touchstones

SETTING DIRECTION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

"Nationally and internationally there is unequivocal evidence that the quality of teaching is the most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes. There is also strong evidence that better appraisal, coaching and feedback leading to targeted development can improve teacher performance."

AUSTRALIAN TEACHER PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, AUGUST 2012

BENEFITS

For Teachers

▶ Guides teachers along a path of reflection, dialogue and inquiry into their own practice.

▶ Uses multiple feedback modes to assist them to better understand their own learning needs.

▶ Encourages openness and collaboration as they engage with, and contribute to, each other's learning.

For Senior Leaders

▶ Manages the paperwork!

▶ Gathers, collates and presents data which adds richness to coaching conversations.

▶ Improves the tracking of staff professional learning.

For Principals

▶ Helps align individual goals for professional learning with the Australian standards and the school's priorities.

▶ Builds learning momentum by fostering a culture of individual accountability and success.

▶ Generates reports on whole school data to inform strategic planning.

WHAT IS TOUCHSTONES?

Designed to provide direction for professional learning, Touchstones embeds a proven process of evaluation and goal setting into a unique and easy to use online environment.

Using a simple five step process the software guides staff as they gather and review feedback, set goals and reflect on their progress and achievement. The supportive coaching methodology encourages collaboration and interaction with peers.

Schools select their own measures of best practice and these act as reference points along the path of reflection and action. They are the focus for learning and growth, guiding self evaluation and goal setting and helping to align individual effort with strategic intent.

www.mytouchstones.com

THE TOUCHSTONES WORKFLOW

Touchstones guides participants through a simple 5-stage process to review & evaluate their practice and set goals for development.

The process:

▶ Actively engages teachers in identifying their needs and planning their own professional learning.

▶ Uses a coaching model to support staff as they work to improve their teaching and leadership practice.

▶ Fosters the growth of a learning community encouraging open communication & sharing as staff collaborate and provide feedback for each other.

FOR PRINCIPALS:

STEVE
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL *(responsible for performance development)*

Steve wants his staff to be involved in a process that generates quality feedback in relation to both organisational goals and professional practice. He needs to be able to delegate delivery to team leaders and be confident that tangible goals will be set, monitored and achieved. He also wants to target his PD budget based on evidence, and be able to measure the impact over time.

1 SELECT TOUCHSTONES

Steve's first task is to select the 'Touchstones' to be used in this cycle. These identify the professional knowledge and capabilities which define quality practice for the staff members involved. A range of data collection options from self-reflection to the collation of 360° feedback are attached to each Touchstone. Student Survey and Lesson Observation options are also available for teaching staff.

2 ASSIGN ROLES

The next step is to allocate staff members to their respective coaches and to set the overall timeline for collecting data before launching the cycle. This will notify everyone involved and open up access to the first stage to both coaches and their assigned staff. From here the process will be driven by the assigned coaches until Steve decides to close the cycle.

3 MONITOR & REVIEW

At any time Steve can view overall progress across his team and drill into current and historical data for individuals. Consolidated reports are also available to identify strengths and areas of focus. Throughout the process, notifications let him know when goals have been set and achieved so that he knows that progress is being made.

1 INITIAL SETUP

Karen receives a notification that Brian has been assigned as her coach. When she signs in she can see that she needs to meet with Brian, and that Brian has some tasks to complete to get things underway. Karen and Brian then meet to discuss the selected Touchstones and how they will guide the collection of data during the Gather stage.

I'll review the AITSL documentation attached to my Compass dashboard.

I might also check out what I achieved last year.

KAREN TEACHER

We're focusing on AITSL Standard 7, Professional Engagement.

How well do you understand the four focus areas?

BRIAN COACH

2 GATHER FEEDBACK

Brian will now monitor progress as information is gathered. Depending upon the Touchstones that Steve has selected this may be a combination of: Karen completing reflective questionnaires; other members of staff providing 360° feedback; lesson observations or a survey of student feedback from one of Karen's classes.

Does my teacher encourage me to succeed?

Do I enjoy being in this class?

NATHAN STUDENT

What are my strengths?

What key initiatives have I contributed to?

KAREN TEACHER

How does Karen contribute to our school culture?

BRIAN COACH

3 REVIEW DATA

With the feedback collated and presented Karen and Brian can now discuss her strengths and areas for future development. The aggregation of data helps guide the conversation and direct it towards the areas that Steve wanted to focus on when he selected the Touchstones for this cycle.

What do my students think?

How do my colleagues see me?

How well am I teaching?

KAREN TEACHER

How do you feel about this feedback?

The students really enjoy your class.

BRIAN COACH

4 SET GOALS

Karen is now tasked with framing her focus areas into defined goals and timebound actions. Once again Touchstones guides this process until Brian confirms her goals, which are then published as a development plan. Steve is notified so that he is aware of her action plan and can assist with resources and support as necessary.

What assistance do I need?

Where should I focus?

Realistically how much time will I need?

KAREN TEACHER

You could apply for some additional release time.

Developing that new science topic will assist everyone.

BRIAN COACH

5 REFLECT

Karen now has a forum for reflecting on progress, adding annotated evidence, and checking off action points. Brian is kept in the loop and can add comments to support her efforts before confirming goals as completed. Steve is notified of each completion, enabling him to share in the success and monitor the progress of his staff.

Does my plan need to change?

Am I on track?

KAREN TEACHER

What evidence are you thinking of using?

This video of Year 9 in the lab really captures their level of engagement.

BRIAN COACH

TOUCHSTONES:

- ✓ Manages the paperwork.
- ✓ Gathers, collates and presents data – informing reflection and adding richness to coaching conversations.
- ✓ Brings focus to goal setting.
- ✓ Tracks interaction between coach and coachee.
- ✓ Provides a central place for staff to upload and reflect upon their learning and practice.
- ✓ Stores and tags evidence of progress & achievement.
- ✓ Generates reports on whole school data and enables trend analysis over time.

- ✓ Provides a structured approach to teacher development.
- ✓ Enables individual PL goals to be aligned with school priorities.
- ✓ Promotes collaboration as teachers share evidence of their learning and practice with each other.
- ✓ Reflects contemporary research into professional learning and teacher effectiveness.
- ✓ Encourages a reflective practice pedagogy.
- ✓ Supports customisation.
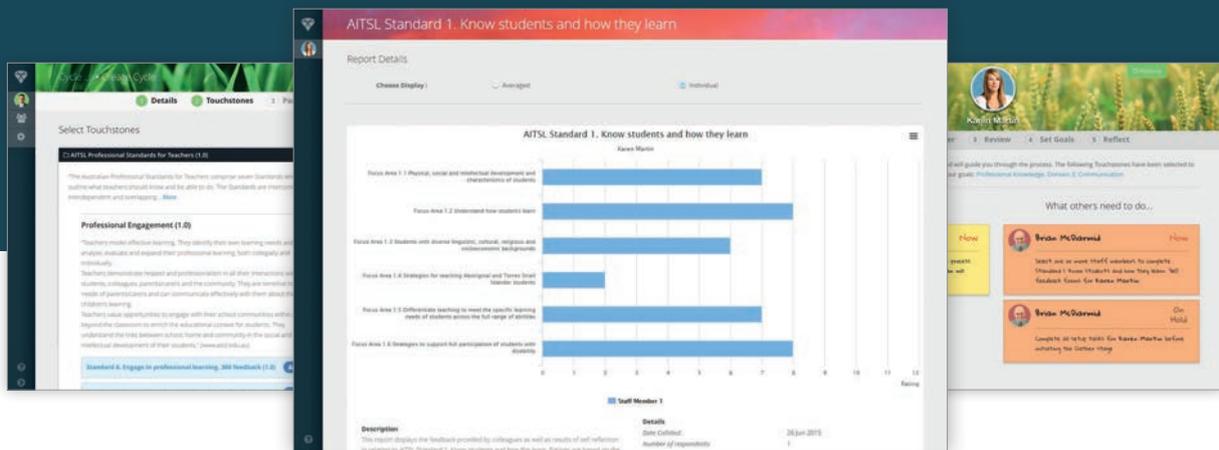
BETTER OUTCOMES FOR MORE LEARNERS

"Touchstones has been developed to equip and empower teachers to grow and develop their own potential, by giving them an understanding of what it is they need to do and their capacity to do it. Every school in Australia needs to engage their staff in the professional growth process in order to achieve better outcomes for more learners."

DR PHILIP SA CUMMINS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CIRCLE

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CIRCLE – The Centre for Innovation, Research, Creativity and Leadership in Education