



The effectivity of professional development trajectories for school leaders

Presentation:
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Societal context

Challenges for school leaders:

- School policy and development
- Curriculum and the organisation and evaluation of education

(Cordero et al., 2018; Plavčan, 2020)

Pressure from:

- Complex and changing social contexts (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Gurr & Drysdale, 2020; Hawkins & James, 2016)
- Societal expectations for high-quality education (Ritzema et al., 2022)
- Responsibility for pupil performance (Tan, 2018; Trust et al., 2018; van Middelkoop & Glastra, 2018)

Need for effective professional development initiatives for school leaders

(Pont, Moorman & Nusche, 2008; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009; van Wessum, 2018)

Educational research context

High-quality, long-term professional development trajectories (PDT) (Jensen, 2016; Sahlin, 2023):

- Organisation and approach influence perceived effectiveness (Mdhlalose, 2022; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tanghe &

Schelfhout, 2023)



However:

- Concrete transfer and sustainable implementation of content is challenging (Grossman & Salas, 2011; Mdhlalose, 2022)
- Especially after the trajectory ends, without funding or support... (Askeff-Williams & Koh, 2020; Cooper et al., 2015)

How can participation in professional development activities be used more effectively for professional growth as a school leader and for school development?

Question card

Based on doctoral research

- development of a **Question card** for school leaders
- to help purposefully select professional development trajectories

The card is structured around four phases:

- Selection of professional development trajectories (before)
- Preparation of participation (before)
- Participation and transfer of content (during)
- Further sustainable implementation and embedding (after)

Question card (first step – in subgroups)

1. **Review the questions** for each phase (see document)
2. **Circle the questions (a maximum of three per phase)** that trigger you the most, with the aim of increasing the perceived added value of your participation as a school leader in professional development trajectories
3. **In the box below each phase**, write down why you consider these questions to be the most valuable
4. **If you feel any important questions are missing** based on your own experience, add them in the box as well



From school leader development to school development (second round - subgroups)

How can you ensure that the input from your participation to this ESHA conference leads to concrete actions to further develop your school/team/...?

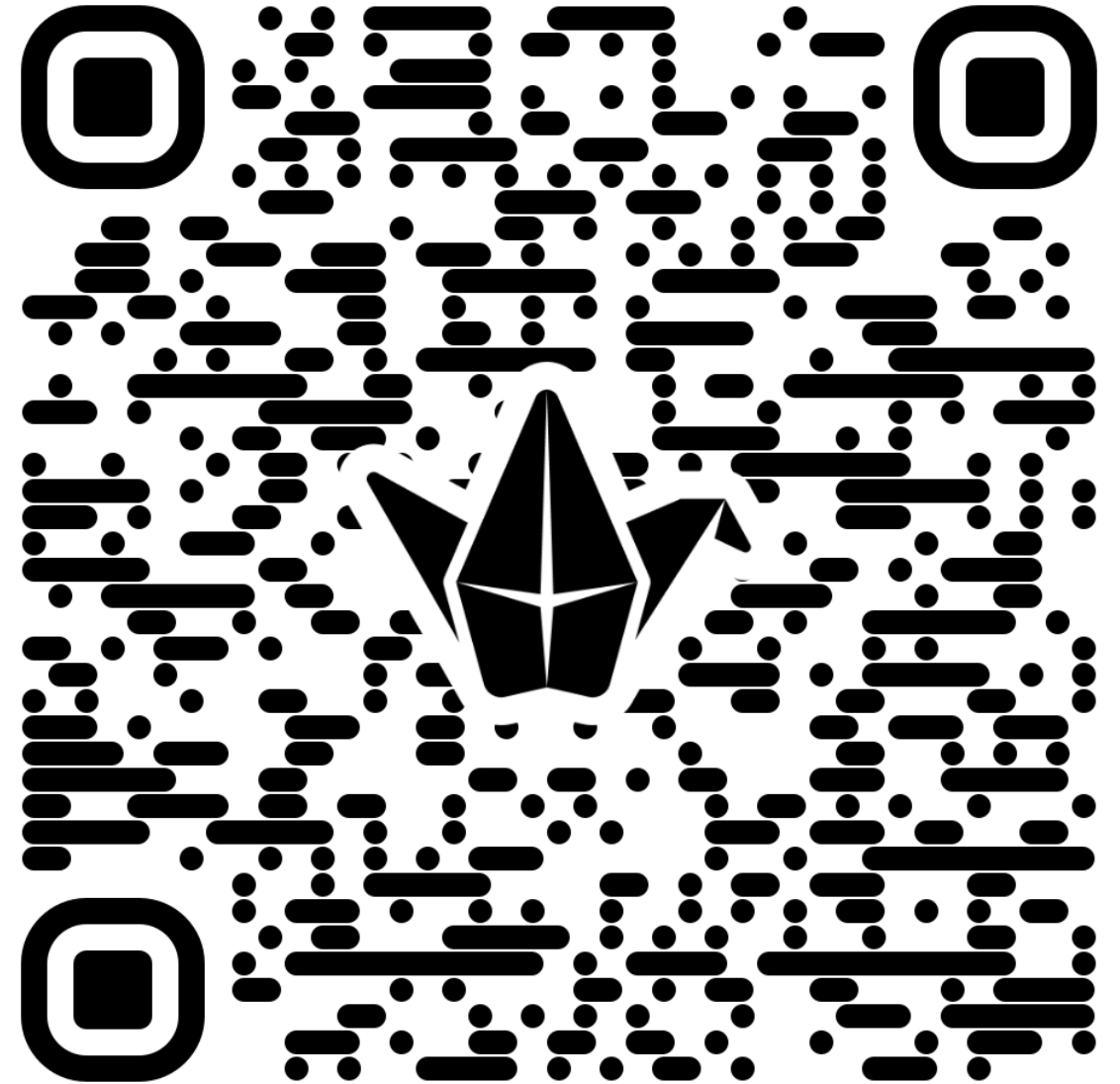
- What do you want to take away from this conference in concrete terms?
- How do you intend to put this into practice/in your school, e.g. timeline, checklist, action plan, meetings? Please, make it actionable!
- What concrete support or resources do you need to make this happen (level: school, team, school leader, ...)?





Overall outcomes of this session

- How can tools be useful to make your participation in professional development trajectories/activities more effective? And why exactly?
- What concrete benefits does tools (e.g. Question card) offer you as a school leader?
- What else do you need for your professional development and school development?



Workshop reflection survey round 3 - Mini Symposium Part 2: Leading a School as a Learning Organisation

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Publications

Tanghe, E., & Schelfhout, W. (2025). Goal-and action-orientation as key factors during a professional development trajectory for school leaders to facilitate sustainable transfer of training. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-27.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2025.2485134>

Tanghe, E., & Schelfhout, W. (2025). Sustainable transfer of training after participation in a professional development programme for school leaders: influential factors related to school leaders and their school context. *Management in Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08920206251330>

Tanghe, E., Smits, T. F. H., & Schelfhout, W. (2024). Professional learning communities of school leaders within inter-school networks: opportunities and conditions for sustainable professionalization. *Pedagogische studiën*, 101(2), 91-124.
<https://doi.org/10.59302/g4zg0q08>

Tanghe, E.; Schelfhout, W. (2023). Professionalization Pathways for School Leaders Examined: The Influence of Organizational and Didactic Factors and Their Interplay on Triggering Concrete Actions in School Development. *Educ. Sci.*, 13, 614.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13060614>

PhD dissertation: [link](#).



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Thank you!

