



# Developing Point of Learning

An innovative approach to  
enhancing professional learning



**Twining, Rix & Sheehy  
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# Executive Summary

A challenge for the assessment of learners in any context is how it can both reflect the learning that is taking place and serve a role in developing that learning.

In this paper we:

- expand upon some of the issues with current approaches used in the development and assessment of professional practice,
- outline the current emphasis upon a life of learning and why we need a new approach to assessment that enhances the development of professional practice,
- introduce and provide a brief overview of Point of Learning (PoL) – a new approach that builds upon our growing understanding of learning and takes advantage of the power of digital technology,
- explain how PoL overcomes problems with existing approaches, and
- develop the theoretical underpinning for this new approach and present the overarching structure in which this new model can be developed. This

is illustrated with an example from the schools sector – though it is important to remember that PoL is applicable to any professional development context.

The underlying premise of this paper is that lifelong learning, people-skills and problem-solving need to be developed for our societies and economies to be successful. If we want to rise to this challenge, we need to recognise that learning is a socialised process; learning means we know how to do things with information and skills in social contexts. As a result, we can only support, encourage and evaluate professional learning<sup>1</sup> if we have evidence about changes in practice. This cannot happen in a one-off or series of top-down, pre-ordained assessments or within competence frameworks. It needs to be situated in people's working contexts. It needs to allow for multiple moments of assessment that include a full range of perspectives relevant to those contexts and support reflection on practice.

In this paper we show how PoL provides an appropriate framework to address these issues.

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<sup>1</sup> *We use the term Professional Learning in the knowledge that there are numerous terms to describe learning and skill development*

# Background – the problem

In recent years a global narrative has emerged around the kinds of competences people need in order to play a successful role within the workplace and maintain a personal sense of wellbeing. There are numerous documents that have called for the development of competences such as communication, collaboration, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking and problem solving (Trilling & Hood, 2003; Partnership for 21st Century Skill, 2007a & 2007b; QCA, 2007; Futurelab, 2007; Rix, 2010; ISTE 2015). Attributes closely related to these are also frequently identified as being in short supply in surveys of businesses and business leaders. For example, surveys in the last 10 years have identified the most significant shortfalls being related to life experience and attitudes, team working skills, communication skills, business and customer awareness, customer handling skills, foreign language skills and international cultural awareness (e.g. Leitch, 2006; Shury et al, 2010; CBI, 2013).

A report from a range of business leaders (Anderson, 2014) included three key recommendations which

underlined this phenomenon. Alongside STEM<sup>1</sup> and language communications skills, there were calls for a focus upon interpersonal and intercultural competencies and attributes such as team working. These were deemed to be just as important as core subject proficiency, as was the need to find methods of assessment to evidence these competences.

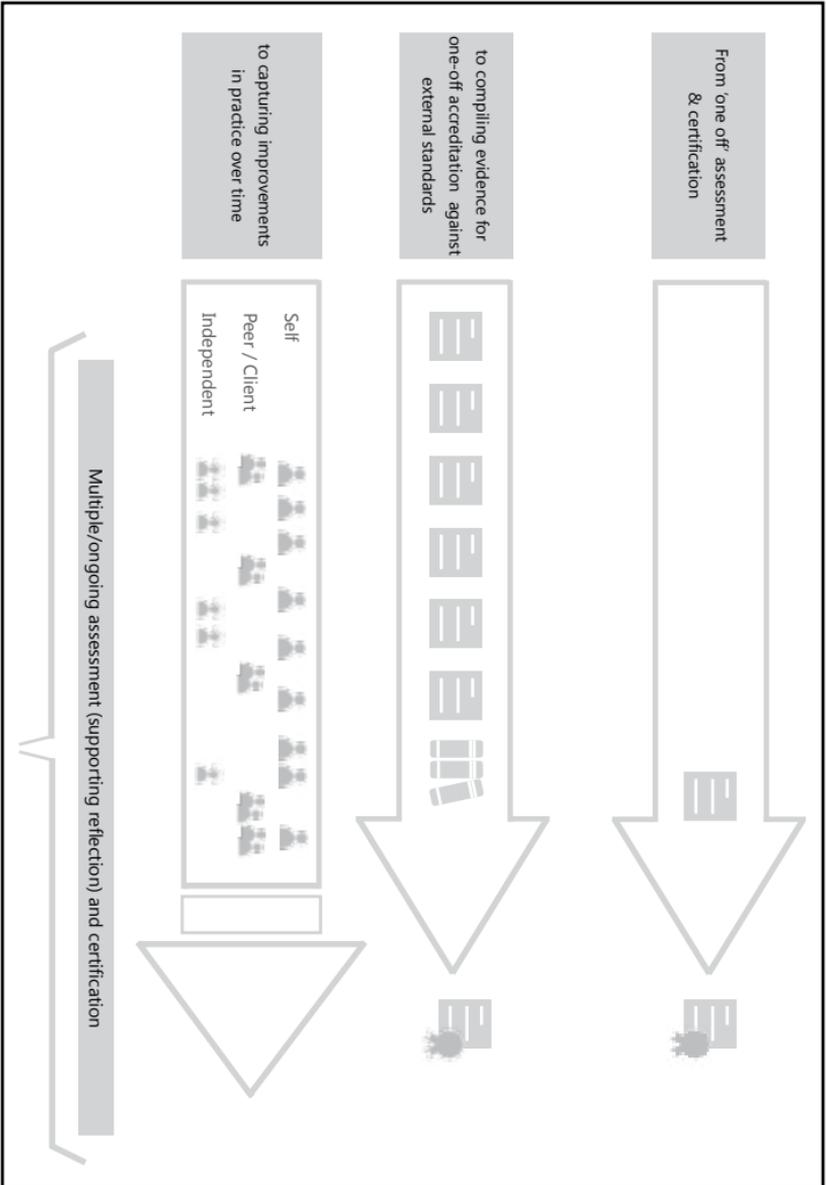
In developing methods of assessment for these competences we need to recognise that they are competences of interdependence. They are socially situated. This poses a profound problem for any system that adopts an individualised approach to learning and assessment. Most current systems of assessment either rely upon individuals passing tests in isolation, at preordained moments within a specified curriculum (see the top line in Figure 1) or on external assessors evaluating practice and/or documented evidence of practice (see the middle line in Figure 1).

Testing individuals in isolation creates an underlying contradiction if you are attempting to encourage interdependent behaviours. For example, in 2013 the international PISA tests, intended to compare

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**Figure 1: Changing the face of assessment**



national educational systems, developed an evaluation of collaborative problem solving (OECD, 2013). Their assessment focused upon individual learners and their cognitive processes, echoing the categories devised for individual problem solving. Consequently, a desire to assess and thereby develop successful interdependence instead encouraged an individualistic response and focus.

If professional development is to develop the interdependent skills and practices of individual learners and avoid this contradiction it must find the means to assess the individual and encourage learning both as a social activity and as a social practice. If we are to evaluate their interdependent nature, we must move to an ongoing socially-situated process of assessment, which can occur at any point throughout a person's life of learning (see the bottom lines in Figure 1). Similarly, it has long been recognised that current assessment practices often do not match well with learning in a digital age (e.g. Heppell 1994). Indeed, using the wrong measures, as so often happens in traditional forms of assessment, undermines enhancements in practice (e.g. ETAG 2015) and focuses effort on the wrong

things (Twining et al 2006).

Approaches to the assessment of professional practice which have taken a modular or evidential approach to certification (see the middle line in Figure 1), such as the English Early Years Professional Status (EYPS), its replacement Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT), and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), have created a top-down competence framework. Such an approach can consider the development of practice across time, but still fails to reflect the reality of practice. Reviews of NVQs, for example (Konrad, 1999), first identified a need for “a radically different approach to the individualistic market-based model” built on a model of collaborative learning and a substantial modernisation of policy, practices and resources. In his international review of the evidence of the impact of National Vocational Qualification Frameworks (NVQFs) such as the NVQ, Raffe (2013) noted that their legitimacy rests on stakeholders being involved. He found little evidence that they have increased stakeholder engagement in their education and training or that this significantly contributed to the objectives of the qualification. Fundamentally, “NVQFs are not pedagogical reforms as they do not

change pedagogical processes” (Chakroun, 2010 p.212).

PoL will tackle these challenges with traditional forms of assessment of practice in six key ways:

1. Shift the emphasis away from a narrow focus on accreditation and certification to a broader focus that enhances feedback and reflection as well as a formal recognition of changing practices across time.
2. Enable a move away from limited, fixed or end point one-off assessments and towards multiple and ongoing recording of achievement. Achievement will need to be demonstrated and maintained over time.
3. Entail a move away from single assessor perspectives, by requiring assessments to be undertaken from different perspectives (e.g. those of the person being assessed, other stakeholders, and one or more independent evaluators).
4. Enable a shift from a focus on secondary evidence (e.g. answers written on an exam paper), towards the use of primary evidence based on observation of practice and its impacts.

5. Involve assessment that is contextualised, both in terms of claims of effective practice and how these are evidenced within the everyday setting in which they occur.
6. Help ensure that what is being assessed is what the community considers to be the most important elements of practice (so that the assessment increases the focus on those elements).



# Overview of PoL

PoL was inspired by Point of Payment systems, which allow organisations to collect information relatively effortlessly to help them improve their provision. PoL utilises digital technology to enable its users to collect information about professional practice in context, against a set of agreed achievable aspirations, using a swipe card and an app on their mobile device.

Unlike other practice-based learning-accreditation systems (such as NVQs) the agreed achievable aspirations (which we call granules) are not a set of fixed standards, but are linked to currently identified priorities within the particular professional contexts where the system is being used. For each granule there is a set of descriptions of observable practices or behaviours which evidence that the granule has been achieved. However, rather than compiling portfolios of evidence, which are subsequently evaluated by an external assessor, PoL enables claims to be made that an individual has demonstrated meeting a particular granule. Three types of claim are possible:

- Type 1: Claim – an individual has made the claim

on their own behalf

- Type 2: Verified claim – a peer or client has made the claim on behalf of the individual
- Type 3: Independent claim – an independent evaluator has made the claim on behalf of the individual

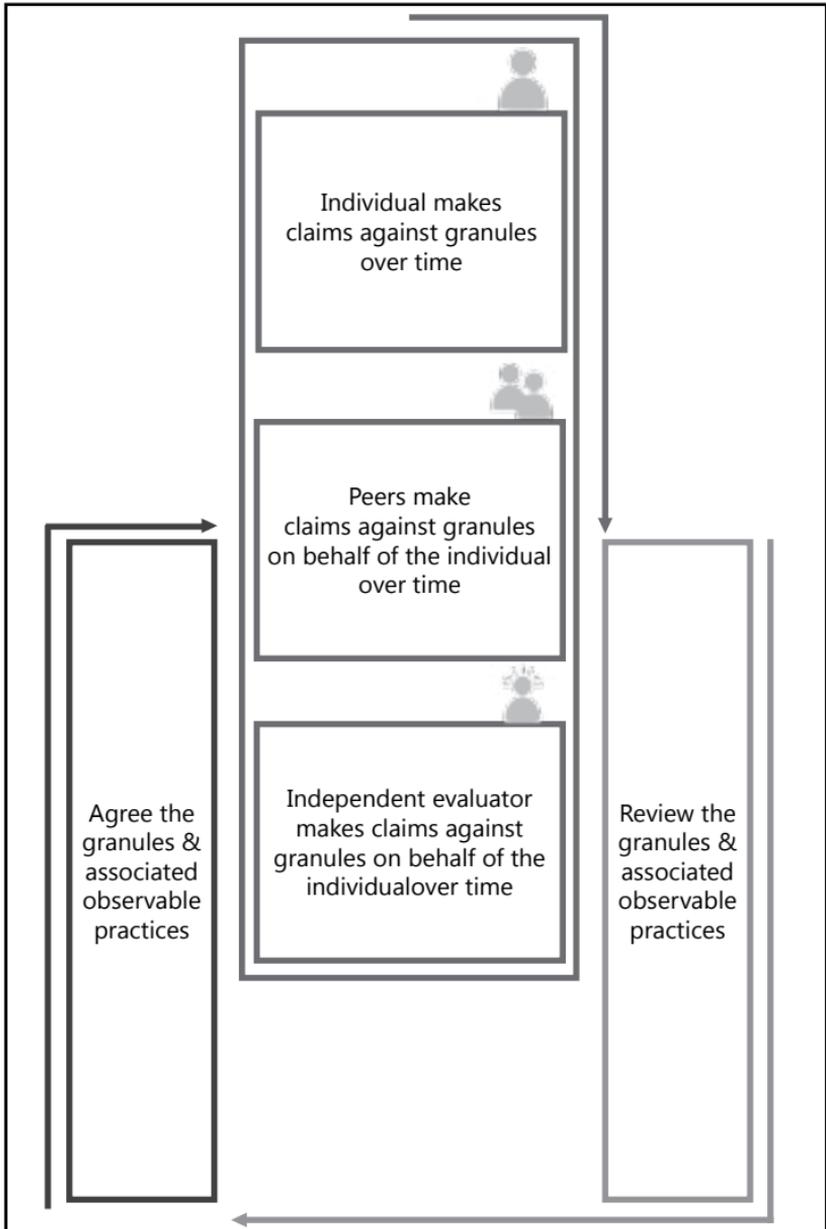
Different levels of confidence are available within the system, depending upon who has made the claim (the Type of claim) and how frequently they have made it.

The PoL system is made up of three elements:

- The theoretical framework
- The implementation model
- The delivery system

Each of these is explained in more detail in the following sections.

**Figure 2: An overview of the PoL process**





# PoL's Theoretical Framework

## Seeking a social solution

Interventions that set out to have a positive impact on people's personal development and educational achievement reflect a particular view of how people change and knowledge is developed. These views are epistemological beliefs and include "assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs about the nature of ability, and beliefs about knowledge, knowing and how knowing proceeds" (Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010, p535). Although these views are often implicit or unacknowledged, they have profound effects on the types of development activities that participants are asked to engage in and the assessment outcomes that are acknowledged as valuable.

In creating PoL it is essential that the approach has an explicit and transparent epistemological position that is evidence based and which is appropriate for the cultural context of its use and intended function. This is important because epistemological beliefs vary significantly between cultures and countries (OECD, 2009) and different fields of study (Tumkaya, 2012).

Consequently, there could be an unacknowledged mismatch between a development and assessment programme, such as PoL, and the culture in which it is used, leading to programme failure or ineffectiveness. In the simplest sense epistemological beliefs can be seen as supporting three pedagogical perspectives regarding the nature of knowledge, how it is 'acquired'; and consequently how personal development occurs. Each perspective values and validates different methods of assessment.

- **Traditional perspective:** Learning occurs through a simple and straightforward transfer of knowledge akin to 'absorption' (Chan & Elliott, 2004).
- **Constructivist perspective:** The learner can be positioned as almost a lone scientist (Wu and Rao, 2011) engaging in self-discovery. This perspective emphasises that teaching is about facilitating learning processes, rather than authoritarian transmission (Lee, Zhang, Song, & Huang, 2013).
- **Social constructivist perspective:** This perspective sees knowledge as created, primarily, through social and collaborative activities (Daniels, 2014), and the appropriation of cultural tools

(Littleton & Mercer, 2012). This perspective tends to focus on the interpersonal aspects of individual learning. The complementary, and overlapping, socio-cultural perspective focuses more on how people learn within particular social contexts, and how interaction can support personal development through the creation of joint knowledge and understanding.

Epistemological research often classifies a person's beliefs as spanning naïve to sophisticated or higher order beliefs. Typically, naïve beliefs include ideas that knowledge is simple, definite and certain (i.e. unchanging). Personal development is believed to be strongly associated with innate personal characteristics or deficiencies. In contrast are beliefs that knowledge is complex and potentially changeable, constructed through learners' active engagement and that a learner's ability can be improved over time (Erdamar & Alpan, 2013; Silverman, 2007). This range of beliefs and assumptions can be seen as mapping onto the three pedagogical perspectives outlined above, with the traditional perspective equating to the most naïve set of beliefs, and a progression towards social constructivist beliefs. This is problematic. Firstly the

idea that some beliefs are naïve assumes progression towards an assumed pinnacle that often “resembles the values of the theorist’s own community or indeed of the theorist’s own life course” (Rogoff, 2003 p.18). Secondly, practitioners’ epistemological beliefs vary significantly between cultures; in many countries epistemological beliefs do not map onto the neat distinctions between the discrete perspectives that are evident in western Europe (OECD, 2009). Therefore, it is important that PoL makes its epistemological position clear and justifies its use in order to lessen ‘cultural imposition’ issues.

One function of PoL is that the approach should be inclusive in nature, able to bring diverse groups together and produce significant outcomes for all those who participate. In an educational context there is evidence from outcome-based international research reviews (Sheehy et al., 2009) and empirical research (Littleton & Mercer, 2012) to show that the approaches which achieve these positive outcomes see knowledge as created, primarily, through social and collaborative activities i.e. are underpinned by social constructivist and socio-cultural epistemological perspectives. This type of approach has proved

effective not only in developing language and STEM skills, but in improving independent reasoning and problem solving skills (Howe & Mercer, 2007; Littleton & Mercer, 2012; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, & Sams, 2004; Mercer & Sams, 2006).

Personal epistemological beliefs are particularly significant in guiding a person's decision making in response to complex 'real life' situations (Abedalaziz, Leng, & Song, 2013; Silverman, 2007). To support personal development and improve decision making in complex real life situations, a range of research indicates that opportunities for structured reflection on real life practice are essential (Brownlee, Purdie, & Boulton-Lewis, 2010). This is likely to be enhanced if the participant is able to collaborate within a pedagogical community (Sheehy et al., 2009), characterised by shared epistemological beliefs. Together these opportunities are able to produce changes in personal epistemological beliefs, which allow a person to improve their decision making.

Personal development is therefore a process of changing participation within the communities of which we are a part (Rogoff, 2003). As much as we see ourselves as individual agents, directed towards

particular ends, actively and selectively focused, constructing our understanding of the world, we do not learn ways of life and thinking in isolation and without support; our agency must be understood as co-joined with collaboration (Bruner, 1996). It is through these relationships that we change our identity.

Learning is a reverberation of how we have engaged and been enabled to engage in different contexts, it is our record of ways in which we have participated and come to understand ourselves in relation to the things and people around us and how we can act. Learning involves us in elaborating different possibilities in different situations and relationships with others; it is about evolving membership within a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). We may wish to engage with knowledge which is valued in a particular context, but our practices will both shape and support our learning; our resources for professional development will lie not simply in the information that we wish to share, but in the practice through which we come to understand it and our relationship to it (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

## **Building PoL**

The PoL framework builds upon notions of participation, identity and agency in the context of workplace practice, particularly in relation to those with whom we work and those upon whom our work impacts. However, in order to be flexible enough to move beyond these principles, it will need to reflect the finer detail of the cultural context in which it is being applied. It will need to allow for local priorities and fine grained markers of development to be established and regularly reviewed, creating granules around which targeted professional learning can form. PoL will have to provide a structure to support people's consideration of their social context and to situate their practice. We can consider the social context as being the networks of practice which links together those who work with similar practices but may never get to know one another (Brown & Duguid, 2000) and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) that are realised through groups engaging together within similar activity. However, the former does not provide a structure for reflection upon its diffuse collection of participants and the latter is not ideally suited to all arenas in which knowledge and

understanding are situated (for example learning in schools). Neither provides a means to consider the wider systemic issues that profoundly influence and are profoundly influenced by practice as well as the fine grained detail essential to that practice.

A model that also allows for a socially-situated understanding of learning but provides a clear framework for delineating aspects of practice at micro and macro levels is the Community of Provision (Rix, Sheehy, Fletcher-Campbell, Crisp & Harper, 2015). The Community of Provision (CoPro) is an empirically based framework that emerged from an examination of models of professional practice related to special education provision. It was intended to enable an analysis of provision across countries. The CoPro is defined by the settings and services that work together to provide a service, in this case educational support, within a locality. The nature of the CoPro will vary nationally and locally and be dependent upon the individuals concerned. It is intended to encapsulate complex societal support systems. Its communal nature means that its internal and external boundaries can be both porous and restrictive, its shape is context dependent and its relationships tenuous,

and it carries with it a sense of ideals and inclusion as well as insularity and marginalization. A CoPro will be filled with people of varying priorities, beliefs, capacities and influence, and it will be dependent upon a range of administrative, policy, funding and political constraints.

The empirical frame used to analyse the complex reality of educational practice emerged from six themes evident in a systematic review of data (Rix et al, 2015). As a result the CoPro is understood as a connected whole within six overarching community perspectives:

1. **Community space** – concerned with where support takes place
2. **Community staffing** – concerned with who is providing the support
3. **Community service users<sup>1</sup>** - concerned with who is being supported
4. **Community support** – concerned with the quantity and type of support

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<sup>1</sup> *In the original study this category was called Community of Students. This change in title has been adopted since it is proposed that this model may be applied to professions beyond education. The category retains its thematic and empirically-derived descriptor.*

5. **Community strategies** – concerned with the quality of support
6. **Community systems** – concerned with issues of governance

Each perspective must be seen in relation to the others. They are the means by which provision is understood but they are also the means by which it is delivered. They do not contain a singular grouping or separate, contained, aspect of provision. These six perspectives affect any and every issue of support and as such, any and every issue needs to be understood through them.

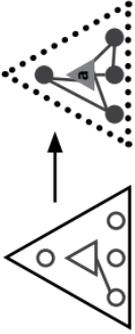
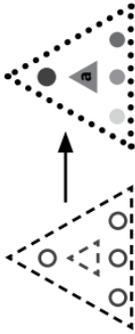
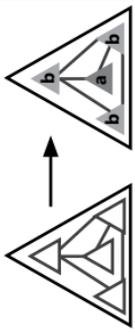
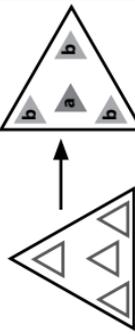
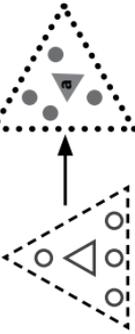
As with all definitions people can interpret the words and phrases in different ways so that discussions can be had about how we understand the terms above. In the context of PoL this is a strength. In this broad form the CoPro does not carry with it any particular values or represent a particular underlying philosophy; it is not prescriptive. The CoPro provides a loose frame to support participants' examination of identity, participation and agency within their context. It enables practitioners involved within PoL to explore the meaningful limits of their own CoPro and how it is both created and experienced in practice.

Through it they can explore the values and underlying philosophies that are in evidence within these six community perspectives.

### **The PoL Approach**

The PoL approach to professional learning is based upon two underlying premises. Firstly, learning is a social process which can be understood as shifting participation, identity and agency within a context; secondly that the context can be examined through the notion of a CoPro. If we wish to undertake an assessment within this interdependent context and provide a means to assess people's experience of practice then that assessment needs to reflect the views of participants within our CoPro. At its most rudimentary we must evaluate ourselves and contrast this with the perceptions of those with whom we work and those who we are supporting. PoL provides a mechanism to achieve this. The framework requires reflection upon and definition of key aspirations of the CoPro; subsequent professional learning results from reflection upon one's own practice within the context of these aspirations. It incorporates the key elements of participation, identity and agency (the Rows in Table 1) along with a focus on the perspectives of other

**Table 1: An overview of the PoL process**

Reflection on self and professional practice within your community of provision		
Enhance learners'/clients'/ customers'	 <p>(1.2)</p>	 <p>(2.2)</p>
Enhance other adults'/colleagues'	 <p>(1.1)</p>	 <p>(2.1)</p>
	Participation	Identity
	 <p>(3.1)</p>	 <p>(3.3)</p>
	Agency	

1 The numbers in brackets show how the cells in Table 1 corresponds with the sub-statements in Table 2.

Large triangle = organisation/institution/system  
 Small triangle 'a' = individual reflecting on practice;  
 Small triangle 'b' = other adult/colleague  
 Small circles = learners/clients/customers.

adults/colleagues, and clients/customers/learners in achieving these learning goals (the Columns in Table 1).

Thus, at the first level there will be statements of overarching priorities related to the participation, identity and agency of others in the context of the CoPro. Nested within these will be sub-statements of agreed priorities related to other adults/colleagues and learners/clients/customers. For each sub-statement there will be three granules around which professional learning can form, set out as agreed achievable aspirations and agreed examples of desirable practices/behaviours that evidence their achievement (see Table 2).

PoL is designed to be a simple structure for exploring and developing complex practice. It will enable participants to define the nature of their CoPro, its salient principles and some essential, more finely detailed aspirations for practice. PoL will encourage professional learning that will be relevant to its context and will be assessed by the people who experience the practices it seeks to develop. As a consequence of this flexibility, the granules within the PoL framework will vary between different professional fields and

between CoPros.

Thus the PoL framework consists of four elements:

**Statements and sub-statements** – the theoretically informed key elements underpinning effective practice (i.e. participation, identity and agency) applied to other members of the CoPro and the stakeholders that they serve. These apply across contexts (because they embody a sociocultural view of learning within the communities where POL is used).

**Granules** – these are key focus areas within each of the sub-statements, which should be provocations (getting you to think about your practice); stretching (requiring users to go beyond typical existing practice within their context), positive (focusing on desirable practice within their context) and claimable (based on practice – observable). They are challenges around which enhanced practice can form. Granules must be culturally relevant/appropriate – there are likely to be a small number (e.g. up to three per sub-statement). Policy makers or advisors may identify up to one sticky granule per sub-statement, which should apply across the field (e.g. all Primary Schools in Egypt). The majority of granules will be generated as part of the

PoL implementation model (see page 32).

**Practices or behaviours** - For each granule there will be a set of descriptions of desirable, observable practices or behaviours which evidence that the granule has been achieved. These practices will be negotiated as part of the PoL implementation model (see page 32).

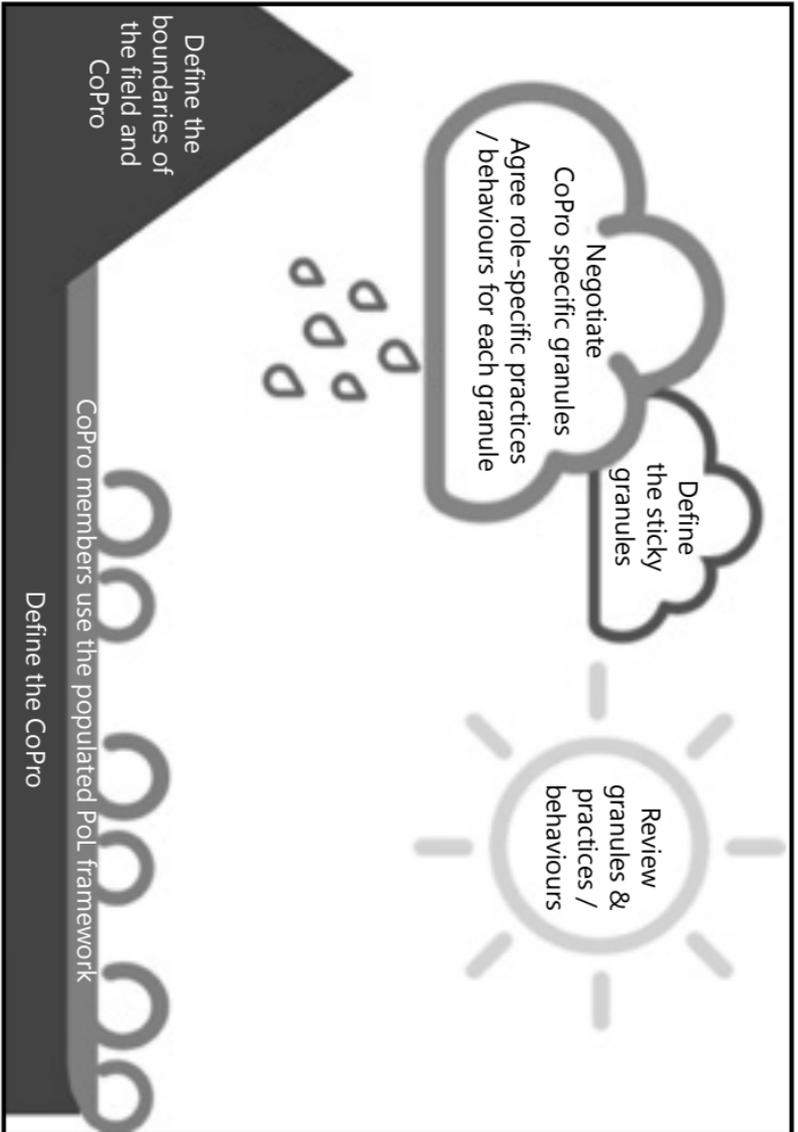
### **PoL implementation model**

The way in which PoL is implemented is vital for its effectiveness. The recommended process involves creating an environment with seven main influences, which are explained in Figure 3.

**Table 2: The PoL theoretical framework**

<b>1</b>	<b>Statement: Enhance the participation of others in my community</b>	
1.1	Sub-statement: Enhance the participation of other adults in my community	
1.1.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
1.1.2		
1.1.3		
1.2	Sub-statement: Enhance the participation of clients/customers/learners in my community	
1.2.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
1.2.2		
1.2.3		
<b>2</b>	<b>Statement: Enhance the identity of other participants in my community</b>	
2.1	Sub-statement: Enhance the identity of other adults in my community	
2.1.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
2.1.2		
2.1.3		
2.2	Sub-statement: Enhance the identity of clients/customers/learners in my community	
2.2.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
2.2.2		
2.2.3		
<b>3</b>	<b>Statement: Enhance the agency of other participants in my community</b>	
3.1	Sub-statement: Enhance the agency of other adults in my community	
3.1.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
3.1.2		
3.1.3		
3.2	Sub-statement: Enhance the agency of clients/customers/learners in my community	
3.2.1	Three Granule: agreed achievable aspiration	Practices/behaviours: Text exemplifying evidence of having achieved the granule
3.2.2		
3.2.3		

**Figure 3: The seven influences in the PoL environment**



**Influence 1:** Define the boundaries of the field and CoPros

The initial Influence is to identify the field within which the PoL Framework is going to be used. The field sets the broad context of practice that you are interested in. This includes identifying the boundaries of the CoPros who are going to work with PoL.

In addition, decisions need to be made about who will be making claims within the system and whether those will count as Type 1, Type 2 or Type 3 claims (see page 13). You may also want to identify threshold levels of confidence that participants should be working towards, based on how many times each type of claim needs to have been made against each granule. Though it should be noted that professional learning is an ongoing process – and so the concept of ‘having achieved a granule’ is inappropriate – you may feel confident about one aspect of your practice and decide to focus on a different granule.

### **Influence 1: Example**

The Advisory team who are implementing PoL in this example decided that the field consists of Primary Schools that they work with in England. Each Primary

School within the field will be treated as a separate CoPro. This situates the CoPro within the broader context of national structures associated with such issues as curriculum, funding, inspection, assessment and policy creation.

The Advisory team decided that individual practitioners within each CoPro will be able to make Type 1 claims about their own practice. All other staff within the CoPro (as agreed in Influence 3, below) can make Type 2 claims. Members of the advisory team can make Type 3 claims.

## **Influence 2: Define the Sticky Granules**

Where PoL is being used by policy makers or advisors to move practice in particular directions then they may wish to develop Sticky Granules, which will apply across all CoPros within that field who engage with PoL. These cannot be changed by an individual CoPro within the field.

For each sticky granule the policy makers or advisors need to identify examples of specific positive practices/behaviours that would be evidence of having achieved that granule. These example practices/behaviours are not intended to be comprehensive. They are not

the only desirable practices/behaviours that would evidence having achieved the granule, nor are they intended to be compulsory, in the sense that you might claim the granule on the basis of practices/behaviours that are not listed. Indeed, in Influence 5, members of the CoPro may decide upon additional or more role appropriate example practices/behaviours.

### **Influence 2: Example**

The Advisory Team identified aspirational targets that they perceive to be of particular importance and which they consider should apply across the whole field (e.g. all of the primary schools that they are working with in England). These included the following sticky granules and example practices /behaviours:

## Sticky Granule

### Example practices/behaviours that would be evidence of meeting this granule

1.1.1: Staff are active members of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I include colleagues in group planning</li><li>▪ I provide effective informal mentoring for colleagues</li><li>▪ I attend professional development related to mentoring</li><li>▪ I act as a critical friend</li><li>▪ I create opportunities for colleagues to socialise</li></ul>
1.2.1: Pupils use a wide variety of communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ All Pupils I teach frequently have the opportunity to communicate their ideas in non-print formats (e.g. video, audio, animation, drama, music, coding, artefacts)</li><li>▪ I actively support all pupils in taking part in pupil and school councils</li><li>▪ I provide opportunities for all pupils to share their work with audiences beyond the classroom and school</li></ul>
2.1.1: Teachers are treated as trusted professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I spend time with colleagues jointly planning the curriculum, building upon their ideas</li><li>▪ I delegate responsibility for colleagues both within planning and implementation of teaching</li><li>▪ I support colleagues to share their expertise through team meetings and external channels</li><li>▪ I support colleagues to achieve personal goals</li><li>▪ I support colleagues' professional development</li></ul>

### **Influence 3: Define your CoPro**

For each CoPro within the field (as defined in Influence 1) the members of the CoPro need to think carefully about their CoPro's membership, using the six community perspectives (see page 25) as a tool for reflection. The membership of the CoPro is important because, in Influence 4, representatives of the key members of the community need to be invited to contribute to the development of the remaining granules.

### **Influence 3: Example**

This example focuses on one specific primary school - Greyfields Primary School. The CoPro consists of those people and services linked with Greyfields:

Staff employed by the school: the Head, Deputy, Assistant Head, 18 teachers, 30 LSAs (many allocated to support specific children who have been formally identified as having special educational needs), ESL support, a fully staffed kitchen (where school dinners are prepared), a road crossing person and caretaker.

The pupils at the school.

The school is part of a local authority, which includes

music services, educational psychologists and other specialist services. The Advisory team – who are instigating the use of PoL within the CoPro – are also members of the local authority.

A theatre group who are brought in to work with children across the school year.

An African Drum Group who work with children one day per week.

A number of educational software companies with whom they work closely, trialling and providing advice on the design of software, and one member of staff is an Apple Advanced Educator.

Academics from a University whom they have helped with research projects

People within the local community (e.g. businesses, police service, religious groups, etc.).

The parents and community governors.

Ex-pupils and local businesses with whom they try to maintain good relationships, with varying success.

#### **Influence 4: Negotiate CoPro specific granules**

Members of the CoPro should discuss their

community's particular needs and priorities. Where these discussions cannot involve all members of the CoPro then it is important that the representatives involved in the discussion should encompass key members of the CoPro; they need to be able to offer meaningful insights from the six community perspectives. These negotiations should involve an external provocateur whose role is to facilitate the process and ensure that the agreed granules are provocations; stretching, positive and claimable.

This group need to populate the PoL Framework, so that it has three granules with associated exemplars of evidence, for each sub-statement. Where a sub-statement already has a sticky granule then only two additional granules should be developed.

The group need to be clear about what participation, agency and identity mean within the context of their community and must ensure that the granules and associated practices/behaviours reflect the meanings they have agreed.

#### **Influence 4: Example**

Greyfields has experienced a large turnover of staff with, six new teachers joining the school at the start

of the year. Historically the role of support staff in enhancing pupils' learning has not always been sufficiently recognised by teachers.

The school aims to ensure that pupils are happy, confident young people with a love of learning. They recognise the critical importance of parents as 'the children's first teachers' and are keen to increase parental involvement in the school and support parents to in supporting their children.

At present they have particular curricular foci on ensuring that pupils are:

- Effective communicators
- Digitally literate (in the broad sense of that term)
- Self-motivated, resilient and able to persevere

These overarching concerns and priorities informed their discussion of the granules, resulting in the following granules:

1.1.2	Parents are actively involved in school life
1.1.3	New staff – successfully introduced to the community
1.2.2	Pupil socialisation is a key part of all aspects of the school
1.2.3	All pupils are active members of their class(es)
2.1.2	Support staff are valued members of the class
2.1.3	Parents feel confident to support their children's learning
2.2.1	Pupils see themselves as being effective learners
2.2.2	Pupils see themselves as being effective communicators
2.2.3	Pupils see themselves as valued members of the community
3.1.1	New staff have the capacity to influence practice and processes within the school
3.1.2	
3.1.3	All carers have a voice in school decision making processes
	Support staff play a proactive role within the school
3.2.1	Pupils make decisions within the curriculum
3.2.2	Pupils influence policy and practice within the school
3.2.3	Pupils build upon their out of school digital literacy practices

Inevitably a range of discussions took place in defining these granules. For example, in relation to 2.1.2, members of the CoPro recognised that it might be seen as contrasting with sticky granule 2.1.1 (see page 37). However, they felt it reflected the reality in Greyfields and complimented sticky granule 2.1.1, and was aspirational yet achievable at this point in time.

### **Influence 5: Agree practices/behaviours**

In developing the example practices/behaviours it is important to ensure that they are sufficiently specific and can relate to observable practice. As part of this process you need to consider examples that work for people with different roles as members of the CoPro.

The key is to think about how you would know whether or not a granule has been achieved – what would you be able to see that confirmed it was?

The number of examples of evidentiary practices/behaviours is not fixed. However, the process of developing them is important in that it will scaffold discussions about what particular granules mean and how they might be recognised, which will help to develop shared understandings of desired practice within the CoPro. Normally between three and five

examples should be generated for each granule. As practitioners work with the PoL framework they are likely to come up with other examples to support their claims that they have achieved particular granules.

The external facilitator plays an essential role as a critical friend seeking to ensure that granules are aspirational and positive developments of practice, and that examples fairly reflect appropriate targets for a range of practitioners. They also need to encourage CoPros to reflect upon the suitability of the practices and behaviours, including those self-identified by practitioners as they use PoL.

It is worth noting that a practice/behaviour may be evidence of having achieved more than one granule. It is also worth noting that granules and practices/behaviours can be changed or retained at times of review, as long as they remain relevant provocations that are stretching and claimable. From an external perspective the examples may appear contestable or open to alternative interpretations. However, their meaning is developed through discussion within the CoPro and reflects the priorities that they have identified and these discussions will have ensured shared understanding of the examples.

These understandings cannot be interpreted or used externally without reference to the CoPro and discussion with them.

### **Influence 5: Example**

In thinking about the agreed practices/behaviours members of the CoPro considered examples that would work for different people within the CoPro. For example, in relation to granule 2.1.2 (see page 42), they discussed what this might look like from a range of perspectives. They agreed that teachers needed to explicitly identify the role of support staff and that support staff should be involved in planning. They also noted that teachers should provide feedback to support staff and vice versa. Their discussion resulted in the following examples of agreed practices/behaviours for Granule 2.1.2:

I value support staffs' input to planning/I contribute to planning

I provide feedback on teaching

My planning recognises support staff as an important resource for all learners

I encourage support staff to attend courses related to

the needs of our pupils

In relation to granule 3.2.2, the CoPro came up with the following agreed practices/behaviours:

I facilitate democratic processes

I negotiate and revisit policies and practices with pupils

I challenge decisions which ignore the views of pupils

These agreed practices/behaviours will be interpreted in different ways according to the role of individual practitioners and they may not all be applicable to all situations. However, it was agreed within the CoPro that a behavior – such as ‘I negotiate and revisit policies and practices with pupils’ – would apply to all staff, whether teaching or support.

### **Influence 6: CoPro members use the populated PoL Framework**

Members of the community who are engaging with PoL should then decide which sub-statements and granules they are going to focus on. This recognises that it is unlikely to be feasible to address all of the sub-statements simultaneously. Where sticky granules are present then these will normally be part of that

agreed focus.

Members of the community then look for evidence that they have achieved granules related to their focus sub-statements and record their achievements using the PoL delivery system (see page 49).

As noted above, the confidence one can have that an individual's practice is in line with the granules depends upon multiple claims being made about their practice over time by different people. Having multiple claims over time helps to maintain the practitioner's focus on desirable practices and helps to ensure that the practice becomes embedded.

Where someone is claiming to have met a granule they should keep a reflective note of the evidence that they have based that claim upon. This is particularly important where their evidence is not one of the practices/behaviours listed in the PoL Framework.

### **Influence 7: Review Granules and Practices/ Behaviours**

At agreed intervals the granules and their associated practices/behaviours within the PoL framework should be reviewed. Members of the CoPro who have been using the PoL framework should discuss the

claims that they have made and the evidence upon which they are based. This is both an opportunity to further develop shared understandings of the desired practices and to enhance the examples of behaviours/practices within the framework.

The group should also reflect upon the ongoing relevance and value of the granules, and where appropriate agree revisions and enhancements to them.

Where Sticky Granules have been developed by an advisory group for the field as a whole these should also be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure their continued relevance.

The seven influences within the PoL environment need to be monitored and updated to ensure that they reflect the priorities of the CoPro and the wider field in which it is situated.

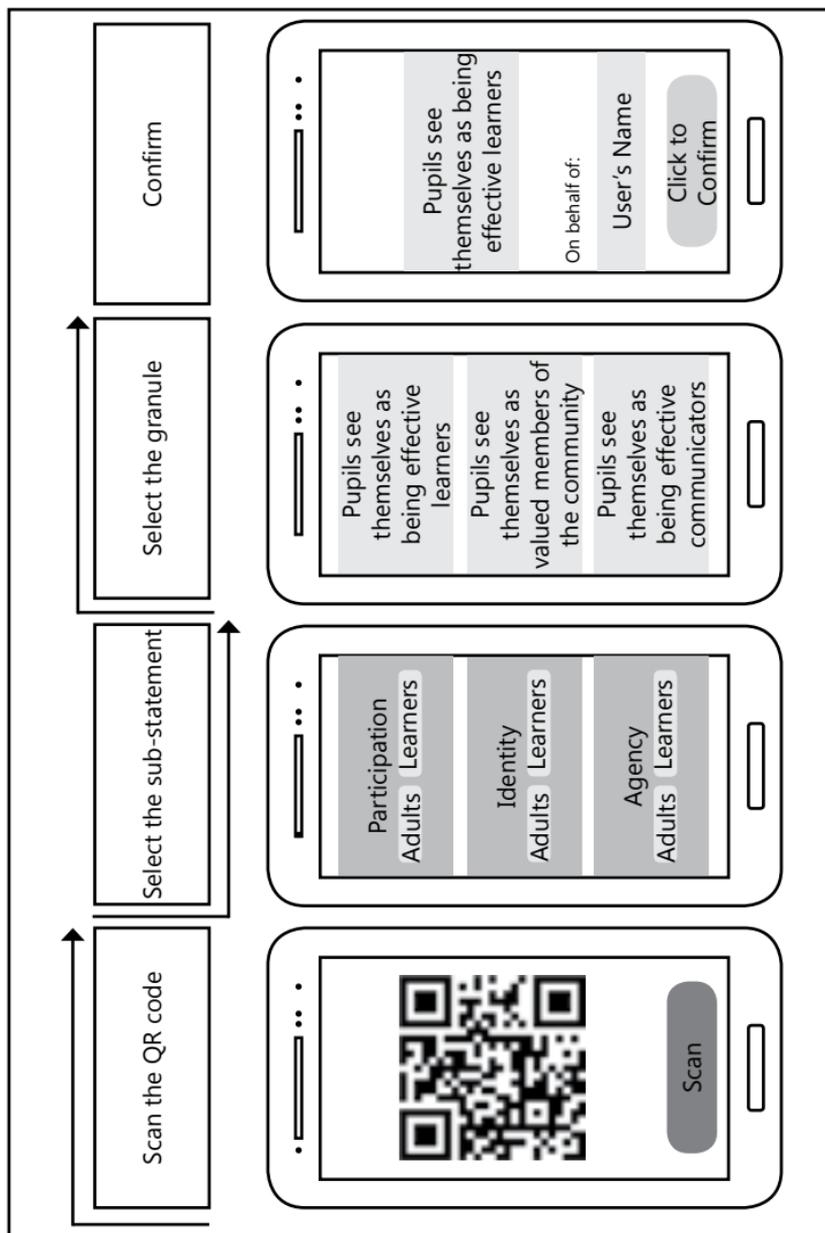
A process for ensuring that this takes place needs to be created in a manner which best suits the members of the CoPro.

## **PoL's delivery system**

One of the distinguishing features of PoL is that it utilises digital technology to enable the efficient capture of data about an individual's practice. Without this the system would be impractical to use.

The delivery system needs to make the process of recording claims about your practice quick and easy. Therefore, it could involve the use of a swipe card – to identify the user – and an app that allows you to identify the person for whom you are claiming evidence and the granule to which the evidence relates. Figure 4 illustrates what this process might involve.

**Figure 4: Mock-up of the process for claiming evidence**



# Conclusions

This paper has noted the need for a new approach to assessment that enhances the development of professional practice. It has developed the theoretical underpinnings for this new approach and presented the overarching structure in which this new model of assessment (PoL) can be developed.

Based upon this analysis we argue that PoL represents a productive approach to overcoming the inadequacies of current assessment models and simultaneously enhancing professional learning across a broad range of fields. It offers a reflective tool, which is under the control of those who are using it, drawing upon evidence from a broad range of sources. It acts as both an ongoing means of assessing changing practices and of ensuring the practices which are sought are relevant, achievable and valued.

Visit **[www.imagine.education](http://www.imagine.education)** for references and appendices.





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