues to be addressed.

The bibliography on this report also offers a valuable guide to current literature about student voice.

The MOE's [INSTEP programme](#) offers some guidelines about using student voice, and the [Access To Learn \(AToL\) project](#) similarly offers findings from its use of student voice as part of the teacher inquiry cycle focusing on assessment for learning.

[Accent Learning](#) offers a useful student voice case study, along questions, tips and next steps, as well as links to other New Zealand sites.

There's a very brief, but informative, case study on pupil voice in a UK secondary school that addresses the challenges as well as the opportunities presented by student voice. It's a Powerpoint presentation on the Centre for the Use of Research & Evidence in Education website (www.curee-paccts.com) called [Pupil Voice: comfortable and uncomfortable for teachers](#).

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Templates

Conversation with principal about PLD review

Key points to raise at the meeting may include:

- Thanks for making the time for this discussion.
- We are keen to work with you on the issue of PLD in our school.
- That branch members understand and support the following points about PLD:
 - 1) PLD is an integral part of all teachers' professional practice.
 - 2) Schools have an obligation to support the professional development of their staff.
 - 3) PLD is a negotiated process that needs to be flexible enough to meet a range of PLD requirements for staff within each school.
- Have you seen the PPTA PLD toolkit?
 - 1) No... Would you like some time to read and think about this before resuming our discussion? Schedule follow up meeting.
 - 2) Yes... that's great, what do you think about having a look at the suggested audit process with us?
- Ideally, the meeting will conclude with some agreed outcomes and next steps such as:
 - 1) Yes, the audit is a good idea, let's agree to an audit group (or, the PLD committee will pick this up)
 - 2) Yes, this is a worthwhile project, let's take it to the next staff meeting.
- Less ideally, if the meeting does not result in agreed outcomes it is still important to close the meeting on reasonable terms and with an assurance to the principal that the issues will be taken back to the branch for discussion and a follow-up meeting sought.
- Branch delegates from the meeting write a brief letter to the principal summarising the issues/outcomes from that meeting (see template)

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Letter to principal template

Dear [name]

Thanks again for making the time to meet with me/us about the school's professional learning and development (PLD) policy.

At the meeting, we discussed the PPTA PLD toolkit, the school's current PLD policy and practices, and the possibility of using the suggested audit process to review PLD.

We agreed that...

Some issues that remain unresolved include...

As agreed, we will now report back to the [branch/staff meeting] and... [seek interested people to run the audit/distribute the staff survey/look forward to the PLD committee's findings/etc

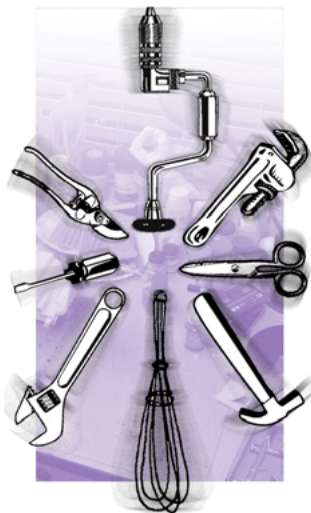
[finish with something about agreed timeframes and/or the need to develop a timeline for the process]

Best wishes

[Name/s]

Branch Delegate/s

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Staff survey

A couple of points...

You do not have to conduct a staff survey as part of your PLD audit if you do not think that it will be helpful. The survey is designed to complement other information gathered during the audit process and, specifically, to capture staff perceptions about access to and value of PLD in your school, at present. It may be that this step is not needed – or is not useful at this point. If so, just skip it!

[NZCER teacher workplace survey](#)

Your school may already have used, or prefer to use, the NZCER teacher workplace survey, which has one section specifically focusing on professional development.

The NZCER survey includes five sections:

1. Physical working environment and resources
2. Satisfaction with school
3. School leadership
4. Professional development
5. School organisation

The survey is completed by staff, in confidence, online, with the facility for school-specific questions to be added, and results returned to the school. This survey is available at a cost of between \$225 and \$500 (depending on number of staff).

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PPTA survey

We also offer a shorter survey template you may choose to use/adapt.

Staff professional learning and development	(a) How useful is this practice?				(b) How often does this occur for you?			
	Very useful	Useful	Neutral	Not Useful	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever
External courses related to your subject area/s								
Professional learning groups based at school								
Staff led PD sessions								
External support e.g literacy/numeracy facilitator								
Subject association support								
On line, eg NZC on line								
University study: degree, post graduate								
Department based PD								
Other:								
Other:								

Evaluating staff professional learning and development	(a) How useful is this practice?				(b) How often does this occur for you?			
	Very useful	Useful	Neutral	Not Useful	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever
PD relates directly to enhancing teaching practice								
PD is linked to student outcomes								
Staff are observed and given feedback about their teaching								
Staff are surveyed about effectiveness of PD								
Senior management are actively involved in the PD								
There is a clear link between PD, school goals and department goals								
Students are informed of the PD staff are engaged in								
Time is provided for PD (weekly/ fortnightly)								
There are actual take aways from PD sessions								
There are high expectations that staff will implement suggested action								
Other:								
Other:								

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Checklist



This chart is designed as a guide – your branch may wish to construct its own checklist, or adapt this one to suit. Ideally the key people will be named, and outcomes changed to reflect the branch’s wishes.

Although this process has been developed with a branch in mind, a delegated group (such as an existing PLD committee) could equally follow this process.

Task	Timeframe	Key people	Outcomes
Policy check	One week	One person	Report back to branch
PLD leadership/personnel check	Two weeks	One person	Create summary page/table for staff use/handbook
Resourcing check: - how much? - by whom? Meetings with those i/c budgets: - (might also include a BOT person and the EO). - processes.	2-3 weeks	Might need a small group (2-3 pax)	Report back to branch, including current financial status (total budget, money spent, \$ remaining): - breakdown of allocations, etc.
Staff library and print resources/professional reading: - discussion with TLR and library manager. - discussion with PLD decision-makers.	1-2 weeks	One person	List of current subscriptions. Proposal for change/new process if needed, eg, suggested process for circulating journals/articles.
Differentiation of PLD	2-3 weeks	Small group	The staff survey might reveal some of this information. Discussion with HODs, SMT i/c PLD, committee (if needed).
Survey	1-2 weeks	One person if using survey monkey or similar Small group if doing via paper	Survey distributed. Timeframe publicised and reminders given. Collate results and distribute to branch for discussion. Could produce recommendations arising from the survey.
PLD cycles	1-2 weeks	Small group	Check PLD plans and review cycles Write up a summary document for branch. Develop recommendations for improved practice if needed.
Final decision about report back to branch	1-2 meetings	Small group (made up of the people who've carried out above tasks)	Determine final recommendations to take to branch Write summary report (brief) Present branch recommendations to principal Negotiate whole staff meeting to review findings and establish next steps

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Further reading

Five keys to effective teacher learning teams

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/04/13/29gallimore.h29.html?tkn=Y YTFLY9T%2FN8EEMI0YLkRQLj79%2B8bX%2FmZAAZd&cmp=clp-edweek>

How friends can be critical as schools make essential changes

<http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leading-change/Organisational-change/How-Friends-Can-Be-Critical-As-Schools-Make-Essential-Changes>

How effective is your appraisal system?

Includes a useful table documenting typical practice/issues/possible solutions
<http://www.educationgroup.co.nz/Publications/Appraisal%20%20how%20effective%20is%20your%20appraisal%20system.pdf>

How teachers evaluate the impact of GTCW continuing professional development projects.

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/thematicreports/GTCW%20Remit%20FD1%20FINAL.DOC%207%20June.pdf>

Practitioner engagement in and/or with research and its impact on learners

<http://www.curee-paccts.com/node/2303>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT WORKS: What Makes Professional Development Effective?

Journal article by Thomas R. Guskey; Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 84, 2003

<http://www.kappanmagazine.org/content/84/10/748.abstract>

Literacy Professional Development project: Identifying effective teaching and and professional development practices for enhanced student learning.

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/literacy/16813>

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Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide

<http://www.nsd.org/news/evaluationguide.pdf>

- includes a logic model (p.15) and checklist (p.23)

You can find the International Academy of Education summary of the PLD BES here:

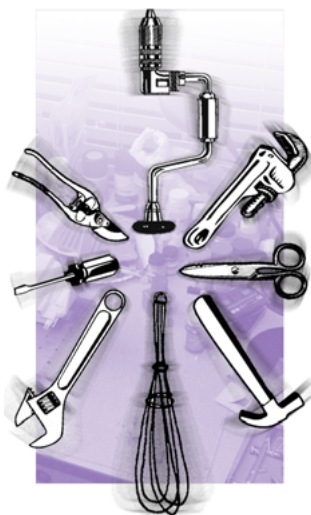
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/publications/educational-practices.html>

Timperley, H. (2008). Teacher professional learning and development: Educational practices series-18. International Academy of Education, International Bureau of Education & UNESCO.

Timperley, H. (2009). Te Kaupapa Whakaako, Whakapakari Kaiako: Te kete tikanga matauranga 18. Translated by Ngata, W. International Academy of Education, International Bureau of Education & UNESCO.

Katz and Earl (2007) Creating new knowledge: evaluating networked learning communities

<http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/files/Jan30EvaluatingNetworkedCommunities.pdf>



Wylie, Cathy. Focusing Leadership on Adult Learning: The Secondary School Challenge [online].

[Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2010: 51-66. http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=275340397896442;res=IELHSS](http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=275340397896442;res=IELHSS)

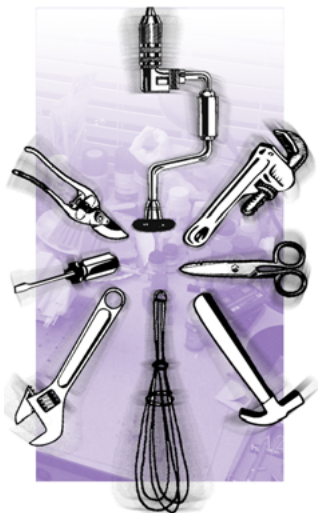
Teachers' perceptions of their professional learning activities

<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v8n2/Yates/paper.pdf>

For Jean McNiff's guide to starting action research, see

<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/booklet1.html>

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PPTA national office, PO Box 2119, Wellington 6140 | ph 0800 630 400 | email piu@ppta.org.nz