

Developing Teachers

Improving professional development for teachers

January 2015

**Improving
social mobility
through education**



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As a young child, I am told I was spotted and given extra encouragement by a primary school teacher who thought he saw some potential in me. I'm convinced that Mr Messiter transformed my life. I would go onto become the first person in my family to take A-levels and attend a university. I'm not alone of course; many of us have been inspired and helped by a brilliant teacher.

So it should shock us all that many of today's teachers do not benefit from the professional learning they need and deserve. Yes there are schools with development programmes that appear to be effective; but they are the exceptions not the rule. Too many educators we entrust with the learning of our children do not themselves have high quality learning opportunities. In the battle to improve social mobility it seems an obvious priority area to act upon immediately: we know that within schools the quality of classroom teaching has by far the biggest impact on pupils, particularly those from poorer homes.

The problem is that improving the effectiveness of teachers is hard. We hope this report will support schools on a professional learning journey, a journey that we know has the potential to generate great gains in the achievement of their pupils. But it is also a deceptively difficult path to navigate.

What is unusual about this report is that it combines the practical insights from school leaders from around the globe who have developed their own programmes with the main messages garnered from an extensive review of the academic research literature. The material was generated from a two day international summit on teacher observation, feedback and the school ethos necessary to sustain these, that the Sutton Trust jointly organised with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. We are hugely grateful to our partners at the Gates Foundation, and most importantly of all the 80 teachers, principals and headteachers we gathered together in Washington DC in November 2014.

In this report we highlight some of the examples of successful school strategies for peer learning presented from across the world, including Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada, the UK and the US. These debunk the myth of the lone teacher shutting their classroom door behind them to pursue their practice without any outside interference. Teachers are increasingly part of learning communities, observing each other and providing feedback to improve their practice.

The next step should be to ascertain the impact these programmes can have on student outcomes. This was the main plea in the Sutton Trust's recent report *What Makes Great Teaching* which is also summarised here. The review generated huge interest among teachers. It concluded that in fact there is no easy recipe to describe the complex craft of great teaching. It highlighted some of the classroom practices that the evidence suggests are ineffective, or are delivered poorly with little consequent impact on pupils. It argued that teachers should develop themselves through three main sources of feedback: teacher observations; surveys of students; and measures of student progress. Some schools have managed to produce measurable student gains using this tripartite approach. The ultimate yardstick for great teaching always comes back to what impact it has on student outcomes.

A recurring theme in the research and the practical strategies is the need to create a culture of trust (and challenge) in schools to enable professional learning of teachers to prosper. In the most successful schools the leaders provide direction and support, but also trust their staff and encourage creativity, innovation and a degree of risk-taking. The British headteachers who attended the summit argue powerfully that the same conditions are also required for a school system to develop as a whole – coupled with more intelligent accountability to monitor student outcomes. In the UK at least, it feels that we are at a critical crossroads for the teaching profession.

We may need to make some tough choices to improve professional learning for teachers – even reducing the time we expect them to spend in the classroom. The mantra of Huntington School headteacher John Tomsett, who attended the summit, is to ‘teach less, and teach better’. As he writes in his contribution to this report: “Our greatest resource is our teachers and their most precious resource is their time; it is common sense, then, that we must give our greatest resource the time to learn to become even better teachers.”

Dr Lee Elliot Major, Chief Executive of the Sutton Trust.

A SUMMARY OF 'WHAT MAKES GREAT TEACHING?'

This is a summary of the report *What Makes Great Teaching*, written by Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major, published by the Sutton Trust in October 2014. Since publication, the report and accompanying press release have been read by more than 50,000 people on the Trust's website.

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/great-teaching/>

What Makes Great Teaching set out to address three apparently simple questions:

1. *What makes 'great teaching'?*
2. *What kinds of frameworks or tools could help us to capture it?*
3. *How could this promote better learning?*

Question 1: "What makes great teaching?"

Great teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress.

Effective teaching is that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Defining effective teaching is not easy. The research keeps coming back to this critical point: student progress is the yardstick by which teacher quality should be assessed. Ultimately, for a judgement about whether teaching is effective to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students.

The six components of great teaching

Schools currently use a number of frameworks that describe the core elements of effective teaching. The problem is that these attributes are so broadly defined that they can be open to wide and different interpretation. It is important to understand these limitations when making assessments about teaching quality.

There are six common components suggested by research that teachers should consider when assessing teaching quality. We list these approaches, skills and knowledge in order of how strong the evidence is in showing that focusing on them can improve student outcomes. This should be seen as offering a 'starter kit' for thinking about effective pedagogy. Good quality teaching will likely involve a combination of these attributes manifested at different times; the very best teachers are those who demonstrate all these features.

(Pedagogical) content knowledge (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes)

The most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach. When teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level, it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.

Quality of instruction (Strong evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Good instruction includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also elements of good quality instruction.

Classroom climate (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes)

This covers the quality of interactions between teachers and students, and teacher expectations: the need to create a classroom that is constantly demanding more, but still recognising students' self-worth. It also involves attributing student success to effort rather than ability and valuing resilience to failure (grit).

Classroom management (Moderate evidence of impact on student outcomes)

A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that are consistently enforced, are all relevant to maximising the learning that can take place. These environmental factors are necessary for good learning rather than its direct components.

Teacher beliefs (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Why teachers adopt particular practices, the purposes they aim to achieve, their theories about what learning is and how it happens and their conceptual models of the nature and role of teaching in the learning process all seem to be important.

Professional behaviours (Some evidence of impact on student outcomes)

Behaviours exhibited by teachers include reflecting on and developing professional practice, participation in professional development, supporting colleagues, and liaising and communicating with parents.

What are the least valid teaching practices?

In addition to what the evidence tells us about teaching practices that do make a difference to attainment, there are at least seven popular practices where there is little or no reliable evidence that they make a difference to students. It may seem unduly negative to focus on things that do not work, but there are a number of reasons for wanting to do this.

The first is that it provides a challenge to complacency. 'Best practice' lists can simply confirm what teachers already thought they knew. If the list is long enough, most teachers will be able to identify some they think they are doing. They can also be a bit like motherhood and apple pie - good, but predictable, obvious and nothing new. Including some examples of poor practice, which we highlighted in the media when we published the original report in October, provoked a stronger reaction, but it proved constructive in encouraging tens of thousands of teachers to read the full report.

A second reason is that many of these ineffective practices seem to be quite popular, though most evidence about them is anecdotal and selective. As well as telling us 'what works', an important contribution of research is to tell us what doesn't work. By stopping doing things that are ineffective or inefficient, we can spend more time focusing on things that will make a greater difference.

Here are seven examples of practices whose use is not supported by research evidence:

Using praise lavishly

Praise for students may be seen as affirming and positive, but a number of studies suggest that the wrong kinds of praise can be very harmful to learning. Praise that is meant to be encouraging and protective of low attaining students can convey a message of the teacher's low expectations. Children whose failure is responded to with sympathy are more likely to attribute their failure to lack of ability than those who were presented with anger.

Allowing learners to discover key ideas for themselves

Enthusiasm for 'discovery learning' is not supported by research evidence, which broadly favours direct instruction. Students do need to build new understanding on what they already know. But, if teachers want them to learn new ideas, knowledge or methods, they need to teach them directly.

Grouping learners by ability

Evidence on the effects of grouping by ability, either by allocating students to different classes, or to within-class groups, suggests that it makes very little difference to learning outcomes. Although ability grouping can in theory allow teachers to target a narrower range of pace and content of lessons, it can also create an exaggerated sense of homogeneity within and between groups in the teacher's mind. This can result in teachers failing to make necessary accommodations for the range of different needs within a supposedly homogeneous ability group, or going too fast with the high-ability groups and too slow with the low.

Encouraging re-reading and highlighting to memorise key ideas

Re-reading and highlighting are among the commonest and apparently most obvious ways to memorise or revise material. They also give a satisfying – but deceptive – feeling of fluency and familiarity with the material. However, a range of studies have shown that testing yourself, trying to generate answers, and deliberately creating intervals between study to allow forgetting are all more effective approaches.

Addressing issues of confidence and low aspirations before you try to teach content

Teachers who are confronted with the poor motivation and confidence of low attaining students may interpret this as the cause of their poor results and assume that it is both necessary and possible to address their motivation before attempting to teach them new material. In fact, the poor motivation of low attainers is a logical response to repeated failure. Start getting them to succeed and their motivation and confidence should increase.

Presenting information to learners in their preferred learning style

A belief in the importance of learning styles (for example, visual, auditory or kinesthetic) seems persistent, despite the prominence of critiques of this kind of advice. A recent survey found that over 90% of teachers in several countries (including the UK) agreed that "Individuals learn better when they receive information in their preferred learning style." Yet, the psychological evidence is clear that there are no benefits for learning from trying to present information to learners in their preferred learning style.

Ensuring learners are always active, rather than listening passively, if you want them to remember

This claim is commonly presented in the form of a 'learning pyramid' which shows precise percentages of material that will be retained when different levels of activity are employed. These percentages have no empirical basis and are pure fiction. Memory is the residue of thought, so if you want students to remember something you have to get them to think about it. This might be achieved by being 'active' or 'passive'.

Question 2: “What kinds of frameworks or tools could help us to capture great teaching?”

Assessing teacher quality through multiple measures

A formative teacher evaluation system – based on continuous assessment and feedback rather than a high-stakes test - must incorporate a range of measures from different sources, using a variety of methods. A key to a suitably cautious and critical use of the different methods is to triangulate them against each other. A single source of evidence may suggest the way forward, but only when it is confirmed by another independent source does it start to become a credible guide.

Currently available measures can give useful information, but there is a lot of noise around a weak signal, so we must be careful not to over-interpret. If we were to use the best classroom observation ratings, for example, to identify teachers as ‘above’ or ‘below’ average and compare this to their impact on student learning we would get it right about 60% of the time, compared with the 50% we would get by just tossing a coin. Therefore, these judgements need to be used with considerable caution.

Six approaches to teacher assessment

For this review we focused on three approaches to assessing teachers that demonstrate moderate validity in signalling effectiveness:

- classroom observations by peers, principals or external evaluators
- ‘value-added’ models (assessing gains in student achievement)
- student ratings

Three other approaches had limited evidence:

- principal (or headteacher) judgement
- teacher self-reports
- analysis of classroom artefacts and teacher portfolios

Classroom observations

Successful teacher observations are primarily used as a formative process – framed as a development tool creating reflective and self-directed teacher learners as opposed to a high stakes evaluation or appraisal. However, while observation is effective when undertaken as a collaborative and collegial exercise among peers, the research also emphasises the need for challenge in the process which may involve principals or external experts.

Levels of reliability that are acceptable for low-stakes purposes can be achieved by the use of high-quality observation protocols. These include using observers who have been specifically trained – with ongoing quality assurance, and pooling the results of observations by multiple observers of multiple lessons.

Measuring student gains

Value-added models rely on the availability of good outcome measures. Their results can be quite sensitive to some essentially arbitrary choices about which variables to include and what assumptions underpin the models. Estimates of effectiveness for individual teachers can vary from year to year and class to class. However, at least part of what is captured by value-added estimates does seem to reflect the genuine impact of a teacher on students’ learning.

Student ratings

Collecting student ratings should be a cheap and easy source of good feedback about teaching behaviours from a range of observers who can draw on experience of many lessons. There is evidence of the validity of these measures from use both in schools and, more widely, in higher education.

Question 3: “How could this promote better learning?”

Professor Helen Timperley has detailed a teacher ‘knowledge-building cycle’ - a feedback loop for teachers – that is associated with improved student outcomes. Their synthesis ‘assumes that what goes on in the black box of teacher learning is fundamentally similar to student learning’. And their findings suggest that teacher learning can have a sizeable impact on student outcomes.

The observation/feedback routine should be structured explicitly as a continuous professional learning opportunity that enables them to work on improving student outcomes.

The research provides a challenge to the much quoted claim that teachers typically improve during their first three years and then plateau. Teachers working in schools with more supportive professional environments continued to improve significantly after three years, while teachers in the least supportive schools actually declined in their effectiveness. Another study found that feedback from classroom observation led to a significant gain in students’ mathematics test scores in the years following the intervention.

Six principles of teacher feedback

Sustained professional learning is most likely to result when:

- the focus is kept clearly on improving student outcomes;
- feedback is related to clear, specific and challenging goals for the recipient;
- attention is on the learning rather than to the person or to comparisons with others;
- teachers are encouraged to be continual independent learners;
- feedback is mediated by a mentor in an environment of trust and support;
- an environment of professional learning and support is promoted by the school’s leadership.

On November 3rd and 4th 2014, a group of very experienced and successful headteachers, principals and teachers from ten different countries met in Washington DC, at a summit organised by the Sutton Trust and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The aim was to share ideas and develop strategies focused on raising the quality of teaching, thereby improving student learning in our classrooms. The UK participants felt that there were important messages that they would want to share from this international gathering, specifically with a British audience.

The heads believe these messages are particularly important at a time when many aspects of our education system are under review. The last 25 years have seen almost continual change in our curriculum, assessment, school structures and accountability system. Yet, the international evidence suggests that this has not produced a world leading education system.

The heads set out below what they believe are the five characteristics of a system that could be world class. As head teachers they know that the most successful institutions are those where there is consistency of practice at all levels and in all relationships, both in the school as a whole and in each classroom. They also suggest some practical steps that would allow us to ensure the system-wide change happens.

Trust should go with autonomy

Our experience in schools and classrooms is that, when we show trust, the vast majority of our children and adults learn, develop and grow. Of course we need systems to identify and support those who do not, but we need to build a model that is based on a positive view of the potential of our children and adults, that trusts them, not on a model whose default is negative and whose main objective is to identify failure. Despite the growth of institutional autonomy, the danger is that the overriding focus in our current school system on identifying and dealing with the weak schools and weak teachers ignores the reality that most schools and most teachers are not weak. This creates an environment where fear is prevalent, risk-taking even in good schools is discouraged and professional judgement is replaced by a 'tick box culture'. Only those schools that are highly successful can take risks.

We have a stronger generation of school leaders and teachers than ever and with their hard work, we have made progress in our schools over the last two decades. We need now to show trust in their ability to lead the system. We learned from our colleagues in the world's current high-performing education systems such as Singapore and Finland, professional trust is key to success.

Policy recommendation: Increase the professional autonomy of school leaders and teachers, and actively encourage them to be innovative in improving standards in their schools. Trust them and do not allow the need to identify and support those schools where this does not work, to drive the whole system.

Strengthen professional development for all teachers

Learning needs to be at the core of what happens in the classroom, but all the current evidence also shows that the high-achieving systems also invest heavily in the learning and Professional Development (PD) of their teachers. It is through this good quality professional development that real improvements in teaching and attainment take place. We need teachers who have both subject and pedagogical knowledge and who have a career pathway that recognises, as in other professions, that their professional development doesn't stop when they qualify but is renewed through life. Too often, professional development is seen as something to fill the statutory training days rather than an integral part of every teacher's career. We all have a responsibility to get this right.

In many countries, teaching is now a Masters level profession. Going back 50 years to a time when teachers in England only required a certificate, there has been a general trend since to raise the qualification level required to becoming a teacher. In recent years, this has stalled and may even have gone into reverse, with a growing acceptance of unqualified teachers.

A College of Teaching and a renewed National College for School Leadership, independent of government and appropriately funded, could play a major role in leading the development of our teaching profession. Just as we want the focus in our classrooms to be on learning so we need the same for our staff. We learned from our colleagues that, for example, the Finnish system puts huge emphasis on good quality initial teacher training in partnership with universities and that in Ontario Initial Teacher Training now lasts two years, with a requirement for schools to provide 'corporate' professional development and for teachers to pursue their individual development.

Policy recommendation: A strong entitlement for all teachers and school leaders to professional development backed by a College of Teaching and a revitalised National College for School Leadership. Follow the Finnish example by enabling teachers to obtain Masters' qualifications drawing on the professional experience they gain in their schools.

The use of evidence

The Washington Summit started with a review of the research into what makes great teaching, what frameworks and tools could help us to capture this and how we can promote better learning. We have a well-qualified and skilled workforce that wants to improve outcomes for our pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. If we are to enable this to happen, we need to create a system which is not only based on and grounded in evidence, but also actively encourages research.

Schools need to work more closely with universities and with organisations such as the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation. It was clear from the research review that the search for causal links between different teacher behaviours and improved attainment is still in its infancy. But it was equally clear that we need an approach that is evidence-based, not simply grounded in 'this is what we have always done' or in one individual's or group's view of great teaching. We need a profession with research, evidence and professional learning at its core, focused on learning outcomes for pupils.

Policy recommendation: *Ensure all school policies are evidence-based and provide new and existing teachers and school leaders with the knowledge to evaluate and use good evidence to improve results in the classroom, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Ofsted should credit schools that use evidence effectively, with inspectors asking schools about the evidence behind their strategies and initial teacher training should enable teachers to understand the use of quantitative evidence.*

Intelligent Accountability

We recognise the need for accountability in our schools, and accept the importance of independent inspection and published exam results. However, it is important that the accountability system values and measures what is important and focuses on improving our schools and connecting good practice. Of the countries represented at the Summit, apart from the USA, which has huge variations between states and cities, none had accountability systems as rigid and as focused on judgement as we have in England.

In an autonomous system where schools are trusted and given space to innovate, they need to show that their schools are raising standards, using evidence to inform practice and are encouraging research. We need an inspection system which encourages this rather than focusing on narrow grades or rankings, which have little international support. We welcome some of the changes planned in performance tables, where progress is taken into greater account. But we need a national discussion about ways to improve inspection and the tables further to ensure that we have a system of measuring success that genuinely reflects the achievements of schools without any perverse consequences.

Policy recommendation: *The Government should facilitate a national debate about school accountability, to ensure that inspections and performance tables measure and encourage genuine achievement.*

A self-improving system

From our discussions with colleagues from high-performing countries, one area in which we seem to be at the forefront is our recognition that schools can help and support each other. We need to build on this and develop a system in which our schools have a joint responsibility for each other and for all the young people in their community. There are already models that encourage this, such as the Teaching School Alliances, which support training and professional development.

The success of the London Challenge owed much to schools working with each other, and that model is increasingly extended through collaborative models across the country, through the national leaders of education programme, Teaching School Alliances and other trusts and partnerships. Their success shows that when leaders and teachers are trusted, they use that trust in ways that help improve the success of the whole system. All schools need the chance to benefit from such arrangements. Arrangements are currently haphazard and not inclusive. Some competition between schools may be necessary, but we need incentives within the system for schools to care about their whole community not just their own school. Professional collaboration benefits all and leads to innovation and creativity.

Policy recommendation: Government should actively incentivise professional collaboration, encouraging all schools to join partnerships with other schools.

Details of these recommendations will feature in the Summit Report to be published by the Sutton Trust. There is undoubtedly much to be learned from our international colleagues, although always with the proviso that culture and context play a critical role. We hope as a group of head teachers to continue working together and with the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation.

We would very much welcome an opportunity to discuss with you, as policymakers, how we, as school leaders, might work in partnership to develop the ideas in this paper.

This statement is supported by:

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- Andrew Dawson, Head Teacher, St. Mary's Roman Catholic High School, Astley
- Geraldine Davies, Principal, UCL Academy, London
- Wendy Hick, Head Teacher, Manorfield Primary, London Sir Alasdair Macdonald, formerly Headteacher of Morpeth School, London
- Bethan Hocking, Head Teacher, Herbert Thompson Primary School, Ely
- Eithne Hughes, Head Teacher, Ysgol Bryn Elan, Colwyn
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- Tracy Smith, Head Teacher (Executive), Seven Kings High School, Ilford
- John Tomsett, Head Teacher, Huntington School, York
- Susie Weaver, Principal, Wallscourt Farm Academy, Bristol
- Alan Yellup, Head Teacher, Wakefield City Academy

1. LIVE LESSON OBSERVATION (BRISTOL, ENGLAND)

Filming learning sessions and looking back over them afterwards is a technique that helps teachers' professional development at a primary academy in Bristol. Teaching Teams at Wallscourt Farm Academy have taken classroom observation a step further by using tablet computers and video cameras.

Lessons are viewed in pairs with colleagues each learning from the other in the process. The academy sees the approach as a great way to provide feedback on lessons so that the teaching team can improve their own teaching. Capturing learning as it happens supports sharper professional development, allowing for deeper reflection on teachers' own practice.

The academy, a relatively new member of the Cabot Learning Federation in Bristol, has introduced this approach throughout the professional development cycle, and colleagues from other schools can bring an external perspective. Research and Development plays a significant part in terms of professional development at Wallscourt Farm. The observations, and resulting reflections and discussions are seen as a way of teachers supporting research into effective teaching.

The academy is in the early stages of growth, and putting R&D at the heart of the CPD strategy and capturing learning in action has already helped staff to realise where they needed to improve their professional development. The children have been making good or better progress in the Early Years' Foundation Stage. The school believes this approach to professional development has been a contributory factor.

For more information, please contact: Susie Weaver, Headteacher, Wallscourt Farm Academy, Bristol susie.weaver@wfa.cabot.ac.uk

2. COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY (ONTARIO, CANADA)

Addressing teaching and learning issues at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, a large high school in Brampton, Ontario, Canada is a team effort. When a problem of practice arises, a group of teachers and/or administrators will work through the issue together in a systematic way.

To solve a particular problem, a small group of educators will schedule a series of meetings – perhaps four over ten weeks – to work through a cycle of planning, action, observation and reflection.

In the Plan stage, the focus of the inquiry is identified along with any anticipated results. The group agrees on an "IF/THEN" statement that will narrow the focus of the inquiry. In the Act stage, the group determines the instructional strategies to deal with the issue, applying them over several lessons. In the Observe phases, data on achievement and the results of classroom observations are collected. Finally, in the Reflect stage, they draw conclusions on the effectiveness of their strategies.

The biggest issue in implementing the strategy is finding the time for teachers to meet and work together in an undisturbed environment. Also, critical to the effectiveness of this strategy is the presence of high levels of trust amongst those working together.

As a result of the approach, the school believes there has been a significant improvement in student engagement and achievement. Moreover, teachers have been much more willing to share their issues and problems. The school is much more collaborative in its approach to teaching and learning.

For further information, please contact: Dan Compagnon, Principal, St Thomas Aquinas School, Brampton, Ontario Dan.compagnon@dpcdsb.org

3. BUILDING TRUST AS A PRINCIPAL (QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA)

Trust is crucial for a successful school. Conversely, if teachers don't trust their Head it is unlikely they or the school they work for will see any improvement. Fear will replace trust - fear of failure, ridicule or even job loss - seriously inhibiting a teacher's willingness to be vulnerable and to develop their own professional skills and knowledge.

As a result of his PhD research, Dr Paul Browning (from St Paul's School, an Anglican School in Brisbane Australia) has developed a Trust and Transformational Leadership Assessment Rubric. The tool is used to appraise a leader's current practice and highlight practical things that they can do to improve relationships within a school in order to develop high levels of trust and a positive school culture.

The rubric allows a principal (or a person in a leadership position) to be assessed by those he or she leads. It provides the principal with feedback on ten key leadership practices that have been linked to the development and maintenance of trust, such as: a willingness to admit mistakes, offering trust, affirmation, and visibility. Completing the rubric can identify areas for improvement, enabling the development of a professional learning plan. It is an effective tool for coaching, allowing pairs, or triads of leaders to support each other in the growth of their leadership capacity.

Dr Browning has identified a correlation between high levels of trust and outstanding results in the Australian national literacy and numeracy tests. Prior research has also linked high levels of trust within the culture of a school to students' academic performance and a school's ability to improve.

For further information or for assistance in administering the rubric and the generation of a report that compares the level of trust in your school with others who have participated please contact **Dr Paul Browning** - Headteacher, St Paul's School, Queensland p.browning@stpauls.qld.edu.au

For a copy of the rubric, please see the annex to this report.

4. CRADLE TO GRAVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: COACHING (ESSEX, ENGLAND)

Professional development is everyone's responsibility at Seven Kings High School in Ilford, Essex, where every teacher is trained to become a coach to work with other colleagues to develop their pedagogy and engage in reflective professional learning.

Newly qualified teachers at Seven Kings experience this coaching model from the start, and are coached by a more experienced teacher in their first year. In their second year, they are trained to be coaches and join two other teachers to consider an aspect of assessment for learning, a student progression process used in many English schools. In the third year, they coach each other in a research project and by the fourth year they are full coaches themselves.

As a result of this approach, Seven Kings currently has nearly half of their 100 teachers fully trained and working with other staff as coaches, and they do this without extra pay or time off lessons because they believe it is so important to improving pupil learning and teacher development.

Seven Kings leads a Teaching School Alliance and the approach is being shared with other schools by a dedicated team of coaches through the alliance. The school's appraisal process is also linked into the coaching programme. The programme uses Iris technology to enable teachers to record and reflect on lessons.

For further information, please contact: Tracy Smith, Headteacher, Seven Kings School, London t.smith@skhs.net

5. COACHING TRIPLETS (CARDIFF, WALES)

Teachers work in groups of threes to observe and coach each other on an individual 'teaching target' at the Herbert Thompson Primary School in Cardiff, Wales.

In the first term, teachers are given training on carrying out lesson observations, what an 'excellent' lesson looks like and coaching skills. Each teacher then records themselves teaching a lesson. They pick an area of their practice for improvement and set a 'teaching target'. They then meet with the two others in their 'Coaching Triplet' and share their targets.

In the second term, the Triplets observe each other teach a lesson (with one teaching, one observing/coaching, and one giving feedback on the observation and coaching). In the third term, the observations are repeated with a senior leader providing quality assurance.

The school believes this strategy encourages an open and honest culture, which promotes teamwork and gives teachers the time and opportunity to help solve their own problems. Herbert Thompson School is the first primary school in Wales where all aspects of leadership, teaching and standards are judged to be excellent by national inspectors.

For more information, please contact: Bethan Hocking, Headteacher, Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff, Wales. bhocking@cardiff.gov.uk

6. LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS (HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND)

The strategy used by the Wroxham School in England relies on ongoing professional development through self-reflection, team work and pupil feedback.

Based on research undertaken by the University of Cambridge, *Creating Learning without Limits*, the school has an agreed list of key characteristics essential to increase the capacity for professional learning. These qualities are: openness, questioning, inventiveness, persistence, emotional stability, generosity and empathy. These qualities ensure teachers remain open to the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to try new ideas, and perhaps be surprised by what they may achieve.

Dame Alison Peacock, the headteacher, says she does not herself visit classrooms or take part in lesson observations as a part of performance monitoring, leaving the task to less senior staff. The school relies on the culture of self-development by self-regulation, teamwork and pupil feedback.

The school is now rated outstanding, having previously been in special measures.

For more information, please contact: Alison Peacock, Headteacher, The Wroxham School, Potters Bar, England alison.peacock@thewroxham.net

7. 'STAFF FIRST' TEACHER LEARNING COMMUNITIES (YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND)

The Wakefield City Academy has created a system of Teacher Learning Communities that encourages a supportive, development network of teachers to share and demonstrate best practice.

Within the school, there is a programme of formal lesson observations, learning walks and 'drop ins' to classrooms to observe practice. Observations can be recorded or observations written down. Feedback is then provided to all staff in a very supportive way. The purpose is to build confidence and maintain self-esteem of staff.

The school also uses specialised IRIS lesson observation technology, which provides for self-reflection and becomes the property of the colleague filmed. Teachers may, and invariably do, ask colleagues to comment on the lesson. Staff are invited to share good and outstanding practice and they build up a library which is available across schools.

Teacher Learning Communities share the new ideas and are continually supported and encouraged by senior school leaders.

The Academy admits students at age 11 with very low levels of attainment and aspirations - they leave school with levels of attainment well above national averages. Many go on to higher education and the school has achieved three consecutive Outstanding Ofsted inspection reports.

For more information, please contact: Alan Yellup, Wakefield City Academy, ayellup@wakefieldcityacademy.com

8. VALUES AND MINDSETS (AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND)

Stonefields School in Auckland, New Zealand has developed a shared set of organisation values and mindsets to communicate 'how we do things around here'.

The values and mindsets support ongoing teacher and school reviews to ensure all staff are aligned to the school's vision. Learning hub teams (usually consisting of three teachers) will use the values and mindsets as a framework to audit how they are performing as a team. The entire staff also get together to take stock and review areas of strength. This is done through staff-wide surveys and shared documents.

Beneath these principles lies a practical framework for individual teachers to identify areas for development and create a plan to change their practice. Teachers then come together for 'professional learning smackdowns', where teachers have six minutes to share their teaching goals, what they have done practically and its impact. These are then recorded in a digital library.

This strategy has been in place for three years, and has resulted in improvements of reading where before only 48% of pupils were below standard, and now all are at or above standard. An external evaluator showed that the school is getting on average shift two to three years greater than expected in the traditional areas of reading, writing and maths.

For more information, please contact: Sarah Martin, Headteacher, Stonefields School, Auckland, New Zealand. principal@stonefields.school.nz

9.A COMMUNITY OF REFLECTIVE PHYSICS TEACHERS (SINGAPORE)

A significant way the Academy of Singapore Teachers promotes and supports professional collaboration and learning among teachers within the fraternity is through Networked Learning Communities. There are three ways teachers from different schools are organized into these communities: by role, subject and interest.

An example of a community organised by role is the Physics Senior Teacher-Lead Teacher Network. This network includes approximately 70 Senior/Lead physics teachers from across 170 secondary schools/junior colleges in Singapore. Led by a Physics Master Teacher, the activities undertaken by the network are co-developed with teacher leader representatives from across the four zones in the country. A number of network events are held throughout the year. The events involve a mixture of learning opportunities such as co-generative conversations, sharing of best practices and customised blended learning workshops designed by teams of Senior Teachers and Lead Teachers, facilitated by the Principal Master Teacher and physics Master Teachers as knowledgeable others.

After the events, school visits by the physics Master Teachers ensure learning is embedded in practice. These visits also include mentoring to try out innovative pedagogies and develop teachers as reflective practitioners with a strong theory-practice nexus. By pulling together the varied tacit knowledge of practitioners, the network expands the body of pedagogical content knowledge for physics teachers, which is codified in the Handbook for Teaching Secondary Physics.

For more information, please contact: Charles Chew, Academy of Singapore Teachers, Singapore. charles_chew@moe.gov.sg

10. ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS – PUPIL FEEDBACK (CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES)

Aspire Public Schools (Charter schools in California and Tennessee) use pupil surveys effectively as a part of their teacher professional development programmes.

Research from the Gates Foundation, and others, has found that young people are particularly astute at assessing the abilities of their teachers – they know the good ones and the ones who could be better. One study found that questions related to how well a teacher controls a classroom and whether the teacher challenges students with rigorous work were especially correlated with student learning gains. However, the surveys need to be carefully designed to ensure they do not turn into teacher popularity contests.

Aspire Schools survey all of their students on all of their teachers once a year, with a simpler questionnaire for elementary school grades and a more complex survey for secondary school grades. Questions are worded carefully, so instead of asking “Do you like your teacher?” a survey asks students to agree or disagree with statements such as “I like the way the teacher explains things again if I don’t understand them the first time”.

For more information, please contact: Wesley Frakes, Principal, Aspire’s Vanguard College Preparatory Academy, California Wesley.Frakes@aspirepublicschools.org

John Tomsett on how to make time for teachers to develop their knowledge and skills.

If school leaders have one priority, it is to create in their schools the conditions for growth for their students and staff. As school budgets tighten across the globe in this age of austerity, you have to resist the urge to squeeze every last hour of teaching out of your teachers; rather, you must give them time and space to work on their practice.

Ultimately you can't just wish teaching to be better. There is no shortcut to being a great teacher. I reckon Dylan Wiliam got it right when he said, Elite performance is the result of at least a decade of maximal efforts to improve performance through an optimal distribution of deliberate practice.¹ Trouble is, you can't just insist that colleagues work on their teaching.

I heard Tom Bentley² utter a single phrase in a talk over a decade ago at the National College of School Leadership which has stayed with me ever since. Bentley's mantra is unbeatable when it comes to ensuring you have coherent focus in your school: Change your structures to accommodate your core purpose, rather than contort your core purpose to fit within your existing structures. It is a mantra which has underpinned my approach to school leadership ever since.

Like an increasing numbers of schools, at Huntington School in York, England, we have two hours of continuous professional development (CPD) time every fortnight as well as our five standard training days – that's a minimum of 63 hours of CPD a year. In the 19 two-hour sessions a year, departments can focus on their development priorities and teachers can co-plan lessons and work on their teaching.

We have less than the UK government's recommended contact time with students, but since we restructured our school timetable to accommodate more CPD, our results have improved significantly. It is far better for students to get less contact time where the time is with teachers to be of a high quality, than more time exposed to mediocre teaching. A la Bentley, we have changed our structure to accommodate our core purpose.

Our fortnightly sessions are known as our Teaching and Learning Forum (TLF). The forum sessions are based in subject areas. In seven of them, the sessions begin with an hour together as a whole staff watching and debating examples of our practice on video.

The forums allow colleagues time to talk about which aspects of their teaching they are currently developing. It's about improving practice at the micro-level – gesture, questioning, subtle classroom control techniques – and sharing with colleagues the trials and tribulations of trying to get better at this thing called teaching.

The forums are planned by subject leaders on a termly basis, using their evaluation of the previous year's examination results to identify where students' learning was weakest in order to establish the general areas for development in the department members' teaching for the year. This golden thread from teaching through to student outcomes underpins our approach

¹ Wiliam, Dylan, Key Note Speech, SSAT Conference 2012:

http://www.dylanwiliam.org/Dylan_Wiliams_website/Presentations_files/SSAT%202012%20keynote.pptx

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Bentley

to improving teaching and echoes Professor Rob Coe's mantra that great teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress.³

The subject leader identifies two or three departmental development priorities and the individual teachers choose one of them for their subject performance management objective. This ensures a high level of coherence between performance management, subject development, individual development and whole school development. Such a level of coherence is crucial if we are going to improve the quality of teaching in our schools.

Each teacher's personal development is charted in their own Growing Great Teachers Professional Development Journal where they record exactly how they are working on their teaching as part of his professional obligation to improve individual practice.

What we are doing is ensuring that we all have the space and time to work deliberately and continuously upon our practice and, having dispensed with attending expensive external courses which promise to move you to outstanding, we have confidence within ourselves to support each other to improve our teaching.

Ultimately there can be no point in continuous professional development if it does not impact upon learning, the golden thread through to student outcomes and it's a causal link that is hard to trace. Yoon et al⁴ provided evidence that CPD lasting less than 30 hours has never been found to affect student outcomes.

Roland S Barth's perceptive comments make school leaders' responsibility clear: Show me a school where instructional leaders constantly examine the school's culture and work to transform it into one hospitable to sustained human learning, and I'll show you students who do just fine on those standardised tests.⁵ To create such a culture, ring-fenced, frequent, regular periods of time dedicated to improving teaching are an utterly essential ingredient of the self-improving school.

How often do we hear our colleagues say, we have no time? Our greatest resource is our teachers and their most precious resource is their time; it is common sense, then, that we must give our greatest resource the time to learn to become even better teachers.

John Tomsett is headteacher of Huntington School in York. He blogs at www.johntomsett.com.

³ Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, *What makes great teaching?* The Sutton Trust and the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at the University of Durham, October 2014.

⁴ Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss and Shapley: *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*; Regional Education Laboratory, 2007 – no. 033.

⁵ Barth, Roland S.: *The Culture Builder*; EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, Volume 59 Number 8, May 2002, Pages 6-11

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MAKING TIME

- Shorten the school day for pupils every fortnight for dedicated professional development sessions
- Increase class sizes so that each teacher has more students in each class, but less teaching time for peer observation and collaboration.
- Appoint a specialist teacher to mentor colleagues and occasionally cover lessons so they are freed up to undertake professional learning activities.
- Replace traditional meetings with dedicated free time for collaboration.

Adapted from ideas presented by Tom Sherrington, Headteacher, Highbury Grove School, London at <http://headguruteacher.com/>

THE CHALLENGE FOR LEADERS IN STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

Sir Alasdair Macdonald considers the challenges for school leaders in struggling schools.

It is frequently stated that our school system, driven by high stakes accountability, is risk-averse and not an environment that will support the use of evidence, research and new ideas in our classrooms. Only those schools that are high achieving have the confidence to innovate and take risks. The consequences of failure are so great that school leaders, particularly in schools deemed to be struggling or failing, adopt strategies which they know are safe, and a leadership style that tightly controls the school - staff are held to account for all aspects of their work, such that the schools end up mirroring the model externally imposed by Ofsted. How can schools, in this situation implement the ideas and strategies discussed at the Washington summit?

The purpose of the Washington summit was to look at current research, evidence and practice around what makes great learning and teaching. However it became apparent from an early stage that, from the headteachers' perspective, teaching and learning cannot be separated from school ethos, culture and leadership. Time and again in the planning for the summit, and in both the formal and informal discussions, we returned to the complex nature of schools and the importance of school culture. The best schools not only understand this complexity but actively develop an ethos which emphasises the importance of both relationships and institutional consistency based on trust.

In schools that are under pressure to be turned around quickly, we are increasingly seeing a leadership model which provides templates for everything, and then continually checks that the resulting instructions and procedures are being followed. In the current climate it can be difficult to avoid this model; indeed, the evidence in the McKinsey report⁶ on school systems would seem to support this as a valid approach in certain circumstances. In that report, the authors argue that different styles of leadership are required at different stages in system development. Though they are looking at national systems, they could equally be talking about individual schools. Those schools with low levels of attainment will need to implement top down strategies that will create the order and structure necessary for good learning to take place and also to focus on approaches that will quickly raise levels of attainment.

While it may make sense to introduce such clarity to move a school that has been identified by OFSTED as requiring improvement the danger lies in this becoming the default position as the school moves forward. In such schools, a negative culture can easily develop, in which morale is low, where teachers feel de-professionalised, leading to high staff turnover and many teachers deciding to leave the profession. This will in the long - or even medium - term fail to create schools that are vibrant, creative and innovative. In short, it will not produce schools that implement best practice in learning and teaching. Knowing when to introduce greater autonomy and trust requires good judgement and courage and needs systems, structures and attainment to be secure and stable.

However all is not doom and gloom. There has been a huge improvement in the attainment of our pupils across England's schools and although many young people are still failing to achieve their potential, we do have a greater understanding of how schools can make a difference and in every school there are good teachers and areas of strength. The message

⁶ http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/social_sector/latest_thinking/worlds_most_improved_schools

from the summit was clear: underlying the school, whatever its stage of development, there needs to be a clearly articulated set of values that constitute the school's ethos. The specific strategies used by the school, if it is to keep improving the education it provides, will change over time. But the values and ethos should not.

These values will vary from school to school and need 'ownership' from the school community. However the five key characteristics identified at the summit by the British headteachers, which they felt should underpin the national system, could equally be applied at an individual school level and are offered here as the combined view of the summit participants.

Trust. However challenging the circumstances in which a school finds itself, its staff are its greatest resource. There may have to be a strong steer from the centre initially but wherever an opportunity presents itself the leadership should show that it has confidence in its teachers. As the school moves forward, more and more responsibility should be delegated to staff.

Professional Development. If a school is to progress in terms of its teaching and learning in the classroom, it needs to invest in staff learning. It needs to build up capacity and capital and encourage a culture that values knowledge and understanding.

Use of evidence. As schools improve, it is crucial that they look at the evidence of what works and what makes a difference. The profession is increasingly using research and evidence and organisations such as the Education Endowment Fund and the Sutton Trust are providing valuable support.

Intelligent Accountability. A school that is in difficulties will have to track and monitor progress very closely but even at this stage staff need to be involved in the process and see the relevance to the pupils of what is being measured. There will always be a hard edge to accountability but the summit highlighted the value of observation linked to development and also the value of involving pupils.

Self-improving schools. In the same way that schools can support each other, leaders can, even when a school is struggling, look within the institution for support. We know that in-school variation is at least as great as between-school variation. The answers often lie within our schools.

This report includes a range of strategies that were presented at the summit. There are exciting ideas, increasingly supported by evidence, being developed around the world. The potential for their use in all schools, including those facing difficulties, is enormous, but the aim of this short essay is to emphasise that these strategies, in order to be successful, need the support of a strong school ethos and culture. Even in schools facing great challenges it is vital to establish the key values and principles that will remain constant throughout their growth and development and in so doing build up a school's educational capital.

KEY RESOURCES

The following links are to research reports, articles, blogs, assessment models and case studies that teachers might find useful:

What makes great teaching?

1. [Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning](#)
Study by Bjork and Bjork, 2011
2. [How people learn](#)
Study by Bransford et al, 2000
3. [What makes great teaching?](#)
Literature review by Rob Coe et al, 2014
4. [Effective learning techniques](#)
Study by Dunlosky et al, 2013
5. [The dangers of lavish praise](#)
Article by Dweck, 1999
6. [The myth of learning styles](#)
Article by Reiner and William, 2010
7. [Research based teaching strategies](#)
Report by Rosenshine, 2012
8. [The effect of teachers' expectations on student learning](#)
Article by Stipek, 2010

How do you measure teaching quality?

1. [Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching](#)
Report by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013
2. [A model for peer feedback](#)
Article by Bramschreiber, 2012
3. [Features of successful professional development programmes](#)
Literature review by Broad and Evans, 2006
4. [Classroom observation, it's harder than you think](#)
Blog by Professor Rob Coe, 2014
5. [The framework for teaching](#)
Teaching framework by Danielson, 2007
6. [The peer assistance and review protocol](#)
Guidance by Harvard Graduate School of education
7. [Evaluating Value Added models for teacher accountability](#)

Article by McCaffrey et al, ND

8. The classroom assessment scoring system
Assessment model by Pianta et al, 2008

9. The UTeach observation protocol
Observation model by the University of Texas

10. Self-appraisal tools for teachers
Blog by John Tomsett, 2014

How do you improve teaching quality?

1. Rubric for assessing Trust in schools
Case Study, Dr Browning, St Paul's School, Brisbane, 2014

2. Understanding what enables high quality professional learning
Study by the Centre for the Use of Research Evidence in Education (CUREE) (2012)

3. Evaluation trials of peer observation, lesson study and self-appraisal
Evaluations by the Education Endowment Foundation, updated 2014

4. Improving the learning of teachers
Blog by Lee Elliot Major, 2014

5. Improving teacher appraisal and feedback
Report by the Grattan Institute, 2011

6. How teacher development affects student achievement
Literature review by Kwang Suk Yoon et al, 2007

7. Five promising ideas for more effective professional development programmes
Article by the McKinsey Society, 2012

8. The effect of evaluation on teacher performance
Study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011

9. Practical approaches to improve teacher professional learning
Report by Timperley, 2008

Rubric for assessing trust and transformational leadership practice

Admit mistakes	Never displays vulnerability nor admits his/her mistakes or accepts responsibility for poor decisions; blames others.	Rarely displays any form of vulnerability; acknowledges when a poor decision or mistake has been made but doesn't take any personal responsibility or acts to resolve it.	On occasions displays vulnerability; accepts responsibility for his/her own errors and poor decisions but doesn't apologise; admonishes others for their mistakes and poor decisions.	Displays professional and personal vulnerability; admits mistakes or poor decisions; apologises publicly; is willing to accept responsibility for other's mistakes; actively rectifies mistakes.
Offering trust	Micro-manages staff; controls or interferes with staff members' decision-making responsibilities; ordering, directing, or commanding; feedback is primarily corrective, or limited, general.	Allows staff to perform their role to an extent, monitors and sometimes influences decisions and regularly checks on work; feedback is primarily in the form of advice.	Allows staff to perform their role and make decisions that affect their work with minimal interference; provides supportive feedback when asked.	Treats staff as professional colleagues by implicitly trusting them to perform their role; willingly provides mentoring and coaching when asked.
Active listening	Speaks far more than he/she listens; is easily distracted when the person is speaking; shows little interest; does not show empathy; is only keen to share his/her point of view.	Gives time for the other person to speak before he/she shares their point of view; can allow distractions to interrupt the conversation; demonstrates a level of understanding.	Balances listening with speaking; is not easily distracted; demonstrates that he/she has heard and understood what the person has said by summarising their main points.	Listens far more than he/she speaks without distraction; asks clarifying questions; demonstrates empathy; can articulate succinctly what the person is feeling and what they have actually said;
Affirmation	Never or rarely gives staff members' affirmation or thanks.	Provides affirmation to staff members on occasions either publicly or privately for significant contributions and successes.	Regularly recognises contributions staff members have made and provides affirmation either publicly or privately.	Actively seeks ways to affirm and thank staff members either publicly or privately; affirms not just the significant contributions but also the little things staff do.
Decision making	Either makes decisions with no consultation or consideration of its impact or rarely is able to make a decision; doesn't communicate a decision nor provides justification or explanation for it.	Makes considered decisions; superficial consultation that works to enact an agenda; enacts the decisions.	Seeks staff input using consultative decision-making process; makes decisions and enacts them; communicates decisions to staff.	Values staff input and views; uses consultative or collaborative decision-making processes; makes timely and informed decisions and enacts them; communicates the justification for decisions.
Visibility	Rarely seen around the school; mainly confined to his/her office or is away from the school; does not regularly attend assemblies, chapel services, events, etc.; not accessible to staff.	On occasions can be seen around the school; attends assemblies, chapel services, etc.; on occasions attends school events; staff can make an appointment to see him/her.	Often seen around the school speaking with students, staff and parents; often attends assemblies, chapel services and other school events; accessible to staff.	Regularly seen on the grounds speaking with parents, staff and students modelling and reinforcing expectations; attends assemblies, chapel services and other events; is very accessible to staff.
Demeanour	Is unpredictable; prone to losing control of his/her emotions in different situations; primarily focused on his/her agenda rather than the staff member.	Responds emotively to different situations, expressing their feelings accordingly; displays concern for both him/herself and the staff member.	Is able to keep his/her emotions in check; shows a level of restraint in difficult or challenging situations; demonstrates respect for the staff member.	Is consistent and predictable, always remaining calm and level-headed no matter the situation; always respectful of the staff member.
Coaching and mentoring	Displays little interest or support for staff professional development; feedback is primarily corrective and judgmental.	Supports staff professional development programmes; feedback is primarily in the form of advice, or is limited or general.	Takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers; provides supportive and honest feedback when asked.	Maximises staff members' potential and career growth through coaching or mentoring; provides immediate, specific and accurate feedback aimed at promoting growth.

Care and concern	Does not display empathy for staff members; has little interest in knowing people as individuals.	Displays an interest in the wellbeing of staff members; knows staff members and their role in the organisation; claims to know how others feel.	Considers staff members' needs and wellbeing; displays empathy; knows staff members professionally and personally but knows where to draw the line.	Extends a genuine care and compassion for individual staff members by offering practical support; invests time to get to know staff members as people.
Confidentiality	Does not keep a person's confidences when they come into possession of sensitive information; rumours occur on a regular basis.	Keeps information confidential when specifically asked by the member of staff.	Keeps the confidences of staff members; will make a professional judgment as to whether that information should be shared.	Keeps the confidences of staff members when he/she is entrusted with sensitive information; only shares information with permission.

For full details of how this rubric developed by Dr Paul Browning in Australia is used in practice, please see case study 3, on page 14 of this report.