

## Relevant Experiential Learning

Experiential learning can be both formal and informal. It involves action as well as reflection. At an informal level, the learner may decide to make a change in a specific area of practice in order to improve their leadership. They will then try out the change and observe and evaluate the impact of the change on their practice and on learning outcomes for students. When experiential learning becomes more formal, it often takes the form of a structured professional enquiry combined with action research. The evidence seeking is supported in this formal process by theory generated from reading and discussion. The Australian Charter for Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (aitsl) <sup>1</sup> emphasises the point that “professional learning will be most effective when it is relevant, collaborative and future focused” and that it needs to; “...address and adapt to the challenges faced by the practitioner.”

The focus of the learning is on the identified needs of students and encourages teachers and school leaders to test out approaches that “find new solutions to persistent issues by challenging their assumptions about their practice.”

The Cosán Framework for Teachers’ Learning <sup>2</sup> cites action research projects and piloting of new initiatives as examples of learning processes.

The Centre for the Use of Research Evidence in Education (CUREE) report (2012), “Understanding What Enables High Quality Professional Learning” <sup>3</sup> draws on a range of published research addressing the question “What are the characteristics of high quality professional learning for practitioners in education?” This report highlights the role of structured dialogue and group work as “providing opportunities for exploring beliefs and assumptions, trying out new approaches .....and giving and receiving feedback..... as well as exploring evidence from trying new things.”

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/australian-charter-for-the-professional-learning-of-teachers-and-school-leaders>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Cosan-Framework-for-Teachers-Learning.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/\[site-timestamp\]/CUREE-Report.pdf](http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/[site-timestamp]/CUREE-Report.pdf)