Conversations: Does form follow function?

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Synopsis:
This workshop explores the concept of deliberate use of conversations forms as a vehicle for professional learning. In particular it seeks to clarify some of the terminology commonly in use about professional conversations and coaching conversations, to support school leaders in using these conversations in an informed way. The workshop will also go on to look at blended and emerging forms of these conversations.

References


The key finding of the review was that “professional development opportunities that are carefully designed and have a strong focus on pupil outcomes have a significant impact on student achievement.”

- appropriate duration: at least 2 terms, usually a year or longer
- “rhythm” of follow-up, consolidation and support activities
- designing for participants’ needs: opportunities for individual teachers to discuss their beliefs and to engage in peer learning and support
- a shared sense of purpose: an explicit relation to everyday experiences and context. eg working on why things work as well as what does and does not work
- alignment: a logical thread between components of the program and opportunities for teacher learning that are consistent with the principles of student learning being promoted.

Four core roles for school leaders

- Developing vision
- Managing and organising
- Leading professional learning – including promoting a challenging learning culture and promoting “evidence-informed, self-regulated learning”
- Developing the leadership of others – including encouraging teachers to lead a particular aspect of pedagogy or of the curriculum.

Bearing in mind the findings from the review...

Identify a PD program or process that is working along these lines in your school.

- How could your leadership of this program be strengthened by further use of professional conversations and coaching conversations?

- Form a group of 3-4, and think it through, then share – what conversations will you use? What strengths or tools of that conversation will be most useful here?