



# Professional Learning as a key lever to support long-term improvements in teaching practice

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## Impetus for the study



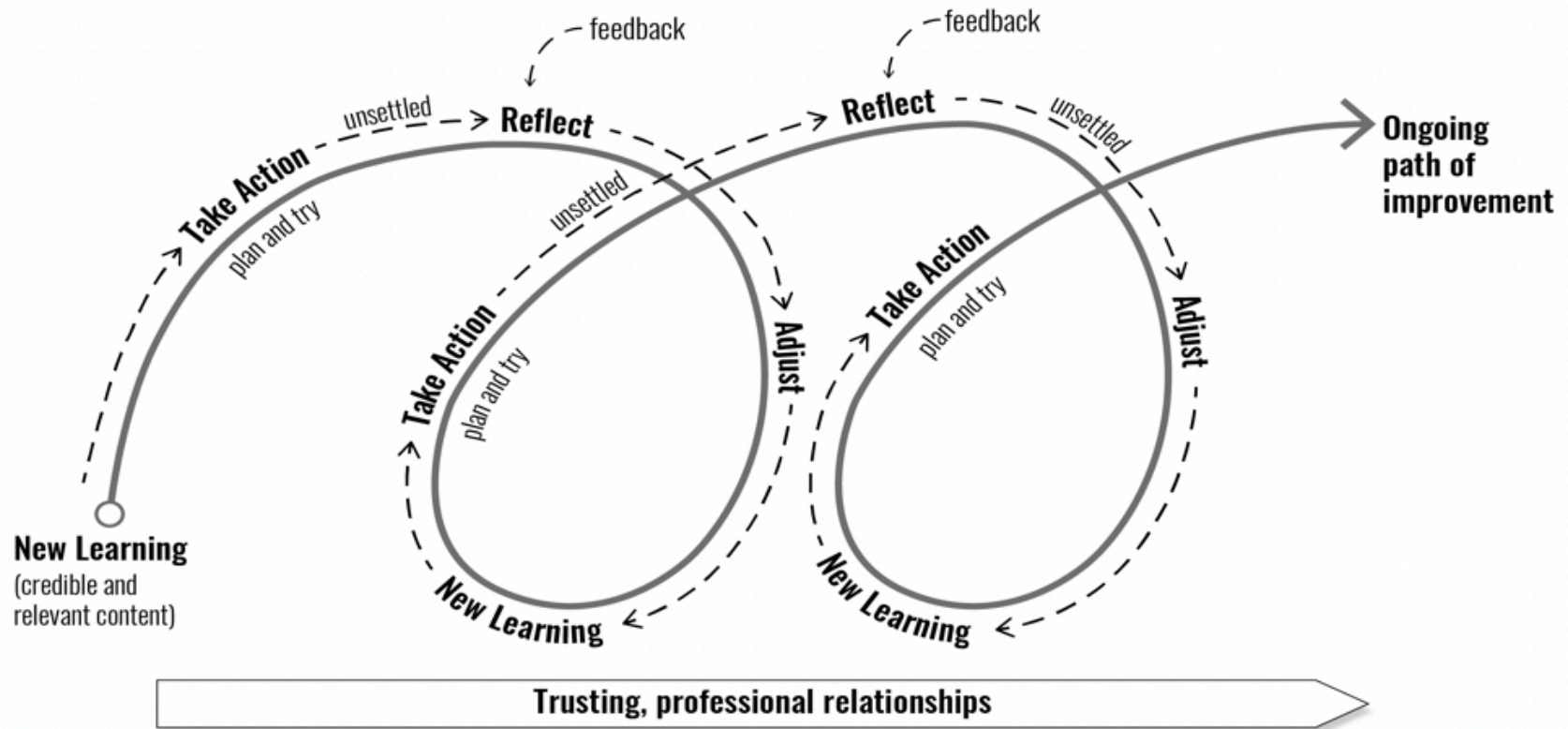


### Characteristics of effective professional learning

1. Facilitate the establishment of, or enhances trusting professional relationships
2. Credible, relevant and accessible subject matter
3. Programs of sustained duration
4. Opportunity for teachers to reflect on the impact of their new learning
5. Personalisation of professional learning to meet the learning needs of teachers



# Iterative model of professional learning







# Definition of professional learning





*“Professional development consists of all natural **learning experiences** and those **conscious and planned** activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect **benefit to the individual, group or school** and which contribute through these, to the **quality of education** in the classroom. It is the process by which, **alone and with others**, teachers review, renew and extent their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day and Sachs, 2004 p34)”*



What are the characteristics that influence a sustained improvement in teaching practice in response to an on-going professional learning program?

- How do teachers in the same school respond to the same professional learning experiences?
- Does the narrative of each participant change over the 12 months of the study?
- Can a model be used to support a process of professional learning?





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*'They (the strategies) worked well with Year 12 revision' (Angela – 12 months)*

*'Those tools (dialogic teaching strategies) have definitely improved in all aspects of their learning in the classroom' (Carla – 12 months)*

*'I found that it (wait time) really increases the depth of response you get from the kids and I didn't think that would happen' (James – interview 2)*

*'I think I'm still going okay but here are some very practical immediately applicable, manageable things that I can do, A, to think about my teaching and B, make adjustments that are still comfortable and um I can do pretty much straight away' (Sarah – group discussion)*



*‘Going back and solidifying stuff is actually really helpful’*

*‘Yeah ah... that was smaller manageable and bite sized chunks as opposed to ‘information overwhelm’ without a lot of support.*

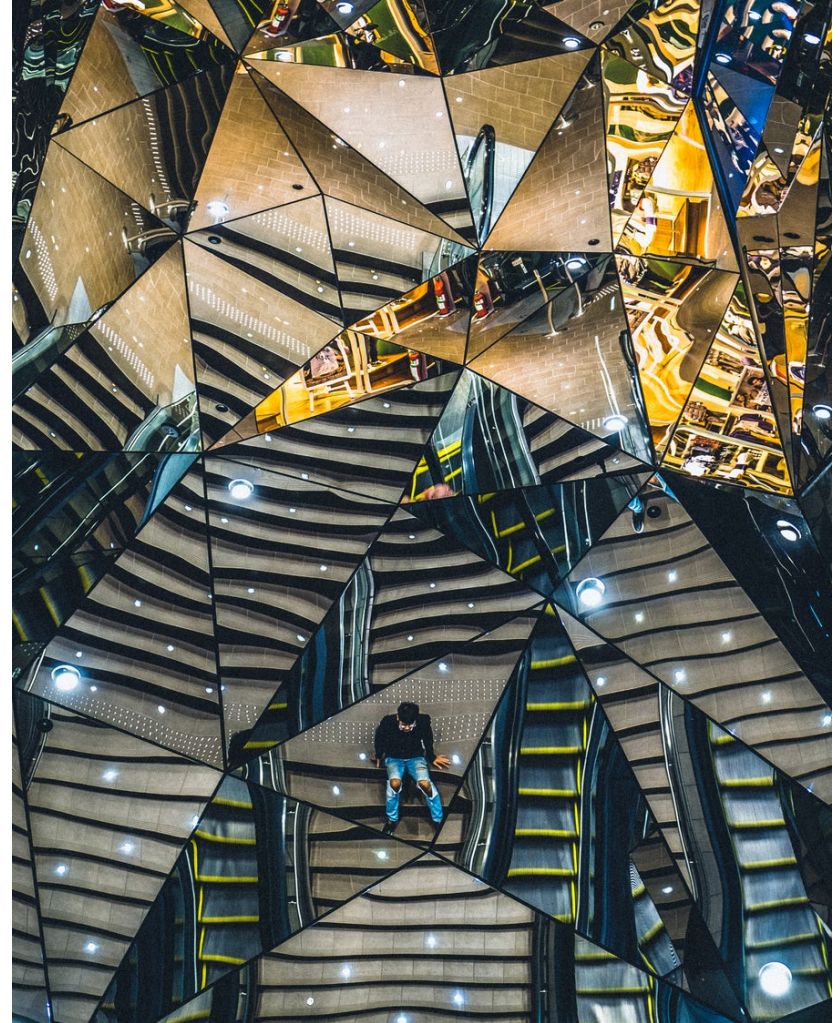
*There was more support in this.*

*It was also because it was continuous and on-going and a skill I'm able to practice everyday’*

*(Angela - interview at 12 months)*



- Student engagement with learning
- Video
- Conversations with colleagues





*And I think they're able to engage a little more and ask more questions*

(6 months)

*um ...I think it involves... I think it increases motivation*

(12 months)

*I'm currently marking the folios and they all seem to be stronger than they ever have in the past*

(Interview at 6 months)

(Angela)









*'They (the dialogic teaching strategies) **stuck because I did them and we practiced and I watched myself do it, do them.** And the way I walked around the room physically seeing that physically seeing that (um) shifts it because you imagine that you're doing something a certain way and **you actually see it, I felt that was very powerful**' (Joanne 12 months)*



*'I thought I wouldn't like it, wouldn't like watching yourself on video as well **because I felt really self-conscious but it was actually really helpful** looking back and **actually seeing how you taught** and you know even like I was saying to you, facial expressions so something that I didn't look forward to hasn't been that bad at all and actually it's been really productive because I can sort of see how I did something and how I think of myself **rather than have someone critiquing me** does that make sense?' (Cathy - Group conversation)*



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## Opportunity to reflect on practice – conversations with colleagues





*“I think the regular meetings that we were having to bring up the new strategy ... but um **certainly coming back and talking about how it went and what you did and just making sure that you did incorporate them and you did not just walk away***

*but **coming back and having those discussions** about how it went and what worked and **particularly as a team***

*it was nice coming together as group **listening to what other people had to say and how they did stuff as well** and also talking about that I found that really good”*

*(Cathy - Interview at 12 months)*



*'Embarrassment is good motivation to change' (Brian-  
group conversation)*







*'through dialogue **yep um...** relationships also allow... **um** teachers to engage students more and extend them **so ahhh** if a teacher has a **aaa** safe relationship with **a student** and feels that **um** there's encouragement and support **the student** will more likely be more open and more receptive to what **the teacher** has and **probably** more willing to take on new challenges as opposed to **the student** doesn't feel safe with **the teacher they** are **probably** going to be **a little bit** shut down and disengaged'*

(Angela - baseline interview)

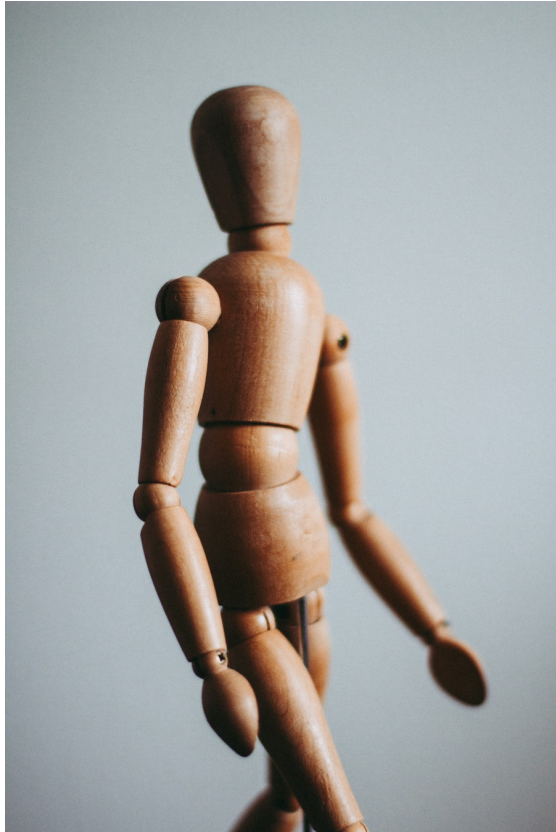


*'um ... I think it involves I think it increases motivation  
... I think if a kid feels that they might be called on they  
might be more attentive and for me I see that the flow  
on effect is that they are more motivated yep ...um...  
things like individual and small group tutorials I've  
stuck with because I feel that the kids have ...um  
grasped the material'*

(Angela - 12 months)



## Personalisation of professional learning to meet the learning needs of teachers



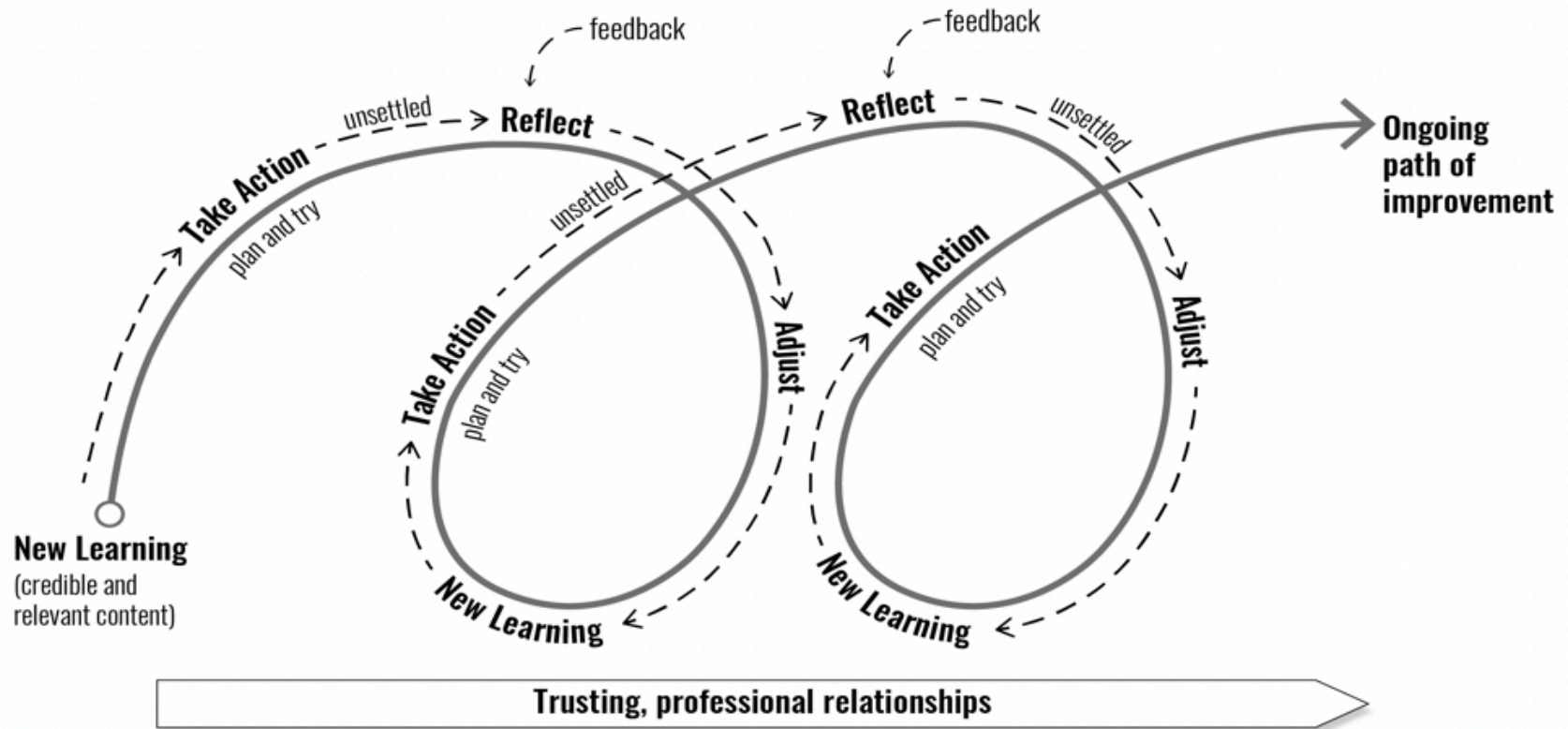
Teachers implemented the strategies at different rates

Sought or needed differing levels of support

Reacted differently to the program



# Iterative model of professional learning





- School leaders as leaders of PL
- 10 week program, with follow up as a impetus for change – doesn't need to be huge to have an impact
- Recent follow up with participants (3 years after initial PL program).





How might these findings or this model support professional learning in your context?

Could this model be useful for teachers?  
School leaders?



# ACTIVITY



- In a group of 4 or so
- Choose a scenario
- Using IMPL as a framework – sketch out a possible PL plan
- How would you ensure that the 5 elements are included?

***relationships, on-going, credible & relevant  
content, reflection, personalised***



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## Next steps

