

Enquiry in Education

Reflective journal

# Introduction

This document complements the [enquiry in education learning resource](https://auth.education.gov.scot/professional-learning/self-directed-professional-learning/enquiry-in-education/). It is an optional extra and is not for submission. You can use this as a reflective journal to support your enquiry.

If you use this and think there is anything that we need to add, remove or change please get in [get in touch](mailto:edspll@educationscotland.gov.scot).

# Using this reflective journal

A reflective journal is where you record your thoughts and your reactions to the learning. Your journal is personal to you and could be a physical or virtual notebook, voice-recordings saved on your phone, or even sketching in a scrapbook.

Reflection is a purposeful activity in which you analyse experiences, or your own practice, skills and responses to learn and improve.

Reflecting can involve:

* scrutinising an experience and the way you dealt with it
* evaluating a project or experiment and considering how to do it better next time
* reflecting on things you have read/heard/listened to (such as programme events) and linking theory with practice/lived experience

# Planning your enquiry

[Planning your practitioner enquiry](https://education.gov.scot/professional-learning/self-directed-professional-learning/enquiry-in-education/planning-a-practitioner-enquiry/) will help you pause and reflect on yourself as an educator; your core values, your purpose or what makes you tick. This is an important step in the enquiry process - it helps us to start with our why rather than focussing on what.

The time to explore is also important. Consider your learners and reflect on what is important to them and their needs. You may already have strong ideas of what you want to enquire into, this process of reflecting and exploring may change, clarify or refine these ideas.

## Pause and reflect

You might want to focus your reflections on yourself as an educator and think about what is important to you and how this might relate to your enquiry.

You might focus your reflections on your setting and learners, any observations you have made since the induction sessions and questions or ideas that have arisen from this.

You may have focussed your reading on the current educational context in Scotland and how this has impacted your thinking about your enquiry**.**

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## 2. The purpose of enquiry

What is the purpose of practitioner enquiry and why is it worth doing?

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## 3. Focus for your enquiry

Outline the thematic area you have chosen and the possible areas of practice you might focus on in your enquiring approach and why.

Give ideas of what you might do differently and what impact you think this could have on learners. You will have more than one idea as to what you might change or try at this stage – this is ok, just note them all down.

You might have considered how you would evidence the impact of what you plan to do. If so, make sure to keep a note of this for later.

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## 3. Reflecting on what is known

Once you have identified your enquiry focus, the next step is to look outwards and see what is already known.

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## 4. Creating an Enquiring Question

Use the simple ‘framework for an enquiry question’ to help you to focus your question if you have not already formed it.

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# Conducting your enquiry

[Conducting your practitioner enquiry resources](https://education.gov.scot/professional-learning/self-directed-professional-learning/enquiry-in-education/conducting-a-practitioner-enquiry/) support you as you refine the best enquiry process for you and your context and carry out your enquiry.

In addition, by continuing to explore the nature of enquiry we hope to create a shared enthusiasm within our learning community, of practitioners who want to move beyond an initial enquiry project to a career-long enquiry stance.

## 1. The process of practitioner enquiry

Now that you have considered the purpose of enquiry and the specific area you would like to explore, it is important to think about the process of enquiry and have a look at examples of the enquiry process.

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## 2. My Process for Enquiry

Now that you have looked at examples of enquiry processes, take time to write in your reflective journal under the title ‘My Process for Enquiry’.

### Prompts for reflection:

* note any parts of a process which you find helpful
* ignore any steps which you consider unclear
* make a note of any steps which you feel are missing from the process.

Create your own simple diagram, table or chart to show an enquiry process which makes sense to you and which you feel you could use as a guide. It might be like one in the links, or it might be quite different.

Which parts of the process are you confident about? Do any cause feelings of uncertainty? There is no right or wrong answer here, you are simply identifying a process which you intend to try out and then reflect upon.

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## 3. Conducting your practitioner enquiry

Consider:

* How will you measure your results?
* What’s the plan?

Don’t forget to do the easy bit and plan out your enquiry. Building on your process diagram, this is all about what and when.

Decide when you’ll be gathering evidence, when you’ll be changing your practice and when you’ll be gathering evidence again. What will you be doing differently in your practice and when?

What if during the enquiry:

* the learners don’t respond to the change the way you hoped
* something happens within your setting that makes you want or need to change direction

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# Reflecting on Progress

### Prompts for Reflection:

* How has my reading, events in the classroom or professional conversations influenced my thinking?
* What’s happening in my enquiry?
* What’s working and what potentially needs a rethink?
* What am I not sure about - who/what can help me?

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# Review

[Reviewing your practitioner enquiry](https://education.gov.scot/professional-learning/self-directed-professional-learning/enquiry-in-education/reviewing-a-practitioner-enquiry/) will support you to pause and reflect on your enquiry, on your learning journey and to consider the impact of practitioner enquiry on your [leadership of and for learning in your context](https://education.gov.scot/professional-learning/the-national-model-of-professional-learning/).

## 1. Pause and Reflect

* What did you plan to do and why?
* What was your original question and plan? Think about: who, what, where, when and why.
* Why was this important for your context - how did you know it was an important focus for your enquiry?
* How was your original enquiry backed up by policy and literature?
* Where did your enquiry fit into the bigger, Scottish education picture?

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### What has happened in your enquiry?

Chances are your enquiry plan may not have progressed quite as you envisaged (this is perfectly normal and expected). Take time to reflect on what you’ve done so far and with whom (colleagues and learners).

1. To what extent did you manage to answer your enquiry question?
2. What went well?
3. What bumps in the road did you come across and how did you attempt to adapt?

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### What are the implications and next steps?

1. What have you learned from the evidence you have gathered from your enquiring approach so far?
2. What does this tell you about the learning and/or wellbeing of your pupils?
3. What has the impact of taking this enquiring approach had on your colleagues and learning community (if any)?
4. What are your intended next steps?
5. Do you have more work to do on this area or can you see new enquiry areas?
6. How might this practitioner enquiry inform your practice going forward?

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### What impact has this had on your professional identity?

A fundamental part of practitioner enquiry is the exploration and deeper understanding of ourselves as professionals. Through enquiry, what do we learn about ourselves, our professional identity, and the values, beliefs and actions that this encompasses? Professional values, beliefs and actions are a key part of the Professional Standards for all educators. It may be helpful to consider your professional standards as you reflect on the following:

1. To what extent have you as an educator progressed and developed?
2. Have you achieved what you set out to achieve for your professional learning and the learning of the children and young people or adults that you work with?
3. What will this mean for your practice in the future?
4. How have you embedded your engagement in practitioner enquiry into your professional review and development process?

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## 2. My Leadership Journey

Look back over your reflective journal. What is the story of your professional learning journey through this enquiry cycle? Use your professional standards to support your reflection.

The National Model of Professional Learning has Leadership states that leaders understand that people are the drivers and enactors of change for improvement. In what way does practitioner enquiry put this into action?

Have a look at the following statements from practitioners about what they consider to be educator leadership:

“Taking ownership of my own teaching practice, being able to reflect and draw conclusions and changing where it is needed”.

“We are all leaders, influencing change, leading learners and others, encouraging others to take ownership and lead their own learning”.

“Leadership is not just about one person leading it is about a collaborative approach making change for the better”.

“…whenever a teacher gets curious and makes changes there are ripples and that this can be as transformative as an official directive from a designated Leader”.

“Being a conduit for change. In your own practice and the place where you work for the wider good. Having the confidence to speak up and try things. Being able to help and support others who may have similar ideas or issues that you've considered in your professional life, even if it hasn't formed part of a formal professional enquiry process”.

What resonates with you? Is there anything you would add or challenge? You may want to write your own definition to describe how you see your own leadership identity.

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# Creating an enquiry poster or other artefact

As part of an enquiry process, we should be able to evidence and share our learning. There are different ways that you could do this. The important thing is to be succinct and think about what information others would find helpful to reflect on their practice in their context.

We have included questions to support your thinking.

### What did you plan to do and why?

What did you plan to do, with whom and when?

Why was this needed? Think about context, policy and literature

### What has happened in your enquiry?

What has happened so far in your enquiry?

Did what you plan come to fruition or did you have to adapt and make changes?

How did you include your learners in your enquiry?

### What are the implications and next steps?

What are the implications of your enquiry for: your practice, your learners, your colleagues, more widely?

How do you know what the impact has been? What evidence do you have?

Based on what you have found what new questions do you have; and

Do you have a new enquiry question to explore?

### What impact has this had on your professional identity?

Where are you on your leadership journey and how has this been influenced by your enquiring approach?

Has engaging in this programme impacted upon your professional beliefs and values?

# Submit an enquiry poster

If you would like to share your learning with us and with educators across Scotland through this page, we ask that you [complete an enquiry poster template](https://education.gov.scot/professional-learning/self-directed-professional-learning/enquiry-in-education/sharing-learning-through-practitioner-enquiry/) and send it to: [PLsubmissions@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:PLsubmissions@educationscotland.gov.scot). Make sure that the title of your email is **Enquiry in Education** as the inbox is used for other submissions too.

The enquiry template is structured using the four questions outlined above and is in an easy to share format.

Please send your completed enquiry poster template and ensure you have also completed the submission questions on page 1 of the template.

We hope to publish the posters on our website to inspire others, so please don't include your name or setting on the poster itself unless you're happy with this being shared.

We review any enquiries submitted at the end of each month and if they have covered the four questions outlined above (described in more detail on the poster template) they will have met the submission criteria.

We will then publish them and send you a completion certificate for your Professional Learning portfolio.

# Feedback on enquiry in education resources

Your feedback is important to us and will be used to improve our professional learning offers in the future. Please take time to complete this [evaluation form](https://forms.office.com/e/FyLqAEdSTT), thank you.

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