

# A Primary Learning Conversation:

## Using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for Development and Performance

**Professor Louise Stoll**

London Centre for Leadership in Learning  
Institute of Education, University of London  
[louise@louisestoll.com](mailto:louise@louisestoll.com)

**APPA Workshop**

Cairns  
1 July 2013



# Outline

- Context
- Different kinds of conversations
- Learning conversations between leaders and teachers using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Stimulating learning conversations between teachers using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Creating the conditions

# 7 Survival Skills

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analysing information
- Curiosity and imagination

Wagner (2008)

# Powerful learning dispositions

Claxton et al,  
2011

**Resilience**

**Resourcefulness**

**Reflection**

**Relating**

...the kind of education  
needed today requires  
teachers to be high-  
level knowledge  
workers who constantly  
advance their own  
professional knowledge  
as well as that of their  
profession.

Istance and Vincent-Lancrin  
with Van Damme, Schleicher  
and Weatherby (OECD, 2012)

## Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

. . . that can guide professional learning,  
practice and engagement, facilitates the  
improvement of teacher quality and  
contributes positively to the public standing  
of the professional

Work settings are language communities . . . All leaders are leading language communities. Though every person, in every setting, has some opportunity to influence the nature of the language, leaders have exponentially greater access and opportunity to shape, alter or ratify the existing language rules.

Kegan and Lahey (2001)  
How the Way We Talk  
Can Change the Way We Work



What kinds of conversations  
would a visitor to your school or  
fly on the wall hear?



# Accountability conversations

## Open to Learning Conversations (OLCs)

Robinson (2011), based on Argyris (1991, 1993)

## Difficult conversations

Stone, Patton and Heen (2000)

## Courageous conversations

Ontario Leadership Framework (2010)

## Fierce conversations

Scott (2002)

Also: Crucial conversations, hard conversations,  
constructive problem talk

# Learning conversations

... how educators  
make meaning  
together and  
jointly come up  
with new insights  
and knowledge.

These conversations  
lead to intentional  
change to enhance  
practice and  
pupil learning.

Stoll (2012)

Intentional action/change



Knowledge creation



Reflection that challenges thinking

Learning  
conversations

Purpose and  
process

Engagement

# Purpose and process

Focus – evidence or ideas

Experience + external knowledge/theory

Protocols and tools

Facilitation

## Engagement

Inquiry-mindedness

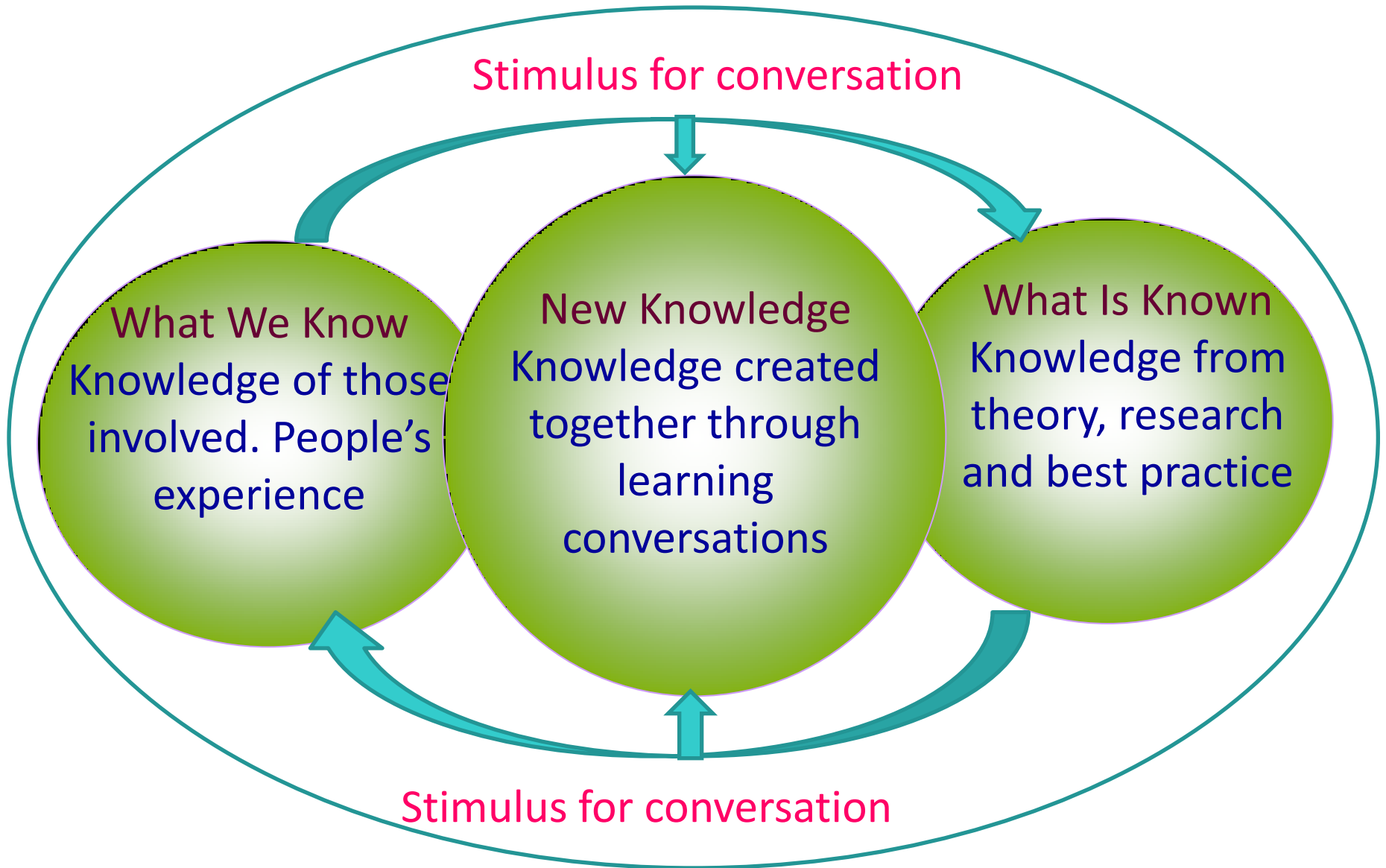
Depth

Respectful challenge

Risk taking



NCSL (2006)



Adapted from NCSL (2006)

# Depth of talk in studied networks of maths teachers

## Talk related to one or more of:

<b>Low</b>	How to coordinate text, standards, assessment, pacing guides; how to organise the classroom; sharing materials or activities; general discussion of how a lesson went or whether students were 'getting it'
<b>Medium</b>	How lesson went, including why; detailed planning, including discussing why; specific = detailed discussion of whether students were learning (but not how they learn); discussing teaching strategies in the context of observations; doing maths problems with discussion
<b>High</b>	Talk related to one or more of the following pedagogical principles underlying teaching and learning approaches; how students learn, or the nature of students' mathematical thinking; mathematical principles or concepts

# Go beyond the “Land of Nice”

In education’s “Land of Nice”, being nice to each other is equated with not challenging each other.

City et al (2010)



## Reflection that challenges thinking

### Effective professional development challenges thinking as a fundamental part of changing practice

The result of professional learning isn't only visible in changes in practice but also "in one's thinking about the how and why of that practice" Kelchtermans (2004)

Digging deep and understanding why one practice is better than another

Challenging and interrupting assumptions Timperley (2011)

Intentional interruption Katz and Dack (2012)

Stimulating meta-learning Watkins et al (2000)

Stoll, Harris and Handscomb (2012)  
for National College for School Leadership



What makes you reflect most on your practice when you are having conversations with school-based colleagues and others who work with you?

Intentional action – change in practice



Knowledge creation

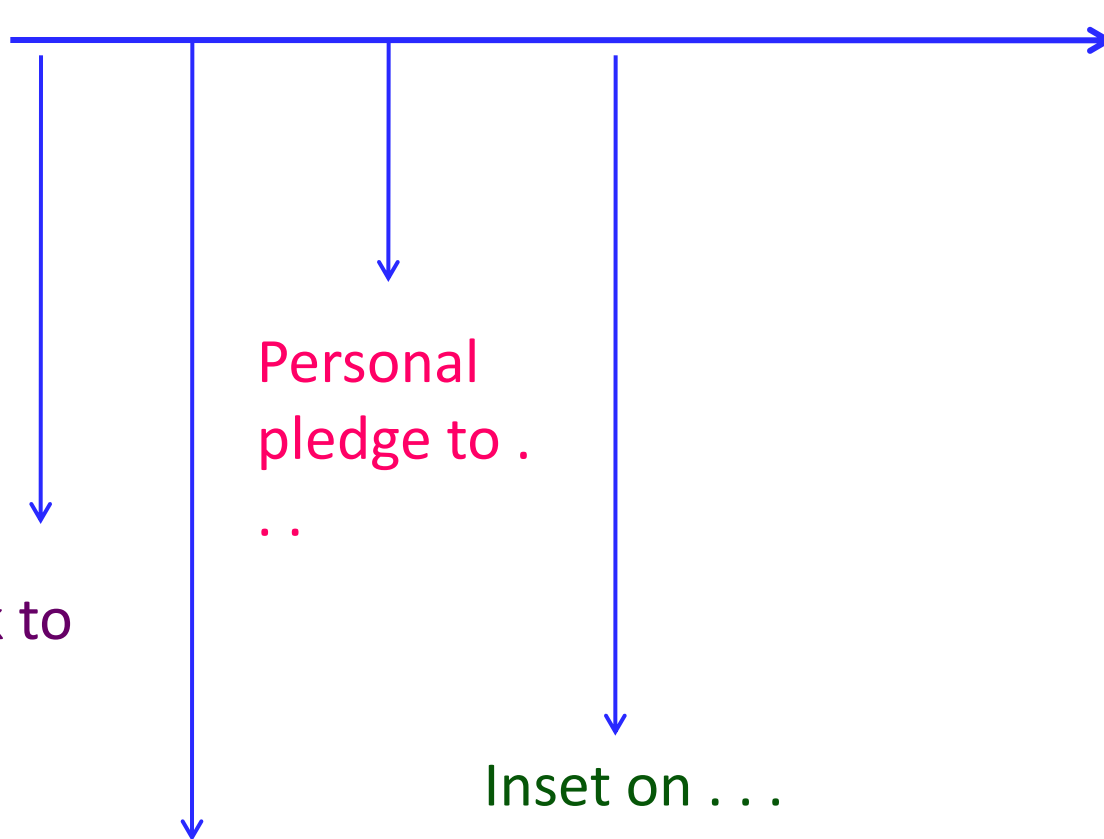


Reflection that challenges thinking

# Tracking transfer: from ideas to changed practice

Conversation/  
observation  
that challenges  
and inspires  
new thinking

Feedback to  
...



Coaching  
with ...

Personal  
pledge to .  
..

Inset on ...

Change  
in  
practice  
at school

# Using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to enhance development and performance

Learning conversations  
between leaders and teachers  
related to the Australian  
Professional Standards  
for Teachers

# The National Professional Standard for Principals

- **Vision and values:** Principals model “learning for life” through their own professional practice and promote it actively in their interaction with students, staff, families and carers and the wider community
- **Knowledge and understanding :** Principals understand the practice and theory of contemporary leadership and apply that knowledge in school improvement.
- **Personal qualities, social and emotional skills:** Principals can communicate, negotiate, collaborate and advocate effectively and relate well to all the school’s community. They are good listeners and coaches, clear in responding and able to give and receive feedback.

# Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework



. . . calls for the creation of a performance and development culture in all Australian schools. A performance and development culture is characterised by a clear focus on improving teaching as a powerful means for improving student outcomes, In particular, it requires that teachers: know what is expected of them; receive frequent feedback on their teaching; and access high quality support to improve their practice. This Framework **aims to promote genuine professional conversations** that improve teaching and minimise the risk that administrative and bureaucratic requirements will become the focus.

August 2012

Using Standard 3.3 Use teaching strategies, think together about having a learning conversation with a teacher:

- How would you differentiate your learning conversation for a graduate teacher, proficient teacher, highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher?
- What would distinguish your conversation from having an accountability conversation?



Using the National Professional  
Standards for Teachers in learning  
conversations between teachers

# How the World's Most Improved Systems Keep Getting Better



McKinsey & Company (2010)

# Professional learning communities

an inclusive and mutually supportive group of people with a collaborative, reflective and growth-oriented approach towards investigating and learning more about their practice in order to improve pupils' learning.

Stoll (2011)

# Three ways of thinking about teacher learning

- Knowledge *for* practice
- Knowledge *in* practice
- Knowledge *of* practice

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999)

Examples included

**Book club**

# Gap analysis survey – another conversation starter

## A. Current Situation

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = neither agree or disagree

2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree

## B. Importance

5 = crucial

4 = important

3 = fairly important

2 = not very important

1 = unimportant

5 4 3 2 1 Teachers in this school  
have high expectations  
of all students

5 4 3 2 1 High levels of trust  
and mutual respect  
exist here

5 4 3 2 1 Teachers observe each  
other and give each other  
feedback on their practice

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

## Sequence of phases in protocol to look at pupils' work

Protocol phase	Guidance to participants
1. Introduction (2 mins)	Remind norms – no fault, collaboration, consensus. Teacher providing work gives brief statement without qualitative comment
2. Describing the student work (10 mins)	Gather as much information as possible. Describe what see, no judgements or interpretations
3. Interpreting the student work (10 mins)	Try to make sense of what student doing, thinking and why. Multiple interpretations evaluated against quality of evidence
4. Implications for classroom practice (10 mins)	Based on observations and interpretations, discuss implications for teaching and assessment in the classroom
5. Reflect on the process (10 mins)	Reflect on how process worked. Share insights

# Ealing PLC's Learning Review

Host school formulates key question

Host team introduces key question,  
theory and context to review team

Lesson observations, interviews,  
looking at schemes of work

**Learning conversations between  
pairs of reviewers**

**Review team conversation and  
agreeing feedback**

Feedback to host school's headteacher

Host school plans action



## Ealing Professional Learning Community reviewer feedback form

### Area and focus of enquiry:

What do you see, hear, think is going on for students?

So what conditions for learning or adult behaviours facilitate what is going on?

Summary comment for end of day feedback – what key strengths could the school build on to further develop learning?

## Jigyoukenkyuu – Japanese ‘lesson study’

Team of teachers identifies aspect of teaching likely to have an impact on area of pupil learning need

1-3 years collaborating in groups planning interventions, closely observing these ‘research lessons’, deconstructing and writing up what they learn from successes and failures

At end of cycle of studies, may teach a public research lesson before an audience of peers to share practice and widen critique

# The Research Lesson process: step by step

1. Analyse your data and identify your focus
2. Identify your lesson study group and set ground rules
3. Connect with, and draw on what is already known about your focus before you start
4. Identify 3 case pupils
5. Jointly plan a research lesson based on the case pupils' needs
6. Joint observation and data capture
7. Joint analysis and recording – be explicit about what you have learned
8. Finding ways of helping others learn from what you have learned

NCSL (2005) based on  
Japanese Lesson

# Australian Professional for Teachers

## Professional engagement Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning

### 6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs

Understand/use/analyse/use comprehensive knowledge of the  
National Professional Standards . . .

### 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice

### 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice

Feedback/contribute to or initiate and engage in collegial  
discussions

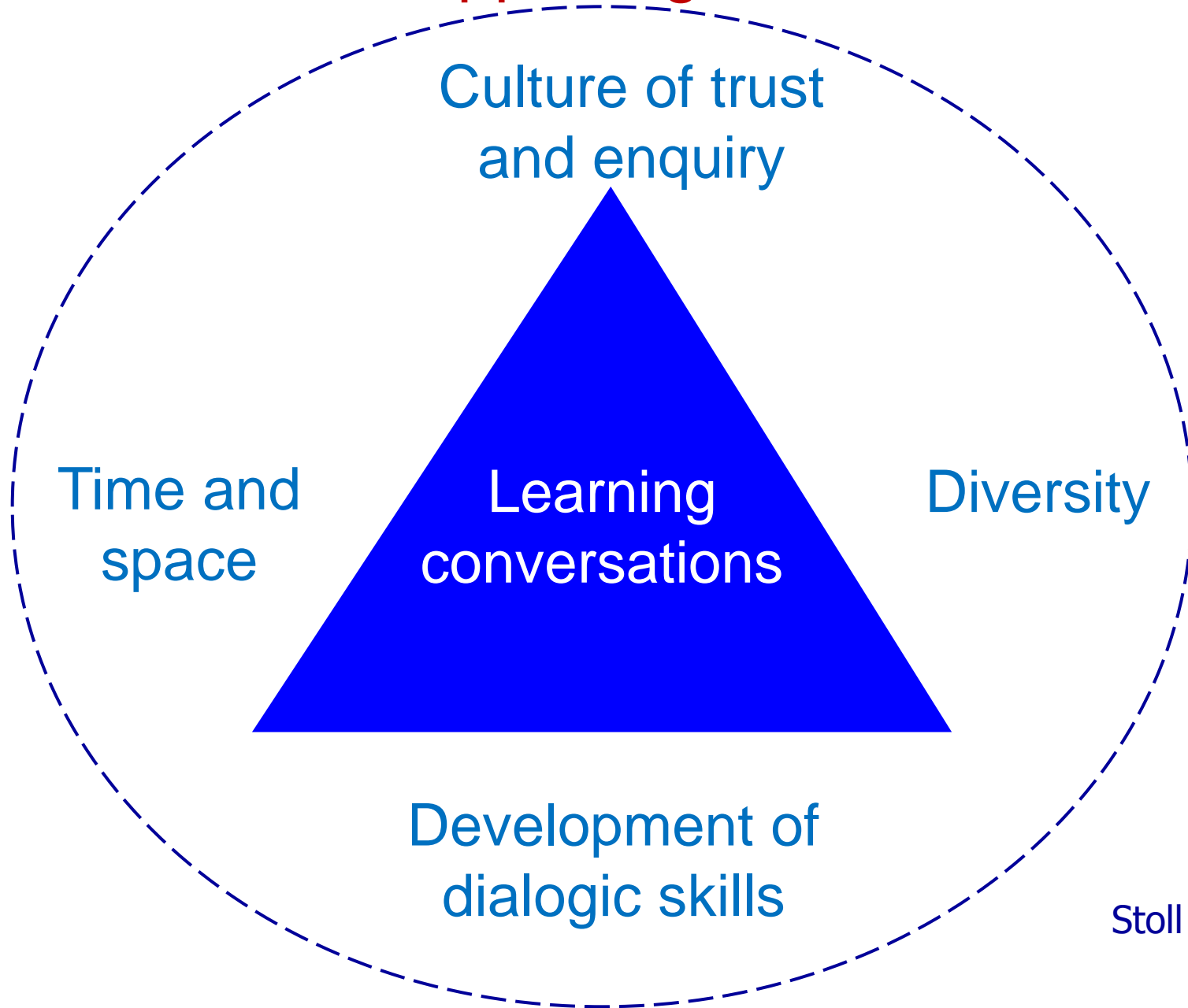
### 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning



Share examples of your teachers collaborating to use the Australian Standards (or state or territory standards).

What is engagement in learning conversations like more generally in your own school? What evidence are you drawing on?

# PLC supporting conditions



Stoll (2012)



King Arthur knew that such a restless and fuming group could not help keep a kingdom in order, so he exercised a very simple idea. His table would be round. His knights would sit around a round table. No position would be greater than any other.

Perkins (2003)





What opportunities do you already create for learning conversations around the Standards:

- in your school?
- between teachers in your school and other schools?

Are there any other conditions you might provide?

# Dialogic skills

Listening

Questioning

Challenging

Probing

Connecting

Building

## [Take home] task

Design a challenging professional learning experience for your staff using the standards and learning conversations.

What is one idea you have heard or spoken about today that you will take away and have a learning conversation about at school to enhance teachers' engagement with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers?

How will you use learning conversations during ICP?

It [the PLC and learning review process] gets teachers to reflect really. The more reflective somebody is, you've built capacity for them to go away and improve their own practice. . . . The learning community has contributed massively to that in school - it means that all the other stuff we do will have much more impact. It's got people talking about teaching and learning.

Headteacher, Ealing PLC