

Create peer learning opportunities

One way to improve the quality of a professional experience placement is to provide formal and informal opportunities that support pre-service teachers (PST) to learn from their peers.

Who implements this strategy

Professional Experience Co-ordinator (PEXC) supported by the University placement office.

How is it implemented?

- School aims to align professional experience placements from different Universities to have similar placement dates (where possible) so that pre-service teachers (PST) share the same or similar commencement date and complete placements as a group.
- Create, facilitate and promote structured and unstructured peer learning opportunities among all PSTs which promote professional conversations.
For example:
 - weekly whole PST group induction meetings
 - observing another PST's classroom practice
 - joining beginning teacher induction meetings
 - creating a space for PSTs to informally gather during breaks
 - sending an online meeting request to PEXCs from other schools inviting their PSTs to join an online mentor meeting

Variations:

- Cross-campus groups or regional city groups of PSTs are brought together for weekly or fortnightly meetings either face to face or using an online platform.
- The school creates a PST staffroom and all PSTs have a desk in this room. Beginning Teachers, Early Career Teachers, Supervising Teachers, PEXC and Senior Executive are encouraged to regularly visit this staffroom to create informal support opportunities.

What are the benefits of implementing this strategy?

- It raises the profile of the Professional Experience Program within the whole school community.
- PSTs have peers to support each other as a peer group throughout their placement. This can create an effective and supportive environment for PSTs, reducing their apprehension and assisting them to self-reflect on their practice with like-minded peers as an additional support to school staff.
- It builds collaboration into a PSTs repertoire early in their teaching careers.
- It reduces the demands on STs as professional learning linked to induction can be facilitated with the group.
- STs are also supported by the PEXC as a group, again reducing administrative load on the school as a whole.

Success indicators

- An indicator that the strategy is working as intended: high engagement in PST group meetings. Evidence of support and encouragement being shared between PSTs. PSTs initiate the observation of each other's lessons without PEXC or ST involvement. Professional conversations are deepening their understanding of the profession.
- An indicator that the strategy is not working as intended: Professional conversations are dominated by the PEXC or ST. Poor attendance after first meeting or PSTs not valuing or seeking any further informal opportunities.