

Individual and Collaborative Learning

Individual learning has benefits, should be a part of all professional learning and allows for leaders to develop their own individual personalised pathway towards their specific goals. The Cosán Framework for Teachers' Learning ¹ acknowledges this and in relation to teacher's learning argues for "a balance between the enhancements of their own practice as individuals on the one hand, and the creation of a responsive and dynamic community of practice on the other."

However, reflection and experiential learning referred to here as components of a model of leadership learning do, to a large extent, depend upon collaboration for sustained impact on practice. Carroll Smith and Whewell (2008) ² stress the importance of considering group dynamics and a safe working environment as well as explicit discussions of notions of trust, confidentiality and power that will allow for better outcomes from the collaboration. The Australian Charter for Professional Learning for Teachers and School Leaders (aitsl) (2012)³ sees collaboration as having a powerful effect on "magnifying and spreading the benefits of professional learning."

The charter also stresses the need for a disciplined and purposeful approach to collaborating and encourages the use of technology to enhance and enrich collaboration and learning. Networking which focuses on the development of practice, problem solving and sharing is equally important. A genuine structured collaborative process that involves leaders working together, identifying starting points, sharing evidence about practice and trying new approaches can be a powerful component of any leadership professional learning activity.

¹<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Cosan-Framework-for-Teachers-Learning.pdf>

²Carroll M, Smith S and Whewell C. (2008) Creating Contexts for Practice-Based Learning cited in Reeves J. and Fox A, Practice Based Learning Developing Excellence in Teaching Dunedin Academic Press Ltd

³https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/australian_charter_for_the_professional_learning_of_teachers_and_school_leaders