



Designing in-school professional learning and development around digital technologies for learning



With the rapid rate of change that new technologies have brought us, it is important to invest wisely and thoroughly in upskilling staff to support them to engage learners and raise achievement through the effective use of digital technologies for learning. There are many means by which schools can design professional learning and development for all staff. This guide will suggest ways to utilise in-house expertise to plan, implement and evaluate professional learning and development initiatives.

This guide is intended for senior and / or middle leaders with responsibility for teacher professional learning and development in the area of digital technologies for learning / e-learning.

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Once you have read this guide you are welcome to contact the Connected Learning Advisory to get more personal assistance. We aim to provide consistent, unbiased advice

and are free of charge to all state and state-integrated New Zealand schools and kura. Our advisors can help with all aspects outlined in this guide as well as provide peer review of the decisions you reach before you take your next steps.

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Planning



Twenty-first century teacher professional development needs to combine and integrate individual and organisational development: it needs to build individual learning, but it also needs to focus on individuals working together — to build their current “community of practice” as teachers, but also to move forward together in “learning communities”.

Fullan (2005) and Earl and Hannay (2009) cited in:

[Bull, A. and Gilbert, J. \(2012\). *Swimming out of our depth? Leading learning in 21st century schools.*](#)

Strategic, cohesive and collaborative

Professional learning and development should be responsive and respectful to individual needs whilst also meeting the vision for whole school development. There should be a strategic plan that allows for growth, development and, crucially, cohesion and alignment across the various initiatives schools may focus on at one time. Professional learning and development should be collaborative and take place within the culture of a whole-school learning community.

Sustainable and cost-effective

Develop and nurture in-school expertise to ensure that professional learning and development is sustainable as well as cost-effective. Ensure that where in-school expertise is used to provide professional learning and development, adequate time, support and resourcing is given to those involved. These staff should have their individual learning needs met as well, for example through coaching and mentoring. Using external support could be one way to meet the various professional learning needs of all staff. Centrally-funded professional learning and development is also available through the Ministry of Education. See the relevant section in this guide for some more information.

Personalised and evidence-based

You will need to plan professional learning and development with staff, based on their needs, current strengths and inquiries. To do this effectively, it is useful to check in with staff to ascertain levels of confidence and competency, as well as strengths and needs

around the use of digital technologies to help inform your strategic planning. There are various ways in which you might do this, such as a survey, or whole staff or small group discussions. The [e-learning planning framework](#) may be a useful tool for this purpose, as might a [design thinking approach](#).

Questions to help you plan

The following questions may be worth considering as you start to plan to provide professional learning and development around digital technologies for learning:

- What is the vision for teaching and learning at your school?
- What are the goals for the professional learning and development programme?
 - How are these connected to the vision?
 - How are these connected to improving student outcomes?
- What are the staff needs?
 - How do you know?

Implementation



Whole staff professional learning and development can be counterproductive: just as with students, teachers are learners and not all ready at the same time for the same information.

Key principles of effective professional learning and development

Based on research, the components that contribute to effective professional learning and development for teachers include:

- Connecting the professional learning and development to identified student needs and learning outcomes
- Integrating content knowledge with pedagogical and assessment knowledge
- Operating within a learning community and culture of trust
- Offering sustained and multiple opportunities to learn over a period of time.
- Being collaborative, building knowledge with colleagues, and sharing learning and new knowledge with the wider staff
- Leaders taking an active participating role in the professional learning and development

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- Using an inquiry framework, such as the [Teaching as Inquiry model from the New Zealand Curriculum](#), or the [Spiral of Inquiry by Timperley, Kaser and Halbert](#)
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Image: Effective professional learning from [Department of Education and Training \(2005\)](#). [Professional learning in effective schools: The seven principles of highly effective professional learning.](#)

It may also be useful to keep in mind [Malcolm Knowles' 6 principles of adult learners](#) (1984):

- Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
 - Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences
 - Adults are goal oriented
 - Adults are relevancy oriented
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- Adults are practical
- Adult learners like to be respected

Further readings:

[Department of Education and Training \(2005\). *Professional learning in effective schools: The seven principles of highly effective professional learning.*](#)

[Timperley, H. \(2008\). *Teacher professional learning and development.*](#)

[Wenmoth, D. \(2015\). *What makes for effective PLD?*](#)

Models of professional learning and development

As we know from the principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#), staff rooms, like classrooms, are places of “predictable variability”. They will include the full range of competence and confidence around integrating digital technology, and this is entirely normal.

Additionally, designing professional learning and development initiatives is a golden opportunity to model modern learning practices. These are practices that are future-focused, agentic, personalised, accessible, and inclusive. As such, it is important that professional learning and development is not ‘one-size fits all’. Where practicable, it is highly recommended to:

- **Offer choice.** Make use of the expertise of your staff to offer more than learning opportunity at a time. Staff can then exercise agency by choosing what to attend or do.
- **Adopt ‘rewindable’ learning.** Utilise screencasting tools and / or record workshops or other sessions so that teachers can access learning anywhere, anytime.
- **Create a central repository for resources.** Staff should know how and where to access all professional learning and development materials. This ensures sustainability through staff transitions, as well as staff who are absent from workshops. Consider how resources, reflections or ideas created by staff as part of PLD can be digitally shared so that others can access and benefit from them.
- **Be clear on how to access help and support.** Staff should feel safe to ask questions and know where, how, and from whom they can continue their learning journey.

- **Design professional learning sessions with staff.** Use a framework such as [design thinking](#) to ensure a common understanding of what the PLD learning intentions are, how it connects to the school's strategic goals, and to create sessions that meet staff needs and interests.

Keeping this in mind, the professional learning and development you design with teachers may well include a range of approaches. These could include:

- **One to one tutorials:** staff access 'just in time' support from a known and identified expert colleague.
- **Small focus groups:** small groups form around a common interest, need, target student cohort, or teacher inquiry to provide support and advice to one another.
- **Buddy support:** adopt a 'tuakana - teina' model whereby staff find or are matched with another colleague to support one another with their teacher inquiries.
- **"Techie brekkies":** offer optional technology tool-focused workshops to staff before school starts. Provide coffee and breakfast snacks to attendees.
- **Topic-specific seminars or workshops** - consider how you could offer choice via a menu or topic board about the topic itself or within the workshop
- **Professional learning groups or communities:** [PLGs](#) or [PLCs](#) provide opportunities for staff to connect with others, share ideas and resources, reflect critically on their practice, and create new knowledge about teaching and learning with digital technologies.
- **Quick-fire sharing:** provide opportunities in staff or team meetings for people to share what they have tried or learnt recently related to learning with digital technologies. Teachers can then find out more if they are interested.
- **"20/20/20"s:** 20 minute seminar focusing on the "why" / big picture scene setting; 20 minutes for a workshop (ideally offering a range for people to choose from); 20 minutes of reflection time (connecting the learning to the teacher's inquiry and / or to the Teachers' Code and Standards).
- **Jigsaw Activity:** split your staff into teams of 4-6. Within each team, each teacher researches a different aspect of a bigger picture idea or topic. They can do this independently or in collaboration with others from the

other teams. After a set period of time, the teams come back together then each teacher presents their piece of the overall jigsaw.

- **Speed dating:** each teacher gets three minutes to share an idea about some classroom practice that they've tried (or other idea, depending on the focus) with a partner then everyone rotates.
- **Classroom observations:** by watching their own colleagues teach during classroom visits, teachers learn things they can immediately apply in their own work.
- **Lab classrooms:** a host teacher demonstrates a strategy in his or her own classroom, with students, while visiting teachers observe.
- **Student-led sessions:** sometimes students have a lot to offer their teachers if they are given the opportunity to do so
- **Unconferences and educamps:** have almost no plan and just let people say what they're interested in exploring and spend time together with others to explore those things. Some preparation up front for people to offer suggestions on a spreadsheet or slidedeck about what they can offer or are interested in can help provide a bit more structure. Learn more about [the educamp experience](#).
- **Have fun doing something together as a staff that you've never done before:** this may not immediately result in specific outcomes but connections are made to build trust and familiarity leading to greater support for each other in future. Conversations that are had 'off site' can often offer fresh, different perspectives.

Further readings:

- [Innovative ideas for PD days and events](#) and [Alternative structures for PD](#): crowd-sourced ideas via Twitter

Centrally-funded professional learning and development

To support or supplement a focus on professional learning and development around using digital technologies for learning, it may be possible to apply for centrally-funded professional learning and development from the Ministry of Education. An external facilitator can act as a 'critical friend' who supports the school to develop a holistic view of the professional learning development so that it is

integrated and meaningful. Information for principals and school leaders about this is available from the Ministry's [Professional Learning and Development website](#).

Sustaining professional learning and development

Once your professional learning and development initiatives have started, it is important to focus on ways to sustain a positive learning culture within the staff. You could consider:

- **Consistently keeping the focus on the ‘why’ of the professional learning and development.** Tell student stories and involve student voice to foster a sense of moral imperative for upskilling in digital technologies for learning. It is important to keep the overarching strategic goals for the professional learning and development front and centre: raising student achievement.
- **Celebrating all wins:** provide opportunities for teachers to showcase their learning and evolving teacher practice. This supports a culture of innovation and risk-taking and can lead to sustaining positive change in the school.
- **Acknowledge the “[learning pit](#)”:** that learning is a messy process at times. Look for ways to nurture a growth mindset in staff: praise persistence, resilience and effort.
- **Treating the staff room as a learning environment:** what materials are on display? How is the staff room structured and organised? Is it a conducive learning environment for all staff?
- **Encouraging the establishment and maintenance of individual [Professional Learning Networks](#)** through being connected educators.
- **Subscribing to relevant publications** about teaching with digital technologies, such as [Interface magazine](#), as a way to drip-feed new ideas and to promote professional reading.
- **Remembering to provide professional learning opportunities for support and administration staff** who will also have development needs to help them make more effective use of digital technologies. They need support and to be in the loop. Identify key people who could be the ‘e-champions’ to support others.

Monitoring and evaluating



Effective professional learning involves ongoing cycles of evidence-informed inquiry. It begins with leaders and teachers collecting and analysing a range of evidence that will help them answer the question, 'What is going on for students in relation to the outcomes that we value?' The perspectives of students, parents and whānau will be included in this evidence along with that of professionals.

[ERO \(2016\). School Evaluation Indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learner success.](#)

Are you meeting your success criteria?

It is important to monitor and evaluate the professional learning and development initiatives in order to evolve them based on feedback and identified need, and to ensure that the initiatives are having the desired impact on raising staff capacity and student achievement. You will need to consider ways in which to reflect on and assess the outcomes of the professional learning and development. Therefore it is crucial to have clearly articulated goals and success criteria before starting any initiative. Using frameworks such as the [e-learning planning framework](#), [Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge \(TPACK\)](#), or [Puentedura's SAMR model](#) is also useful to determine progress and identify possible next steps.

Gathering voice

Other important considerations to monitor and evaluate your initiatives are to check in and ask both staff and students for their input and voice. Ideally, professional learning and development is co-designed with teachers, and student voice should play a key role in identifying learning priorities. Further, effective professional learning and development is not only linked to the school's strategic goals, but also to its [appraisal](#) system, ideally through an inquiry process. Staff should reflect on their professional learning journey and keep a record of this towards gaining or maintaining their practising teacher certificate.

Useful links and resources



- [21st Century Learning Design - Learning activity rubrics](#) - This guide describes six rubrics of 21st century learning, each of which represents an important skill for students to develop: collaboration, knowledge construction, self-regulation, real-world problem-solving and innovation, the use of ICT for learning, skilled communication.
- [#edchatNZ](#) - #edchatNZ is about empowering educators through knowledge and connection. We aim to build a network of supportive, inspirational educators who collaborate and share for the good of the students in front of them - whoever and wherever they may be.
- [Building teacher capability](#) - Enabling e-Learning's resources
- [Connected Educator NZ](#) - Connected Educator New Zealand is an initiative designed to support and promote networked approaches to educational professional learning.
- [E-learning leader blogposts](#) - by Philippa Nicoll Antipas
- [Expanded teacher capacity](#) - one of the eight planning strands from the Strategic Thinking Roadmap by the Connected Learning Advisory
- [Teacher education: Technology Online](#) - Information on professional supports for Digital Technologies in the New Zealand Curriculum. The Technology learning area has been revised to strengthen the positioning of Digital Technologies to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to become digitally capable individuals. This change signals the need for greater focus on our students building their skills so they can be innovative creators of digital solutions, moving beyond solely being users and consumers of digital technologies. Schools will be expected to fully integrate the revised learning area into their curriculum by the start of the 2020 school year.
- [Teaching as inquiry](#) - Enabling e-Learning's resources
- [Westlake Girls' High School Teachers Help Site](#)

School stories

[Professional learning - teaching inquiry](#)
(2:36 mins)



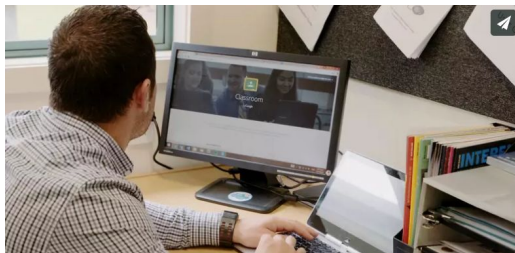
Pakuranga College principal, Michael Williams describes their intensive PLD programme. Students have a late start every Friday morning with that time dedicated to professional learning. Teachers have time and support to focus on their inquiries, which are based creating better learning opportunities for students using digital technologies as a tool to support this.

[Developing the e-learning teacher inquiry process](#)
(5:33 mins)



Deputy Principal, Vicki Trainor explains why teacher inquiry was used as a method of professional development at Holy Cross School following the development of their e-learning strategic plan. Through the teacher inquiry process they developed a better understanding learning pedagogy. iPads are a device used to enhance teacher practice and student learning. Teachers select apps specifically for their students' needs.

[Professional learning - planning strategically](#)
(2:27 mins)



Pakuranga College principal, Michael Williams explains their system for PLD. Using their rubrics teachers can identify their strengths and next steps. e-Mentors support teachers with their inquiries into using digital technologies effectively. Michael explains, "staff will self identify where they think they are. We support them, we plan those next steps."

[Planning for building staff capacity](#)
(2:49 mins)



Hampden Street School principal, Don McLean describes their approach to professional development. They began by identifying: barriers for teachers, expertise within the staff, successful methods for teachers to share their practice and inquiries. All professional development must be informed by your school's vision – why are you doing this, what is your intended outcome?

[Support for teachers](#)
(3:19 mins)



Principal, Melissa Bell and the e-learning leaders at St Hilda's Collegiate describe the professional development they have in place to support teachers with teaching and learning. e-Learning professional development began with upskilling teachers on how to use their "system" and working digitally. A shift has occurred and professional development is now based around teaching and learning. The sessions began with the e-learning leaders providing PD to teachers. As teachers have become more proficient they are now presenting and sharing what they are doing with the rest of the staff. A key feature has been regular, short weekly meetings. Staff are also supported in the classroom by the e-learning team.

This guide has been produced in response to a number of specific queries about offering in-school professional learning and development from schools. It should not be read as a recommendation or endorsement of any specific product. The Connected Learning Advisory is a Ministry of Education supported service that provides schools with technology information relevant to their queries and does not recommend one product over another.



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