

Staff Development in a 'Learning' School

Research has shown that helping students become more independent, more reflective, and better able to plan and evaluate their own learning, is a better way of boosting their attainment than drilling them in the subject-matter.

Despite there being a lot of talk globally about lifelong learning and the 'wider skills' or 'key competencies' for life, relatively little is still done to address this in classrooms. However, where schools have changed the way in which they approach student learning, accepted that there is more to teaching than drilling the subject matter and taken on a new way of working that encourages students to learn how to learn, remarkable things begin to happen. The classroom becomes a more exciting environment and learning begins to extend beyond formality to assume a creative partnership between teacher and learner. This new way of working builds a student's *Learning Power* in such a way as to prepare them for the 'learning journey' that, whatever their future may hold, is an inevitable fact of life.

'Learning' schools are markedly different from their peers in the way in which their staff approach their roles not only in the classroom but also the manner in which they become integral to their school's dynamic. Thus, management of the personal development of every teacher is vital to creating an inclusive and engaging learning culture throughout the organization.

Here are just some indicators against which staff assess how investment in their own personal development is making a difference towards the creation of the '*Learning-Powered*' school ...

AT THE BEGINNING ...	WHEN CHANGE OCCURS ...
Staff development is a 'bolt-on' activity and with little or no recognizable relationship with the strategic vision for the school's future ... if one actually exists!	Teaching staff have now begun to become integral to managing the total assets of the school in pursuit of a vision that has gained the 'ownership' of the principal stakeholders
Budget is both a real and perceived restriction to investment in staff development	Whilst budgets may be limited, it is the opportunity to participate in decision-making and problem-solving that releases staff creativity, innovative ideas and input
Staff are less concerned for what is happening within their own school than for the offers that may provide a move elsewhere	Teachers are driven by the needs of the students and by the contribution they can make to the school as a whole
It is 'input' that is a measure of performance	'Outcomes' have taken over as the ultimate measure

External courses and training provisions are held in the greatest regard	There has been a significant move towards staff development that is predominately internally based
A feeling of being divorced from the job and external to requirement	No question that one feels valued and integrated into the spirit and purpose of a meaningful future
The emphasis being on new and acquired knowledge	A change in emphasis that embraces and directs teaching practices towards a learning-centered approach
Professional development assessed by the gaining of knowledge-based qualifications	Assessment now accrediting and recognizing competence, student feedback and peer observation in the classroom
Staff using a narrow range of learning modes rooted in classroom traditions	Learning modes no longer limited by the past but now knowing no boundaries and welcoming experimentation
Managers perceived as budget controllers	Managers now taking on the roles of coaches
Staff being thought to be no more than 'useful'	Staff now being recognized as essential