

Module 4 Topic 3: Continuous Improvement in the School

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Topic Description

In this topic we are raising issues about the need for both administrative staff and teachers to remain up to date about many aspects of education in a changing world. We explore why, where and how this might be done and what the new learning imperatives are for all types of staff in the modern school. The topic commences by identifying the new professional knowledge and skills of the 21st century teacher and the extent to which these are recognised as important. It continues by encouraging a personal assessment of the ownership of these skills.

Topic Objectives

The objectives of this topic is to identify the new professional knowledge and skills for 21st century teachers and pupils

Target Audiences

There are a variety of target audiences for this module.

- a) Initially there are the decision-makers – the politicians elected to give direction to many aspects of the city’s focus and to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing environment within which the city and the school operates.
 - b) Secondly there are those city professionals whose responsibility it is to provide a school system open to the needs and demands of the 21st century.
 - c) Thirdly there are the administrative staff and teachers who are preparing youngsters of all ages to live in a vastly different society in the future, one where change is constant, where employment depends on adaptability and flexibility and where learning is for everyone and for life.
 - d) Fourthly there are the pupils and students themselves who should be included in this crucial debate about their own futures.
 - e) Fifthly there are those who have a deep interest in the progress of the school – the parents, the governors, the members of the community around it – who can contribute much to its ethos, its processes and its effective operation.
 - f) Sixthly, there are the National Government Advisers, Inspectors and Civil Servants who determine the content of the curriculum and influence the way in which schools operate in many other ways
- Lastly there are the ordinary citizens whose interest arises from the sort of inclusive and interactive society created in the concept of the learning city. All of these can profit from the seminars this module generates.

Lesson 4.3.1: Skills for 21st Century Teachers

Lesson Objectives

To identify the full range of professional knowledge and skills needed by modern teachers in order to demonstrate the need for a continuous improvement programme

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

NB Learning Leaders with an audience of non-teachers or a mixed audience will need to interpret the exercise flexibly, by asking them to identify a teacher they know or knew at the local or their own school.

NB2 This may be more than one lesson – it may be split between after point 5 below.

1. Introduce the idea of change in society to which the school will need to respond in order to give a 21st century education. Remind the class what has been learned in this module so far. What are they? Put a few examples up on the board. Ask what new knowledge and skills will need to be learned by professional teachers in order to cope with these. Point out the parallel in the need for other professionals such as doctors to make similar responses.

2. Hand out toolbox item and ask the class to read and respond to the quotations in groups of 3.
3. Bring into plenary and discuss the results of this exercise. Does it reinforce the points made in 1 above.
4. Hand out toolbox item 2. In different groups of 3 ask the class to give a mark on their perception of the importance of that knowledge/skill.
5. Ask the same groups to mark the last column on how many teachers at their school have that skill . Bring into plenary and discuss the results. What insights have the class gained from doing this exercise?
6. Hand out toolbox item 3. Divide into groups of two and ask each group to give an example in practise of the skill described. Get them to put a mark against each skill which describes their own competency 1= no competency, 2= some knowledge, 3= full knowledge and competency
7. Bring into plenary and compare the results. Discuss the results and reinforce the need for continuous improvement in professional life. Point out that the 'how' will be discussed in next week's lesson.

Lesson 4.3.2: Strategies for Staff Development

Lesson objectives

To examine the elements of a continuous learning plan so that the learner can know a) how to apply it to others and b) how to apply it to him/herself.

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

NB – There are several lessons here- perhaps as many as 4 if done in every detail. Alternatively learning leaders may choose to select items from the toolbox to demonstrate principles.

1. Discuss the current situation regarding updating of skills for teachers. How is it done. Get a few ideas and then give out toolbox item 5, the class to complete this in groups of two. Bring together in plenary and discuss what the answers are and whether or not this is satisfactory.
2. Point out that most companies in industry have a personal development plan for every one of their employees. Hand out toolbox item 6, this to be completed individually. Then ask them to discuss the answers in groups of two. Bring together in plenary and discuss the exercise and how and why different people have different priorities.

Toolbox Item 1

1. Staff Development

Exercise 1: How do the sentiments expressed in the following quotations equate to your perception of the need for development of staff in your school?

1= in every respect, 2= a lot, 3= some 4= only a little, 5 = not at all

‘A Lifelong Learning school will involve both children and staff in the maintenance of a culture of quality and respect for high standards in everything it does. It will have continuous improvement programmes for all teaching and non-teaching staff’

European Lifelong Learning Initiative – Principles

‘Teaching as a professional role faces decisive change in the coming decades: teachers and trainers become guides, mentors and mediators. Their role – and it is a crucially important one – is to help and support learners who, as far as possible, take charge of their own learning in formal and informal settings. The capacity and the confidence to develop and practise open and participatory teaching and learning methods should therefore become an essential professional skill for educators and trainers, in both formal and non-formal settings.’

(European memorandum on lifelong learning)

‘In a world in which information is doubling every five years, no-one expects the teacher to have total knowledge. The teachers most valuable function is as a trained, skilled manager - a conductor of the orchestra of learning, introducing the instruments which facilitate the learning in a wide range of symphonic variations’

(Longworth – Making Lifelong Learning Work)

‘For teachers in particular the transformation of the school into a lifelong learning establishment will entail great changes. They will develop new skills and competencies. The psychology of how people learn, individual learning styles, open and distance learning technologies, how to motivate reluctant learners, using the internet for collaborative teaching, creating fruitful learning partnerships, mentoring techniques, administering learning audits and personal learning plans are just a few of the skills and competencies they will need to update as a part of their continuous professional development, just as doctors and lawyers have to stay current with developments in medicine and the law. And that is the easy list. To classroom management skills are added resource and person management skills, leadership and counselling skills and the competence to inspire and animate others. How to encourage creativity, how to identify barriers to confidence, how to use new learning relaxation techniques such as meditation and music, or transactional analysis and brainstorming, the psychology of learning stimulation, how to open up the mind to new learning and how to make learning fun are an even greater challenge to the teacher. All of this would be a part of a school management system aimed at transforming the school into a ‘learning organization’ or a learning community, where every member of staff and every child has a personal learning target for the day, week and/or month and is actively engaged in continuous learning.’

(longworth – Education for the 21st century)

Exercise 2. Insert here any initial comments that occur to you as a result of these quotations.

Toolbox Item 2

Exercise 1.: This is a list of the knowledge identified by Longworth in ‘Making Lifelong Learning

Work' which teachers may have to develop in order to help create a learning approach. In column

1 please express your opinion of the importance of each in column 3

1=crucial, 2=very, 3= so-so, 4= not much 5= not at all

New skills for learning and teaching				
1	How to set and administer personal learning plans for their students			
2	The effective uses of mentoring as a learning support system			
3	Knowledge of how to identify and teach to different individual learning styles			
4	Knowledge of how to establish and use partnerships with other organisations (eg industry) as additional resources for learning			
5	Practical knowledge of the uses of Computers as aids to learning			
6	Practical experience and knowledge of distance learning techniques			
7	Up to date knowledge of the psychology of how children learn			
8	Knowledge of how to use electronic networks with other schools to help learning and learner motivation and collaborative learning			
9	Skills as a resource manager to mobilise and use all the human resources in the community to improve the learning of their students			
10	Knowledge of how to carry out and analyse learning audits			
11	Knowledge of new evaluation and assessment techniques			
12	Ability to teach all ages in several types of institution			
13	Counselling skills for children with troubles			
14	Knowledge of web-surfing and the use of the internet as a communication and learning tool			
15	Knowledge of meditation and other techniques for improving receptiveness to learning			
16	Knowledge of how to give ownership of learning to the learner			
17	How to organise classrooms so that they are hives of active personal learning			
18	How to help students design, develop, administer and analyse questionnaires which lift their appreciation of the world around them			
19	How to tap into local funding resources			
20	How to develop links with local media to enhance the visibility of the childrens' work in the community			

Exercise 2. in the 4th column please insert your estimate of the percentage of teachers in your institution with that skill.

Exercise 3: Tick the skills which you yourself already have in the 5th column

Toolbox item 3

Learning Counsellors - Teachers of Tomorrow

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|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Leadership Skills</u> | ✓ Create the habit of learning in people through a thorough knowledge of how people learn and their individual learning styles |
| <u>Technology Skills</u> | ✓ Optimise the use of open and distance learning technologies to make the best use of their power to create interactive feedback between the learner and the learning programme(s) |
| <u>Classroom Management Skills</u> | ✓ Understand how to organise classrooms into hives of active personal learning using human resources available from parents and the community |
| <u>Networking Skills</u> | ✓ Network learners with other learners on a local, national and International basis and develop all the ways of using Communications technology to stimulate innovative learning |
| <u>Negotiating Skills</u> | ✓ Support learning by developing and exploiting partnerships between Industry, schools, higher and further education, local Government and the informal education system |
| <u>Counselling Skills</u> | ✓ Empower each learner by helping to set and monitor personal goals through personal learning plans, mentoring techniques and individualised learning modules |
| <u>Research Skills</u> | ✓ Lift the vision of students by involving them in audits, surveys and studies which enhance their appreciation of the world around them and the value of critical analysis |
| <u>Resource Discovery skills</u> | ✓ Link the results to learning opportunities locally, nationally and internationally and make use of all funding sources |
| <u>Resource Management Skills</u> | ✓ Organise information programmes and schemes to mobilise the skills and talents of the whole community for education and learning |
| <u>Self-Improvement Skills</u> | ✓ Respond to the new lifelong learning world by continuously updating skills and competencies |
| <u>Inspirational Skills</u> | ✓ Stimulate learning into an enjoyable and creative experience through a thorough knowledge of the psychology of learning motivation and how to overcome barriers to learning confidence. |
- Equally at home in Industry, Schools, Adult Education, Universities and all parts of education and social systems**

Toolbox item 5

Exercise 1: Say how important are the sentiments expressed in the following quotation to the development of staff in your school? 1= in every respect, 2= a lot, 3= some 4= only a little, 5 = not at all

The Creation of personal development planning support mechanisms over a career which involves opportunities for both the enhancement of job skills and the development of personal and organisational vision are not simply desirable for teachers in the 21st century. They are essential
 Christopher Day, Lifelong Learning and Teacher Education

Exercise 2: Mark what percentage of people in the school do the following
 1= 0-5%, 2=6-15%, 3= 16-30%, 4=31-60%, 5= over 60%

1	Teaching staff having completed a course on lifelong learning	
2	Administrative staff having completed a course on lifelong learning	
3	Teaching staff having completed a course on Quality management (TQM or similar)	
4	Administrative staff having completed a course on quality management	
5	Teaching staff have a continuous improvement personal learning plan	
6	Administrative staff have a personal learning plan	
7	School staff have mentors, coaches or guides (as used in learning organisations)	

Exercise 3: Answer the following questions about teacher training

1	How many days in the year will the average teacher go on a full-time course or seminar to update skills and knowledge	
2	How many day equivalents will the average educator spend in updating skills and knowledge part-time or in own time	
3	How many days per year will administrative staff spend in personal skills updating in their own time	
4	Is there a system in the school for monitoring the performance of teachers? Yes/ No	
5	Is there provision for teachers to learn by distance education methods? Yes/No	

Exercise 4: Say what incentives are there for staff to update their knowledge and practice?

1	Full payment of costs	
2	partial payment of costs	
3	tax deductions	
4	Potential promotion	
5	Time off for learning activities	
6	Time off in lieu of payment	
7	Professional Pride	
8	Other incentives (please state)	

Exercise 5: Are teachers habitually in touch with other teachers in the following situations

1	From other schools locally Yes/ No	
2	From other schools nationally by internet Yes/ No	
3	From other schools internationally by internet Yes/ No	

Exercise 6 Make 5 key comments about strategies for staff development in school,

1

2

3

4

5

Toolbox Item 6

The Scottish Power Learning system adopts a similar approach to personal development. It recognises that learning is a feature of many aspects of life – not just for career development – and encourages all its employees to think hard about what is important to them personally. The following exercise covers some of the topics covered in the company’s annual assessment plans.

Exercise 1: Mark the importance for yourself of each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= not at all important 2= slightly important, 3= of average importance, 4= quite important and 5 very important.

1	Staying in this geographical location	
2	Helping others to learn	
3	Having a secure job	
4	Being well paid	
5	Having a good Family Life	
6	Achieving promotion	
7	Having some personal challenges to meet	
8	Learning New Things	
9	Leisure and recreational pursuits	
10	Reaching my potential	
11	Helping others to reach their potential	
12	Improving the way I work	
13	Making a contribution to society	
14	Influencing people	
15	Being efficient	
16	Making things happen	
17	Doing a job that is worthwhile	
18	Involving myself with Community Activities	
19	Working in a team	
20	Being looked up to	
21	Religious/Spiritual Activities	
22	22 Being creative and innovative	
23	Positive working environment	
24	Delivering quality and value to customers	
25	25 Freedom from stress	
26	Helping my school’s reputation in the community	
27	Making a contribution to the future	
28		
29		
30		

Exercise 2: Insert 3 more of your own in 28-30

Exercise 3: Put an asterisk against the 5 most important

The Scottish Power development plan encourages a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis and continues by helping the respondent develop a personal action plan incorporating both career and personal objectives. Guidance is given on the many learning methods and opportunities available and how to monitor the plan once started. Learners are encouraged to use mentors and guides in order to help overcome the obstacles that may arise.