Framework for effective transfer and taking practice to scale

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The framework for effective transfer and taking practice to scale is based on a review of literature from sources with a track record for producing reliable and robust evidence in the areas of teacher professional development, leadership and transfer of practice. These are:

- OECD

- Best Evidence Syntheses (BES)

- Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence (CUREE)

- NESTA

A range of documents were included in the review and the key messages and findings are listed below under the categories of:

- Principles of transfer and scaling up (TSU)

- Continuing professional development (CPD)

- Leadership

To access the source of the information collated here, follow the link at the bottom of each list of bullets.

The principles for effective transfer of practice were identified from the literature review as the need for:

- Clear moral purpose

- A focus on a specific set of problems and a specific group of learners

- Evaluation to be built in from the beginning of the programme

- A combination of specialist input AND coaching of practitioners in the implementation of new approaches

- Coaching as a sustained, collaborative process which includes: demonstration, modelling and simulation

- Reflective dialogue

- Bringing to the surface practitioner beliefs about the focus / content of practice to be transferred

- The delegation of real power and work from the centre, ie the practitioners who are adopting the new practice require a personal sense of responsibility in integrating it well into their practice

- De-privatisation of practice > enabling colleagues and trainers to have sight of practice, eg through observation

- Integrated leadership – leaders should be involved in teaching and professional learning (instructional leadership) and delegate responsibilities (distributed leadership)

Summary of key messages coming from the literature

Principles of Transfer and Taking Practice to Scale

- Important that practitioners understand underpinning rationale for the practice they are being encouraged to adopt

- Key dimensions –

    - deep (beliefs, norms, social interaction – 'real' professional learning)

    - sustained (support mechanisms, including supportive professional community)

    - spread (how far do reform norms influence operational structures)

    - ownership (reform no longer controlled by reformer, but internally – organisation, individual practitioners)

    - purpose

- Need to identify and tackle the barriers to professional learning

- Evaluation needs to be built in from the start

- Leadership support is important

- Focus on specific sets of problems and specific groups of students – need for

- Development efforts are effective where there is collaboration, supported by processes such as coaching, co-construction and collaborative enquiry

- Co-construction: involvement in diagnosing needs; involved in interpreting and refining the focus of the activities; having active role in designing their approach

- Coaching is a sustained, collaborative process that includes: demonstration and modelling, simulation, experimentation, observation, reflecting on evidence, building on individual starting points and structured dialogue that explores beliefs, internalised practice and the rationale for approaches

- Specialist input AND coaching teachers in the application of new approaches

- Benefits for the mentor of mentoring others

- There is an emerging consensus that collaboration offers reformers a better chance of success than prescription

- Two interventions have been taken up in a 'non-engineered' way, ie they have not been imposed from above: Assessment for Learning (AfL) and thinking skills – what they have in common is:

  - evidence of improved pupil learning

  - a cross-curricular application

  - things practitioners can do – and a clear structure that can be interpreted and adapted as a clearly defined set of strategies

  - focus on issues already high on teachers' and schools' agendas

  - a clear moral purpose

  - vignettes – short stories of how something worked and what the impact was.

- But without appropriate support strategies, teachers have adopted the letter but not the spirit of AfL (not using insights into learning to shape the next steps)

- Partnerships need to delegate real power and work from the centre so all those involved understand purpose and processes well and feel personal sense of responsibility / accountability to integrate them well into daily practice

- The greater the scale, the greater the need for flexibility and adaptation to context in the long-term, and for prescritpion in the short term to ensure genuine trialling

- Those adopting the new practice need to: understand the essence of the practice; see what effective practice looks like and how pupils might respond

- There needs to be support in place to help teachers understand why and how a practice works – suggestion for planning frameworks which clarify boundaries and allow for adaptation which does not contravene essential elements of the practice

(Cordingley & Bell, 2007)

http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/1236960866/Transferring%20learning%20and%20taking%20innovation%20to%20scale%20-%20think%20piece.pdf

- There is a need to develop a scaling strategy, to include: clarifying social, organisational and personal goals for scaling, and choosing a route to scale

- Need to generate both effective supply and effective demand, but unlocking the demand can really change the game

- Need to be clear on what's fixed and what's flexible – in relation to the model, scaling routes, goals and aims – identify the core

- Checks and balances can slow scaling down, but might be necessary in order to make the social innovation sustainable in the long-term

- Adopting new practice requires distinct skills and competencies and forces organisations to change their cultures in ways that can be uncomfortable

(Gabriel, 2014)

http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/making-it-big-strategies-scaling-social-innovations

CPD

- it was important that CPDL programme design creates a "rhythm" to activities, through multiple instances of ongoing support/follow-up activities.

- essential element of successful CPDL is overt relevance of content to its participants and their day-to-day experiences and aspirations for pupils.

- CPDL providers should be focusing on how best to ensure that course content can build a sense of purpose, rather than presuming that it will already be there

- the review highlights the contribution of formative assessment, learning processes and outcomes for teachers within effective CPDL programmes.

- important consideration of the participants' existing theories, beliefs and practice, an understanding of the rationale underpinning the practices being advocated, and content which can challenge existing theories in a non-threatening way

(Cordingley, et al., 2015)

http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/[site-timestamp]/DGT%20Full%20report%20(1).pdf

- Systematic reviews http://bit.ly/1J1y18X show effective CPDL involves sustained, iterative, aligned combinations of:

  - access to specialist expertise coupled with peer supported, evidence rich dialogue re learner responses to changes

  - exploration of disruptions, assumptions & beliefs to support development of practice and theory side by side

  - activities focused on aspirations for learners /students; ie AFL for teachers

- support via tools and protocols that help contextualise content for subjects and sub groups of learners

(Cordingley, n.d.)

http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/%5Bsite-timestamp%5D/SSAT_seminar_session_010317_0.pdf

- Professional learning communities are characterised by a reflective dialogue among staff, deprivatisation of practice, a collective focus on student learning, collaboration and a shared sense of purpose

- In dealing with students from disadvantaged families and students with special educational needs, teachers might benefit from reflection on their practice by consulting colleagues in the school and by classroom observation of their colleagues to address these students effectively

(OECD, 2016)

(http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/school-leadership-for-learning_9789264258341-en#.WPHmGqK1uUk#page19)

Leadership

- Instructional and distributed leadership are regarded as important for creating and sustaining professional learning communities and for creating a climate conducive to student learning. Instructional leadership comprises leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, co-ordination and improvement of teaching and learning. Distributed leadership in schools is not only a reflection of leadership being shown by the principal, but also of others acting as leaders in school.

- When principals take action to support co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practice, teachers may be more inclined to collaborate

- In schools in which principals are more engaged in instructional leadership, teachers more often perceive a positive change in their instruction as a result of feedback on their classroom management practices, their teaching practices and their use of student assessments to improve learning

- Positive teacher-student relationships are more common in schools with distributed leadership in all educational levels. Schools creating opportunities for students and their parents or guardians to participate in school decisions means teachers are interested in what students have to say and are likely to be concerned with students'

well-being. Thus, distributed leadership may result in a greater sense of belonging among students and parents, as well as common responsibility for the functioning of the school among all key stakeholders

- Schools with principals showing integrated leadership, ie balancing elements of both distributed and instructional leadership, are more often associated with characteristics of professional learning communities – such as teachers engaging in reflective dialogue and collaboration – than schools with inclusive leaders. Similarly, schools with integrated leaders are linked, more often than schools with educational leaders, to a shared sense of purpose among their staff and a collective focus on student learning

- Depending on the type of leadership, around 40%-60% of principals' practices might be explained by system differences.

(OECD, 2016)

(http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/school-leadership-for-learning_9789264258341-en#.WPHmGqK1uUk#page4)

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