

## Description of Toolbox Themes and Tools in the RETAIN project

Theme description	
Title of Toolbox Theme	Co-construction, Co-design and Collaboration – developing a professional learning community
Description of theme	<p>Research suggests that collaboration is linked to positive school outcomes, higher levels of motivation and effective implementation of change. In this theme, we address the ways in which collaboration between teachers can develop open, engaged and inclusive communities of practice in which professional learning has a central role. Our analysis of existing literature and initial research with teachers suggests that there are three key issues in teacher retention that collaborative working may help to address: Teacher Resilience, Risk management, and Innovation. The tools outlined in this theme of the toolbox are designed to support senior leaders in scaffolding collaboration between teams of teachers at all levels within the school, to address these broad challenges of teacher retention and to enable schools and teachers to focus on particular aspects that would either a) engage and excite them in their teaching (pull factors) or b) address particular classroom/team issues that are causing them particular difficulties (push factors).</p> <p>One key principle in this element of the toolbox is to challenge any assumption that learning is uni-directional within a school hierarchy, and to foster collaborative dialogue between all teachers. Schools may choose to use these tools within a whole-school approach, within a particular team, as triads of School leaders, Senior and Novice teachers, with teachers and support staff or even including parents and pupils. In this way, the tools aim to support the development of all teachers.</p>
Overall description of relevant tools for addressing these issues and challenges	<p>Within this theme, we have identified two key tools to support teachers' collaborative dialogue and cooperative working. These are the Framework for Collaborative Dialogue, and Lesson Study.</p> <p><u>Framework for Collaborative Dialogue (FCD)</u> This highly flexible tool is adapted from a successful tool from the 'Exeter Model of Initial Teacher Education' and is designed to scaffold collaborative conversations between groups of teachers around a key issue or question that is particularly relevant to their particular school context. Theoretically rooted in Activity Theory, the FCD supports teachers in exploring how they can take action for change in relation to the issue or problem identified. It can therefore support schools in developing an open and inclusive approach to collaboration as it opens out a space for both novice and experienced teachers to learn from each other and value each others' different experiences, as well as fostering innovation and resilience through shared risk-taking and problem-solving.</p> <p><u>Lesson Study</u> Supported by the FCD both to identify possible ways forward and reflect on impact, Lesson Study is a tool which supports teacher collaboration to address a key issue or develop an innovative and creative pedagogy. Originally developed in Japan, Lesson Study is increasingly popular amongst teachers and researchers internationally and evidence of its impact is well supported by research. In brief, a group of teachers (usually 2-3 teachers) undertake to collaboratively plan a lesson, which one of the teachers then teaches, observed by the others. This fosters shared ownership of the lesson and enables critically reflective thinking about the impact of the teaching on learning. This critical reflection can be supported by the FCD within this toolbox.</p>



**INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS  
TO RETAIN NEW TEACHERS**



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Lifelong Learning Programme

The **RETAIN** Project is supported by The Lifelong Learning Programme

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Tool description</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-weight: normal;">Copy this part as many times as needed</p>	
Name of the tool	The Framework for Collaborative Dialogue (FCD)
Aim of the tool	The aims of this tool are to support independent critical reflection and to provide a framework to facilitate collaborative dialogue.
Target group	This tool may be used by a wide variety of stakeholders including senior leaders and governors, teachers (both experienced and novice), support and administrative staff and even parents and pupils.
How to work with the tool	<p>The flexibility of this tool means that it can be used in a variety of ways. An individual teacher may use it, for instance, when planning/evaluating a unit of work. A group of teachers in a department may use it when considering how to use ICT more effectively in their lessons. Senior leaders may use it to facilitate conversations around how to create a more inclusive school environment.</p> <p>The topic/question/issue under discussion or consideration is written in the centre hexagon. Teachers then use the prompt questions within each of the surrounding hexagons to guide their thinking in relation to this topic/question/issue. Some hexagons and some prompt questions may be more appropriate/relevant than others depending on the <a href="#">topic/question/issue</a> what is being considered, but it is worth reflecting on most of the questions where possible, as they may bring issues to bear on the discussion that may not otherwise have been considered. Teachers can use the corresponding blank text boxes to record their thoughts (using key words/bullet points) in relation to each of the hexagons. This can either be done by hand or electronically.</p> <p>We have found that the best way to use this tool to support collaborative dialogue is if each member of the group prepares for the dialogue in advance and brings to the conversation a partially completed Framework template which they can then draw from and refer to during the dialogue. The group may also decide to complete a new Framework for Collaborative Dialogue template during the conversation which would collate the various contributions made and record agreed actions.</p> <p>We have included an example of a completed Framework for Collaborative Dialogue. The dialogue was between a number of initial teacher educators and senior leaders in partnership schools. The central question under discussion was ‘How can we foster resilience in our least resilient trainee teachers?’</p>
Special expertise need to work with the tool	Some expertise is needed in relation to knowing how to access policy documentation, relevant professional and academic literature and research findings. While it is not essential, it may be helpful if teachers involve university colleagues in the use of FCD (or in their preparation for discussions shaped by FCD) as university staff will have more ready access to academic literature.
Special material (complementary or additional)	<p>The Framework for Collaborative Dialogue template includes relevant prompt questions to support the conversation, during which other useful tools/strategies may be identified.</p> <p>An example of a completed FCD template has been included for information.</p>



<p>Possible risks</p>	<p>It is possible that people may not allow sufficient time prior to the collaborative dialogue to consider the prompt questions and to draw from already existing research findings and professional guidance. This may have an impact on the quality of and outcomes of the dialogue.</p> <p>It is also important to ensure that all those participating in the dialogue, regardless of their role in the school or their level of experience, feel able to contribute to the conversation equally.</p>
<p>Outcome</p>	<p>The aim of this tool is to facilitate the kinds of dialogue which will support schools in developing an inclusive approach to collaboration as it opens out a space for both novice and experienced teachers and senior leaders to learn from each other. It may lead to the realization that another more specific tool is needed to address a particular issue that has been identified as a result of the dialogue.</p>
<p>The theoretical foundation of the tool</p>	<p>Theoretically rooted in Activity Theory, the FCD supports teachers in exploring how they can take action for change in relation to the issue or problem identified. It can therefore support schools in developing an open and inclusive approach to collaboration as it opens out a space for both novice and experienced teachers to learn from each other and value each others' different experiences, as well as fostering innovation and resilience through shared risk-taking and problem-solving.</p> <p>Dialogue promoted by the use of FCD will promote co-construction, collaboration and co-design of innovations to practice and behavior. Activity theory reminds us to pay attention to personal and institutional histories as part of this dialogue. What is happening, and what could happen differently, will be influenced by these histories. Action plans emerging from the dialogue focus on the key component of activity theory – namely activity. Activity theory also reminds us that by engaging in different activities, people change, understandings of the context change, understandings of the purpose of the activity change, power becomes differently distributed. A key aspect of activity theory is that institutional, as well as individual learning, must take place. Senior staff in school should approach dialogue prompted by FCD with the view that institutional change is possible and desirable. Individual teachers should approach dialogue prompted by FCD with the view that change in their own preferences, practices, identity and even values is possible and desirable. Activity theory recognizes that when one considers all the elements that impact on an activity (e.g. as mapped by the hexagons of the FCD) some synergies will emerge which may identify new activity that may be particularly productive at that time. Some tensions and constraints will also emerge. Tensions in activity theory are seen as points of creative engagement and innovation. They can rarely be resolved by ignoring one aspect of the tension and putting all energy into the other. They are more creatively resolved by inventing new ways of working (or adopting different existing practices) that pay attention to all the factors that are currently in tension with one another.</p>

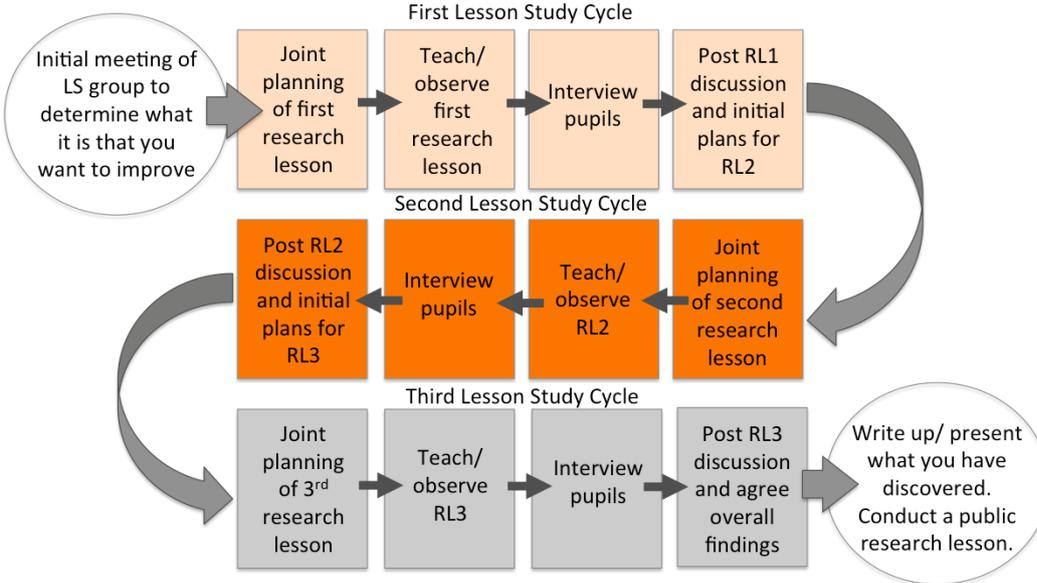
**Tool description**





Name of the tool	Lesson Study
Aim of the tool	Lesson Study is a powerful, <a href="#">professional collaborative</a> learning approach that <a href="#">can</a> dramatically improve learning and teaching and the practice and subject knowledge of teachers. The principle aim of LS is to help teachers to improve and develop their practice. It does this by providing teachers with 'new eyes' that can observe and see in great detail the micro-level interrelationships between their pupils' learning and their own teaching – and vice versa.
Target group	This tool may be used by all teachers, from experienced teachers and mentors to novice teachers.
How to work with the tool	<p>Step 1: Identify the Lesson Study Group. This is a group of teachers (usually two or three teachers) who undertake to collaboratively plan a lesson, which one of the teachers then teaches, observed by the others.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify the focus of the 'research' lesson. This may be something like 'we want to learn how to improve how we teach complex concepts to low ability pupils' or 'we want to learn how to effectively implement cooperative learning strategies in the classroom'.</p> <p>Step 3: Carry out a review of relevant research (including previous lesson studies), to identify a tried and tested teaching technique to develop or improve the agreed area of focus.</p> <p>Step 4. Identify 3 case pupils (or multiples of 3). Each triad of pupils could typify a group of learners in the class – for example, high, middle and low attaining in the strand being taught and developed. Alternatively a group of pupils who provide a particular challenge could be identified as the focus.</p> <p>Step 5. Jointly plan a research lesson based on the needs of the case pupils</p> <p>Step 6. One teacher teaches this lesson which has been jointly planned, and the remaining teacher(s) observe the lesson. In their observation, these teachers need to focus on the case pupils' learning and progress. You will need to think in advance about what data you want to gather during the lesson concerning these pupils' learning and progress.</p> <p>Step 7. Interview the case pupils and gather their thoughts about the lesson.</p> <p>Step 8. Meet together as a Lesson Study group and hold a post lesson discussion as soon as possible after the lesson. Discuss how the case study pupils responded to the techniques, what progress they made and what can be learned about the application of the technique. Also discuss what each person feels they have learned.</p> <p>Step 9: Repeat steps 5-8 twice so that each research lesson is taught and analysed three times.</p>



	 <p>Step 10. Find ways of helping others to learn from your Lesson Study. Teachers using LS in schools in the UK have found that by presenting their learning to others, they further their own learning and deepen their understanding of what they have learned.</p> <p>For a more detailed explanation of the process, a Lesson Study handbook is available for download from the following link:  <a href="http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/">http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/</a></p>
<p>Special expertise need to work with the tool</p>	<p>For Lesson Study to be effective, it is important that the steps are implemented as outlined above and as explained in more detail in the handbook.  <a href="http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/">http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/</a></p>
<p>Special material (complementary or additional)</p>	<p>All templates associated with Lesson Study are included in the handbook which can be downloaded from this link <a href="http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/">http://lessonstudy.co.uk/lesson-study-a-handbook/</a>. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Pupil Information panel</li> <li>• Research lesson planning, observation and discussion sheet</li> <li>• Interviewing case pupils after lesson</li> <li>• The post research lesson discussion</li> <li>• Overall assessment record of progress in a Lesson Study</li> </ul> <p>A Lesson Study Case Report template can also be downloaded from:  <a href="http://lessonstudy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/new-lessonstudytemplate.pdf">http://lessonstudy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/new-lessonstudytemplate.pdf</a></p>
<p>Possible risks</p>	<p>Researchers and teachers using LS in schools in the UK found that in order for it to be effective and result in the kinds of changes that are outlined above, it is essential that it becomes deeply embedded in school systems and practice. LS, therefore, needs to be supported by leadership teams that understand and are committed to the approach. It is important that the teachers involved (the Lesson Study group) have dedicated time and support to implement LS effectively.</p>

	<p>In order for the Lesson Study group to work effectively, it is essential that at the start of the process, the group sets ground rules for risk taking and joint ownership of the research lessons.</p> <p>It is also important to remember that the flow of analysis following the 'research lesson' needs to start with the observations made of the case pupils' learning. This preserves the focus on pupil learning and only on teacher learning that arises from this and reduces the tendency for lesson observation discussions to become feedback on teaching.</p>
Outcome	<p>The aim of this tool is to support collaboration between teachers and teacher generations. As the tool is designed primarily to improve and develop teachers' classroom practice, one of the key outcomes will usually be higher pupil attainment/motivation/engagement etc. Another key outcome is that use of LS contributes to the development of a collaborative school culture which in turn raises teachers' own levels of motivation and confidence.</p>
The theoretical foundation of the tool	<p>Recent research suggests that taking part in collaborative enquiries into improving teaching and learning is the single most impactful action a school leader can take to improve educational outcomes for pupils. Lesson Study is the ideal tool to facilitate such enquiry.</p> <p>The collaborative, shared endeavour of LS creates 'safe' motivating spaces for teachers to take risks and learn together from their joint 'seeing and understanding' of their pupils and lessons. This helps teachers to develop new theories and understandings about how their pupils are learning that lead to lasting improvements in their pupils' achievement and in their own subsequent teaching.</p> <p>Researchers employing LS in the UK found that teachers' 'new eyes', coupled with the affective, social effects of the collaborative nature of LS, helped teachers to better understand the different ways their pupils were learning in different areas of the curriculum and to be able to respond to these in more personalised, nuanced ways which improved pupils' learning outcomes.</p>
<b>Process Description</b>	
Process and implementation of the theme in schools	<p><u>Framework for Collaborative Dialogue (FCD)</u></p> <p>The FCD can be used at several levels of sophistication, some of which are indicated below. There is no suggestion that colleagues should work through all these in a rigid sequence. The best starting point will be influenced by current practice and current expectations about professional dialogue. However, once a starting point has been chosen, the ideas below may be useful in identifying ways to deepen the engagement with professional development should the initial use prove to be straightforward, or to simplify that engagement should it prove difficult to bring the dialogue to a satisfying conclusion. Start somewhere, and move up or down the options below as appropriate.</p> <p>The FCD can be used in a conversation between an experienced teacher and a less experienced colleague to explore some aspect of current practice that is an issue for them. This may be a problem that needs to be addressed or an area of strength that needs to be further developed. It is often productive to first use FCD to look at the latter so that its use does not become associated with issues of low confidence, self-justification and poor self-image. Once confidence in the tool is established, dialogue</p>

focused on areas of weakness are more likely to be successful. Even at this level of use it is important to keep in mind the need for some (perhaps quite limited) institutional change.

The more experienced colleague could involve the less experienced colleague in a FCD analysis of the experienced teacher's own practice. This emphasizes that professional learning is a necessary component of all practice, not just that of new teachers, or teachers encountering difficulties. It enables the less experienced colleague to contribute their thinking and experience to the discussion in a way that is difficult if they feel they are the person needing to change. It alters the power relationship.

The FCD can be used to plan, or to analyse the effects of, innovation in practice being undertaken by a group of colleagues. This could involve working in triads, working as a subject department or age phase team to respond to external change such as a change in curriculum or assessment, engaging in peer observation of lessons (e.g. through the use of webcams in the classroom). Such collaboration might involve colleagues from other subjects or age phases, or colleagues in different schools who have chosen to work together. Used in this way, FCD can clearly be one of the tools used within a lesson study project.

The FCD can be used to explore whole school issues through dialogue involving some, or all, of senior staff, governors, middle management, external consultants and less experienced staff (including support staff such as teaching assistants). The dialogue is more likely to be successful if the key characteristic of dialogue (namely that ideas are dealt with in terms of their intrinsic value not in terms of the status of the person putting them forward) can be adhered to. In this style of use the full implications of the activity theory foundation of the FCD (see above) can be powerfully exploited. Institutional change will be even more heavily fore-fronted.

In the pilot process it will be important to collect data on the impact of FCD so that the tool and the suggestions for its use can be further developed. It is useful if someone is identified as having particular responsibility for managing this data collection. The process is likely to include data from (informal) interviews with (some of) the participants in the dialogue. It may include minutes of meetings, copies of action plans created through the use of FCD, or diaries kept by participants. It could include evidence of the impact of new practice on students (e.g. through conversations with individuals or a group or through monitoring of student performance). However, there is no suggestion that formal 'control group/experimental group' research designs are necessary. The emphasis is on what is easily achievable in the circumstances.

#### Lesson Study

It is likely that the use of Lesson Study will emerge as a result of being identified during a collaborative dialogue, using the FCD, as one of the tools that would support a variety of collaborative activities, such as:

- Designing and preparing materials
- Collaborative research
- Co-planning and evaluation of lessons
- Implementing new ideas and teaching strategies





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzing impact of teaching on pupils' learning</li><li>• Talking with other teachers about one's own classroom practice and development</li></ul>
Developed by	University of Exeter

