

Defining a focus for an Enquiry

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Defining your focus

List the key professional issues you are facing personally, or your department or school is. Which of these is a 'felt need' something you would like to try and resolve or improve? Is any work currently going on around these issues? Who else could be interested in working on these issues with you?

Start to socialize the issue(s) you have as of interest – this means checking out how important these are to other people, what views they hold on them, what they see as the key factors or elements within the issue, and how it might be improved. Explore what support or commitment there is for working on this issue. **Select one issue.**

Break down your issue into its key elements based upon discussions with others and where appropriate additional background research in your school and the existing knowledge base. **Produce a schema** of the issue, which illustrates the key factors that contribute to it in your classroom, department or school.

Within the schema identify the first point of change, where you will start your intervention. In relation to this point you need to establish why the current 'state of play' exists. This means **generating a series of questions or hypotheses** about this area that you will then check out by gathering further data.

The first stage of the intervention is the 'reconnaissance'. This is about trying to establish what is currently happening and why. Using the hypotheses and questions generated in the previous stage you need to create **a plan for your reconnaissance.** Identify the data to be collected from whom and which question it will answer.

Commencing your intervention

Analyse the data from your reconnaissance in relation to key questions and the extent to which they challenge or confirm your initial hypotheses. Do you need to collect more data or can you plan your first intervention step? Identify the main focus of your **intervention**. Who and what do you wish to change?

At this point you may need to do further reading about, or identify good practice within, the area you wish to improve. **Create an action plan** for your intervention. If possible develop a baseline measure for the area of improvement and identify how you will evaluate what is occurring over the period of the intervention.

Carry out your baseline and implement the first step of your action plan.

Commence **collecting the evaluation data** you require to monitor the implementation of your action step and its impact. **Analyse the implementation data** and use this to fine-tune your work. Use the data to check out if your initial reconnaissance was correct.

Collect your impact data and analyse the nature of the improvement, if any, the intervention has resulted in.

Review your action plan on the basis of the evaluation data from step one. Do you need to change it? Improve the quality of your evaluation techniques?

Enquiry questions

The funnel should produce a question which others are interested in but it is not a bad idea to start with a question that interests you. Stems for enquiry questions usually have two or three parts.

1. Sometimes we are looking at a particular improvement or change?

In what ways could Improve.....

To what extent does Enable

How does the use of Prevent.....

What difference does Make to

How can the use of Increase

2. They may be more like hypotheses

If we did A to B would C happen?

When we did A to B did C really improve?

E.g. If we increase the length of time of plenary sessions at the end of lessons will this improve pupil recall?

3. At the beginning of an enquiry the question may be more about defining and describing what is already happening.

What do pupils and staff currently think about the current discipline procedures?

How do different groups of pupils view homework?

What are the areas of agreement and disagreement between staff on...?

How are different departments implementing...?

What level of agreement do we have as to what counts as...?