

Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

June 2016



Ontario
College of
Teachers
Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
de l'Ontario

Cover note

The cover photo portrays Bruce K. Beardy, a First Nations educator and member of the Ontario College of Teachers and Lakehead University's Faculty of Education, Aboriginal Education Department.

Bruce is holding an Anishinaabe representation of the Standard of Practice for the Teaching Profession, *Ongoing Professional Learning*, which he created to depict the rich and diverse nature of professional learning that members of the profession are committed to and engage in.

Ongoing professional learning

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.



Table of Contents

1	The Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession
2	Ethical standards, standards of practice and the Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession
3	Professional inquiry
4	The purposes of the Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession
5	Guiding principles
6	Self-directed professional learning
7	Learning through practice
7	Conceptual framework for ongoing professional learning
10	Contexts that support ongoing professional learning
12	Additional Qualification courses
13	Advanced degrees
14	Communicating with the public
16	References

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* was approved by the Council of the Ontario College of Teachers on June 2, 2016.

The Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

Members of the College refine their professional knowledge, skills, practices and values described in the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* through ongoing professional learning. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* describes some opportunities and processes that support ongoing professional learning for educators. These opportunities have been identified by members of the profession through provincial consultations, surveys, focus groups and written narratives of practice. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* is one component of a collective vision of teacher professionalism in Ontario (Figure 1) that was collaboratively created by both the profession and the public.

Collective vision of teacher professionalism



Figure 1

Professional learning takes a variety of forms. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* is one of the ways the Ontario College of Teachers meets its legislated mandate to “provide for the ongoing education of members of the College. It also informs the public of the many ways educators remain knowledgeable and current. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* supports the ongoing growth and development of the profession through the identification of a wide range of learning and education opportunities.

Ethical standards, standards of practice and the Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

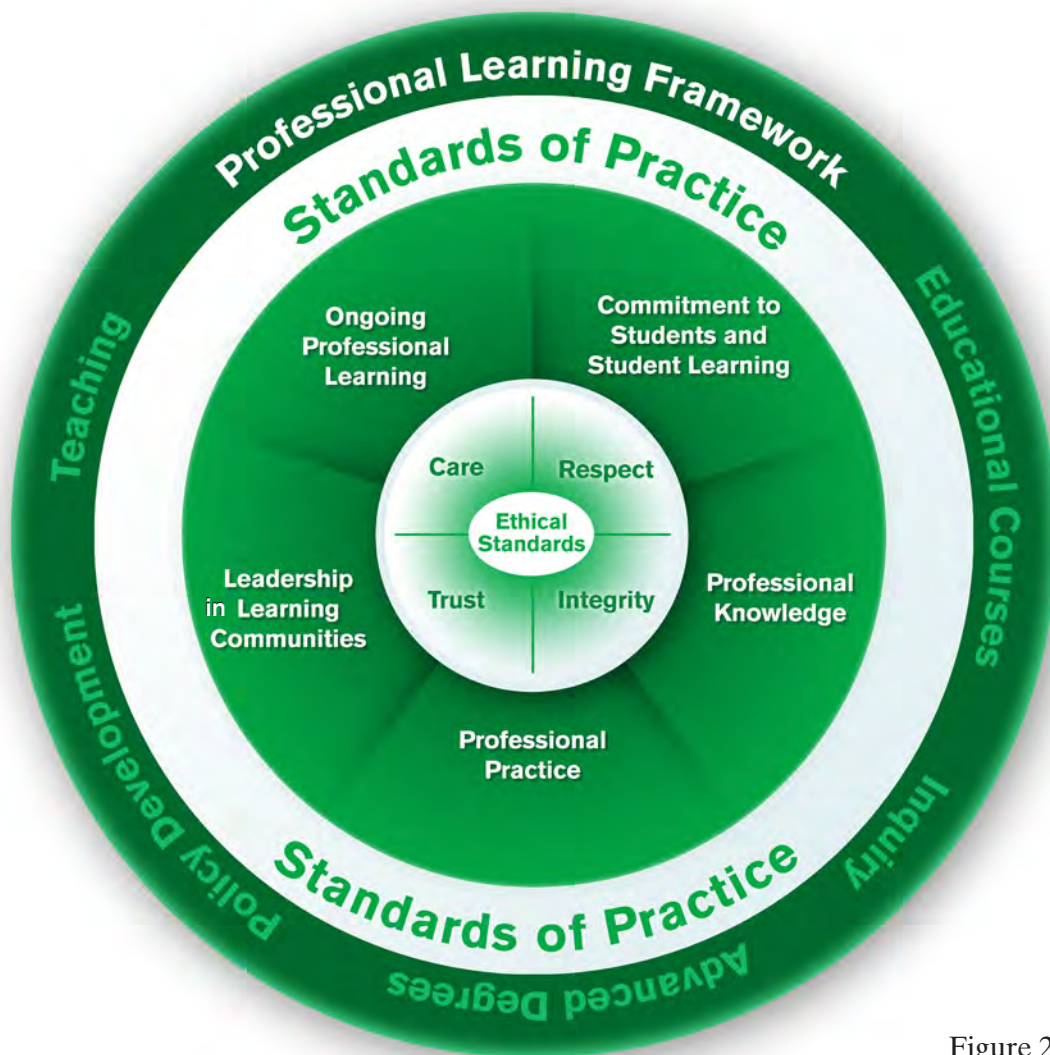


Figure 2

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* are strengthened and further embodied through the many professional education and learning processes identified in the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. A holistic vision of teacher professionalism (Figure 2) stresses the interrelationships between ethical practice, professional knowledge, skills, values and ongoing professional learning.

The standard of practice, entitled *Ongoing Professional Learning*, highlights the inherent connection between student learning and professional learning. This standard also explicitly identifies the importance of self-directed professional learning, which is enhanced through lived experience, research and collaboration.

Standard of Practice: Ongoing Professional Learning

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.

—Ontario College of Teachers, 2006

Together, the ethical standards, standards of practice and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* support the capacity for thoughtful, ethical and critically reflective practices and innovations that inform professional practice.

Professional inquiry

A professional inquiry section is included throughout the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* document. This inquiry section is designed to invite educators reading this foundational document to reflect upon and further explore their own self-directed professional learning experiences through the various lenses associated with ongoing professional learning and education articulated in the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*.

The purposes of the Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* (PLF) has been collaboratively designed with members of the teaching profession to reflect the following purposes:

Purposes of the PLF

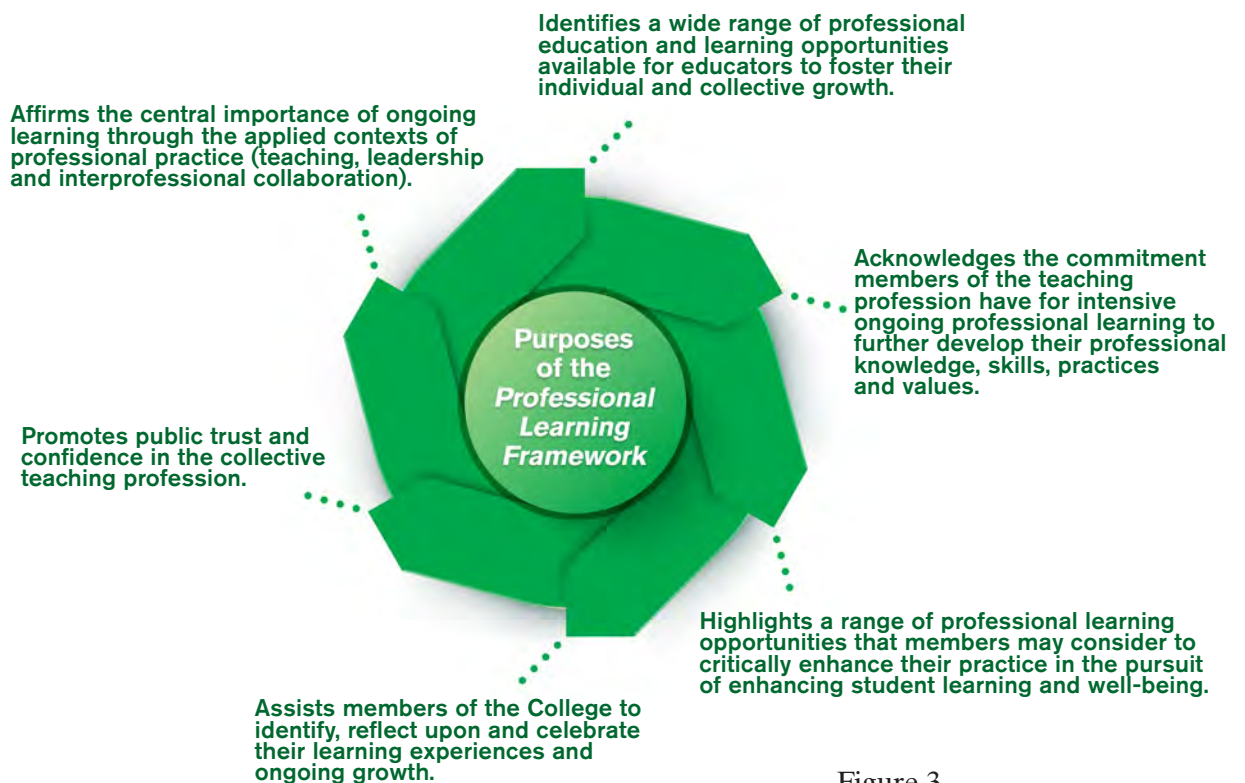


Figure 3

A commitment to ongoing learning is a central tenet of teacher professionalism. Educators’ professional knowledge and efficacy are fostered through engagement in professional learning and this is inextricably connected to student learning. Members of the Ontario teaching profession engage in multiple opportunities that increase their learning and further refine professional practice. The adoption of an ethical inquiry stance to professional learning and education helps to support democratic teaching and learning.

Guiding principles

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* supports a set of guiding principles (Figure 4) that help inform the continuous and diverse processes educators engage in to foster their ongoing learning. These principles include:

Guiding principles of the professional learning framework



Figure 4

Self-directed professional learning

Professional autonomy and self-directed professional learning puts trust in our professional judgment to decide what we need to learn or be developing. As professional educators, we are committed to ongoing professional learning throughout our careers and require the freedom to gain the experiences we need. This is how learning is best done.

—Member of the Teaching Profession

Autonomy in professional learning lies at the heart of teacher professionalism. Members of the College are intrinsically motivated to stay current in many ways through various pathways informed by professional needs, interests, passions and inspirations (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Ontario College of Teachers members engage in a wide variety of professional learning to improve their practice and enhance student learning. These diverse opportunities are an integral part of the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. Educators engage in many forms of self-directed professional learning as well as participating in learning opportunities offered by their employers, the Ministry of Education, Faculties of Education, the Ontario Teachers' Federation and its affiliates, principal organizations, supervisory officer organizations, subject associations, professional institutions and community organizations. College members' commitment to continued professional growth serves as the catalyst for innovative, creative and responsive professional practice.

Learning through practice

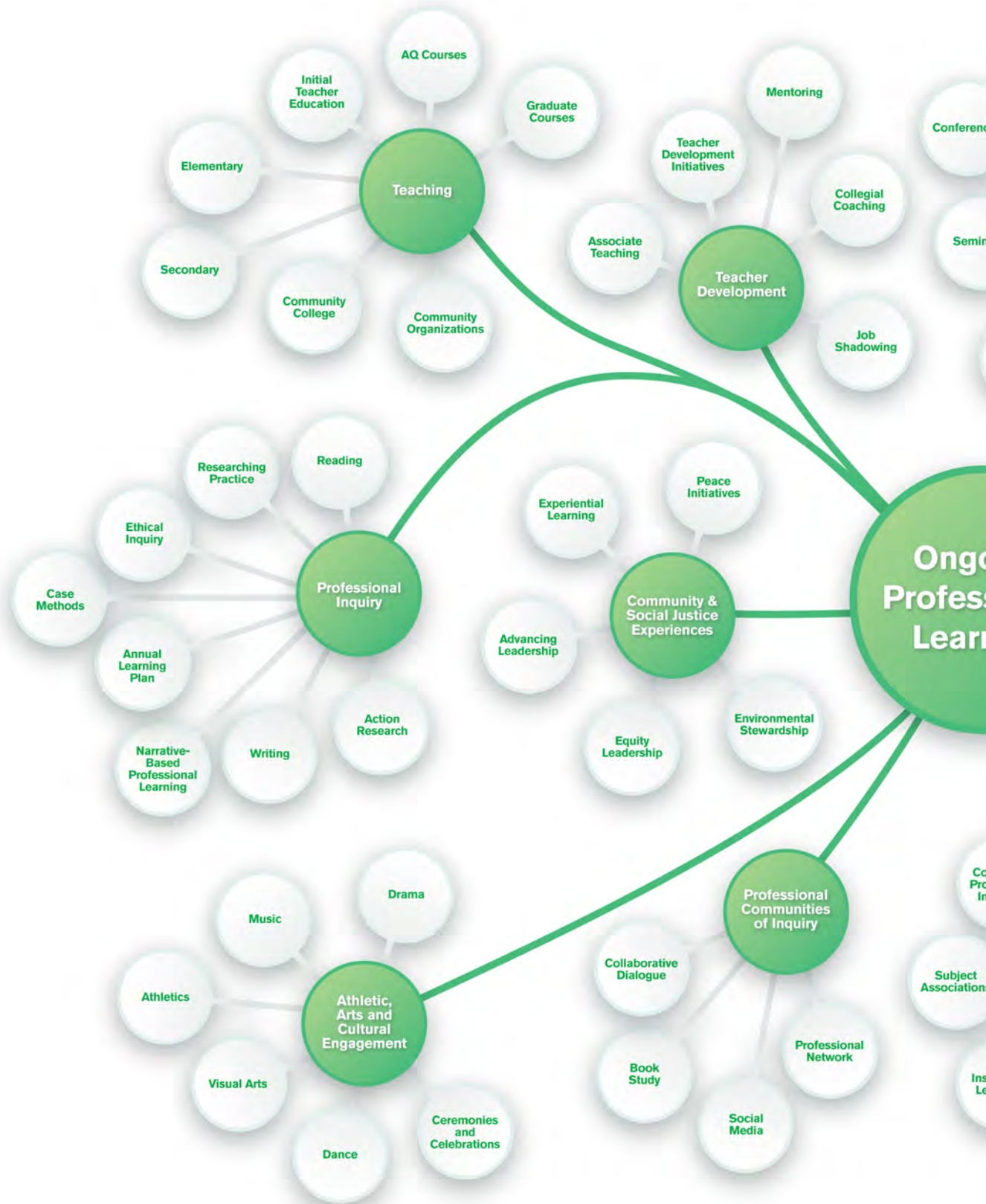
Listening to the students to know and understand what they truly need. They are the driving and guiding force behind my practice. Working with students — I learn what works and doesn't over time. Through trying certain techniques, adjusting them until I find what works.

—Member of the Teaching Profession

Members of the teaching profession have identified that the most significant and powerful professional learning that informs their practice is teaching alongside learners. Educators understand that their teaching and leadership experiences are key sources of learning within the context of their practice. Professional learning and efficacy are strengthened by critically reflecting on professional practice. Learning from professional practice can involve experiential, transformative, relational and reflective learning. Professional autonomy is essential for supporting and advancing educators' practices in response to the evolving nature of teaching and learning.

Conceptual framework for ongoing professional learning

A conceptual framework for ongoing professional learning has been designed based on the feedback received from members of the teaching profession regarding their sustained engagement in highly diverse and complex forms of professional learning. This conceptual framework (Figure 6) provides a lived theory of action for understanding the complex, holistic, interrelated, self-directed, contextual and evolving nature of relevant and meaningful ongoing professional learning. The lived theory of action of the various forms of professional learning engaged in by the teaching profession is depicted in Figure 6, and is by no means exhaustive.



Ongoing professional learning

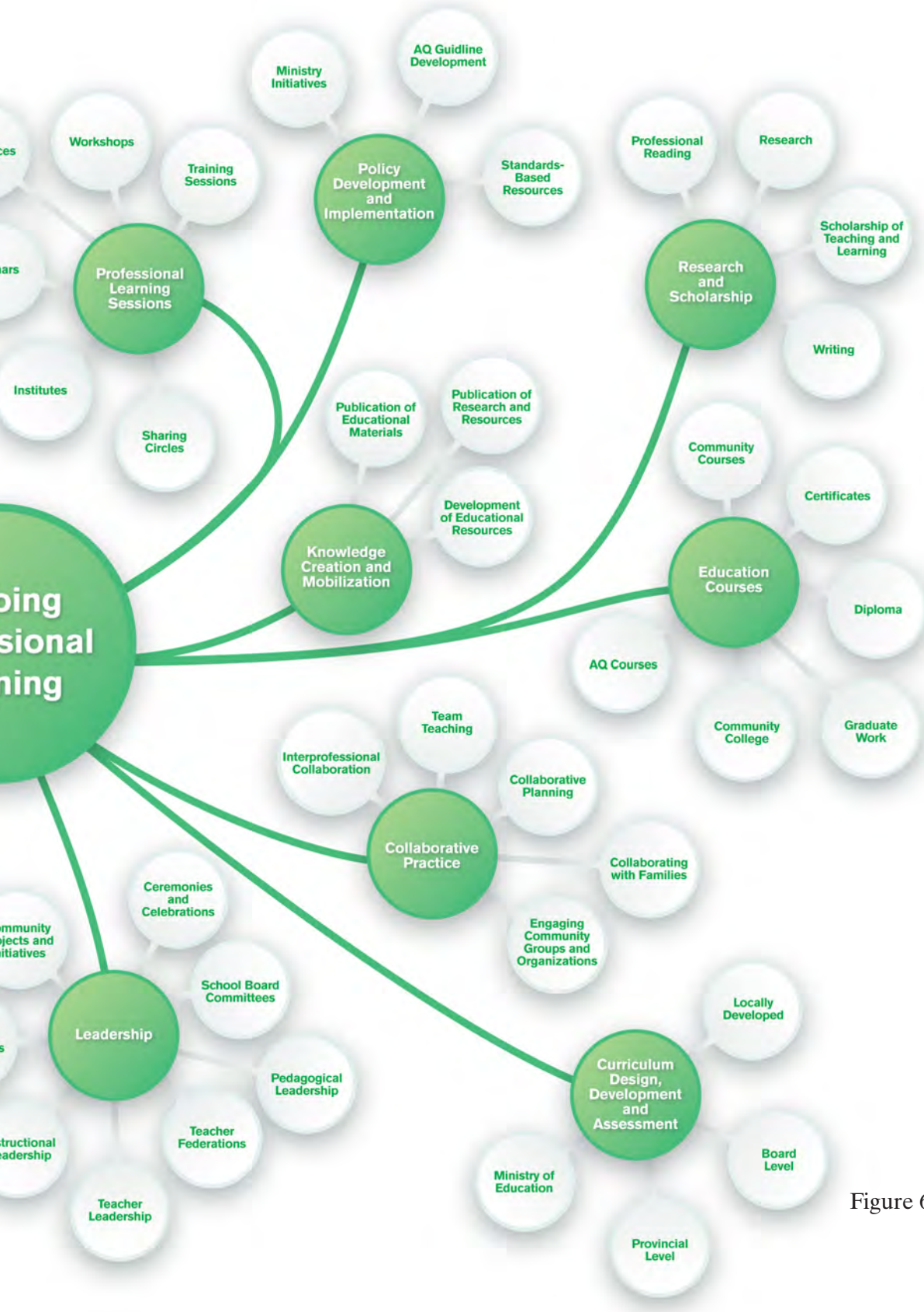


Figure 6

Conceptual framework for ongoing professional learning

PROFESSIONAL INQUIRY

As you consider your own professional learning journey, you may want to reflect on the following self-directed inquiries:

- How can you critically reflect on the vast and multifaceted nature of professional learning for the teaching profession?
- How does this conceptual framework connect to your diverse experiences engaged in ongoing professional learning?
- Discuss how this conceptual framework can be used to inform your own ongoing professional learning.
- How can this conceptual framework be enhanced to reflect the evolving nature of ongoing professional learning?
- How does this conceptual framework support your journey of professional learning through designing your own concept map?
- Collaboratively design a concept map to illustrate a school or board's engagement in ongoing professional learning to support school and/or board improvement plans.

Contexts that support ongoing professional learning

Professional learning takes place in a variety of diverse and wide-ranging contexts. These varying contexts, settings and forms help to foster the ongoing professional knowledge, skills, practices and values of educators. The self-directed learning that occurs in these various contexts is supportive and responsive to the continually evolving nature of teaching and learning in democratic communities.

The following professional learning matrix, *Contexts that Support Ongoing Professional Learning: A Professional Learning Matrix* (Figure 7), illustrates some of the contexts and processes that support educators' engagement in ongoing professional learning. This matrix (Figure 7) lists the top 15 professional learning contexts and learning processes identified by members of the teaching profession through provincial consultations. It can serve as a reflective tool to further inquire into and explore professional practice.

Contexts that support ongoing professional learning: a professional learning matrix

SCHOOL	COMMUNITY	SYSTEM	PROVINCIAL	HIGHER EDUCATION
Teaching	Community service	Board level workshops	Conferences	Additional Qualification (AQ) courses
Collaborative planning with colleagues	Workshops offered by other organizations	Professional activity days	Additional Qualification (AQ) courses	Master's course(s)
Professional activity days	Artistic performances	Conferences	Workshops offered by other organizations	Certificate courses
Team teaching	Cultural ceremonies	Curriculum in-service sessions	Presentations	Online learning modules
Mentoring	Social justice actions	Collaborative planning with colleagues	Summer institutes	Research and scholarship
Annual Learning Plan process	Leadership opportunities	Presentations	Leadership opportunities	Diploma courses
Performance appraisal process	Conferences	Leadership opportunities	Online learning modules	Professional inquiry
Leadership opportunities	Presentations	Facilitating professional learning sessions	Curriculum leadership	Reflective writing
Presentations	Athletic experiences	Teaching	Curriculum in-service sessions	Presentations
Professional excursions	Teaching	Curriculum leadership	Curriculum writing	Teaching
Peer coaching	Professional excursions	Mentoring	Certificate courses	Additional Qualification (AQ) instructor
Coaching	Member of a community of practice	Professional inquiry	Facilitating professional learning sessions	Conferences
Divisional meetings	Coaching	Summer institutes	Collaborative planning with colleagues	Action research
Curriculum in-service sessions	Collaborative planning with colleagues	Professional communities of inquiry	Teaching	Workshops by other organizations
Facilitating professional learning sessions	Retreats	Strategic planning	Professional inquiry	Leadership opportunities

Figure 7

Contexts that support ongoing professional learning

PROFESSIONAL INQUIRY

As you consider your own professional learning journey, you may want to reflect on the following self-directed inquiries:

- Critically reflect on the diverse and varied contexts that have fostered your ongoing professional learning.
- Identify additional contexts, settings or forums that could nurture your ongoing professional learning.
- Explore how your professional learning is supported through each of the contexts identified in the matrix (for example, classrooms, schools, school board, provincial, community).
- Generate professional learning goals for supporting your ongoing growth and development.

Additional Qualification courses

Additional Qualifications ... extend teachers' knowledge, skills, collaborative abilities, professional learning, and support student learning and enable educators/practitioners to stay informed of the ever evolving nature of our practice.

—Member of the Teaching Profession

An Additional Qualification (AQ) is a program of study designed to inform and enhance professional practice, and taken in addition to initial teacher education in an area of study based on theory, research, pedagogy, the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the application of theory to practice. AQ courses are another form of self-directed professional learning designed to reflect the rich diversity and complexity of Ontario's educational system. They support professional practice by inviting educators to engage in reflection, critical inquiry, research, as well as pedagogical and curriculum leadership to foster positive, safe and accepting school cultures. AQ courses also support ongoing professional learning in various areas of teaching, and enable educators to gain qualifications associated with various leadership roles such as Principal qualifications and Supervisory Officer qualifications. Regulation 176/10, *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*, made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, identifies over 370 qualifications available for Ontario educators in both English and French (oct.ca/members/additional-qualifications/schedules-and-guidelines). (See Figure 8)

AQ courses are accredited by the College and offered by approved providers. Successful completion of an AQ course is recorded on a teacher's Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

Professional education courses accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers



Figure 8

Advanced degrees

The pursuit of advanced degrees provides educators with rich professional education and learning opportunities. These educational experiences enable educators to further refine and deepen their professional knowledge, skills, practices and perspectives.

Communicating with the public

Highly knowledgeable, ethical, insightful and skilled educators committed to fostering the growth of all learners support public trust and confidence in the teaching profession. Educators' ongoing commitment to and engagement in multiple forms of ongoing professional learning serves the public interest.

The teaching profession's deep commitment to engage in rich ongoing professional learning is communicated to the public through multiple transparent communication mechanisms. This is a shared responsibility and a direct object of the College's mandate (Figure 9).



Figure 9



References

Ontario College of Teachers. (2006). *The ethical standards for the teaching profession*. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2006). *The standards of practice for the teaching profession*. Toronto, ON: Author.

RRO 176/10. *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation of the Ontario College of Teachers Act*

Foundational Concepts for Professional Learning

Self-Directedness

Collaboration



**Professional
Autonomy**

Critical Inquiry

**Transformation
of Practice**



Ontario
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Setting the Standard
for Great Teaching

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre de
Cadre de formation de la profession enseignante.

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