



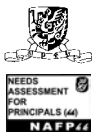
Serving principals **Needs Analysis Programme**

A NAFPhk Professional Development Programme




Issues ID





**A NAFPhk Professional Development Programme –
Serving Principals Needs Analysis Programme
*Issues ID***

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Introduction

SpNAP is designed to assist serving principals to identify their development needs. Part of the process is designed to target needs which stem from the ongoing and day-to-day issues which constantly arise in the school. The following example illustrates this point.

Mrs Chen, an experienced principal of 15 years standing, found herself in a meeting with a group of parents who demanded that her school create a 'students of high potential' or 'gifted' class. The parents believed that their children were being disadvantaged by not having their IQs recognised by the school. The parents believed that the school catered for remedial students, but not for the exceptionally talented. This issue had been 'brewing' for a couple of years, ever since one of the families had returned from Canada where their children had been in a school with a 'gifted children's' class. While Mrs Chen was not personally opposed to the idea, she was unsure of all the issues and lacked the knowledge (or experience) needed to act on the matter.

Issues ID stands for Issues Identification. This element of SpNAP is designed for principals who wish to base part of their needs analysis on what *they need to learn* (or skills they wish to refresh) in order to deal with some of the *current* issues or problems that they face in their schools or community. As one principal stated, "I am currently dealing with two really important issues, what I *need* is a lot more knowledge and skills about how to manage them properly. While I think I am doing a reasonable job, I also know that I could do it better."

There are two separate mechanisms in this booklet. Both aim to help you consider needs within the context of your school on an ongoing basis. The first mechanism, 'Issues ID – Needs, Fears and Concerns' asks you to identify the key issues presently facing you and your school. The second mechanism, 'Leadership in Context' encourages you to consider the challenges which are unique to your school context.

Steps to Effectiveness

Maintaining your success as a principal means acknowledging that you do not have all the answers all the time. That some problems and issues call for you to learn new skills or knowledge before responding. This process of on-the-job learning can be thought of as a staircase. As you climb the learning staircase you move to a higher level of the principalship – you become better in both your leadership and school management. Each step along the way involves some form of learning. This might **not** necessarily be learning from textbooks or workshops, but can also include learning from experience and learning from others. The Total Quality Management concept of ‘continuous learning’ or ‘ongoing professional education’ is important. Each day in the principal’s office brings new issues, and each issue can bring new challenges and opportunities for learning and development.

Figure 1: Stepping to Effectiveness





A Matter of Perception – the Learning Organisation Challenge

As a serving principal, you may have many years of experience in the job. Unfortunately, for a small number of principals such experience is taken as an indicator that they 'have done it all' and no longer have anything else to learn.

You will no doubt agree that this is a very limited view and that the most effective principals are those who lead professional **learning organisations**. In such organisations even issues that have been dealt with many times before can become an opportunity for ongoing learning and improvement – it is a matter of perception. In very simple terms, a professional learning organisation is one in which the principal and staff are committed to ongoing and continued learning. They are schools where people:

- work together to solve problems.
- strive to create a collaborative culture in which shared standards are developed and common goals are established.
- are focused on improved practice and greater learning.
- share leadership and decision-making.
- foster continual learning for teachers as well as students.

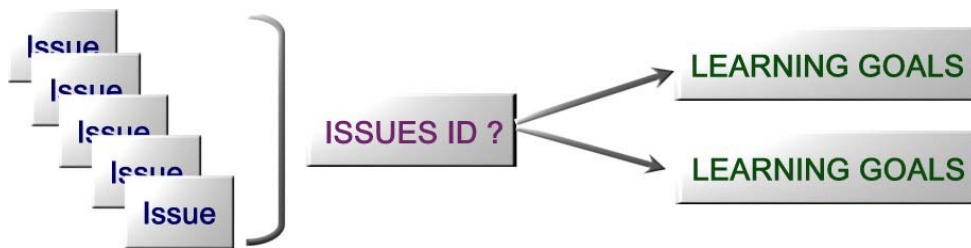
(From: National Commission for Teaching and America's Future Report "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future", 1996.)

The key for needs analysis is therefore to use **various school issues as challenges for ongoing learning**. These issues can come from day-to-day events related to your leadership of the school, from your most recent QAI report, outcomes of any form of school self-evaluation or even feedback from a parent group. Once you have identified one or a number of issues they can be used to design relevant learning goals which can in turn drive professional learning. This is the Learning Organisation Challenge.

Taking up the Learning Organisation Challenge

There are obviously many issues flying at you from different facets of school, however, experienced practitioners may at times have difficulty with immediately identifying issues that could lead to learning challenges and goals. Although it is easy to identify the day-to-day leadership issues, it can be more difficult to decide which of the myriad issues to focus on – put another way, there are so many issues haunting the lives of most principals that it can be daunting to choose *which* issues form the basis of their Learning Organisation Challenge.

Figure 2: Learning Organisation Challenge – which issues?





Mechanism 1: Issues ID – Needs, Fears & Concerns

One way of breaking down the myriad of things happening in your school – and to identify those issues that lead to worthwhile learning goals – is to use the framework of “needs, fears and concerns”.

Issues ID is based on clarifying your current **school needs, fears and concerns**. These are briefly introduced below:

Needs are defined as issues that come from the needs of the school.

For example: The **need** for

- funds to start a new learning program.
- rearranging a teacher’s lesson plans to cater for a student’s individual learning needs.
- managing the change necessary to ensure a pedagogical innovation is adopted by teachers.
- counselling staff in order to meet their emotional needs following a critical incident at school.
- shared vision and values.
- staff training and development.

Fears are defined as issues that come from things the school is ‘afraid’ of.

For example: **Fear** of

- being sued (litigation) for a breach of duty of care.
- a fall in student achievement in external examinations.
- parent complaints due to perceptions of low standards or unsafe school conditions.
- a critical incident occurring at school (e.g. suicide of a student or a teacher being attacked).

Concerns are defined as issues that arise because the school is striving for optimal performance.

For example: **Concerns** about

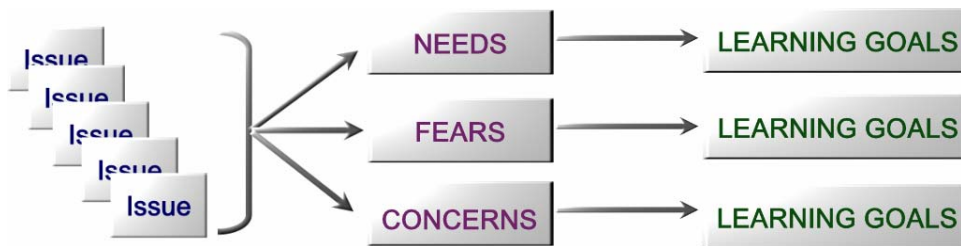
- the appearance of the premises/building or garden’s maintenance.
- the incidence of bullying in the school.
- the age of the school’s computers and network system.
- a teacher’s performance.
- an existing database management system.
- the lack of collaboration between teachers.

The 'One-One-One' Rule

The reason for breaking down day-to-day issues into needs, fears and concerns is to help you to reflect on the importance of each issue and to determine which issues might lead to learning goals.

While there is no one best way to do this, you may select **one need, one fear and one concern** to develop into learning goals. This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 3: One – One – One *Issues ID*





Shared Leadership in Issues ID

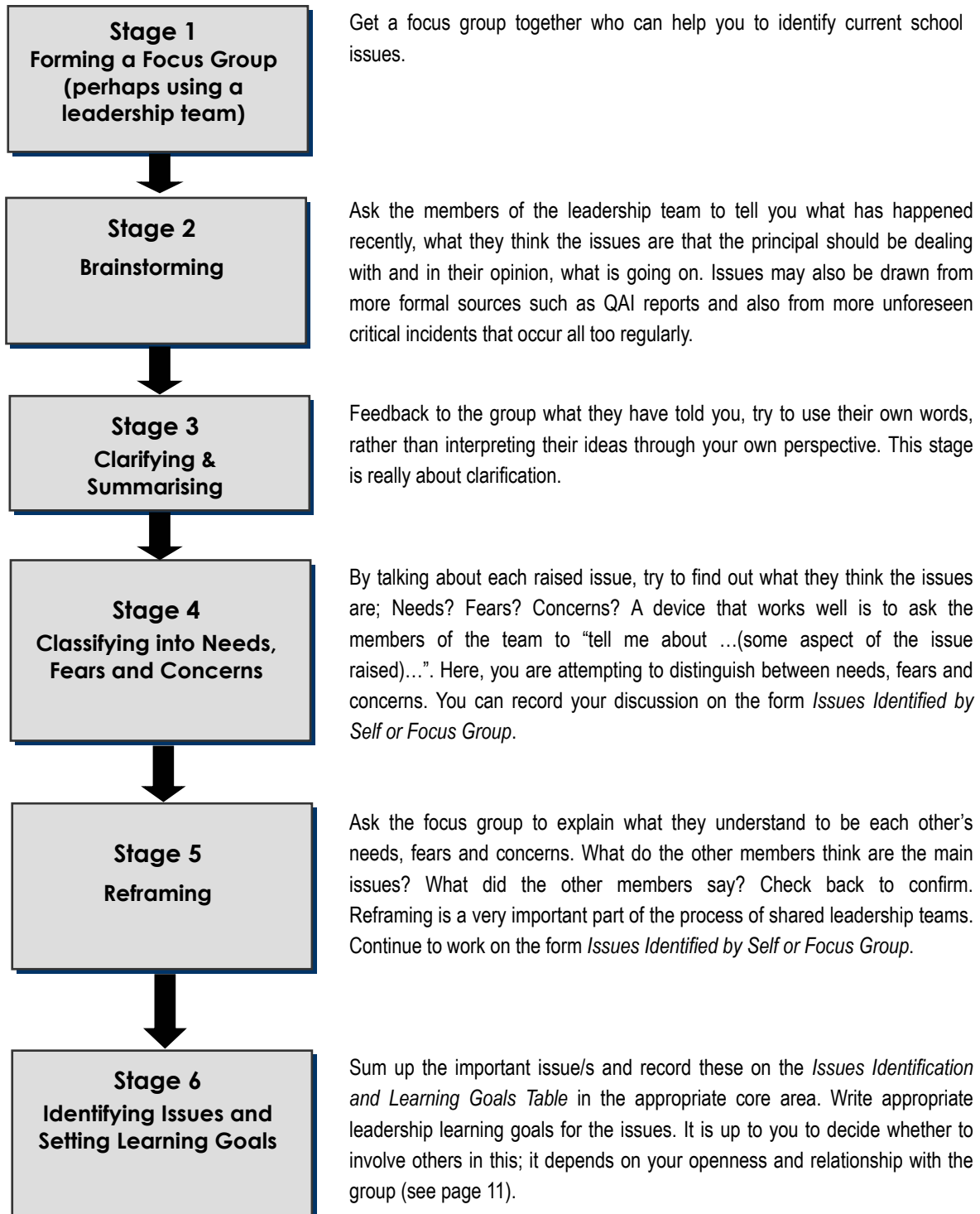
It is also a good idea to engage other staff in the learning organisation challenge.

It is clear from the school leadership literature that shared leadership can be very important in effective schools. Shared leadership occurs when the principal engages others in leadership roles. This is not so much delegation as building leadership density using a process of sharing power and responsibility. The formation of a leadership team is highly effective in **Issues ID**. You may use your existing leadership team or form other groups to examine issues.

The process of engaging a leadership team in the process of **Issues ID** involves asking the team to answer the simple question: “What are the key issues facing our school on a day-to-day basis?” During this process they are asked to reflect on school issues (and describe them as needs, fears and / or concerns). As well as a useful needs analysis exercise this is also an excellent team building and school planning activity. The process is professionally engaging and can lead to collaboration on important elements of school effectiveness, such as agreeing on school outcomes and school planning.

Shared Leadership in Issues ID (Flow Chart)

The following flow chart describes a method for setting up shared leadership in *Issues ID*. **Of course you do not need to use a team, the exercise can also be done individually.**



Issues Identified by Self or Focus Group

<p><u>NEEDS</u></p>	<p><i>E.g. Teachers of the Math.Dept. need to standardize their lesson plans - students from different classes are now focusing on a different topic and find it difficult to form study groups.</i></p>				
<p><u>FEARS</u></p>	<p><i>E.g. My students' performance in HKCEE has been declining over years. The QAI report, which reflects students' exam results, shows that our students are doing poorly in open exam thus affecting our school's reputation.</i></p>				
<p><u>CONCERNS</u></p>	<p><i>E.g. English teachers do not seem to know what teaching aids their colleagues have prepared for classes. They don't seem to share ideas and prepare lessons together.</i></p>				

Mechanism 2: Leadership in Context

This mechanism has two parts. Part I asks you to think about your leadership within ten specific areas of your school. Part II encourages you to select those facets of your school context which you believe have the potential to most influence how you define and exercise leadership. The activities can be done in any order and may be usefully done with other members of the school community, even during formal staff meetings.

Part I [Structured]

This activity asks you (either alone or with your senior management group) to consider **your** unique school community and the rewards and challenges it presents to your leadership. Identifying challenges related specifically to your school leadership can help you identify key issues which call for leadership development. These can be used to develop meaningful learning goals.

The activity aims to encourage you to think more deeply about leadership development within the context of your school, whether you have been there for 2 or 20 years. The activity should be viewed as a starting point only – consideration of context must infuse all leadership thought and action.

- Step 1:** On the form *My School-My leadership* I record in point form key words, statements or figures which describe defining features of your school within the headings included in each of the ten boxes. A defining feature is something which you consider influences present and future school life. It might be useful to discuss such features with other groups in the school.
- Step 2:** Think carefully about how the defining features challenge the way you presently practice and define leadership within your school. Record the challenges in the appropriate *Issues That Challenge* boxes. What you are doing here is identifying some key leadership issues related specifically to the unique context of your school. Again, this step may be done either individually or, perhaps more usefully, with your leadership team or another school-based group.
- Step 3:** From the challenges listed for the ten areas select the **three** which you believe require action and record them in the *Issues Priority* boxes. That is, those that you believe are crucial to sharpening your leadership of the school – and so the further improvement of the school. Working with other groups may also be very useful at this stage.
- Step 4:** Once you have prioritized the three main challenges to your leadership go to the *Issues Identification and Learning Goals* table and write the three key issues which challenge your leadership in the Issues column next to the Core Area which best captures the thrust of the challenge.
- Step 5:** After you have entered the issues into the table on page 19, select the most important or most pressing and write appropriate learning goals.



My School – My Leadership I

1. Student Background

2. Community Demographics

3. Student Outcomes (Affection & Academic)

4. Parental Involvement

5. Teacher Knowledge & Skills

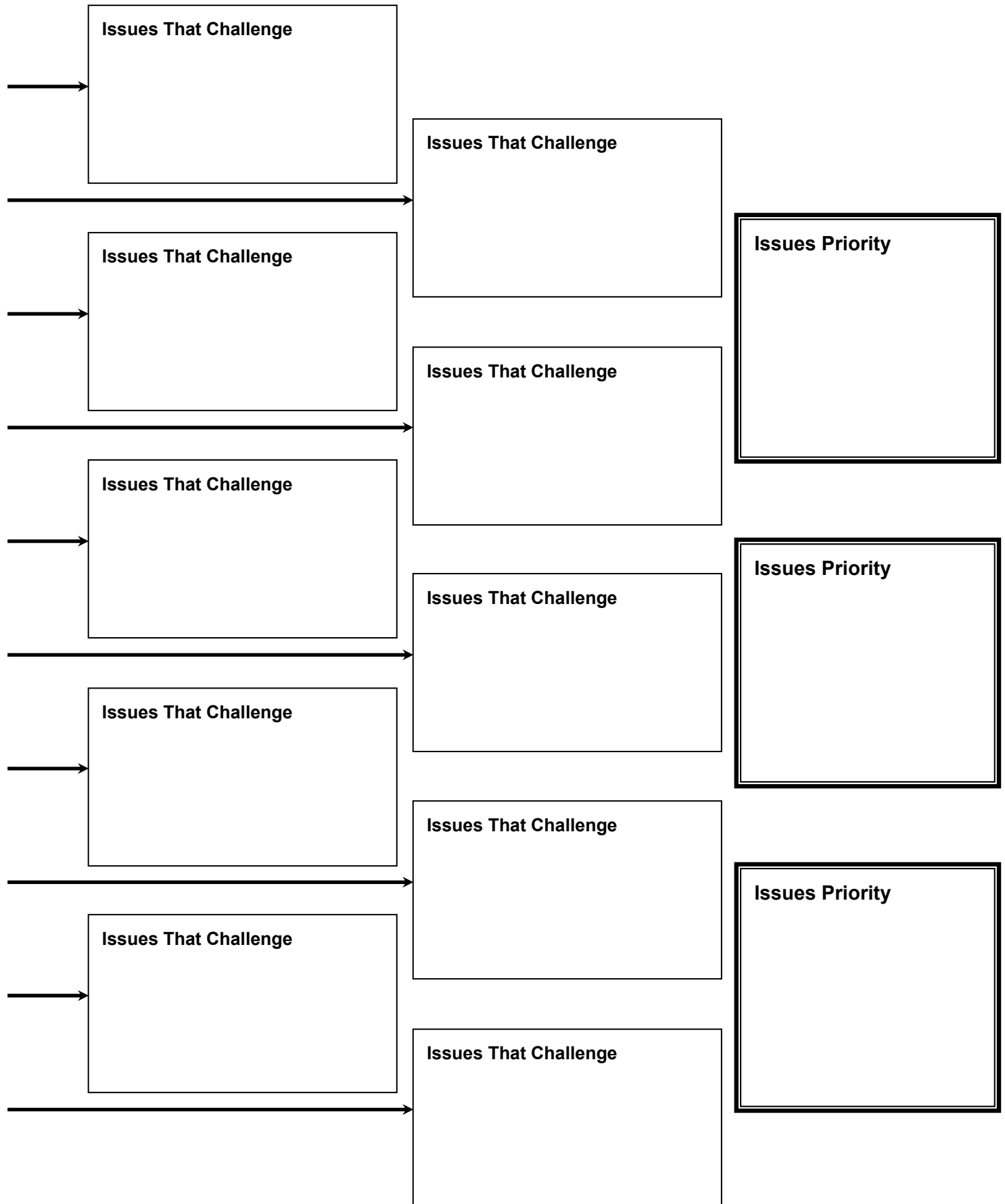
6. Staff Morale

7. Senior Staff Leadership

8. Support of SMC

9. Lingering Problems

10. Curriculum Reform





Part II [Selected]

This activity asks you to consider your unique school community and the challenge it presents to your leadership. Identifying challenges related specifically to your school leadership can help you identify key issues which call for leadership development. These can be used to develop meaningful learning goals.

The activity aims to encourage you to think more deeply about leadership development within the context of your school, whether you have been there for 2 or 20 years. The activity should be viewed as a starting point only – consideration of context must infuse all leadership thought and action.

- Step 1:** Read the list of headings on the following page – *Key Areas of School Operation and Culture* – and select the ten areas which you or your group consider most important at this time. Feel free to add to this list, or ask others to add to or alter the list.
- Step 2:** On the form *My School – My Leadership II* record in point form key words, statements or figures which describe defining features of your school within the headings you wrote in each of the ten boxes. A defining feature is something which you consider influences present and future school life. It might be useful to discuss such features with other groups in the school.
- Step 3:** Think carefully about how the identified features challenge the way you presently practice and define leadership within your school. Record the challenges in the appropriate *Issues That Challenge* boxes. What you are doing here is identifying some key leadership issues related specifically to the unique context of your school. Again, this step may be done either individually or, perhaps more usefully, with your leadership team or another school-based group.
- Step 4:** From the challenges listed for the ten areas select the **three** which you believe require action and record them in the *Issues Priority* boxes. That is, those that you believe are crucial to sharpening your leadership of the school – and so the further improvement of the school. Working with other groups may also be very useful at this stage.
- Step 5:** Once you have prioritized the three main challenges to your leadership go to the *Issues Identification and Learning Goals* table and write the three key issues which challenge your leadership in the Issues column next to the Core Area which best captures the thrust of the challenge.
- Step 6:** After you have entered the issues into the table on page 19, select the most important or most pressing and write appropriate learning goals.

Key Areas of School Operation and Culture

- Teachers' Attitude to Change
- Students' Attitude to Change
- Quality Assurance
- Adult Learning
- Use of Record
- Parental Expectation
- Use of Technology
- Competition
- Demographics, Socioeconomic Change
- Student Disciplinary Record
- Teacher Initiatives
- Preferential Development
- School-based Curriculum
- Teacher Teaching
- Equity in Learning
- Student Understanding
- Teacher Education/Appraisal
- Timetable
- ECA
- Development Planning
- Finances
- Student Grouping
- Use of Space
- Personnel Strengths
- Community Linkage
- Collaboration
- Classroom Management
- Teacher Demographic
- Induction
- Selection Policy
- Student Grouping
- School Facilities and Equipment
- Professional Development Beliefs
- Professional Development Programs



My School – My Leadership II

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

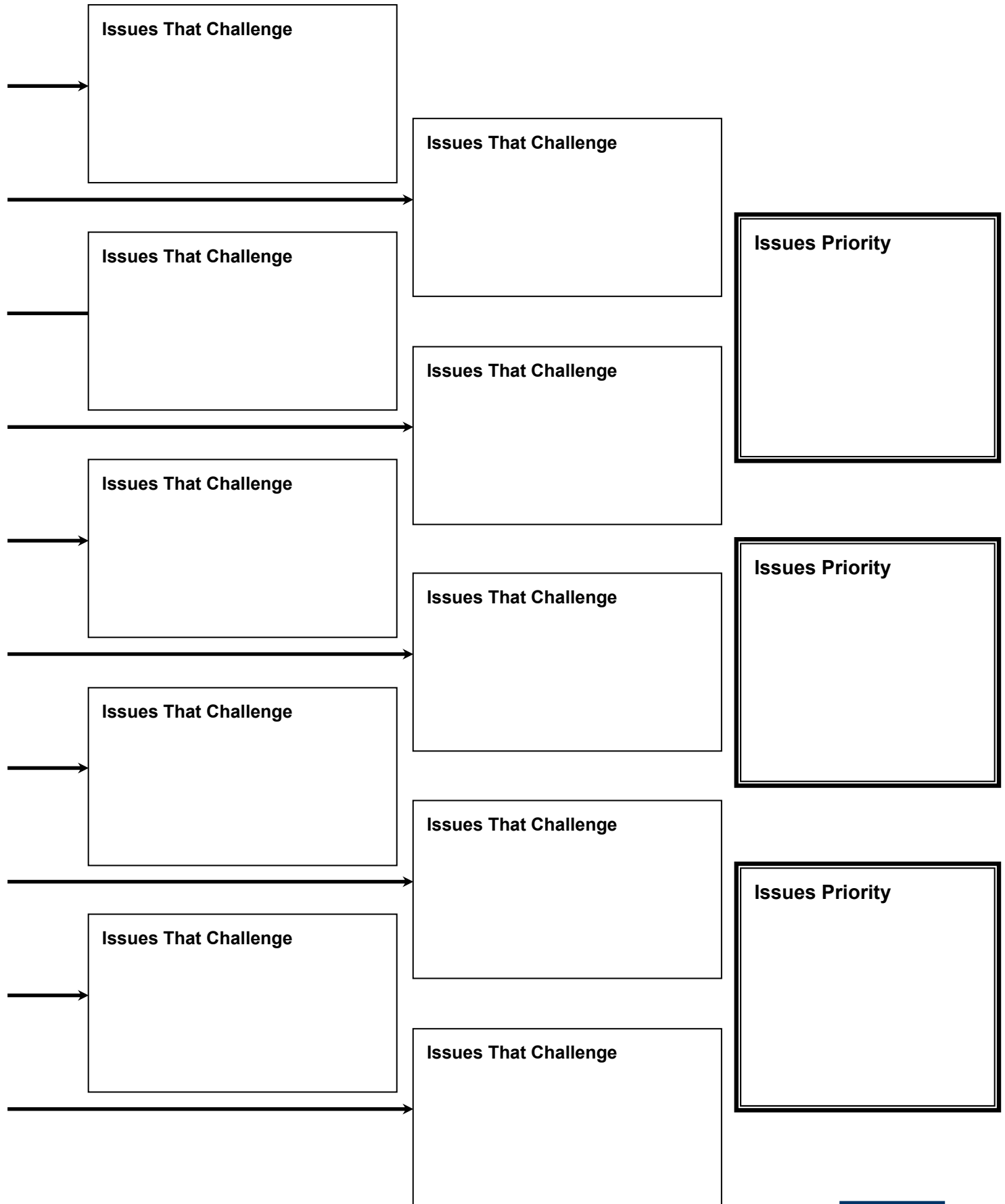
6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____





So what are the issues that can lead to ongoing learning?

In this final section we suggest that you pull all your thinking (and the ideas identified by your team) into one set of school issues. These issues can be drawn from either one or both of the two mechanisms.

One way of identifying the issues that can become learning goals, is to use the following table *Issues Identification and Learning Goals* on page 19.

In order to complete this table, you should make a list of all the issues currently affecting your school, either taken from your Needs, Fears and Concerns from the challenges 'in context' which you face or from something that suddenly arises. Take the most important issue from your list and arrange them in accordance with the *Key Qualities of the Principalship in Hong Kong*. These are the roles and associated tasks of principals in school-based management and school improvement – they have been clustered into six core areas.

After you have grouped the issues select the most important or the most pressing and write appropriate learning goals.

Issues Identification and Learning Goals

Example:

6 Core Areas	Issue	Learning Goal
<p>Strategic Direction and Policy Environment</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current and emerging education and education-related policies as guides to planning and future intent. ▪ New theories, ideas and trends in education with potential for informing strategic thinking and planning. ▪ The legal context and its implications for the rights, responsibilities and duties of school members and for the formulation and implementation of school policy and planning. 	<p><i>We are not sure where we are going. We need to review the school's strategic plan for the coming year and set new outcomes/priorities.</i></p>	<p><i>Learn more about the strategic planning process and the best way to get staff involved so that they are committed to our agreed school outcomes.</i></p>

6 Core Areas	Issue	Learning Goal
<p>Strategic Direction and Policy Environment</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current and emerging education and education-related policies as guides to planning and future intent. ▪ New theories, ideas and trends in education with potential for informing strategic thinking and planning. ▪ The legal context and its implications for the rights, responsibilities and duties of school members and for the formulation and implementation of school policy and planning. 		
<p>Teaching, Learning and Curriculum</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum design and evaluation in fashioning an innovative, relevant and balanced curriculum. ▪ Pedagogy and informed teaching and learning approaches geared to appropriate learning outcomes for all students. ▪ Social and child psychology necessary for understanding the needs and behaviours of individuals and groups of students. ▪ Psychology of learning as it underpins the teaching and learning processes. ▪ Coaching and counselling for providing a supportive and safe environment in which teaching and learning are practised and experienced in a caring and enjoyable fashion. ▪ Management, organisation and leadership as they support informed teaching and learning practices. ▪ Student assessment as it relates to informed curriculum practice. ▪ Computer technology embedded in teaching, learning and curriculum. 		



6 Core Areas	Issue	Learning Goal
<p>Leader & Teacher Growth & Development</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Models of, and approaches to, professional development and training leading to improved understanding of school and classroom practice. ▪ Coaching and counselling techniques useful for supporting staff in embracing student-centred and lifelong learning. ▪ Personal health and stress management as means of sustaining high levels of professional performance. ▪ Technology as a tool for supporting professional development. <p>Knowledge of the theory and implementation of cutting-edge professional development pertaining to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum design and evaluation consistent with current theories and principles. ▪ Pedagogy and informed teaching-learning approaches. ▪ Social and child psychology. ▪ Psychology of child and adult learning. ▪ Management, organisation and leadership. ▪ Student assessment. 		
<p>Staff and Resource Management</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budgeting and financial management as ways of resourcing the school's academic and non-academic programme. ▪ Allocating and deploying human, financial and physical resources to support the priorities of the school with respect to teaching, learning and curriculum. ▪ Management and organisation for the efficient and effective day-to-day operation of the school. ▪ Management and organisation of school resources consistent with principles underpinning school policy and informed teaching, learning and curriculum practices. ▪ Computer technology for financial and organisational management. 		

6 Core Areas	Issue	Learning Goal
<p>Quality Assurance and Accountability</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy context with respect to quality assurance and accountability and their relationship with school performance. ▪ Evaluation processes pertaining to students, teachers, departments and the whole school and the benefits that follow for improved performance. ▪ Data collection and analysis techniques relating to individual, department and school performance. ▪ Computer technology as it relates to data collection and analysis. 		
<p>External Communication and Connection</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, Attributes related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social, economic and political conditions as they relate to the local, national and global contexts. ▪ The purpose of parental and community involvement and participation in school life. ▪ Computer technology as it relates to furthering connections with local, national and global communities and involving parents in school life. 		
<p>Miscellaneous</p>		

Transfer your most important learning goals to the Leader's Learning Journal in the SpNAP Workbook.



Conclusion

One of the keys for needs analysis is to identify **various school issues as challenges for ongoing learning**. It is important to take the day-to-day complexity of school leadership and use this to identify issues from which you can derive **Learning Goals**, which in turn drive professional learning. This is the **Learning Organisation Challenge**.

This booklet has outlined a process for identifying learning goals from the issues arising in the unique context of your school. We have advocated the use of **leadership teams or focus groups** to assist you to identify such school issues while building **shared leadership**. However, you can also complete the process on your own.

We have also suggested two mechanisms which can help you identify the most important issues.

Reference:

National Commission for Teaching and America's Future. "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future", 1996.