

RICERCA - FORMAZIONE

# RESPOND

Sustaining the professional development of teachers within schools as professional learning environments

Edited by  
Davide Capperucci and  
Martin Dodman

R-F

**FrancoAngeli** 

# R-F

## Ricerca-Formazione

collana diretta da  
Davide Capperucci, Roberta Cardarello, Bruno Losito, Ira Vannini

La Collana accoglie studi teorici ed empirico-sperimentali che indagano il rapporto tra ricerca e formazione degli insegnanti; essa nasce dalla comune volontà di un gruppo di studiosi e ricercatori di diverse università italiane interessati a questa tematica e con specifiche competenze di ricerca in ambito educativo.

I continui cambiamenti che attraversano il mondo della scuola e che coinvolgono direttamente coloro che operano al suo interno in qualità di insegnanti, dirigenti, educatori, necessitano di professionalità altamente specializzate e allo stesso tempo flessibili, in grado di interpretare le trasformazioni in atto e di gestire la complessità che oggi è presente nei contesti scolastici. Per questo è importante promuovere un rapporto sempre più stretto e sinergico tra la ricerca accademica e la scuola, affinché questa relazione possa essere letta in modo biunivoco e paritario.

La formazione iniziale e in servizio del personale scolastico, e degli insegnanti in particolare, rappresenta una leva decisiva per il miglioramento della qualità dell'offerta formativa, l'innalzamento dei risultati di apprendimento degli alunni e il funzionamento delle istituzioni scolastiche, in un'ottica di equità e di democrazia del sistema di istruzione. La ricerca educativa, con i suoi molteplici approcci teorici e metodologici, deve poter offrire nuovi ambiti di riflessione e strumenti d'intervento per formare competenze e sostenere lo sviluppo professionale degli insegnanti. La possibilità di progettare, realizzare e monitorare interventi e strategie efficaci, sul fronte sia della ricerca sia dell'educazione e dell'istruzione, nasce dalla capacità di far interagire competenze diverse e attivare processi didattici e organizzativi rispondenti ai bisogni di bambini, giovani e adulti. In tale prospettiva, si può parlare di metodologie orientate alla ricerca-formazione, da considerare soprattutto come una scelta metodologica per fare ricerca con gli insegnanti e per il loro sviluppo professionale e il miglioramento della scuola. Una scelta che caratterizza, accompagna e sostanzia (nelle sue finalità e procedure applicative) le specificità e il rigore dei vari approcci metodologici della ricerca empirica, nelle loro declinazioni di volta in volta quantitative, sperimentali, fenomenologiche e qualitative.

La ricerca-formazione pertanto, oltre a rappresentare un settore di studio interdisciplinare, che comprende molteplici apporti teorici ed epistemologici, viene considerata, all'interno della presente collana, soprattutto come un modo di fare ricerca insieme ai professionisti dell'insegnamento, inaugurando nuovi campi d'azione verso cui convogliare risorse e interessi comuni. In questo senso, la collana valorizzerà contributi capaci di evidenziare la contiguità tra insegnamento e ricerca, prestando particolare attenzione alle modalità di coinvolgimento degli insegnanti, al rigore procedurale, alla ricaduta formativa dei risultati raggiunti.

In particolare, gli aspetti presentati di seguito delineano l'idea di Ricerca-Formazione cui la collana si ispira; essi possono pertanto costituire un orientamento per gli autori.

Una Ricerca-Formazione, per essere tale, richiede:

1. una esplicitazione chiara della finalità della ricerca in termini di crescita e sviluppo della professionalità degli insegnanti direttamente coinvolti e un'attenzione a documentare e analizzare le ricadute in termini di cambiamento;
2. la creazione di un gruppo di R-F di cui facciano parte ricercatore/i e insegnanti, nel quale vengano chiariti i diversi ruoli dei partecipanti e in cui vengano negoziati e chiariti obiettivi e oggetti, scelte valoriali e metodologiche della R-F;

3. la centratura sulle specificità dei contesti - istituzionali e non - in cui si svolge la R-F, che si concretizza in tutte le fasi della ricerca attraverso un'analisi dei vincoli e delle risorse in essi presenti;
4. un confronto continuo e sistematico fra i partecipanti alla ricerca sulla documentazione dei risultati e dei processi messi in atto nei contesti scolastici e in quelli della formazione;
5. l'attenzione alla effettiva ricaduta degli esiti nella scuola, sia per l'innovazione educativa e didattica, sia per la formazione degli insegnanti.

La collana intende accogliere contributi di studiosi italiani e di altri paesi, sotto forma di monografie, volumi collettanei, rapporti di ricerca e traduzioni relativi a studi e ricerche che realizzino una sinergia tra università e scuola, compresi volumi che documentino percorsi di Ricerca-Formazione realizzati nelle scuole.

Una particolare sezione della Collana accoglierà inoltre volumi relativi a risultati di ricerche empiriche che affrontino specificamente le questioni della formazione alla/della professionalità docente.

La collana è diretta da un gruppo di quattro studiosi di diverse università italiane che condividono finalità e scelte metodologiche del progetto editoriale e che mantengono un rapporto di confronto e di scambio costante con il Comitato scientifico.

Attraverso la collana, la Direzione e il Comitato scientifico intendono promuovere un ampio confronto tra ricercatori, studiosi, insegnanti, educatori e tutti coloro che a diverso titolo sono coinvolti nei processi di istruzione e formazione.

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Ogni volume pubblicato nella collana è sottoposto a *peer review* da parte di revisori anonimi.

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With the support of the



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Publicazione realizzata con il contributo del Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia dell'Università di Firenze con fondi EAR.

Isbn e-book Open Access: 9788835176619

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## Chapter Five: The RESPOND framework for promoting and monitoring sustainability indexes

*Davide Capperucci, Robert J. Didham, Martin Dodman, Susanne Jonsson, Kristine Nymo, Marianna Piccioli, Irene D. M. Scierri and Thor-André Skrefsrud*

This chapter presents the RESPOND promoting and monitoring sustainability indexes which constitute the last tool produced by the project. This is closely connected to the first three tools presented in the previous chapters. The indexes represent both tools for school self-evaluation and monitoring of the dimensions connected to the professional learning and development of teachers as well as the functioning of schools understood as organizations capable of institutional learning and development and thereby supporting teacher professional learning and development (MacBeath & McGlynn, 2004).

The indexes represent tools that schools can use flexibly to verify the presence and effectiveness of school policies and intervention strategies related to the school's mission (Ball et al., 2012). At a broader level they can contribute, in an empirical and situated manner, to keeping the quality and effectiveness of schools under control, in line with what has been said by international studies on “effective schools”, which consider the self-evaluation of schools as a fundamental tool for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of schools both in terms of developing teachers' professional skills and increasing student learning outcomes. The initial and more recent studies about the effective schools (Brookover et al., 1979; Creemers et al., 2022; Damiano, 2006; Mortimore et al., 1988) envisage that it is possible to break open the “black box” of the school by studying characteristics related to organization, practices, context and resources of schools. The results of the effective schools research converge around five factors capable of incisively influencing the quality of schools and initiating internal changes: (i) strong educational leadership; (ii) emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills; (iii) an orderly and secure environment; (iv) high expectations of pupil attainment; (v) frequent assessment of pupil progress and school outcomes (Scheerens, 2002).

For this reason, the evaluation of schools becomes not only a tool for the accountability of the results achieved to be shared with the stakeholders and the management of the school system, but above all a tool capable of orienting the change of schools in view of the achievement of measurable and monitorable targets over time.

### **5.1. The strategic role of self-evaluation and monitoring for the professional development of teachers and schools**

The last 20 years has witnessed a rapid growth in the areas of research and practice covering the fields of school effectiveness and improvement. This has produced a transition in the governance strategy of national governments combining devolution of authority, administrative autonomy and a strong emphasis on the quality of education (Keddie & Mills, 2019; Klein, 2017). New models of school regulations based upon accountability measures, and evaluation practices, have received considerably more attention (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Such models have led to the development of national educational policies that include standards for school performances, external student assessment, internal and external evaluations, and the development of best practices.

These educational policies point to two different approaches to accountability: a so-called government-based versus a school-based accountability approach. The second model seems to have been more successful within schools, with greater appreciation for self-evaluation rather than external evaluation. As demonstrated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2018; 2020a; 2020b) and Eurydice reports (Eurydice, 2015), the improvement of quality in education has become the central concern of educational policy in many European countries. Several European and North American countries have completed – or are working on – legislation and monitoring in the field of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) and School monitoring (SM), considering in particular the responsibility of schools to manage their own quality assurance processes internally.

A system of school self-evaluation and monitoring can be considered from several positions depending on the school's goals, ranging from a restricted view that focuses purely on the school's outcomes, to a broad perspective in which school assessment is focused on input, internal processes at school and classroom level as well as performance.

School evaluation provides the identification and judgment of the quality of schools, as well as the improvement of their educational, managerial and organizational effectiveness. Hofman et al. (2003b) developed a framework for school evaluation using relevant standards from an accountability perspective and combined them with a school improvement perspective. This led to the use of the so-called CIPPO model (Context, Input, Processes at school level, Processes at classroom level, Output) which is an adapted version of the well-known Context- Input-Process-Product model (CIPP) that has been widely used in research into school and classroom quality management (Stufflebeam, 2000).

For the school improvement perspective, the framework adds theoretical organizational perspectives that focus on school development using a system of integral school evaluation as a starting point (Dalín, 1993; Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000; Stoll & Wikeley, 1998). In this process, four implementation stages for improvement reflect the Plan-Do-Check-Act (*PDCA*) cycle (Deming, 1994): the stage of orientation and preparation (plan phase), implementation (do phase), evaluation (check phase) and finally the institutionalization or integration (act/adapt phase).

Studies into effective school improvement offer knowledge on the matters schools should consider in relation to self-evaluation. These lead to three general theoretical perspectives regarding how school evaluation is developed or takes place in a certain school setting:

1. School self-evaluation within schools as high-reliability organizations (Hofman et al., 2003a; Stringfield & Slavin, 2001).
2. School self-evaluation developed under pressure of external organizations (Hofman et al., 2005).
3. School self-evaluation within schools as learning organizations (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Carnall, 1990; Leithwood et al., 2001).

The RESPOND project has intended to adopt this third perspective. The third theoretical approach considers the school as a learning organization that focuses on the teaching staff and its ability to learn through interaction and peer exchange. Leithwood et al. (1999) define a learning organization as “a group of people pursuing common purposes (and individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes” (p. 4). This definition sees the learning organization as a dynamic process, characterized by a low degree of hierarchy in between school staff and a widespread collaboration at all stages of the process. The goal is reaching not a static finish, but a continuous accentuation of purposes and means. In

a learning organization, schools need to adapt to their context and population while giving shape to five aspects that promote collective learning identified by Leithwood et al. (2001): (i) school vision and mission; (ii) school culture; (iii) school structure; (iv) school strategies; (v) school policy and means. A learning organization does not aim only at the self-consistency of the organization itself but at its continuous improvement, therefore self-evaluation becomes the priority tool from which to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school through the use of a rational model of analysis based on specific dimensions, areas, indicators and descriptors. The latter represent the most specific unit of analysis, functional to the collection of information relating to the context, processes and educational and managerial results achieved by the school. School self-evaluation represents a data driven process, focused on collecting evidence on the functioning of the school rather than on the perception that the professionals who work there may have of it (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Datnow & Hubbard, 2016).

For the RESPOND project, school self-evaluation has many different functions that explain how it has to be implemented in and for the schools (Eurydice, 2015). For this reason, it is important to point out some statements and assumptions about how the ‘construct’ of school self-evaluation has been perceived by the research team.

- School self-evaluation empowers a school community to identify and affirm good practice, and to identify and take action on areas that merit improvement.
- School self-evaluation is primarily about schools taking ownership of their own development and improvement.
- School self-evaluation represents a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review, focused on school improvement.
- School self-evaluation further develops the school development planning process, and focuses it firmly on school organization, management and teaching and learning.
- School self-evaluation involves reflective enquiry leading to action planning for improvement that is informed by evidence gathered within each school’s unique context. The process enables schools to use this evidence to identify meaningful and specific targets and actions for improvement that focus on teaching and learning practices. It enables them to create and implement improvement plans, to measure their progress, and to identify their achievements.

In their ongoing engagement with school self-evaluation, schools should continue to focus on teaching and learning. They should continue to use the process to implement national initiatives and to identify and work on aspects

of their own teaching and learning practices which require development and improvement.

School self-evaluation to be effective must be considered as a collaborative, inclusive, reflective process of internal school review (Capperucci, 2015). During school self-evaluation the principal, deputy principal and teachers, under the direction of the board of management and in consultation with parents and students, engage in reflective enquiry on the work of the school (Brown et al., 2020). It is an evidence-based approach which involves gathering information from a range of sources and making judgments with a view to bringing about improvements in students' learning and school organization (Abrams et al., 2020).

Self-evaluation requires a school to address the following key questions with regard to an aspect or aspects of its work:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we find out more?
- What are our strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- How can we improve?

School self-evaluation builds on and develops the process of school improvement planning. It is a way of working that contributes to both the permanent and developmental sections of the school plan. Through school self-evaluation, schools reflect on and review their day-to-day practices and their policies, with a particular focus on organization, management, teaching and learning. It provides all schools with an internal process for developing and progressing action planning for improvement (Harris & Crispeels, 2006).

According to these basic assumptions, the project partners have agreed on the following definition of school self-evaluation:

The process undertaken by the school to systematically gather information about its activity and functioning, analyse and evaluate this information in relation to the quality of education provided, and make informed decisions leading to decision-making. In the process of self-evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative insights into the school's processes and outcomes are generated, facilitating a comprehensive diagnosis of the institution. It serves as a tool for fostering self-awareness regarding the institution's strengths and weaknesses, critical and success factors. This self-awareness tool is instrumental in improving the overall quality of educational services provided by the school through informed decision-making (van Velzen, 2012, p. 75).

Therefore, school self-evaluation involves reflective enquiry leading to action planning for improvement that is informed by evidence gathered within each school's unique context. The process enables schools to use this evidence to identify meaningful and specific targets and actions for improvement that focus on teaching and learning practices and outcomes. It enables them to create and implement improvement plans, to measure their progress, and to identify their achievements.

In this sense, self-evaluation represents an indispensable and preliminary phase in pursuing school improvement, that here is considered as:

a systematic approach aimed at enhancing the performance and outcomes of educational institutions. It involves strategies and interventions of varying intensity to support and improve schools. The goal is to ensure that all students are supported and that there is a sustained improvement in their academic achievements (van Velzen et al., 1985, p. 98).

and as:

a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively (van Velzen et al., 1985, p. 98).

School self-evaluation provides a meaningful context in which boards of management can further develop and review the policies and practices to ensure they support continuing developments and improvements in school organization, teaching and learning (O'Brien et al., 2020).

Although both processes, school self-evaluation and improvement plan construction, are under the coordination of the school board management, they are not self-sufficient. In fact, to be effective they require not only the contribution of school staff with specific skills related to quality assurance, but they also need the contribution and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders.

In the context of education, the term stakeholder generally refers to anyone who is invested in the well-being and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, community members, elected officials, and government representatives such as local business leaders and school board members (Brown et al., 2020; 2021).

The various stakeholders can be involved in the self-evaluation process, not so much because they care about identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a school, but above all because they are interested in how the

school can overcome obstacles, limits and fragilities in order to pursue the improvement of both the professional skills of school staff and the learning outcomes of students (Demetriou & Kyriakides, 2012). From this it is easy to understand the close link of reciprocity that exists between self-evaluation of schools and improvement (Mac Ruairc, 2019).

It is only when the actions in the improvement plan are implemented that the work of the school can improve. All relevant school personnel should share ownership of the actions to be implemented at individual teacher, working groups with specific responsibilities, or whole-school level. These actions should become part of the ordinary teaching and learning process (Kyriakides & Campbell, 2004).

The improvement plan is the tool that enhances the results of the self-evaluation process and gives concreteness to another process, that of improvement, through which it the school tries to intentionally orient the change towards a specific direction.

Characteristics of a school improvement plan are as follows:

It is organized into a timetable and has:

- a medium-term cycle – usually a three to five-year rolling program;
- a yearly cycle – linking the plan to the academic and financial years.

The plan should also include deadlines, for example:

- short term objectives, within 3 months;
- medium-term objectives, within 18 months;
- long-term objectives, 18 months or more.

A school improvement plan should:

- be simple;
- identify from two to three main priorities;
- have a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation;
- clarify links between priorities, goals/targets and improvements;
- focus on the impact the plan has on student outcomes.

The school improvement plan should be about:

- managing change: the plan should be seen as a live document and not produced to be stored somewhere. It should also have a strategic view of the future broken down into achievable aims;
- the need to focus on standards: the quality of education should be the driving force behind the school improvement plan. It is driven by the analysis of evidence and is honest about strengths and weaknesses;

- the link between teaching and learning: a clear link between the School Improvement Plan, the strategic direction of the school and the learning objectives expressed in the school aims should be stated;
- the need for links with governors, staff, students and parents: the wider community is essential for school improvement. Involving the school community in the improvement plan shows ownership of the plan and a wider support network to achieve the objectives;
- the way the school improvement plan will be implemented: the school should not try and tackle everything all at once. It is essential that it is targeting objectives, but also that everyone has a chance to understand each objective and their responsibilities to meet these objectives (Ar-carò, 2024).

In order to evaluate the impact of the school self-evaluation process and improvement actions, they must be monitored. Schools will need to decide:

- How monitoring will occur
- Who will be responsible for monitoring
- How progress will be determined and reported
- When and to whom progress will be reported (for example, at staff meetings, planning meetings, board meetings)
- If targets and actions realistic or need to be changed

The role of those leading the process, and the role of all teachers, in the ongoing and systematic monitoring of the implementation of the plan is important. In this regard, the gathering and use of information at specified intervals to check if the required improvements are being made is necessary. The results of monitoring could lead to an adjustment of the timetable and revisions of some of the actions, inaugurating a new cycle of school self-evaluation and improvement (Elassy, 2015).

For this reason, the PR4 indexes of the RESPOND project can be used firstly as indicators for the school's self-evaluation and secondly during the implementation phase of the improvement plans as a tool for monitoring the progress of the improvement actions undertaken.

## **5.2. The RESPOND Promoting and Monitoring Sustainability Indexes**

The RESPOND Promoting and Monitoring Sustainability Indexes is a tool designed to enable self-assessment of teacher professional and overall

school development within the four dimensions of sustaining teacher professional profiles, sustaining mentoring and peer to peer support, sustaining the school as a professional learning environment and sustaining teacher wellbeing (Fig. 5.1).

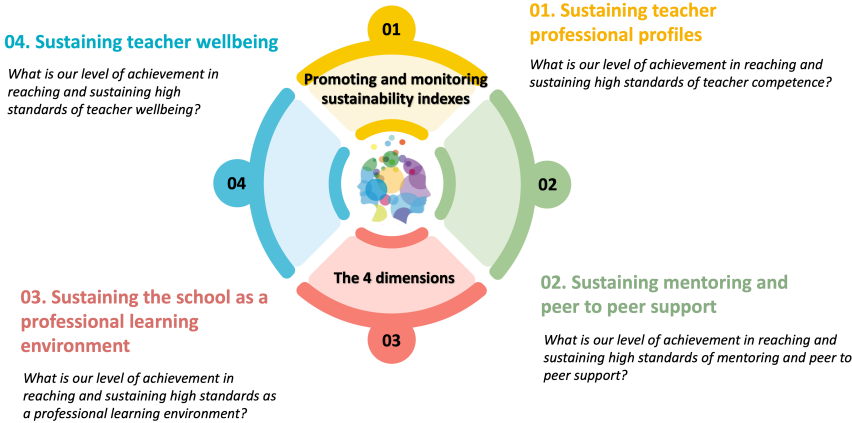


Fig. 5.1 – The 4 dimensions of promoting and monitoring sustainability indexes

The RESPOND Promoting and Monitoring Sustainability Indexes tool is made of two parts closely related to each other. In this paragraph, Part A of the tool is illustrated.

Part A provides checklists regarding the levels of achievement in reaching high standards for each dimension within four action areas (Table 1). Schools can identify whether their current practice takes account of the sixty-four indicators listed, and, if so, assess the level of satisfaction for each one.

Each indicator is evaluated and monitored using a 7-point Likert scale where the value 1 indicates the lowest level of satisfaction and the value 7 the highest level of satisfaction.

To accompany the work of analysis and self-assessment first and monitoring the progress of the improvement actions implemented by the schools, for each dimension of the tool a guiding question has been foreseen to better focus on the object to be investigated.

Tab. 5.1 – Sustaining teacher professional profiles

<b>DIMENSION 1. Sustaining teacher professional profiles</b>									
<b><i>What is our level of achievement in reaching and sustaining high standards of teacher global competence?</i></b>									
<b>Global and local issues and multiple perspectives (1)</b> <b>Intercultural communication and interaction (2)</b> <b>Individual and collective wellbeing (3)</b> <b>Acting for sustainability (4)</b>	No	Yes	If “Yes”, indicate the level of satisfaction regarding the current situation in the school.						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>1.1A</b> In designing its curriculum and providing specific curricular activities, does the school place emphasis on promoting learning about global and local issues and knowledge?									
<b>1.1B</b> Does the school have working groups and/or individual teachers who have specific responsibility for the development and assessment of global competences for teachers and learners?									
<b>1.1C</b> Does the school organize professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop and promote enquiry-based and experiential learning?									
<b>1.1D</b> Does the school organize professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop and promote collaboration and cooperation skills in learners?									
<b>1.2A</b> In designing its curriculum and providing specific curricular activities, does the school place emphasis on promoting learning about intercultural issues, interaction, communication and mediation?									
<b>1.2B</b> Does the school have working groups and/or individual teachers who have specific responsibility for the development and evaluation of provision for intercultural education?									
<b>1.2C</b> Does the school promote the development of multilingual competence and provide multilingual and multicultural resources in its teachers to facilitate effective intercultural communication?									

<b>1.2D</b> Does the school organize professional learning opportunities for teachers to promote skills for listening and effective communication, respect, and empathy towards people from different cultures?									
<b>1.3A</b> In designing its curriculum and providing specific curricular activities, does the school place emphasis on promoting learning about individual and collective wellbeing?									
<b>1.3B</b> Does the school have working groups and/or individual teachers who have specific responsibility for the promotion and evaluation of individual and collective wellbeing?									
<b>1.3C</b> Does the school organize professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop and promote affective and relationship skills in learners?									
<b>1.3D</b> Does the school promote learners' abilities to understand and respect diversity as a right and as enrichment in communities and societies?									
<b>1.4A</b> In designing its curriculum and providing curricular activities, does the school place emphasis on the development of global and local issues related to sustainability?									
<b>1.4B</b> Does the school have working groups and/or individual teachers who have specific responsibility for the development and evaluation of provision for sustainability education?									
<b>1.4C</b> Does the school organize professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop and promote sustainability knowledge and skills in learners?									
<b>1.4D</b> Does the school promote sustainable learning environments to be inclusive of learning needs for all learners?									

Note. (1) Very dissatisfied; (2) Dissatisfied; (3) Slightly dissatisfied; (4) Neutral; (5) Slightly satisfied; (6) Satisfied; (7) Very satisfied.

Tab. 5.2 – Sustaining mentoring and peer to peer support

<b>DIMENSION 2. Sustaining mentoring and peer to peer support</b>								
<b>What is our level of achievement in reaching and sustaining high standards of mentoring and peer to peer support?</b>								
<b>Leadership for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs (1)</b> <b>Support for transitions from teacher education to teaching profession (2)</b> <b>Sustained support for teacher professional development (3)</b> <b>Developing the school culture for professional development (4)</b>	No	Yes	If “Yes”, indicate the level of satisfaction regarding the current situation in the school.					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>2.1A</b> Has the school prepared a clear vision for mentorship and peer-to-peer programs detailing the overall purpose and goals and a roadmap for developing and implementing its mentorship and peer-to-peer programs with short-term and long-term targets?								
<b>2.1B</b> Does the school collect and reflect on observational and evidence-based data on the outcomes and impacts of its practices?								
<b>2.1C</b> Does the school promote peer reflection, collaboration and cooperation, and the exchange of effective practices, teaching materials and assessment procedures between teachers?								
<b>2.1D</b> Does the school support individual teachers in developing their own pathways or plans for career advancement and enable their participation in professional development for mentors?								
<b>2.2A</b> Does the school offer an induction phase for newly qualified teachers where mentoring is prioritized in a systematic way during the first years of teaching, with personalized mentoring plans that assess mentees’ competence and development needs, establish clear professional development targets, and plan and monitor for their achievement?								
<b>2.2B</b> Are special efforts taken to actively engage newly qualified teachers in the professional community and to recognize them as important contributors of new ideas, methods and approaches?								

<b>2.2C</b> Does the school facilitate opportunities for collaboration and joint planning between newly qualified teachers and more experienced colleagues?									
<b>2.2D</b> Does the school leadership emphasise the mental and emotional well-being of newly qualified teachers in their transition to the teaching profession and include this in discussions between mentors and mentees?									
<b>2.3A</b> Are teachers provided with regular opportunities and tools/methods for different forms of peer-to-peer-support (such as observation, mentoring, joint problem solving, peer coaching, and collaborative teaching teams)?									
<b>2.3B</b> Are individual and collective professional development plans prepared which are also aligned with the overarching school goals and expectations for further advancement, with tools for observation, monitoring, and assessment of the competences of teachers on teaching practice during and at the end of a given period?									
<b>2.3C</b> Does the school encourage and promote a school culture where the staff trust each other, with time and space to discuss challenges and successes, share experiences, observe and reflect on each other's practices, and assess how current research could support their specific situations?									
<b>2.3D</b> Does the school support, encourage and reward teachers to conduct practice-based research about student and teacher learning, test new working methods and measure the effect of innovative practices?									
<b>2.4A</b> Does the school promote collective ownership of its mission, values and goals, together with its role in society, through shared assessment and evaluation, cooperative dialogue and deliberation, and identifying strategic development targets?									
<b>2.4B</b> Does the school actively encourage and incentivize regular piloting and testing of new approaches and alternative practices and evaluate outcomes in relation to professional contexts?									

<b>2.4C</b> Does the school provide defined and differentiated roles and responsibilities for school members to implement and achieve collective initiatives and organizational development efforts, actively involving teachers and learners in these processes?									
<b>2.4D</b> Does the school have a systematic structure for review, reporting and feedback that supports collective knowledge generation and organizational learning?									

Note. (1) Very dissatisfied; (2) Dissatisfied; (3) Slightly dissatisfied; (4) Neutral; (5) Slightly satisfied; (6) Satisfied; (7) Very satisfied.

Tab. 5.3 – Sustaining the school as a professional learning environment

<b>DIMENSION 3. Sustaining the school as a professional learning environment. What is our level of achievement in reaching and sustaining high standards as a professional learning environment?</b>									
<b>Building educational values and leadership (1)</b> <b>Creating the conditions for a positive learning environment (2)</b> <b>Understanding and satisfying teacher professional development needs (3)</b> <b>Evaluating professional learning outcomes and impacts (4)</b>	No	Yes	If “Yes”, indicate the level of satisfaction regarding the current situation in the school.						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3.1A</b> Does the school have a mission statement that clearly identifies the values that underpin its educational curriculum?									
<b>3.1B</b> Does the school employ surveys to gather information on the specific needs of the school community?									
<b>3.1C</b> Does the school clearly identify objectives for improving teachers’ professional competences and promoting the achievement of its learning outcomes?									
<b>3.1D</b> Does the school adopt forms of participative and widespread leadership with a transparent and equal distribution of roles and responsibilities?									

<b>3.2A</b> Does the school have a published curriculum that is accessible and comprehensible based on promoting global competence and providing learning pathways that respect diversity?										
<b>3.2B</b> Does the school provide premises and promote activities designed to improve conditions for teachers, learners and for all members of the school personnel in terms of furniture, technology, connectivity, and care of learning and leisure environments?										
<b>3.2C</b> Does the school conduct surveys to ascertain the quality of the professional relationships within the teaching staff and between the teaching staff and other members of the school community and create adequate opportunities for discussing issues and establishing procedures for resolving conflicts?										
<b>3.2D</b> Does the school provide the resources and the facilities necessary to support the introduction of innovative teaching methodologies?										
<b>3.3A</b> Does the school develop and implement tools for ascertaining the professional development needs of the teaching staff and identifying ways of satisfying them?										
<b>3.3B</b> Does the school promote the exchange of good practices and collaborative research projects on teaching-learning processes through a range of means such as participatory meetings, online platforms and digital libraries?										
<b>3.3C</b> Does the school promote action research projects between its teachers and with teachers from other schools or participation in professional development initiatives with research institutes and universities?										
<b>3.3D</b> Does the school have adequate human, financial and logistical resources to be a professional learning environment able to promote the professional development of all its teachers?										

<b>3.4A</b> Does the school have clear guidelines and procedures for the professional development and career advancement of its teachers and ways of assessing their progress?									
<b>3.4B</b> Does the school have clear procedures and tools for monitoring and evaluating the impact of professional learning initiatives?									
<b>3.4C</b> Does the school clearly communicate the outcomes of the procedures implemented for monitoring and evaluating the impact of professional learning initiatives?									
<b>3.4D</b> Is the school able to clearly identify the features that make it a professional learning environment?									

Note. (1) Very dissatisfied; (2) Dissatisfied; (3) Slightly dissatisfied; (4) Neutral; (5) Slightly satisfied; (6) Satisfied; (7) Very satisfied.

Tab. 5.4 – Sustaining teacher wellbeing

<b>DIMENSION 4: Sustaining teacher wellbeing</b>									
<b><i>What is our level of achievement in reaching and sustaining high standards of teacher wellbeing?</i></b>									
<b>A culture of wellbeing (1)</b> <b>An environment for wellbeing (2)</b> <b>Actions for wellbeing (3)</b> <b>Individual and collective wellbeing (4)</b>	No	Yes	If “Yes”, indicate the level of satisfaction regarding the current situation in the school.						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4.1A</b> Has the school created a community culture based on developing psychosocial capital and promoting wellbeing in terms of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and health?									
<b>4.1B</b> Does the school offer opportunities for developing professional job satisfaction and personal wellbeing through institutional participation and career advancement?									
<b>4.1C</b> Does the school have specific procedures for evaluating the level of wellbeing of the teachers and all other members of the school community?									

<b>4.1D</b> Are teachers encouraged to assess and express how they currently feel about their professional wellbeing?										
<b>4.2A</b> Does the school provide equal treatment and support for all teachers regardless of gender, age, experience, or other differences?										
<b>4.2B</b> Does the school provide adequate human and financial resources dedicated to the professional wellbeing of teachers?										
<b>4.2C</b> Does the school create a working environment with a climate that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive, in which every teacher can feel safe, supported, and appreciated?										
<b>4.2D</b> Are all the physical spaces in the school safe, clean, and comfortable, to contribute to general wellbeing?										
<b>4.3A</b> Does the school provide professional learning opportunities and support for promoting inclusiveness for learners and teachers in all areas of the life of the school as a community?										
<b>4.3B</b> Does the school provide professional learning opportunities for teachers concerning emotional awareness, stress management, and coping strategies and the support and resources necessary to implement them in their working environment?										
<b>4.3C</b> Does the school offer specific activities such as mindfulness, yoga, voice caring, or others, that are applicable to the various spheres of action (classroom, meetings ...) in teachers' daily routines?										
<b>4.3D</b> Does the school provide opportunities for teachers to develop professional relationships and networks that enable them to learn from one another and are mutually sustaining at times both of achievement and difficulty?										
<b>4.4A</b> Does the school have members of the community with specific responsibilities and procedures (interviews, focus groups, ...) for lowering the risk of attrition and burnout and reaching and sustaining teacher wellbeing?										

<b>4.4B</b> Is the school flexible in terms of modes of work, managing workloads, and, wherever possible, adapting to teachers' individual needs, personal and work conciliation?					
<b>4.4C</b> Does the school give all teachers the opportunity to participate in decisions as well as activities through dialogical procedures?					
<b>4.4D</b> Does the school have procedures to deal with conflicts between members of the staff and an effective protocol to resolve disagreements?					

Note. (1) Very dissatisfied; (2) Dissatisfied; (3) Slightly dissatisfied; (4) Neutral; (5) Slightly satisfied; (6) Satisfied; (7) Very satisfied.

### 5.3. Assessing levels of achievement

Part B is designed to help identify and reflect on particular strengths and weaknesses within the dimensions and action areas, the factors that can facilitate and impede achievement, how facilitating factors can be increased and impeding factors reduced, and what five specific actions can be undertaken to prioritize and improve weaknesses.

To conduct this self-assessment activity related to the dimensions and action areas of the tool, schools can take the questions below as a reference to guide reflection both at a personal and collective level, extending it to the entire organization.

Please now analyse the levels of achievement you have expressed for each of the indicators.

1. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your school for each of the dimensions assessed.
2. Identify the factors that you believe can facilitate or impede the achievement of high levels.
3. Identify specific actions to undertake to improve areas of weakness.

In doing this you may find it useful to consider the following questions:

1. To what extent is the indicator both declared and realized? Is there a discrepancy?
2. To what extent is the indicator shared and participated in by all the school members of staff?
3. To what extent is the current workload of the school members of staff compatible with indicator?
4. To what extent is the level of resourcing necessary for the indicator in terms of human, physical, technological and financial resources?
5. To what extent is accessibility to and support for using resources and implementing actions a facilitating or impeding factor for the indicator?

Please also use any other criteria that you feel are appropriate.

The reflection stimulated by the questions above can be useful both to accompany the school's self-evaluation process, with the aim of gathering information on the strengths and weaknesses related to the practices implemented and the results achieved, and to monitor the progress of the improvement actions planned by the school.

The tables below can graphically support the reflection work required for schools.

Tab. 5.5 – Sustaining teacher professional profiles

<b>DIMENSION 1. SUSTAINING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL PROFILES</b>	
<b><i>What are our strengths and weaknesses in reaching and sustaining high standards of teacher competence?</i></b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b><i>What are the factors that can facilitate or impede reaching and sustaining high standards of teacher competence?</i></b>	
<b>Facilitating factors</b>	<b>Impeding factors</b>
<b><i>What are the five specific actions we can undertake to prioritize and improve our weaknesses?</i></b>	

Tab. 5.6 – Sustaining mentoring and peer to peer support

<b>DIMENSION 2. SUSTAINING MENTORING AND PEER TO PEER SUPPORT</b>	
<b><i>What are our strengths and weaknesses in reaching and sustaining high standards in mentoring and peer to peer support?</i></b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b><i>What are the factors that can facilitate or impede reaching and sustaining high standards in mentoring and peer to peer support?</i></b>	
<b>Facilitating factors</b>	<b>Impeding factors</b>
<b><i>What are the five specific actions we can undertake to prioritize and improve our weaknesses?</i></b>	

Tab. 5.7 – Sustaining the school as a professional learning environment

<b>DIMENSION 3. SUSTAINING THE SCHOOL AS A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b><i>What are our strengths and weaknesses in reaching and sustaining high standards of sustaining the school as a professional learning environment?</i></b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b><i>What are the factors that can facilitate or impede reaching and sustaining high standards of sustaining the school as a professional learning environment?</i></b>	
<b>Facilitating factors</b>	<b>Impeding factors</b>
<b><i>What are the five specific actions we can undertake to prioritize and improve our weaknesses?</i></b>	

Tab. 5.8 – Sustaining teacher wellbeing

<b>DIMENSION 4. SUSTAINING TEACHER WELLBEING</b>	
<b><i>What are our strengths and weaknesses in reaching and sustaining high standards of sustaining teacher wellbeing?</i></b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b><i>What are the factors that can facilitate or impede reaching and sustaining high standards of sustaining teacher wellbeing?</i></b>	
<b>Facilitating factors</b>	<b>Impeding factors</b>
<b><i>What are the five specific actions we can undertake to prioritize and improve our weaknesses?</i></b>	

## 5.4. Conclusions

The RESPOND Promoting and Monitoring Sustainability Indexes have been designed to be used by multiple actors and for multiple functions.

As for the actors, they can be considered useful for:

- all those who have responsibility for ensuring that schools provide quality education for students;
- trustees and local/national bodies who may wish to ensure that the school self-evaluation process reflects the school's ethos and includes suitable consultation with the entire school community;
- boards of management, principals, deputy principals and teachers to enable them to use appropriate information to affirm good practice and to have a clear focus on the specific areas that need to be targeted for improvement or development;
- school communities including students and parents, to enable their fullest participation in school self-evaluation and improvement processes.

As for the functions, they have been designed to provide schools with tools that can support the professional development of teachers and schools in relation to the research areas investigated by the RESPOND project. Schools can freely choose the dimensions related to teaching professionalism and the development of schools on which they want to focus their attention and interest (Salokangas & Ainscow, 2018). As has been said on several occasions, the use of all RESPOND tools is absolutely flexible and at the discretion of the schools, which can decide to investigate all the dimensions that make up each of the four products or focus only on some of them or on specific areas of action of interest to them. The same applies to the PR4 indexes, which can be adapted to the needs of self-evaluation and monitoring of the improvement of each school, based on the strategic choices and internal policies defined by the school management board (Honingh et al., 2020).

The indexes proposed here lend themselves to both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. On the quantitative side, the use of the Likert scale allows statistical analyses on the frequencies associated with the seven levels of satisfaction provided by the scale, the average values of each indicator, up to correlational analyses between the various indicators of the model (Schildkamp, 2019). On the qualitative side, wide-ranging analyses can be conducted relating to an entire dimension or more at a micro level for each individual indicator, focusing on the effectiveness of the actions implemented by the school or on those not yet present but which it

would be desirable to foresee to introduce elements of innovation and change both in the teaching practices of teachers and in the organization and management of the school (Geijsel et al., 2010).

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