

InterLEAD Connector™

Strengthening learner focused evaluation processes and supporting teachers to knowledge build for improvement and innovation within learning environments

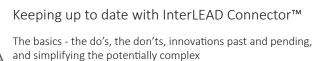


InterLEAD Connector™ areas for strengthening teacher's capability to evaluate impact of teaching on learners

- 1. Keeping up to date with InterLEAD Connector™
- 2. Performance feedback
- 3. Sustaining a professional inquiry
- 4. Performance conversations
- 5. To support government policy, achieve ministry targets and to meet organisational priorities
- 6. Dovetailing InterLEAD Connector™ with Inquiry Models™
- 7. Using InterLEAD Connector™ to connect communities of learning



Using the InterLEAD Connector™ route to develop organisational conditions that support internal evaluation and inquiry



Performance feedback

Feedback for effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation in learning environments

Sustaining a professional inquiry

Using Appraisal Connector™ to ensure inquiries get off the ground, do not peter out or end with a whimper.

Performance conversations

Balancing 'deferring judgement' conversations with 'making judgement' conversations to strengthen learner focused evaluation processes and build knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments

Dovetailing InterLEAD Connector™ with Inquiry Models™

Noticing, investigating, tracking, monitoring and evaluating impact of professional inquiries on the learner

To support government policy, achieve ministry targets and meet organisational priorities

Using InterLEAD Connector™ to connect communities of learning

Effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for COL improvement and innovation

Destination

Developing the organisational conditions to support internal evaluation and inquiry by ensuring teachers:

- undertake effective learner focused evaluations and knowledge building for improvement and innovation;
- Strengthen evidence based critical thinking;
- demonstrate ongoing development of adaptive expertise;
- contribute to the strengthening of a culture of critique and constructive criticism by giving and receiving honest developmental and evaluative feedback;
- commit to engaging in honest performance conversations.

Keeping up to date with InterLEAD Connector™

The basics - the do's, the don'ts, innovations past and pending, and simplifying the potentially complex

When we developed InterLEAD Connector™ our vision was to provide teachers with an appraisal system they would feel as though they would have designed themselves.

We're getting close to achieving this with teachers continuously contributing great ideas to a pipeline of development that continues. But there's a downside to continual improvement. The system may seem to be becoming more complex, more sophisticated. Whilst we e-mail notification modifications and run free workshops not every one is aware of how some modifications work, what they might be, where to find them, why they have been made or how to get the most from them. Neither do these solutions ensure a consistency of knowledge, usage or practice across your organisation.

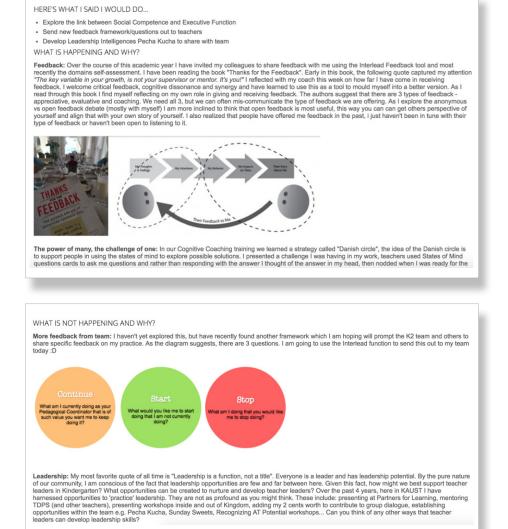
And looking ahead, why are we about to add some 90 new Student Voice items? And which ones should teachers use? Why are we about to add another four domains to the existing four (Behaviour Management, Curriculum Knowledge, Instructional Practices and Formative Assessment) on teaching practice for teachers to reflect on and to consider creating professional inquiries? What's driving this and which of the eight domains should teachers focus on knowing they can't focus on all of them without drowning in evaluation? How can teachers effectively use the domains and other improvements to strengthen their learner focused evaluative capability?

One of the most common reasons offered by teachers using InterLEAD Connector™ for shying away from the system is they don't really know how to use it well to drive their own learning and to accelerate their rate of development. They're using it instead to store things on, write recounts and tag to the Practising Teacher Criteria/Professional Standards - which they can do simply using paper based folders or other digital tools designed for storage and communication. Driving learning and improvement are different matters.

Keeping up to date with innovations and improvements and how InterLEAD Connector™ is keeping pace with legislative requirements around Teacher Certification is the best way to ensure:

- Teachers can drive their own learning;
- Teachers can put themselves on a fast-track developmental pathway;
- Learners benefit explicitly from teachers using the system to effectively engage in learner focused evaluation processes and knowledge building for improvement and innovation within learning environments; and
- Teachers meet certification requirements.

An important piece of the jig-saw puzzle in supporting teachers to effectively evaluate the impact of their teaching practice on learners' outcomes and to build knowledge for improvement and innovation is to move from diarising/recounting and constructing 'scrap books' to developing the ability to move to professional journaling. What are the steps to achieving this? Which functions on InterLEAD Connector™ best support teachers to make the shift? What messages should leaders be giving?



Recent innovations include:

- Teachers can create External Reports for Principals, Managers, ERO and the Education Council.
- Individualising Student Voice Data and Creating Target Groups. School examples of where we have supported teachers to do this include priority and target students, hard to reach students, low ability writers, readers, mathematicians, second language students, Māori and Pasifika students and boys (in particular around writing).
- Customising Student Voice Questions to support an inquiry.
- Stepping stone boxes to simplify creating an inquiry question.
- Simple stepping stone boxes to create SMART and GROW Goals.
- Setting dates to receive automated reminder e-mail notifications to follow up on aspects of an inquiry.
- The ability to consolidate Student Voice and teaching practice reports.
- Introduction of the Education Council's Professional Standards
 - ...and more teacher suggested improvements are on the way.

Performance feedback



Feedback for effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation in learning environments

'Halo' feedback, positive feedback, praise and affirmation are examples of appreciative feedback.

When the purpose of feedback is to motivate and communicate to someone their value, worth and positive qualities and traits, appreciative feedback is the answer.

But those times when the purpose of feedback is teacher knowledge building for improvement and innovation and effective evaluation of teaching practice, receiving appreciative feedback is an obstacle. Receiving appreciative feedback at these moments triggers complacency, inertia and apathy rather than a compelling reason to move to action and into inquiry. Teachers come to hear how good they are rather than identifying potential areas for growth. We are finding teachers often seem reluctant to engage in professional inquiry and self-improvement because those providing them with feedback have become accustomed to providing a diet of appreciative feedback – that's learners, leaders and colleagues.

When teachers are focusing on their performance and the performance of colleagues and engaging in effective evaluation and professional inquiry - the critical work of self-improvement - receiving evaluative and developmental feedback unlocks the inquiry process.

So how are educators throughout New Zealand doing? Taking 'snap shots' over the last five years of the types of feedback 10,800 users have been providing and receiving via InterLEAD Connector™ appreciative feedback is the norm. It dominates all forms of feedback by a very long way – that's appreciative feedback from colleagues, leaders and learners. Worryingly, this is within teachers' reviews of teaching practice and within professional inquiries.

It means people are not using InterLEAD Connector[™] as a tool to sharpen edges. People are doing the opposite and using InterLEAD Connector[™] to reinforce how well teachers are doing and how little they need to improve. In most organisations, rather than creating an edge and driving performance improvement teachers and leaders are using InterLEAD Connector[™] to inadvertently blunt teachers' edges.

A crucial step to engaging teachers in highly effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation in learning environments is being able to provide and be the recipient of honest evaluative and developmental feedback from learners and peers. InterLEAD Connector™ simplifies this. But how do teachers do this? How do learners do this? What are the steps and protocols in the process? What are the norms leaders have to create? How can we be nice to one another yet simultaneously challenge each other to be better? InterLEAD Connector™ overcomes this dilemma easily, simply and painlessly.

Sustaining a professional inquiry

3.

Using InterLEAD Connector™ to ensure inquiries get off the ground, do not peter out or end with a whimper.

Without doubt one of the greatest and most regularly talked about challenges we hear of is the difficulty teachers have of maintaining intensity and focus throughout their inquiry.

One of our consultants working with a school leadership team recently asked a participant innocently what their inquiry was. The teacher sheepishly acknowledged they couldn't remember and logged onto InterLEAD Connector™ to find out. What are the causes of this? Why do inquiries fail to get off the ground, peter out or end with a whimper?

We are learning there are multiple reasons – here are three of many and they may not be what you're thinking:

Inquiring in the Wrong Area: The Problem with Hunches

This was succinctly explained to us by a group of seven teachers from different schools. Each had begun their inquiries with hunches. When each of their hunches proved incorrect two gave up surmising what little time they had, on top of their day jobs, to invest in their inquiry seemed wasted. The other five carried on with second hunches but after they also proved to be blind alleys they all gave up. As one teacher shared, it was now five months into the year and they felt they had achieved nothing. This was the point when all teachers had become discouraged and decided their time was better spent elsewhere. Having a hunch is nice in principle but the reality for teachers is how the day job consumes everything else. On the ground, time is the most precious commodity and squandering it is something teachers are not prepared to do.

How can teachers use InterLEAD Connector™ to move from hunch to a crunch – to pin-pointing with insight and precision a high impact inquiry which they can justify attending to with evidence? How can time frazzled teachers use InterLEAD Connector™ to take the guesswork out of the process?

Confusing Goals with Inquiries

When a teacher announces they've finished their inquiry, and it's taken them 15 weeks to do so, an alarm bell should be ringing. Consider the following examples of sophisticated and meaningful inquiries teachers have crafted through effective use of InterLEAD Connector™:

- How can I promote students' valuing of learning over grades and marks by providing open-ended opportunities to explore?
- How can I ensure I use the right learning vehicles to ensure my hard to reach students' learning does not slow down, lose momentum or come to a standstill?
- How can I best gradually release responsibility to promote independence in thinking and Growth Mind Set?
- How can I best put into practice 'new learning' in an 'old container'?

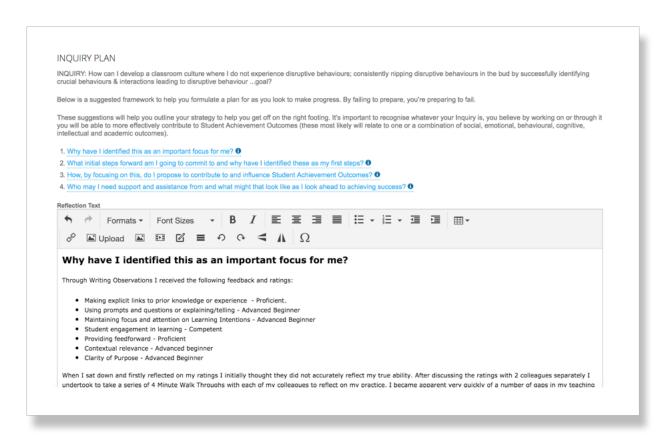


Teachers we share these examples with agree they are worthy and could potentially be circuit-breakers for improving student outcomes. They also agree it's highly unlikely a teacher would finish them within a term or quite possibly half a year. These are journeys, not 'fix its'.

When teachers set an inquiry which should be a goal it doesn't take the teacher anywhere. The inquiry peters out and ends with a whimper. This error has a significant impact on the quality of teachers' critical thinking, the quality of their reflective journals (and other evidences), and on learning conversations. How can teachers use InterLEAD Connector™ to sift goals from inquiries and safeguard against this threat? It undermines teachers' efforts to effectively evaluate and build knowledge for learning environment improvement and innovation.

Absence of an Inquiry Plan

In the absence of a plan of attack many inquiries don't get off the ground – they are quickly forgotten after a few weeks or a month or two once the daily distractions of teaching start to bite. How can teachers use InterLEAD Connector™ to develop an Inquiry Plan? There is an Inquiry Plan on the system but how can teachers use platforms on InterLEAD Connector™ to provide high quality information at each step?



Performance conversations

4.

Balancing 'deferring judgement' conversations with 'making judgement' conversations to strengthen learner focused evaluation processes and build knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments

A myriad of conversation types have been promoted in schools and centres — difficult conversations, crucial conversations, critical conversations, learning conversations and courageous conversations are prominent examples.

All fall into a single category of conversation - learning by deferring judgement. Deferring judgement conversations are crucial when stakes are high and emotions are bubbling away. Think about a thorny issue with a parent and you have the perfect context for a learning conversation.

Performance conversations are different. The purpose of a performance conversation is to make judgements and often many. The purpose is to communicate standards, measures and levels of competency explicitly irrespective of the receiver liking what you're saying or not. You have to say it. There's no room for negotiation, bargaining or reaching a settlement. If you get caught in this trap you're not doing the learners in that teacher's classroom any favours.

Performance Conversations	Learning Conversations			
Learning through judgement	Learning by deferring judgement			
Taking a stance	Not taking a stance			
Communicating evaluations and judgements	With holding evaluations and judgements			
Objectively evaluating impact of practice	Negotiating, bargaining and reaching agreement			
Standards, measures and competence	Feelings and emotions orientated			
Objectively creating dissonance	Using techniques to create more comfort			
Accountability orientated	Relationship orientated			
Triggering performance	Creating a pool of shared meaning			
Doing things better	Overcoming and reconciling differences			
Challenging thinking and practice	Seeking resolution			



	hips				
- 28 appraisals					
13 Acknowledges and pays attention to what students think	^{(,} 3		3	15	10
		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time
${\bf 14} \text{Is interested in students and their learning.}$	5		4	12	12
		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time
15 Believes students can succeed.	2		3	12	13
		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time
16 Cares about students.			2	14	12
		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time
17 Knows what students can and can't do in their learning.	15		8	14	6
		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time
18 Encourages students to think about their long term			3	18	7
futures.		No - hardly ever	Sometimes	A lot of the time	Yes - all the time

We are finding one of the biggest challenges in New Zealand schools and centres is the use of the wrong conversation in the wrong context; the application of a learning conversation for example when a performance conversation is required. The effectiveness of learner focused evaluation conversations based on negotiation, bargaining, reaching settlement and resolution is undermining many leaders' ability to influence performance levels of teachers.

Performance conversations provide the much-needed balance missing in many schools. Performance conversations lie at the centre of effective learner focused evaluation processes and building knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments for teachers across the performance spectrum – low, solid, high and super performers - because performance conversations focus on:

- Doing things better more quickly;
- Motivating, triggering and creating compelling reasons for performance improvement;
- Turbo charging performance and workplaces in general;
- Accelerating personal and professional development;
- Drawing explicit 'lines in the sand' around performance improvement;
- Accountability
- Explicit communication

InterLEAD Connector™ is a valuable tool supporting teachers and leaders to have the right conversation at the right time. What is a performance conversation and how can teachers and leaders use InterLEAD Connector™ to have them? When is it time to have 'deferring judgement' conversations and when should we have 'making judgement' conversations? Qualitative and quantitative data are crucial to effective evaluation and knowledge building processes but how can teachers access both and make sure the quality is high so that conversations have efficacy and have impact? Get the best from InterLEAD Connector™ to significantly strengthen learner focused evaluation processes and to build knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments through effective conversation.

To support government policy, achieve ministry targets and to meet organisational priorities

The language of government policy and ministry targets continuously changes ... target learners, priority learners, spiral of inquiry, internal and external evaluation, accelerating learner achievement, culturally responsive teaching, modern learning spaces, data literacy, adaptive expertise, raising boys' achievement, professional capability, collective capacity, enabling excellence and equity, and cooperative learning are current educational parlance.

InterLEAD Connector™ allows leaders and teachers to align thinking and practice with government policy and to work towards achieving ministry targets.

School examples include:

Target/Priority Students and Groups

Teachers can use InterLEAD Connector™ creatively to support inquiries focusing on target and priority students, hard to reach students, low achieving mathematicians, or readers or writers, and Māori and Pasifika. Teachers should be using the functions on InterLEAD Connector™ to critically evaluate the impact of specific teaching practices on individual students or target groups or both. It means teachers can go beyond tracking, monitoring and evaluating their own development and growth and impact on students without relying solely on the blunt measuring tool of achievement data. Teachers can prove with evidence – and confidence - they have grown and developed their capacity as teachers even in those cases when it may not be strongly reflected in achievement data.

Example: Tracking the impact of teaching practice on a target student as part of a boys writing inquiry

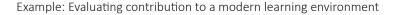


Preparing for ERO

Prior to an ERO visit there are specific things teachers and leaders can do on InterLEAD Connector™ that will provide peace of mind for teachers, the Board and senior leaders. What are those functions we could be using more effectively to ensure we are best prepared for an external evaluation on appraisal?

Modern Learning Environments

Teachers shifting thinking and mind sets away from cooperating within teams to collaboration is the key to unlocking the potential of these new environments for learners. How can InterLEAD Connector™ be used to effectively review team dynamics and effectiveness of teachers learning together in a modern learning environment? How can you create a feedback loop focusing on team performance as part of a teacher's appraisal process? Effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation in a shared learning space is a different proposition than that in single cell classrooms.





Accelerating Learner Achievement and Adaptive Expertise

Accelerating learner achievement requires teachers to change more so than the learner. It's what the Ministry of Education refer to as adaptive expertise. How do teachers identify which aspects of their teaching practice they need to adapt to accommodate their learners the most? How can learners put into words those things they believe teachers need to adapt to help them most? How can teachers move away from starting with a hunch to getting to the crunch? And how much of that change comes down to the need for a teacher to be more culturally responsive? Through effective use of InterLEAD Connector™ teachers, learners and leaders can support and challenge each other to build knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments.





Dovetailing InterLEAD Connector™ with Inquiry Models™

Noticing, investigating, tracking, monitoring and evaluating impact of professional inquiries on the learner

InterLEAD Connector™ is a proven platform through which teachers can bore into a professional inquiry that has an impact. Going beyond undertaking inquiry, because one has to, to undertaking an inquiry that has an impact for learners has been the catalyst for the majority of teacher inspired modifications over the last four years.

Whilst it's crucial teachers know the sequence of steps to getting this right it's just as crucial teachers know what to do within each step within that sequence. Doing so supports alignment of thinking and practice with recognised inquiry frameworks you may be using.

How can you best support teachers to use InterLEAD Connector™ in ways that align with inquiry models? How can teachers best set up a meaningful inquiry and track, monitor and evaluate impact on the learner both on-going and at the conclusion of an inquiry? How can you use InterLEAD Connector™ to support and challenge teachers to prove their inquiry has or has not had an impact from the learners' perspectives? How can teachers use InterLEAD Connector™ to prove they are strengthening their capacity over time to engage in effective learner focused evaluation processes and building knowledge for improvement and innovation in learning environments?





Using InterLEAD Connector™ to connect communities of learning

Effective evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for COL improvement and innovation

Imagine your COL consists of 329 teachers spread across 11 schools – one large secondary school, two intermediate schools and eight primary schools.

Because all 11 schools are utilising InterLEAD Connector™ you can accelerate evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation across all 11 schools.

Imagine each school requires all 329 teachers to complete a self-evaluation of all teaching practices by an agreed upon date. Each teacher must self-review their teaching practices by providing evaluative, developmental and appreciative feedback on themselves. Imagine what you could do with that data – you can identify across your COL:

- The 16 teachers who can not anticipate and minimise disruptive behaviour;
- The 12 teachers whose interactions between students in the classroom are based on compliance rather than 'care' and 'rapport';
- The 22 teachers whose provision of learning is not complementing the culture and backgrounds of individual students;
- The 43 teachers whose lessons are not demanding and subsequently students in those classes are not cognitively or intellectually engaged.
- The 32 teachers who are struggling to provide culturally responsive lessons ... and so forth.

Simultaneously, you've also worked out the 'fix' – the teachers whose expertise you can call upon with your COL to both support and challenge to achieve performance improvements. You can identify:

- The 19 teachers who are masterful at anticipating and minimising disruptive behaviour;
- The 39 teachers who are masterful at crafting interactions between students based on 'care' and 'rapport';
- The 17 teachers who are masterful at providing learning which is complemented by the culture and backgrounds of individual students;
- The 26 teachers who are masterful at creating lessons which are demanding and whose students are cognitively and intellectually engaged; and
- The 13 teachers who are masterful at providing culturally responsive lessons.

If you're part of a COL and you're seeking to tap into the expertise of teachers going beyond curriculum to growing teaching capacity in Behaviour Management, Curriculum Knowledge, Instructional Practice, Formative Assessment, Cultural Responsiveness, Adaptive Expertise, Collaborative Teaching and much more, InterLEAD Connector™ will accelerate collaboration in these critical areas and provide you with the ability to strengthen quickly learner focused evaluation processes and build classroom knowledge for improvement and innovation across your community of schools.



Questions - please contact us

Learn more at www.interlead.co.nz, email connector@interlead.co.nz or contact one of our team. We will be happy to provide you with more information.

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