



About cases

Cases are a professional learning strategy used to examine multiple perspectives and to generate multiple solutions. This case is open-ended and designed to generate rich discussion about leadership issues for leaders of professional learning.

Overview and Glossary

- 1. The Case.**
Story/narrative; the situation that generates leadership issues.
- 2. Individual Reflections.**
Individual responses to the particular issues embedded in the case.
- 3. Leadership Domains.**
An overview to inform individual & group responses.
- 4. Focus Questions.**
A good case is supported by effective questions for guided group discussion.
- 5. Recorded Group Discussion.**
Shared and recorded discussion drawing on focus questions, leadership domains and collective experiences.
- 6. Guide for Facilitators.**
Suggested facilitation process for groups. Facilitators read this first.
- 7. Considerations for Facilitators.**
Facilitators select what is appropriate to the case.



1. The Case

To plan for teacher professional learning needs, leaders of a local school have drawn from a range of sources including student responses, which included the following:

1. One student commented upon teachers needing a variety of strategies in order to meet the learning needs of different students, not only in terms of ability but in the ways in which they learned. He gave the example of a three unit maths teacher who noted down how students in his class learn and how he might best assist them. The inference was that the teacher had been alerted to the current educational discussions around learning styles.
2. Another student suggested that beginning teachers needed to learn, and grow to accept, that negative behaviours were not necessarily personal attacks on them, but may require the teacher to work out why students react as they do. The student gave the example of a beginning teacher who stood their ground after training. The inference was that the teacher subsequently was firmer, more confident and more assertive in class.

2. Individual Reflections

- What are the professional learning issues?
- How will you begin to address these concerns?
- What are the implications for planning for professional learning?

3. Leadership Domains

Educational

Pedagogy, programs, assessment, reporting, learning styles, learning environment, learning community

Strategic

Planning, vision, values, culture

Organisational

Timelines, resources, management, systems, accountability

Personal

Social skills, ethics, commitment, personal vision

Interpersonal

Relationships, team building, conflict resolution, communication



4. Focus Questions

It is not intended that each question be worked through in sequence.

After a preview, selected questions become the stimulus for rich discussion.

Educational

- How does staff professional learning impact upon students in the classroom?
- Do students think of teachers as learners?
- Do students consider how teachers learn the skills needed to teach?
- How does student perception of teacher professional learning impact on their learning?
- What opportunities does this situation offer?
- What issues or challenges does this situation raise?
- What role does student voice play in informing teacher professional learning?
- What value is there in involving students in teacher professional learning?

Strategic

- How do you get teachers and executive to reflect on their practice?
- What sources of evidence/data do you use to assess the quality of learning and teaching?
- How do you promote student learning as the first priority?
- How do you build the trust and confidence of the parents and the community?
- What other evidence/data would you gather to complement/verify/validate/ test/ underpin the student responses?

Personal

- What skills and knowledge do you need to use this situation to support educational outcomes?
- In what ways has your professional learning impacted on student learning? How do you know?
- How do you incorporate student feedback into your teaching?
- How do you assess the value of this feedback?
- Does 'informal' student feedback have a role in informing your professional learning?

Interpersonal

- How will you develop a positive environment to use this situation to support educational outcomes?
- How do you develop a culture of trust?
- What skills and strategies do you need to foster open staff discussion of issues such as student voice in teacher professional learning?



Organisational

- What structures/processes do you need to put in place to use this situation to support educational outcomes?
- How would you ensure that the evidence for planning came from a range of sources and included different types?

5. Recorded Group Discussion

- What are the key issues in this case?
- What are the implications for planning for professional learning?
- As leaders of professional learning what actions would you take?
- What will the professional learning plan look like?
- Proforma link.

6. Guide for Facilitators

It is the process of analysing the case and the issues that is important in using the cases as a professional learning tool.

Using the considerations or sample solutions too early may defeat the purpose and value of leaders reflecting on the professional learning issues and their own practice.

It should be remembered that a single issue case is in fact highly complex. If limited time is available groups could analyse different leadership domains or focus on just a few issues.

Whilst an analysis of the case will generate discussion relevant to the issues, care may need to be exercised in following through only those details relevant to the main issues.

Implementation link.

Notes:



7. Considerations for Facilitators

Considerations may be consulted as a prompt to maintain the depth and breadth of discussion.

Educational

- Create opportunities for small groups to reflect on professional learning experiences, good, bad and the ugly
- Pedagogy, programs, assessment, reporting, learning environment, high expectations, learning community professional conversations, best practice in quality teaching and professional learning,
- Do teachers need to learn how to code classroom and assessment practice?
- How does professional learning and quality teaching fit into the management and professional learning plan?
- How does quality teaching and assessment fit into school priorities?
- How do you develop school priorities? Whose priorities are they?
- What was the impact on student outcomes of the program at your previous school?
- What was the level of whole-school involvement?
- What is considered valid evidence?
- Quality teaching and learning issues
- How do you cater for students with different abilities and different cultural backgrounds?
- What are the middle school issues?
- Are effective professional learning principles driving the learning in the school?
- What teaching and learning strategies are needed to cater for the diverse backgrounds of students?
- How do you cater for students at risk?
- Quality teaching
- Classroom management strategies
- Modification of programs and teaching units of work
- Catering for the needs of special students
- What are the professional learning issues for the teachers; support staff; school executive and whole-school?
- How effective is transition program/system?
- Professional development activities to meet person's needs in regards to student learning, teaching strategies, classroom management strategies, relevance to curriculum (connections QT documents)
- Induction of beginning teacher courses to build networks
- Appoint mentor / involve in collegial discussions
- Visit classrooms of other practitioners
- DET policy and procedure



- Duties of teachers re playground duty
- Resources available to help improve the classroom environment and pedagogical skill
- Alignment of programs, syllabuses, assessments, evidence
- Discussion of learning support
- Relevance of curriculum
- Study skills
- Remedial courses
- Welfare support
- Professional learning plans
- Learning styles
- Leadership skills
- Student voice can enrich and reinforce good teaching and learning.
- ICT competencies are mandatory.
- Staff ICT competencies need to be judged, assessed and addressed.
- Mandatory policies require more consideration than lip service.

Strategic

- Consider the school's vision, policy and philosophy and find opportunities to reaffirm this
- Identify key personnel and involve their expertise
- Develop a shared vision for quality teaching and learning
- Align practices with the shared vision for quality teaching and learning
- How was the school professional learning team formed and how effective is it?
- What will the professional learning plan look like?
- How will you develop leadership capability and density throughout your school?
- What critical thinking and planning skills are needed to effectively evaluate and revise the professional learning plan? What worked, what did not?
- Conduct action research to review and evaluate teaching and learning practices in your school
- Is the professional learning catering to the varying needs of teachers?
- What are the issues for the school (eg whole-school planning); the students; the teachers; support staff; school structures (eg canteen timetable, playground) and the school community? Planning short run / long run
- Current and future staff skills and the professional learning plan
- School welfare program
- Students at risk
- The role of the executive, educational leadership
- Induction procedures for executives
- What is the relationship between the primary and high school?



- Team building
- Team leadership

Personal

- What are the elements of resilience? (Conflict resolution; remaining calm under pressure; nurturing team building skills; sense of humour; personal strength; ability to gather and evaluate information before making a decision, whilst being prepared to be decisive)
- How will you develop the skills or capabilities of individuals including yourself?
- How will you know which skills to develop?
- How will you conduct a staff skills audit without putting staff off-side?
- How do individuals develop a trusting and sharing collegial relationship?
- Useful tools and resources: conflict resolution skills, National Schools Network (NSN) protocols, delphi techniques, team building, mentoring and coaching
- Consider personal management strategies you will need to use to overcome this situation
- What are your own personal skills that will help / hinder this situation?
- Skills
- Conflict resolution
- Personal influence
- Learning styles
- Development of personal people skills
- Individual understanding of teaching and learning
- Supervision
- Communication skills
- Your Mentoring and coaching skills

Interpersonal

Effective collegial relationships are influenced by:

- Team building, team sharing, collegiality, conflict resolution
- Ability to inspire others and motivate
- Using active listening and questioning skills
- Coaching and mentoring skills
- Creating a climate based on mutual respect and support
- Being able to skilfully mediate, negotiate and implement appropriate actions
- How will you encourage collegiality amongst staff?
- How do you develop and support collaboratively based teams?
- How can the school develop professional mentoring/coaching for staff
- Consider necessary effective communication skills to develop relationships with staff and students



- Envisage professional learning needs undertaking these discussions
- Handling difficult situations, develop interpersonal skills
- Team building skills
- Conflict resolution
- Meeting procedures
- Communication skills
- Participative decision-making
- Collaborative decision-making

Organisational

- How and when will the team meet to plan and prioritise?
- Develop clear statements for the programming process
- Monitor policy implementation
- Refer to the *Professional learning policy for schools* (2004): learning requirements
- How will you account for the expenditure of professional learning funds?
- What activities will you undertake when and where and who will be involved?
- Set time aside to modify programs and units of work focussing on differentiation.
- Needs

	Immediate needs	Long term needs
School		
Special needs students		
Mainstream students		
Staff		
Support staff		
School structures		
Parents & parent organisations		

- Consider ongoing support and how this will be achieved (Long-term planning needs)
- Consider resources you need to address the problem
- Analyse procedures within the school (induction policy, implementation and supervision)
- Meeting times / professional learning times
- Career stages
- Plan professional development activities on handling difficult situations
- Time to align programs and policy
- Logistics, organisation of programs
- Staffing priorities, timetabling
- Time management
- Release time



Case discussed:

1. What are the key issues in this case?
2. What are the implications for planning for professional learning?
3. As leaders of professional learning, what action would you take?
4. What will the Professional Learning Plan look like?

Additional Responses:

1. Describe the strategies that you found personally valuable from the discussion.

Disclaimer The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Acknowledgement This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training as a quality teacher initiative under the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme.