

A FRAMEWORK FOR MAKING CRITICAL SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

7. Reviewing Evidence of Professional Learning for Impact.

Rationale

Here you are looking back at what happened. This is often the point at which what might have appeared to have been successful now seems less so having been examined critically. By the same token what may look like failure to carry out planned intentions may, after the same critical examination, be a significant and useful unintended outcome.

Evidence is something to be very careful about. It is important to make sense of its nature, strength and significance. It may be tangible and unassailable but not significant. It may be intangible, weak or highly problematic but, nevertheless, highly significant.

Reporting on the impact of professional learning should not become a pass/fail exercise. People in the education business are always making discoveries that they did not expect to make and examining them for significance and value before deciding to adopt or discard them. We should do this for professional learning.

It is also important to bring to the surface apparent inconsistencies between what institutions, institutions working in partnership, individuals and small groups of individuals have found to be significant that differs from what government has required them to do. This an opportunity to legitimise a collective professional voice: not a uniform voice but an authentic and possibly dissenting voice. So, if this process of critical review of the impact outcomes of professional learning shows that needs are being addressed and uncovered that are, as yet, unarticulated by government and its agents we should find the voice to say so.

Action

Try asking the following questions.

- Did we do as we intended?
- Do we now understand our intended professional learning outcomes differently?
- Were our intentions practical?
- Were our intentions as appropriate as we thought at the outset?
- If we have not achieved any intended professional learning outcomes are they, nevertheless, worth pursuing in the future?

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- Have we done more than intended?
- Have we any unexpected evidence for unintended professional learning outcomes?

For a more detailed approach to these questions click on the following:

[Getting up close and personal with the evidence by asking critical questions.](#)