GTC
General Teaching Council
for England

Booklet 7

Audit

Professional Learning Communities:
source materials for school leaders and
other leaders of professional learning

# Comparing your preferred future and the current situation in your professional learning community

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# What is a gap analysis survey and why use it?

## Surveys can be important in provoking discussion because they draw out people's perceptions and enable colleagues to question each other's assumptions and values. They can play an important role in self-evaluation, helping staff examine areas of strength and need.

In a gap analysis survey, people are asked to answer two questions for each item. The first focuses on their perception of *reality*: what they see is currently happening in relation to the topic. The second focuses on their perception of their *preferred future* (what they think practice should be on this topic if the PLC is to develop).

Analysing the gap in responses between what people believe to be important *(their preference)* and what they perceive to be happening now *(the current situation)* can help you identify strengths and areas of need.

## How can you use the survey?

Each item in this short survey focuses on one of the 12 dimensions identified in our project. We have deliberately kept this short. It is not intended to be all-inclusive, and nor is it meant for comparisons between schools or other institutions. If you wish, you could adapt the survey by adding your own items. For instance, if you look at the content of the other source materials, the project report and the original project survey (available at www.eplc.info), you may identify additional items that are relevant to your situation. The survey can also be repeated after a period of time to see how attitudes have changed.

The survey on pages 3–4 should be photocopied and circulated. Each staff member can complete the survey individually and hand it in for the responses to be collated. Alternatively, people could work in groups where they first fill out the survey individually, then discuss their responses, coming to a group response which is then handed in for collation. You may also choose to adapt the questions for use with pupils or students or members of the wider community.

It is important to ensure that the results are fed back to all those who took the time to complete the survey.

# Comparing your preferred future and the current situation of your professional learning community

This survey has been designed to help you think about your professional learning community as it currently is and as you would like it to be.

Please complete the survey on the next page, circling two numbers:

- In column (A) on the left of the item, circle the number that best reflects your view of the current situation using the following scale:

| Strongly agree (SA) | 5 |
|---|---|
| Agree (A) | 4 |
| Uncertain (U) | 3 |
| Disagree (D) | 2 |
| Strongly disagree (SD) | 1 |

- In column (B) on the right of the item, circle the number that best reflects how important you think this is to develop your professional learning community using the following scale:

| Crucial (C) | 5 |
|---|---|
| Important (I) | 4 |
| Fairly important (FI) | 3 |
| Not very important (NVI) | 2 |
| Not at all important (NI) | 1 |

When you have completed the survey, you may also want to add some comments here:

# Comparing your preferred future and the current situation of your professional learning community

| A: Current situation | | | | | | B: Preferred future | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SA | A | U | D | SD | | C | I | FI | NVI | NI |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff share a common core of values about pupils' learning | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff take collective responsibility for pupil learning | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff regularly collaborate to promote high-quality learning and teaching | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff, as well as pupils, learn here | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff use enquiry and data-based approaches to enhance learning and teaching | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Staff seek and value external ideas, networks and partnerships | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | All staff are equally valued members of the professional learning community | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | High levels of trust and mutual respect exist here | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Structures (time, space etc) are organised to support staff collaboration | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Promotion and co-ordination of professional learning and development is a priority | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Progress and development of the professional learning community are regularly monitored and evaluated | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Leaders at all levels are focused on and committed to developing a professional learning community | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

# Analysing the findings

To make the results less complex to analyse, you might want to collapse the five categories on each scale into three:

| A | Agree = strongly agree and agree |
|---|---|
| | Uncertain |
| | Disagree = disagree and strongly disagree |

| B | Important = crucial and important |
|---|---|
| | Fairly important = less important |
| | Unimportant = not very important and not at all important |

For each item, lay out the agreement percentages directly above the importance percentages (bearing in mind that if your professional learning community is small, you need to be cautious about using and interpreting percentages). This makes it easier to see the gaps and identify other issues.

**Example:**

Staff, as well as pupils, learn here

| | Agree Important | Uncertain Less important | Disagree Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 51% | 31% | 18% |
| B | 91% | 6% | 3% |

In this example, just over a half of the staff (51 per cent) agree that this is currently happening while just under a third (31 per cent) aren't sure and nearly a fifth (18 per cent) disagree. In contrast, nearly everyone (91 per cent) thinks it's important.

When you have all of the results, discuss the questions on the next two pages.

Analysing the findings

**Questions to ask about the results**

**What seem to be your strengths?** (High percentages of staff agreeing that topics are both important and that they are currently happening.)

**What does it mean when people rate an issue as important but feel it isn't currently happening?** Follow-up questions include: *Why isn't it happening?* and *What may need to be done about this?*

**What does it mean when a high percentage of staff members use the rating 'uncertain'? What might this indicate?**

**Why might it be that a high percentage of staff members have used the rating 'disagree'?**

**What does it mean when staff don't consider an issue very important?**

**What will you now do with the results?**

You may want to try one of the other *Audit* activities in Booklets 6 and 8 to give you a fuller picture of your PLC. Alternatively, the *Planning* (Booklet 9) and *Action* (Booklets 10–11) materials may offer some ideas about next steps.

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## Audit

Investigating the culture of your professional learning community

**Comparing your preferred future and the current situation in your professional learning community**

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