



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION NEW ZEALAND

*Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga Aotearoa*



**Evaluation of the  
Inservice Teacher Education  
Practice Project (INSTEP)**

**Report to the Ministry of Education**

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# **Evaluation of the Inservice Teacher Education Practice Project (INSTEP)**

## **Final Report**

Meenakshi Sankar

MARTIN<sup>!</sup>JENKINS



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# Executive summary

## Introduction

Martin Jenkins was contracted by the Ministry of Education to undertake the evaluation of Inservice Teacher Education Practice (INSTEP) project. INSTEP was designed to promote a strategic and coherent focus across the inservice teacher education system and build the capability of inservice teacher educators. Essentially the project was expected to develop and establish effective evidence-based approaches to the learning and practice of inservice teacher educators.

Recent publications such as the *Teacher Professional learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (2007) highlighted the critical role played by inservice teacher educators in promoting effective teacher professional development and promoting teacher learning. For a while now there has been some concern within the Ministry that the delivery of inservice teacher education services is variable and anecdotal evidence suggests that the delivery of professional development does not often meet the needs of teachers. Through this project the Ministry aimed to fill gaps in current knowledge and understandings about inservice teacher education *practice* and trial approaches that would inform future practice. This would contribute to the ongoing development of professional practice of inservice and learning of teacher educators. Meeting the project objectives involved:

- establishing a national group of practising inservice teacher educators to coordinate a coherent approach to developing inservice teacher education knowledge and expertise
- developing and publishing evidence-based professional learning materials for inservice teacher educators
- drawing on the expertise and experience of representatives from the inservice teacher education sector
- piloting and refining approaches to professional learning through inquiry-based research projects
- evaluating and refining the project on an ongoing basis applying the research and development principles underpinning INSTEP.

## Evaluation approach

The evaluation (refer evaluation framework presented on pages 15 and 16 of this report) was carried out in two phases:

- Phase one was undertaken between April 2007 and July 2007. This phase involved an examination of the role and contribution of project structures and processes in helping and/or hindering INSTEP from achieving the project goals. Data was gathered from the 12 National Facilitators (NFs) involved nationally in INSTEP as well the INSTEP project team located within the Ministry. The analysis was tested and sharpened in discussions with the wider group of national facilitators and the Evaluation Advisory Group set up within the Ministry in June 2007.
- Phase two was initiated in July 2007 and concluded in December 2008. This phase involved two sets of activities: a longitudinal case study research (with two data collection points) and a sector survey. Four case study NF *pods* were selected in consultation with the INSTEP project team and each case study included in-depth interviews with the National Facilitator, two Regional Facilitators, 2-4 inservice teacher educators within the provider organisation involved in INSTEP, some teachers and school leaders. The sector survey was undertaken with all participants in INSTEP over the three-year period including Sector

Reference Group (SRG) members. In total 361 participants were sent the questionnaire and we achieved a response rate of 55%. The aim of phase two was to identify early indicators of change and assess the extent to which there was evidence to suggest that shifts in inservice teacher education practice had occurred and the extent to which these were sustained after INSTEP.

This report is a synthesis of data gathered from evaluative activities carried out in phase two and the main findings have been presented in three parts:

- Understanding pre INSTEP context for ISTE practice
- Demonstrating the value of INSTEP
- Implications for the future.

## **Part 1: Understanding pre-INSTE context for ISTE practice**

INSTEP was designed promote a strategic and coherent focus across the system in response to the variability in the quality and consistency in inservice teacher education practice in New Zealand. Therefore building an understanding of the pre-INSTEP context was a critical step as it set the backdrop against which the value and merit of INSTEP could be meaningfully understood. The evaluation findings highlighted a number of challenges for ISTE's due to the fact that the teachers or school principals who took on the role of an inservice teacher educator had not been adequately supported to make this transition by their employers. Consequently ISTE's found certain aspects of their role particularly challenging in the initial stages. Notably, their lack of experience in working with adults, output driven nature of advisory work within School Support Services, perceived pressure to act as the 'expert', and their lack of facilitation experience were identified as factors that impacted on their ability to be effective in delivering professional development to teachers.

These challenges combined with the mixed skill sets of the current pool of inservice teacher educators had contributed to the variability in practice observed by the Ministry. ISTE's said that the following areas of practice were most significantly impacted by these challenges:

- Quality of data analysis as ISTE's own professional development and learning had not extended their skills in this area resulting in pockets of good practice in relation to data analysis
- Insufficient time spent on planning and diagnostic processes when designing professional development and learning interventions with and for teachers
- Coaching and mentoring newer staff within the organisations as there were no institutional systems and processes for induction and ongoing training and support for new staff
- Developing and growing as reflective practitioners, as pressure to deliver on outputs meant that there was insufficient time spent critically reflecting on practice.

The issues and challenges faced by inservice teacher educators pre-INSTEP clearly suggest that INSTEP was a timely and an important intervention in developing a national approach to improving the quality of inservice teacher education practice.

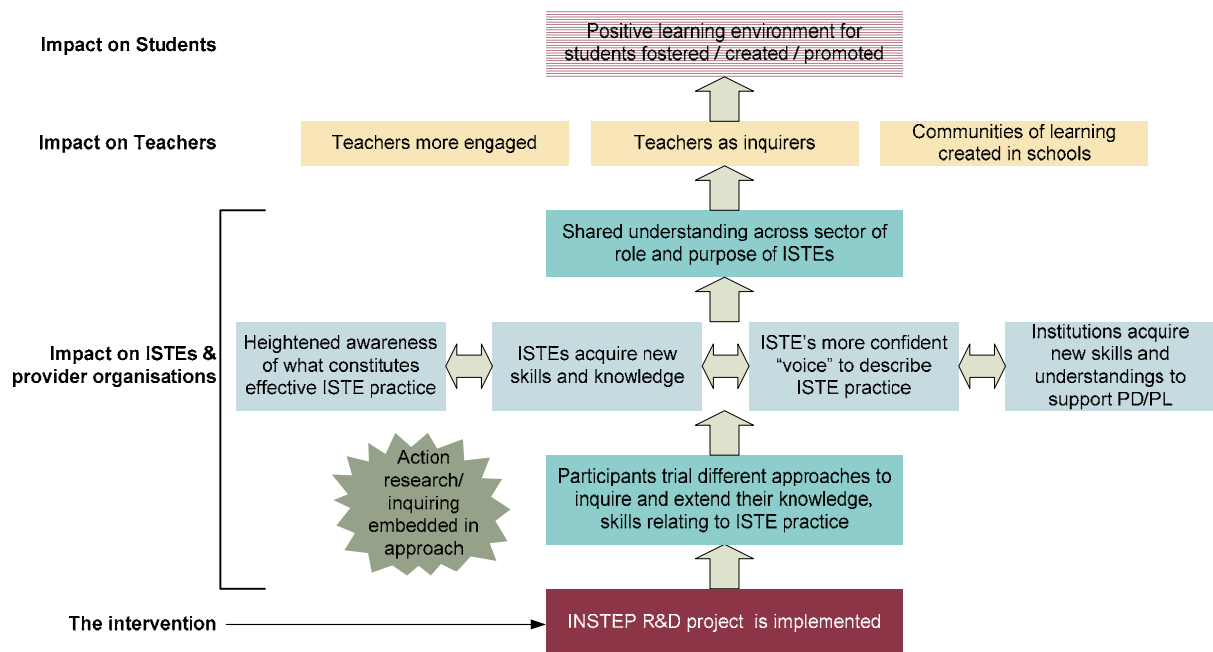


## Part 2: Demonstrating the value of INSTEP

A key project outcome for INSTEP was the development of a model for the ongoing professional development of professional development facilitators owned and operated in a self-sustaining way of teacher education professionals across the country. Therefore determining the extent to which this outcome was achieved was an important step for this evaluation. In this section we discuss the value and benefits of INSTEP for participants in bringing about the shifts desired in knowledge, skills and attributes regarding ISTE practice. The discussion is presented around the theory of change diagram developed to represent and convey the essence of INSTEP and its contribution to participants. The diagram illustrates *how* INSTEP has contributed to bringing about the desired shifts in ISTE knowledge and practice and the nature of this contribution to improved teaching quality which in turn contributes to improved student outcomes.

This diagram has been generated from the evidence presented by participants and illustrates how INSTEP has contributed to the outcomes in the real world. The analysis of the findings from INSTEP presented in this section is wrapped around this analytical model.

**Figure 1: How INSTEP works to bring about desired shifts - an analytical model**



### Implementation of INSTEP

Participants described the INSTEP project as an “invaluable investment in building capability of ISTE’s”. Despite the challenges posed by the research and development approach, the project’s goals of bringing together practitioners from across the sector to work collaboratively to examine, inquire and build knowledge about the practice and learning of ISTE’s was highly commended by all participants. The investment in INSTEP was seen as an acknowledgement by the Ministry of the importance and value of ISTE as a lever for affecting change in the teaching and learning area and served to bring about greater consistency and coherence in practice. While participants recognised that there were inbuilt tensions across providers given the current contestable environment (which runs counter to the collaborative inquiry promoted within INSTEP), there was some degree of openness to engage and share different interpretations and approaches to inservice teacher education.

The key elements in the design of the INSTEP ‘intervention’ that enabled the project to achieve positive outcomes were:

- The research and development approach
- Leadership by a core group of national facilitators
- Inquiry/action research within communities of practice
- Management by a project team located within the Ministry
- Concurrent development of learning materials
- Additional support through research mentors, online communities, international speakers etc.

### **Participants undertake inquiry into their practice and trial new approaches**

In keeping with the R&D nature of the project, participants were given fair amount of flexibility to frame their inquiry into their own practice around what mattered most to them as ISTE. The INSTEP project structures provided a broad framework/ infrastructure within which this inquiry into practice took place (eg national facilitators supporting regional facilitators who in turn supported inquiry into practice by ISTE; national facilitators inquiring into ISTE practice and identifying principles underpinning their work) and offered ISTE the opportunity to identify problems of practice or practice puzzles and pursue this inquiry to achieve better outcomes for teachers and students.

Over the course of the INSTEP project ISTE developed a range of different approaches to the inquiry, each of which was designed to facilitate critical reflection on a problem of practice identified by them. The research reports provided to the Ministry by the NFs at the conclusion of INSTEP document the nature of inquiry undertaken by each of the 12 pods within the project. Our analysis of these reports showed that there was significant variability across the pods and that across the 12 pods, changes were occurring at two broad levels: at an individual ISTE level and at the provider organisational/institutional level. The longitudinal case studies were selected to offer insights about how these changes played out over time and the factors that helped or hindered the sustainability of these shifts. In this section we discuss examples of the broad approaches used within INSTEP to inquire into different dimensions of ISTE practice. This is not an exhaustive list of the inquiry undertaken by all participants and is intended to only illustrate the scope and breadth of the inquiry.

- Professional learning progressions. The progressions were developed around the dimensions of practice identified in the early stages of INSTEP. Within each of these dimensions a series of steps were described which then formed a learning progression for use by ISTE involved in INSTEP in this case. Each ISTE situated them on a learning continuum and steps on the progressions provided a direction for the professional learning of the ISTE.
- Professional learning groups. Participants trialed various *pod* structures for supporting and fostering the professional learning experiences of ISTE within their contexts. Regardless of the approach, ISTE found the opportunity to engage in conversations about practice very useful and most institutions were looking to ways in which they could sustain the gains made through INSTEP in this regard.
- Applying theories of Model II learning in action. Getting buy-in from teachers and school leaders is a critical step to achieving positive outcomes from a professional development intervention. While most ISTE understood the value of getting buy-in, they often found it difficult to engage with teachers who

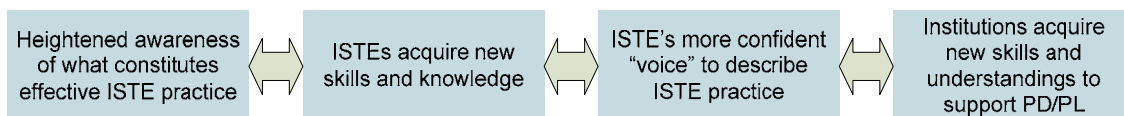
were rigid or put up barriers to learning. By examining their own practice vis-à-vis theories of learning, participants acquired new skills and tools for engaging teachers and school leaders.

- De-privatising practice. Many ISTE's pointed out that their practice had evolved over the years on the basis of their experience or additional study that they may have undertaken. Within INSTEP, they trialled alternative approaches to examining their practice more explicitly within professional learning communities and developed a deeper understanding of what works or doesn't work in relation to *how* they work with teachers.
- Taking a school-based approach to inservice. In some cases, lead teachers in schools took on the role of inservice teacher educators and worked with other teachers to examine and inquire into teaching practices in relation to literacy.

### Impact on Inservice Teacher Educators

Through the trialling of the various approaches to inquire into ISTE practice facilitated through INSTEP, ISTE's gained significant insights about what constituted effective ISTE practice and the knowledge and theoretical base that influence, support and shape ISTE practice. Through the longitudinal case study research the evaluation explored the extent to which the early effects and perceived value of INSTEP had been sustained and embedded into the everyday practice of ISTE's.

Participants unanimously stated that they found the INSTEP project to be invaluable. Adopting a R&D approach over three years and investing in understanding ISTE practice in great depth had contributed significantly to the knowledge base around this area. This investment was seen as an acknowledgement by the Ministry of the importance of inservice teacher education as a lever for change and enhanced connections and collaboration between ISTE organisations within New Zealand. Prior to INSTEP, the sector was seen as a collection of individuals and providers with different views and concepts about what works in inservice teacher education resulting in variable and inconsistent practice. The investment in developing the *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)* was seen as the first step towards building a knowledge-base around what works in promoting learning for teachers. The INSTEP project was felt to have extended these understandings and heightened awareness and understanding of what constituted effective practice and also extended the knowledge and skills of ISTE's more generally. The benefits and value of INSTEP on ISTE's and their organisations can be summarised as:



### Shared understanding of role and purpose of ISTE's across the sector

Quality teaching and learning in any community requires a shared vision and understanding of what is to be achieved in practice. An underpinning rationale for INSTEP was to address a gap in educational research and literature about the practice and learning of inservice teacher educators. By adopting an inquiry approach for the development of practice, it was felt that ISTE's across the sector would build a shared understanding of what constituted effective ISTE practice. Therefore ascertaining the extent to which INSTEP had been successful in building this shared understanding was critical to the evaluation. The evaluation findings suggest that there is a more sophisticated understanding of the role of ISTE's. Where as in the past ISTE's were seen as purely facilitators of professional development, now they were increasingly seeing themselves

as agents of change and as facilitators of learning. Through the project ISTE's have developed a shared understanding of three key aspects to their role as teacher educators: ISTE's as pedagogical leaders; ISTE's as change agents; and ISTE's as inquirers. These roles combined with their pedagogical content knowledge were felt to constitute effective ISTE practice and critical to affecting change in teaching practices leading to improved student outcomes. ISTE's also believed that these roles worked *collectively* to enhance their impact on teachers.

### **Impact on teachers**

ISTE's commented that engagement from teachers was a vital clue that their efforts and focus on critically examining their practice was working. Through videoing their practice, peer observation to get an external perspective on their professional development approaches and strategies, and modelling appropriate behaviours, ISTE's ensured that their own practice was based on sound theories of teaching and learning. Teachers involved in INSTEP noticed this and aimed to apply these practices in their own work with other teachers and students. Our conversations with teachers supported these ideas as teachers involved in INSTEP commented on the open and engaging approach taken by the ISTE and their desire to listen to the teacher and frame the conversation appropriately.

While teachers acknowledged that they acquired new knowledge and skills through their involvement in INSTEP, the longitudinal case study research findings indicated that sustaining these shifts posed some challenges to teachers. Lack of support from school leadership and management and a culture of resistance in the school were identified as two critical impediments to sustainability.

### **Impact on students**

Unlike other PD interventions where impact on students is paramount, in the case of INSTEP it was apparent early on that impact on students was likely to be achieved indirectly through impact on teachers. Essentially the project was aimed at developing and establishing effective evidence-base focused on the learning and practice of inservice teacher educators and was seen as a capability building project. Therefore, ISTE's viewed and tracked impact on students through their ability to ensure that teaching practice was informed by student achievement and outcomes. The inquiry cycle in the INSTEP materials clearly illustrates the linkages between ISTE inquiry and its impact on student outcomes and the evaluation suggests that ISTE's are consciously anchoring their inquiry in teacher needs which in turn is anchored in student needs.

The Controller and Auditor -General's report on Ministry of Education's suite of professional development support for teachers notes that 'although an analysis of student achievement information can identify areas in need of improvement, relationships between the professional development received by teachers and student achievement are complex. The performance of students can be influenced by a range of factors and circumstances'. This was even more challenging in INSTEP which was essentially a capability building project and aimed at strengthening inservice teacher education practice through inquiry approaches. By building the capability of ISTE's INSTEP enhanced the relevance and appropriateness of the professional development and learning opportunities for teachers which in turn created a positive learning environment for students as reported by teachers in the cases selected for this evaluation.

## Impact on sector

A key objective for INSTEP was to support professional leadership and ongoing improvement within the inservice teacher education sector. Consequently evidence of sector taking ownership and leading the discourse on quality of inservice teacher education can be seen as an important indicator of success in achieving this objective. The survey data gathered from the Sector Reference Group members indicated that INSTEP has had a reasonable impact on building a sense of ownership or community across the ISTE sector given the timeframe for the project. For instance when asked about the extent to which INSTEP had built a sense of community across the ISTE sector, 61% felt that it was 'significant' or 'growing while another 39% felt that it was 'minimal' or had 'no impact'. However, Ministry expectations of getting the sector to take the leadership in this area has not been met as the sector still sees a strong role for the Ministry in continuing to lead this discourse.

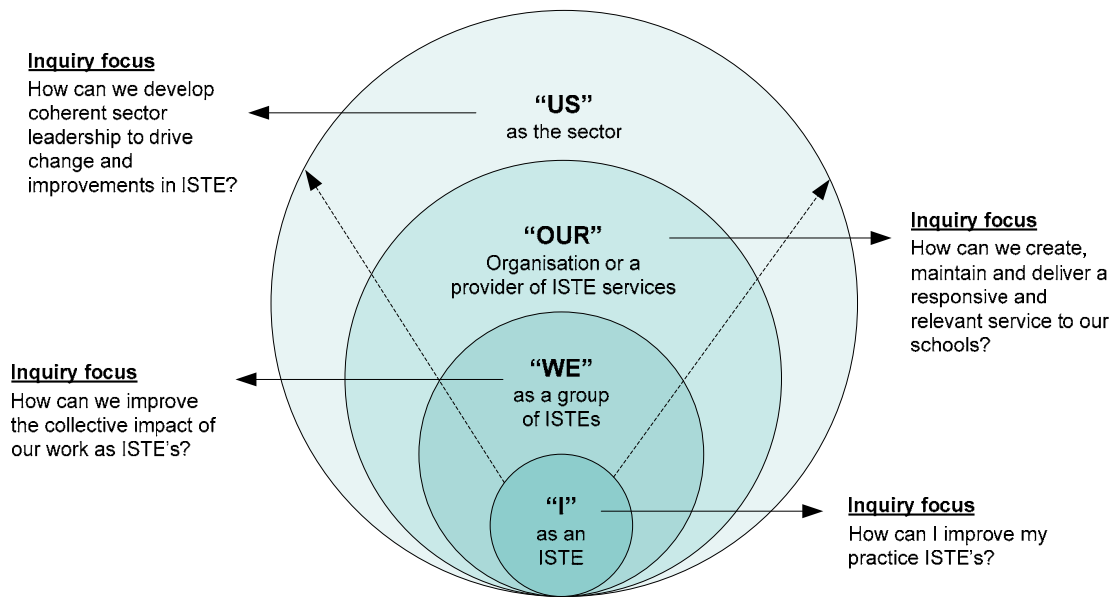
## Part 3: Implications for the future

The findings from the evaluation indicates that INSTEP has been an invaluable and timely intervention in bringing about an awareness and understanding about what constituted effective ISTE practice across the sector. The project reinforced the basic principles articulated in the Best Evidence Synthesis on Teacher professional development and learning and demonstrated to ISTE's that when they examined their practice collaboratively, challenged each other's ways of working and shared and discussed ways in which they determined effectiveness of their work, they were able to achieve far greater engagement from teachers in the professional development and learning. The value of adopting an inquiry-approach in developing practice is well documented in *Ki te Aotūroa – Improving Inservice Teacher Educator Learning and Practice*. This evaluation report offers additional insights about the ways in which participating in INSTEP has contributed to bringing about shifts in knowledge, skills and expertise of ISTE's and identifies early indicators of change for the project.

Our analysis indicates that INSTEP has had an impact at a number of levels:

- at an individual ISTE level
- at a group level
- at an organisational level
- at the sector level.

We see these levels as embedded within each other suggesting that there may be a time dimension to these impacts. For example, for changes in individual ISTE level to generate impact at the wider sector level requires time as it involves bringing about shifts in the world view of different sector groups. Further there are a number of other contextual factors that can impede these shifts from occurring easily such as the contestable nature of the environment and this need to be recognised. The following diagram illustrates the particular focus at each level:

**Figure 2: INSTEP levels of impact**

At an individual ISTE level, INSTEP can be deemed to be a success and all ISTE's involved in INSTEP were unanimous in their view that their views about their practice had been transformed. Focusing on the "I" and engaging in problems of personal professional practice, gathering and examining evidence of this practice and trialling approaches that challenge or push this practice, ISTE's involved in INSTEP had developed deeper understandings of his/her role as pedagogical leaders. Further tools like the video, audio transcripts or peer observations have led to de-privatising practice which in turn has created significant learning opportunities for ISTE's. As one ISTE put it, "there is no going back" and this illustrates the significance of the shifts that have been made and the value of applying these new understandings in their work.

At a group level, there is evidence to show that ISTE's are engaging in collaborative inquiry into their practice within their professional learning groups established during INSTEP. In some instances, these groups are formed around output groups within the School Support services contract such as literacy and numeracy, to discuss and debate issues relating to their practice. Through the consolidation initiatives, other groups have formed such as the Assess to Learn (ATOL) or Literacy Professional Development Project (LPDP) which aim to work across geographical boundaries or institutional boundaries.

The focus on the 'WE', as a community of inservice teacher educators, is clearly growing and taking shape and needs to be supported to investigate cross-cutting issues for the wider community. A key success factor in achieving change at a group level appears to be commonality of interest and purpose.

At an organisational level, the focus has been on "OUR" institution and INSTEP has made significant strides in getting provider organisations involved in the case study research to think differently about how they structure, support and monitor effectiveness of their advisory work. As a result, case study organisations have significantly reshaped their structures and systems particularly in relation to their induction programmes, professional development days, how they support ongoing professional development of their staff, performance appraisal systems and creating professional learning groups to facilitate ongoing inquiry into practice. This is a critical first step towards sustaining the benefits and lessons from INSTEP.

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A closer examination of these structures and systems reveals that within these broader institution-wide changes, in most instances the inquiry on practice related issues still tend to be individually, “I” focussed. This is an emerging issue that needs to be addressed by the management teams, particularly in the larger provider organisations. Just as responsibility for improving student outcomes is a collective responsibility, so too is the responsibility of improving quality and effectiveness of ISTE practice. This means that over time the focus needs to extend beyond individual improvement to explore how ISTE can contribute to lifting the quality of the services provided by their institution as a whole. This requires ISTE to escalate the inquiry to include practice issues that face the entire organisation. It also allows the organisation to tap into the tacit knowledge of advisors to collectively reflect on aspects of their service including issues such as prioritisation and decision-making processes regarding selection of schools; aligning professional delivery to regional needs; gathering evidence of success. Focusing on these issues will help transition INSTEP from an individually focused intervention to bringing about shifts in the professional development provision system.

At the sector level, the focus is on “US” which assumes a level of ownership across the sector for the quality and coherence in approaches to inservice teacher education. However, as noted earlier, impact of INSTEP on the sector appears to be the weakest suggesting that more needs to be done in this regard. While sector reference group members acknowledged that there was need for a coherent sector leadership in the future, the contestable environment that ISTE providers operate in does not create the incentives to bring about this level of cohesion. This requires the Ministry to re-consider and review the structures, systems and processes that help/hinder the development of sector leadership for inservice teacher education and how it can overcome these.





## Introduction

In June 2003 government approved a strategy to improve quality teaching for diverse students which included the following components:

- Component 1: Gaining acceptance of the important contribution quality teaching can make
- Component 2: Building knowledge and understanding of effective teaching practice
- Component 3: Aligning efforts under a range of current policies, initiatives and programmes to draw on knowledge about effective practice
- Component 4: Implementing key new initiatives that will drive further development of knowledge about quality teaching and help improve teaching practice
- Component 5: Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and feedback to ensure continuous improvements.

The InService Teacher Education Practice (INSTEP) Project was designed in response to components 2 and 4 in the above strategy to help further understanding and knowledge about what constitutes effective inservice teacher education (ISTE) practice. The project was based on the understanding that the quality of inservice teacher education practice is a critical contributing factor to improving the quality of teaching. There is a widespread belief that investing in high quality inservice teacher education creates an environment where ongoing teacher learning is promoted and supported, thus improving quality of teaching leading to improved student outcomes.

Currently, inservice teacher educator (ISTE) practice is regarded as being highly variable and at times not felt to meet the needs of teachers in schools. Further there isn't sufficient level of cross-fertilisation or learning across the sector. This has restricted the development of a body of knowledge about good practice. For the purposes of this project, definition of inservice teacher educators included:

- Advisers and facilitators working within School Support Services in the colleges of education within the six universities
- Resource teachers, for example RT: Lits (Resource teachers of literacy), RTLB (Resource teachers: Learning and Behaviour), and RTMs (Resource teachers: Māori)
- Facilitators working within private provider organisations
- In-school leaders of professional learning.

## Current context for INSTEP

Generating of knowledge about teaching and learning as a result of research done by teachers, teacher educators and theorists has been a recurrent theme in the literature on teacher research movement (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Researchers in the field of teacher education have spent considerable time examining questions that can help deepen our understanding of teacher education practices and lead towards its improvement (Feldman, 2000; Noffke, 2001). The Inservice Teacher Education Practice Project represents an attempt and commitment by policymakers in the Ministry of Education in New Zealand and the sector leaders to strengthen the knowledge base around this area and to address a critical gap in educational research and literature about the practice and learning of inservice teacher educators.

Only about 5% of the teachers in any one year are first-year teachers. Most of the teachers in the school system have been teaching for more than one year and will still be teaching during the next 10 years. A significant part of the Ministry's efforts and investment to improve teaching quality therefore is directed towards the inservice professional learning of teachers. The *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (2007) concluded that little attention had been paid to identifying or developing ISTE knowledge and skills for working with teachers in ways that have positive outcomes for students. Yet the pivotal role of ISTE in assisting teachers to improve outcomes for students was very evident. The synthesis identified that "the most powerful professional development for teachers involves them in an inquiry and knowledge building cycle that starts with the identification of students' needs, moves to develop the skills and knowledge teachers require to meet those needs, and then checks to find out if changes in teaching practice have achieved the desired outcomes".

The extent to which inservice professional learning opportunities bring about desired changes such as initiating and promoting ongoing teacher learning or to develop school-based conditions for sustainability is largely dependant upon the quality of inservice teacher education practice and the capacity of the school to sustain and build on the changes made. The absence of a coherent approach over the years, to developing and supporting the professional practice of inservice teacher education, has resulted in variability in the quality and effectiveness of the professional learning opportunities available to teachers.

## **Description of INSTEP**

The INSTEP project was designed to respond to the issues identified in current practice and to build a more strategic and coherent focus on teacher education practice across the system. By drawing together a national group of practising inservice teacher educators from university and private settings, reflecting critically on their expertise and experience and piloting and refining approaches to professional learning through inquiry based research projects, INSTEP aimed to contribute to a body of knowledge about what constitutes effective ISTE practice. The project had the following three strategic objectives:

- To explore and develop effective approaches for the professional learning of inservice teacher educators
- To strengthen and promote evidence-based inservice teacher education practice
- To support professional leadership and ongoing improvement within the inservice teacher education sector.

Ultimately, it was intended that the learnings from INSTEP would contribute to approaches to building the capacity of inservice teacher educators that are owned and operated by inservice teacher education professionals.

To achieve these objectives INSTEP employed a unique project design and while the project plan provided a description of key outcomes against the strategic objectives, the project has evolved and there has been a shift in emphasis towards establishing an evidence base about the processes used to achieve these outcomes and objectives.

## **INSTEP as a R&D project**

INSTEP was deliberately set up as a research and development project. This decision was based on the belief that changes in practice will be achieved by providing opportunities for systematic and sustained engagement

with problems of practice (Spillane et al, 2002) and “iterative cycles of inquiry-based research to inform feedback for improvement” (Alton-Lee, 2005). In addition, it reflected a method of inquiry that involved:

a process of systematic, rigorous and critical reflection about professional practice, and the contexts in which it occurs, in ways that question taken-for-granted assumptions. Its purpose is to inform decision-making for action. Inquiry can be undertaken individually, but it is most powerful when it is collaborative. (Reid, 2004).

The intent of INSTEP was to promote and strengthen the quality and consistency of professional learning provision in New Zealand. There was also a strong need expressed by the Ministry of the need to build a shared sense of purpose and common understanding across the sector and practitioners working in different contexts. In keeping with these objectives, a national facilitation team (NF) was set up that drew together from across the country a group of inservice teacher educators who were contracted for the duration of the project. The project involved a mix of private providers and public providers from across the country as part of this project. This national team was the main conduit through which the Ministry and the INSTEP project team aimed to effect change in the ISTE sector and to build a sense of coherence around ISTE practice.

Each NF worked with five Regional Facilitators (RFs) who in turn worked with five inservice teacher educators in their own contexts. In this way, the project evolved over time to include a wider pool of practitioners to engage in critical reflection about their practice. The inquiry-driven and learning approaches were manifested in the following ways:

- The project emphasised explicit learning. It encouraged ISTE s to draw on a wide knowledge base including theoretical frameworks when responding to problems of practice; the process of inquiry often began with deconstructing practice thereby identifying inconsistencies between beliefs and current practice and so initiating change.
- There was some variability between project design and implementation. In the initial stages the project was defined quite tightly, particularly the timeline, resources, and the intended roll-out. However, the project design was adapted as implementation occurred owing to different interpretations of the intent and as participants had opportunities to clarify meaning as project activities unfolded.
- A forum for discussion on problems of practice. The monthly forums for National Facilitators and the meetings of their own particular clusters offered an opportunity to discuss, debate, and challenge each other’s understanding of ISTE practice thereby developing a shared understanding and language around key concepts. Therefore there was an explicit recognition of the value of creating an environment of trust, respect and reciprocity for the debate and discussion to unfold. In this way, small ISTE communities of practice were encouraged to develop a level of coherence and consistency that was currently lacking within the wider ISTE community.
- Changing the status quo. Through inquiry into personal beliefs and assumptions, asking hard questions of one’s own practice and critically reflecting on interpretations of ‘evidence’, ISTE providers and institutions engaged in INSTEP were exploring new and effective ways of working.

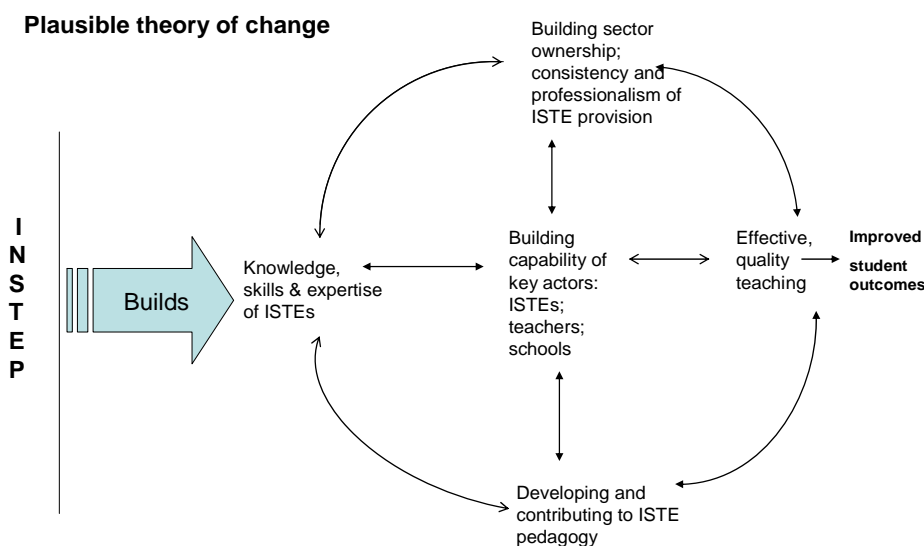


# Evaluation methodology

## Evaluation of INSTEP

Sankar and Bennie (2006) in a paper on the Evaluability of INSTEP proposed a framework for evaluation of INSTEP which was subsequently agreed to by the Ministry. The framework was structured around a theory-driven approach to evaluation that placed current understanding about ISTE learning and practice at the centre of an evaluative inquiry. The theory of change model developed as an anchor for the evaluation reflected the unique design of the INSTEP project and was flexible enough to adapt to the evolving nature of the design. After its implementation there was a shift in emphasis towards establishing an evidence base about the *processes* used to achieve these outcomes and objectives. The following diagram reflects the understandings of how INSTEP was expected to contribute to bringing about desired shifts in ISTE practice leading to teaching practice. This diagram (illustrating the linkages between the different components of the project) was used to frame the project and to surface critical questions and relationships to be explored in the evaluation.

**Figure 3: Understanding INSTEP**



Applying this framework highlighted the different levels of change in ISTE practice that INSTEP aimed to bring about changes to INSTEP participants' own level of understanding and knowledge about their practice; changes to ISTE practice more generally; increased consistency and professionalism within and across the wider ISTE sector; and contributing to a body of knowledge about ISTE pedagogy. All these changes were in order to achieve the goal of effective, quality teaching which in turn will achieve improved student outcomes. The framework identified seven lines of inquiry that would collectively determine whether INSTEP had been successful in achieving its intended objectives. The lines of inquiry as identified in the INSTEP evaluation framework were as follows:





- To what extent have project structures and processes helped or hindered the INSTEP project from achieving its goals?
- Which features of the structures and processes have worked and why?
- What features did not work and why?

Some of the key findings were:

- Contribution of the R&D approach to the project: the relative fluidity and emergent nature of R&D projects vis-à-vis conventional research projects posed some challenges for participants.
- Leadership by a group of national facilitators: the national team was the main conduit through which the Ministry and the INSTEP project team aimed to effect change in the ISTE sector and to build a sense of coherence around ISTE practice. The findings indicated that while a national team of facilitators led by a Ministry project team has been an efficient way of implementing the R&D model at a national level, it raised some challenges for the Ministry. The evaluation highlighted that one of the primary purposes of INSTEP – to build a sense of coherence and consistency in ISTE provision through a shared understanding of what constitutes effective ISTE practice – may not have been fully achieved. While attempts by the project team to synthesise current understanding and learnings from the research projects have gone some way towards meeting this core purpose, the lack of sharing across the individual projects has meant that collective understanding amongst participants as to what constitutes effective ISTE practice has not been built.
- Inquiry/action research within communities of practice: inquiry approaches provided the opportunity to critically reflect on what was happening in a given situation, with the ultimate goal of achieving improved learning outcomes for teachers and students. In the context of INSTEP, the inquiry approach was seen as a learning process that helped practitioners to create new knowledge which they then used to inform their planning and actions. In INSTEP this was facilitated in a number of ways, including monthly meetings of national facilitators. In these, participants’ collectively inquired into their own beliefs and assumptions, and asked hard questions about the lens through which they selected and interpreted evidence or observations. They also considered the impact that their decisions and actions had on the people they worked with – teachers and school leaders.
- Management by a project team located within the Ministry: in INSTEP the project structures operated at a number of levels – at a sector level through the Sector Reference Group; at a Ministry level through the Project Advisory Group; at a regional level through the twelve research clusters; and at a national level through the national team which includes the national facilitators and the Ministry project team. This made the project management aspect of INSTEP complex and onerous.
- Concurrent development of materials: a key objective of INSTEP was to “develop and publish evidence-based professional learning materials for inservice teacher educators”. In order to meet this objective the project team consciously included a member with strong communication and publishing experience. While inclusion of this objective within INSTEP was contentious in the early stages of this project, on reflection, this objective has been hugely beneficial as it helped anchor the project and to keep it focused on outcomes; that is, capture learnings and insights about what constitutes effective ISTE practice.

## Phase two – Early indicators of change (July 2007 – December 2008)

This report responds to questions posed in Phase two of the evaluation and draws together the analysis from two sets of activities undertaken in this phase:

- Longitudinal case study-based research;
- Sector survey.

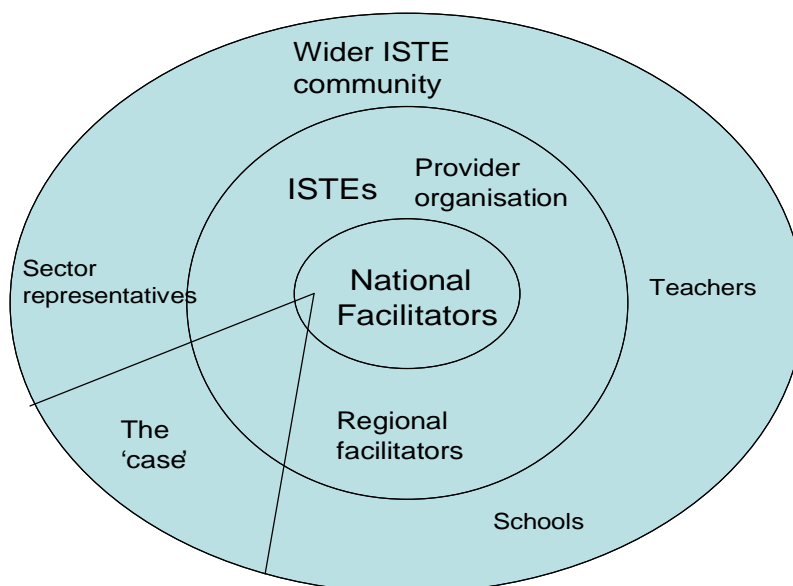
### Longitudinal case study research

The longitudinal case study research was undertaken to map the practice changes evident in inservice teacher education among INSTEP participants and to provide a description of how these changes were contributing to strengthening or building effective teaching practice more generally in schools. Using the national facilitator as the lens into the project, the ‘case’, this phase of the evaluation aimed to generate insights about the question ‘How and in what ways and under what circumstances has participating in INSTEP transformed NFs and RFs beliefs, attitudes and knowledge about ISTE practice and theory?’

The cases of interest were the NFs, as they were the brokers who helped create connections between different players in the ISTE system and introduced new knowledge and ways of working into their practice. Therefore understanding them, hearing their stories and learning about how they applied the new insights and knowledge in every aspect of their work was an important part of demonstrating impact of INSTEP.

In each case, we interviewed individuals who fall within the NF’s sphere of influence and gathered data from all the players in this sphere to triangulate and validate the emerging picture. This included interviews with the NF and representatives from the RF network, management team in the NF’s own organisation, other ISTE, teachers and school leaders. The following diagram shows the different voices that were captured within each case:

**Figure 5: Defining the case**



In total, four case studies were undertaken. There were two data collection points over a 12-month cycle. The cases were selected in discussions with the Evaluation Advisory Group and the INSTEP project team. At the time of selection, there was evidence to show that these cases were trialling and implementing approaches to bring about system - level shifts. By delving deeper into these cases, the evaluation aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges surrounding sustainability of these shifts. Within this area of change, the sample covered private and publicly funded providers to study the nature of influence across the contrasting environments. The four cases were:

- Otago University, Dunedin College of Education
- Auckland University, Team Solutions
- Evaluation Associates, private provider, Auckland
- Education Associates, private provider, Dunedin.

### **Sector survey**

A key objective of INSTEP was to transfer learning and understanding gained through INSTEP about inservice teacher education practice to the sector more widely so as to embed the system-level shifts in practice. Indicators identified in consultation with the INSTEP project team to demonstrate these shifts were:

- evidence of deliberate use of inquiry cycle (or similar) in planning, designing and implementing professional development initiatives and their own practice
- evidence of deliberate use of evidence (linking their practice to teacher practice to student outcomes) to inform decision-making at each stage of their work
- evidence of professional learning within the institutions operating in this sector
- evidence of sector taking leadership for continuous improvement
- evidence of conversations across professional development providers.

### **Survey design and administration**

Key features of the survey design were:

- use of an online web-based survey instrument, designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete
- INSTEP participants contacted by email by the INSTEP project coordinator to participate
- list of participants included three broad groups – inservice teacher educators including the national facilitators and regional facilitators involved in INSTEP, School Support Service Directors and members of the Sector Reference Group.

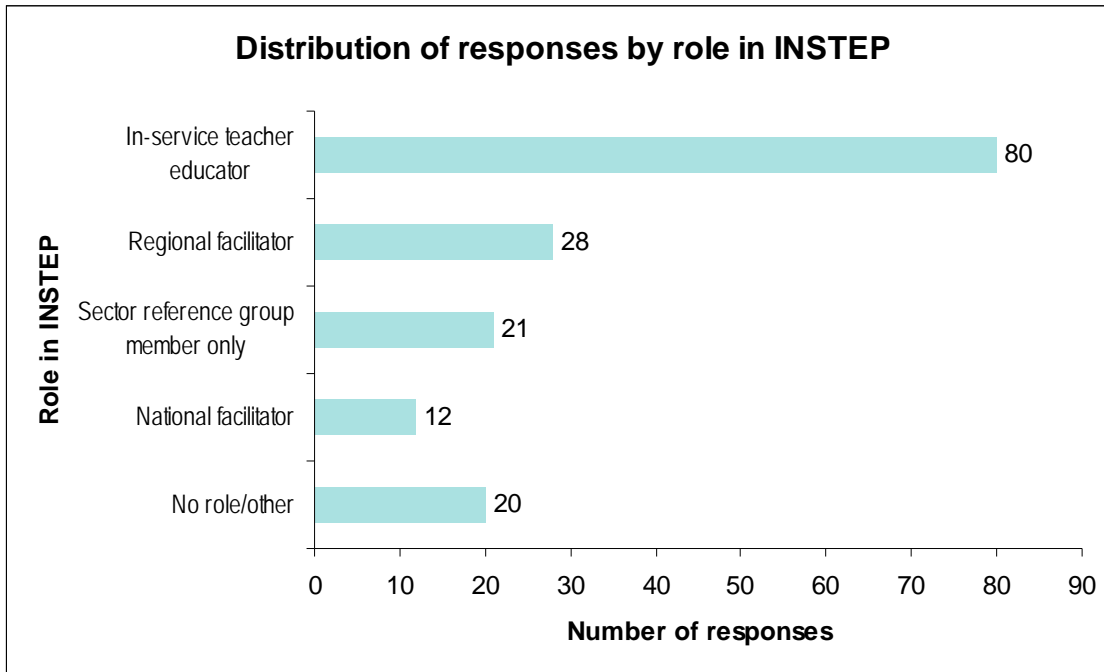
The survey design and administration process was:

- sample frame – list of all INSTEP participants and contact details were obtained from the Ministry of Education
- sample frame was cleaned – preliminary email contact made to confirm appropriate contact email address and to give advance notice of survey
- questionnaire design was tested with the INSTEP project team
- survey sent on 12 September 2008.

## Response rate

We achieved a final response rate of 55% (161 participants).

**Figure 6: Distribution of respondents by their role in INSTEP**



## Analysis and reporting

This report is a synthesis of the data gathered from both research activities and comments on the nature of shifts that is occurring as a result of the INSTEP intervention. The process for developing this report was as follows:

- The evaluation team undertook the four case studies over a 12-month period
- The understanding generated from the case study led to design of the survey questionnaire which was administered in October 2008
- Findings from both research activities were ‘tested’ at a number of different forums including the consolidation workshops, the internal Evaluation Advisory Group and the INSTEP project team
- Revisions were made as a result of the feedback from key stakeholders and finalised.

The structure of the final report:

- Part 1: Understanding pre INSTEP context for ISTE practice
- Part 2: Demonstrating value of INSTEP
- Part 3: Implications for the future.

## Part 1: Understanding the pre-INSTEP context for ISTE practice

This section describes the pre-INSTEP context and environment for inservice teacher educators to set the backdrop against which the value and merit of INSTEP can be meaningfully understood. While the background documents leading up to INSTEP mention the “lack of a strategic focus” and “variability of inservice teacher education practice across the sector”, they do not sufficiently capture the conditions or the factors that have contributed to this state of affairs. In this section we paint a rich picture of what has led to the problem in inservice teacher education by exploring an ISTE’s journey from being in a primarily teaching or management role to the role of an inservice teacher educator. We also describe the issues and challenges that this transition posed to them at that time. Effectively identifying these transitional issues and addressing them is the first step to enhancing the quality of ISTE practice and consequently they need to be better understood.

All ISTE’s interviewed in the case studies indicated that they had entered the inservice teacher education field after years of teaching at either primary or secondary school levels. In the leadership and management area, most L&M advisors had been a school principal or a Head of Department in a secondary school and had spent five years or more in a leadership and management role in a school. For teachers and school principals, the shift to inservice teacher education was seen as a natural career progression and an opportunity to leverage their years of experience in the classroom to train others. The move away from the stress of the classroom was seen as an added bonus.

It is not that our current role is free from stress. But classroom pressures are quite different. You get completely bogged down and have no way of anticipating the workload, what is going to come through your door each day. You have no time to read and if you do, it is at your own time at night (ISTE).

However, when they first entered the ‘profession’ all ISTE’s acknowledged that the transition to an inservice teacher educator role was challenging and one that they were not well prepared for. The aspects of their job that ISTE’s found most challenging and difficult were:

- Their lack of experience in working with adults – in working with adults, ISTE’s have noted that adult learning flows from a different set of assumptions (for example, adults need to be involved in planning and evaluating the professional development they receive; topics and themes that have immediate relevance are more engaging) and that this required ISTE’s to invest more time and effort into understanding and unpacking these assumptions prior to any action. However, most ISTE’s, particularly Resource Teachers of Literacy (RTLits) did not have sufficient experience in working with adults to appreciate this and in the early stages of their life as an ISTE they applied their experience and knowledge in working with children to adult interactions. Over time they realised that working with adults required different approaches and strategies and the professional development support available to them did not sufficiently address their skill gap in this regard.

Resource Teachers of Literacy (RTLits) interviewed in this evaluation faced additional challenges in that they were perceived by their management and schools as providing support to children with literacy needs. They were invited in to ‘fix the problem’ and were expected to work with the child to address the literacy needs of the child. Over the years their practice had developed on the basis of these

understandings and expectations and they had ‘lost’ confidence in their ability to work with teachers. This direction to only work with students was at odds with the steer and direction set by the Ministry for RTELs. It could mean that the Management committee and the schools they work with have yet to fully accept and adapt to this shift in focus.

Adults bring a wealth of knowledge and prior experiences that needs to be acknowledged before you can move on and support them to make the changes that are needed. We need to work with them and not in isolation with only the child but schools do not often understand this. (ISTE)

We didn’t recognise or deal with this in our induction very well and when advisers came in there was this expectation that because they were good classroom practitioners, they would be excellent facilitators. That is not true as working with adults requires different skills and ways of working. You cannot be dictatorial and you can be challenged at all times. This made some of us nervous. (Provider organisation)

There is a distinct difference between teaching and advising. (RF)

Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) involved in INSTEP said that they were uniquely positioned as the nature of the issues they dealt with, namely behavioural issues, required engagement from a wider group of stakeholders including the teachers, principals, parents, and the special needs coordinators. Therefore, whilst their involvement may be triggered by the referral of a student, their response strategy involved a more systemic approach and the learning and behavioural development plans developed were implemented through the teacher. However, this shift away from the child to a wider systems focus had occurred over the past few years and this was also reflected in the training for RTLbs which had an explicit focus on facilitation and collaboration.

We take referrals in and will meet with the student initially and assess the needs through observations and conversations with the student. Then we will meet with the teacher to find out what are the in class behaviours and other challenges they face in dealing with the student. We will also meet with the families, special needs coordinator and the principal as they all need to agree to the intervention. It has to be a collaborative process and more importantly, it is the teacher that will finally be implementing the intervention in an ongoing way. So we work through the teacher and our role will involve facilitating change in the way she/he approaches teaching, we may offer new ideas for facilitating learning for the student. (RTLb as ISTE)

The schools expectation is that our role is to fix the child. So from the management perspective, the direction we get is take the child away and fix the child. This is because the student is not working or behaving to the capacity that the teacher expects them to or would like them to. Unless they are prepared to do something differently, I think we cannot achieve sustainable benefits for the child. They need to look at the problem as not limited to the student, and see how their expectations or their management of the student may be the real issue. Therefore we take a holistic view and deliver through the teacher. (RTLb as ISTE)

- Output-driven nature of advisory work – Advisors working within the School Support Services contract felt that their work and delivery of professional development were shaped by the output areas within the contract. As a result, when they were inducted into their role most ISTE received training about the ‘nuts

and bolts' of their job which mainly related to clarifying their roles and responsibilities around the outputs. This focus on outputs was also felt to result in a siloed approach and did not encourage sharing of teaching and learning practices across advisors.

The training we received was administrative and we were socialised into the administrative aspects of our job – how do we account for the hours and how do we fill in the schedules or type up our case notes etc. I never saw another advisor except for our team days or our get togethers and if I bumped into one in a school, I had no idea who they were. We were so far apart from each other intellectually. (ISTE)

- The pressure to *act, respond* and be the 'expert' at all times

From the first day we were expected to jump in and start to deliver professional development programmes to schools. There was no time to think or plan or understand what was needed. We were given a map, the car keys and resources in our respective output area and were told to go out and meet schools. This made me very nervous as I didn't fully know or understand the areas I worked in eg assessment. (RF)

We were focused on fixing the problem. The moment the principal said something, we would immediately start coming out with our war stories. That is so unhelpful if you are the principal listening. What we need to do is work with them and strategise how we would deal with the current problem or issue we face. (RF)

- Lack of facilitation experience – Facilitation skills were identified as core to ISTE practice and most ISTEes involved in INSTEP felt that they did not have sufficient experience or expertise in this area. As a result, the professional development and learning they delivered to teachers were shaped by ISTEes' own decisions about how best to support teachers' or school leaders' learning. This resulted in teachers and/or school leaders disengaging from the learning experience. ISTEes tried to overcome this skill gap by engaging with schools that were familiar, which meant that some schools missed out.

Initially I tended to work with groups that I was familiar with and this gave me some comfort.

I was hesitant to go into schools where I did not know anyone. I was not sure how I would begin the conversation around professional development and felt that they would not listen to a newcomer. Also I was not confident of my ability to facilitate large group meetings and so preferred one on one contact with teachers. It is pretty scary when you are new. (ISTE)

- Isolation – in most instances advisors worked alone and the lack of opportunity to talk and share experiences was felt to be challenging, particularly in the initial stages of their settlement into the role.

Overall ISTEes acknowledged that they had to undergo a steep learning curve on the job and this has contributed to significant variability in their practice. The issues and challenges discussed also point to the fact that provider organisations did not have a sufficient grasp of the *practice* of ISTEes. Arguably, if they did, then they would have addressed these problems through a well designed, structured and contextually relevant induction programme, refocused their ongoing support for professional development and learning, and increased focus on understanding the teaching and learning of ISTEes. In the absence of such a response from the sector, INSTEP seems like a timely intervention.



Interestingly, private providers appeared to make the transition to the role of inservice teacher educator more easily and were supported by their organisational structures and systems to achieve this transition smoothly. We believe that this could be due to their narrow focus on delivering content knowledge, as well as their size (private providers tend to be very small organisations which allows for greater interactions and exchanges on a day-to-day basis).

These challenges combined with the mixed skill sets of the current pool of inservice teacher educators has led to some of the variability observed in ISTE practice. They also suggest that ISTE practice has evolved organically over the years and has possibly not kept pace with the changing demands and understandings of effective teacher professional development and learning. Areas of practice that suffered as a result were:

- Quality of analysis, particularly data analysis – There is increasing emphasis in gathering, analysing and using data for designing teaching and learning strategies and this is evident in all Ministry contracts. However, ISTE's own professional development and learning have not extended their skills in this area, resulting in data analysis exercises occurring in a vacuum.
- Insufficient time spent on planning and diagnostic processes prior to designing the PD/PL 'intervention'.
- Coaching and mentoring newer staff – Current professional development and learning models for ISTE's do not explicitly allow for mentoring and coaching of new staff. As a result new staff were often left to their own devices for developing their approach to their work and were unable to access the experience and tacit knowledge of current staff.
- Investment in growing and developing networks and professional learning communities that support ISTE learning.
- Developing and growing as reflective practitioners – While most ISTE's talk about relevant and value of reflection, they accept that they spent insufficient time in critically analysing their practice. 'Reflection on the run' was the most commonly heard response when asked about amount of time spent on reviewing, inquiring and reflecting on what is happening in a given situation. Reflection takes time, effort and a degree of openness and willingness to see things in new ways. This was not the dominant paradigm that ISTE's were operating from and, consequently, critical reflection came to be seen as a luxury.

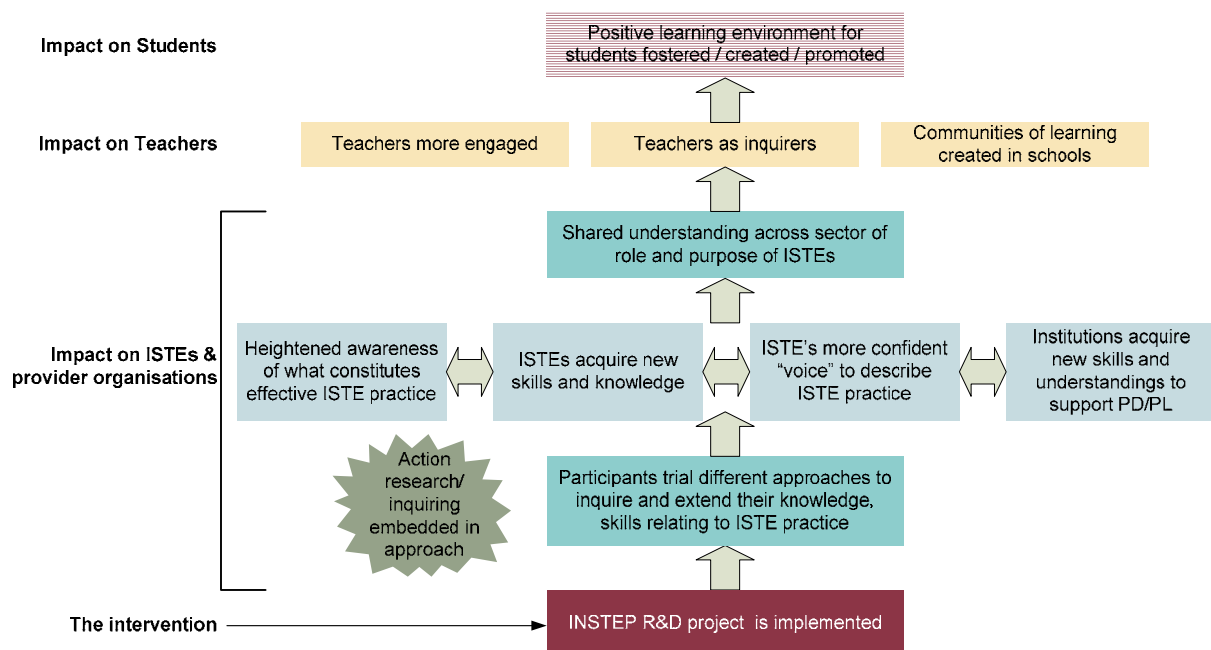
This suggests that the INSTEP project was a timely and important intervention in terms of developing a national approach and focus on improving the quality of professional inservice teacher education practice.

## Part 2: Demonstrating the value of INSTEP

A key project outcome for INSTEP was the development of a model for the ongoing professional development of professional development facilitators owned and operated in a self-sustaining way of teacher education professionals across the country. Therefore, determining the extent to which this outcome has been achieved is an important step for this evaluation. In this section we discuss the value and benefits of INSTEP for participants in bringing about the shifts desired in knowledge, skills and attributes regarding ISTE practice. The discussion is presented around the theory of a change diagram developed to represent and convey the essence of INSTEP and its contribution to participants. The diagram illustrates *how* INSTEP has contributed to bringing about the desired shifts in ISTE knowledge and practice and the nature of this contribution to improved teaching quality, which in turn contributes to improved student outcomes. As illustrated in the diagram, the short to medium-term impact of INSTEP is on ISTE practice. While it can be argued that impact on teachers can be achieved directly through impact on ISTE, in the context of INSTEP building a shared understanding of role and purpose of ISTE across the sector was a critical step, a bridge to link ISTE's practice to teachers' practice.

This diagram has been generated from the evidence presented by participants and illustrates how INSTEP has contributed to the outcomes in the real world. The analysis of the findings from INSTEP presented in this section is wrapped around this analytical model.

**Figure 7: How INSTEP works to bring about desired shifts – an analytical model**



The rest of the discussion in this section is focused on each component and step in the diagram to help illustrate the nature and value of the contribution made by INSTEP at each level.

## Implementation of INSTEP

INSTEP R&D project is implemented

In order to understand the value and contribution of INSTEP, we have posited INSTEP as the ‘intervention’ in this above diagram. Fundamentally INSTEP was an intervention designed to build a deeper understanding of ISTE practice and to promote change in ISTE practice as a result of this understanding. Therefore, understanding the implementation features of the intervention and identifying aspects of the implementation that worked well or didn’t work well were critical first steps to understanding the nature of its impact on ISTE, their provider organisations, teachers and students. The phase one report (summarised on pages 16 and 17 of this report) discussed these features in great detail and we urge readers of this report to refer to it. This will help build a more holistic picture of the ways in which INSTEP has operated to generate benefits for ISTE and the sector.

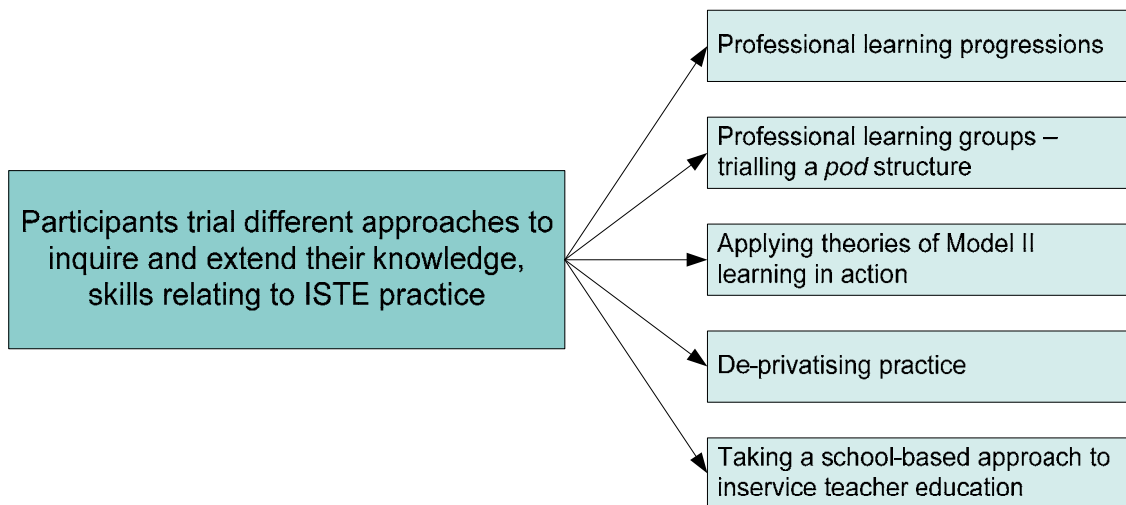
Overall, the INSTEP project was described as an “invaluable investment in building capability of ISTE” by all participants. Despite the challenges posed by the research and development approach, the project’s goals of bringing together practitioners from across the sector to work collaboratively to examine, inquire and build knowledge about the practice and learning of ISTE were highly commended by all participants. This investment was an affirmation of the importance and value of ISTE as a lever for effecting change in the teaching and learning area and served to bring about greater consistency and coherence in practice. While participants recognised that there were inbuilt tensions across providers given the current contestable environment (which runs counter to the collaborative inquiry promoted within INSTEP), there was some degree of openness to engage and share different interpretations and approaches to inservice teacher education.

The key elements in the design of INSTEP ‘intervention’ that enabled the project to achieve positive outcomes were:

- the research and development approach
- leadership by a core group of national facilitators
- inquiry/action research within communities of practice
- management by a project team located within the Ministry
- concurrent development of learning materials
- additional support through research mentors, online communities, international speakers, and so on.

These features collectively contributed to building trust and confidence of ISTE to engage in investigating gaps in knowledge about effective ISTE practice and to collaborate with other practitioners to inquire into their practice as they implemented the research and development activities of the project. Despite some initial challenges in implementation of the INSTEP project, the above-mentioned features played an important role in enabling ISTE to stay engaged with the project and the process.

## Participants undertake inquiry into their practice and trial new approaches



In keeping with the R&D nature of the project, participants were given a fair amount of flexibility to frame their inquiry into their own practice around what matters most to them as ISTE. The INSTEP project structures provided a broad framework/infrastructure within which this inquiry into practice took place (for example, national facilitators supporting regional facilitators who in turn supported inquiry into practice by ISTE; national facilitators inquiring into ISTE practice and identifying principles underpinning their work). It also offered ISTE the opportunity to identify problems of practice or practice puzzles and to pursue this inquiry to achieve better outcomes for teachers and students.

By inquiring into the identified problems of practice collaboratively with a group of peers/colleagues and systematically gathering data about progress or shifts, ISTE involved in INSTEP generated new knowledge and insights about their work and used this to inform their planning and action. Facilitating the process of collective reflection and inquiry was a critical part of INSTEP project design. This was due to the fact that much of the practitioner knowledge was tacit and in order for ISTE to integrate current research knowledge into their professional knowledge, they needed to go through a systematic process of making their existing practices explicit. The INSTEP project allowed participants to undertake this inquiry in an open, inclusive and non-threatening way. This in turn provided an intrinsic motivation for improvement.

Over the course of the INSTEP, project ISTE developed a range of different approaches to inquiry, each of which was designed to facilitate critical reflection on a problem of practice identified by them. The research reports provided to the Ministry by the NFs at the conclusion of INSTEP documents the nature of inquiry undertaken by each of the 12 pods within the project. Our analysis of these reports showed that there was significant variability across the pods and that across the 12 pods, changes were occurring at two broad levels: both at an individual ISTE level and at the provider organisational/institutional level. The longitudinal case studies were selected to offer insights about how these changes played out over time and the factors that helped or hindered the sustainability of these shifts. In this section we discuss examples of the broad approaches used within INSTEP to inquire into different dimensions of ISTE practice. This is not an exhaustive list of the inquiries undertaken by all participants and is intended to illustrate the scope and breadth of the inquiry.

## Professional learning progressions

The professional learning progressions were developed and trialled in INSTEP to support the professional practice of ISTE's and to guide an individual's professional learning. The progressions were aligned to the dimensions of practice identified in the early stages of the INSTEP project (knowledge and theory, change for improvement, inquiry and evidence-based practice and communications and relationships). Within each of these dimensions, a series of steps were described which then formed a learning progression for use by ISTE's involved in INSTEP, in this case study site. The progressions were designed to allow the ISTE's to identify where they were situated within their practice at a particular point in time and within a specific context or problem of practice. The steps on the progressions provided direction for the next professional learning of the ISTE. Participants were encouraged to use feedback from teachers, observations by other regional facilitators, ISTE's' own reflection to verify and validate their placement on the progressions. This then allowed them to use the next step on the progressions as the basis for guiding their professional learning. There were four steps to the progressions:

- Step 1: Placement on a continuum
- Step 2: So what now? What does this mean for my professional learning? What?; how?; with whom?; and by when?
- Step 3: How will I know I have been successful?
- Step 4: Reflect and record in journal.

For majority of the ISTE's involved in trialling this approach, the progressions effectively captured the essence of their work and helped them map the next step in their individual journey towards improvement. The progressions were described as pathways, frame of reference and tool or development in order to reach a desired level of practice.

## Professional learning groups – trialling a *pod* structure

In one case, the organisation trialled a pod structure for supporting and fostering the professional learning of ISTE's to examine in-depth the role and contribution of the pod structure and the experiences it generated to enhance learning for all participants. Care was taken to ensure that the pod was heterogeneous and had a mix of gender, work streams, geographic locations and part-time and full-time ISTE's.

In this organisation each inservice teacher educator was allocated a learning group or 'pod' which was led by a regional facilitator. Each group met twice a month to share, debate and focus on practice-based issues. Each pod was asked to identify a range of issues and to focus on what matters most to the individuals in the pod. Within each pod, ISTE's focused on individual problems of practice. Each pod was conceived as a supportive learning environment where trust was a critical element. Trust was created through selected interactive activities that encouraged pod members to feel 'safe' in sharing opinions, ideas and experience.

Before our professional development was content driven and disconnected from practice. We had PD days but we did not ask ISTE's to interpret or make sense of the new knowledge in terms of their day to day practice. The PLG's or pods were set up to provide a structure for these discussions and allowed for mentoring, coaching and collectively reflection on aspects of ISTE practice. Formalising this is critical as we have seen the benefits and value for our people and looking to ways in which we can embed this into our organisational systems. (Regional facilitator)

In another case, each RF and their ISTE created their own professional learning community within INSTEP and focused on issues relating to effective facilitation practice. The rationale underpinning the establishment of a professional learning community in this case was based on facilitator views about their own job: ‘facilitating is a lonely job’; ‘sometimes I am not in contact with another facilitator for three-four weeks and so if I face a problem, I have to find a way to resolve it on my own’; ‘we are expected to just go and do the work’.

The professional learning communities provided a forum for public sharing of problems of practice within the group which led to dual outcomes: first, it gave the ISTE the confidence to engage with a problem of practice in a meaningful way with their peers; and secondly, there was a sense of accountability to the group as one had to come back and talk about actions they had taken that transformed or changed their practice, as is evident in the following quotation:

The fact that we can face up to our colleagues and say that I realised that I was not as sharp as I ought to have been in that instance, but guess what I have now realised it and am doing something about it. Here is something I tried and it worked. That is very rewarding. (ISTEs)

The professional learning communities were described by participants in this instance as being very successful, as they promoted collaborative learning and open and honest discussions on practice, both successful practice, as well as unsuccessful practice or problems of practice. The use of evidence to frame these discussions also meant that there were opportunities to explore dissonance or gaps in ISTE analysis and reflection.

In a third case, a *pod* was set up within a secondary school and the professional development coordinators assumed the role of an inservice teacher educator within this project. The focus was on developing the coaching and mentoring skills to facilitate literacy learning amongst teachers and to increase the achievement of students. This approach was based on the belief that for professional development to be effective it needed to be thoroughly embedded in the context of the school in which it was to take place. This allowed planning to be informed by the culture of the school and the systems of support available in that school. Through INSTEP, the regional facilitators and in-school ISTE in this case explored ways in which they could develop their own knowledge and skills base to become coaches and mentors to other teachers in their school.

### **Applying theories of Model II learning in action**

Getting buy-in from teachers and school leaders was seen as a critical step to achieving positive outcomes from any professional development and learning intervention. Most ISTE understood the value of getting buy-in at a rational level. However when faced with teachers who were rigid in their attitude or put up barriers to learning, the ISTE’s usual response was to withdraw and try again later. The impact of this response on facilitator practice is illustrated aptly in the following quotation:

As an ISTE the most challenging aspect of our work is getting into a school and negotiating that first interaction and meeting. When we enter a school for the first time, we need to get buy in, get people on our side, come across well, come across as an interesting and intelligent person who has stuff to share. A lot of the times, principals sign teachers up for things and when we go in, the teacher has no interest in learning or cannot understand why she needs to listen to any of this stuff. In such a situation, I will leave and try again, come back another time. I have schools

that don't want to see me but I still go and try every now and then. Nothing comes of it. I only worry as the school really needs help but what can I do? I just go through the motions and I will go away again and come back the following year (ISTE).

In one case study, the national facilitator and the regional facilitators examined theories and concepts underpinning communications and relationships in establishing effective learning relationships with teachers. In trialling application of Model II learning theory and approach in INSTEP, participants (as in the above case) examined their behaviour and practice more explicitly with their peers and realised how their own beliefs and assumptions impacted on creating and perpetuating this dynamic, creating barriers to learning. These beliefs and assumptions described and reflected Model I learning approach as presented by Argyris and Schön (1974) where the focus was on “winning (proving oneself right), and suppression of any data that does not fit the actor's assumptions”. Model II by contrast represented a more consultative approach in which the participants in learning had ‘bilateral’ control of the process where winning was not being ‘right’ but rather making sense of the evidence, and where no dialogue was suppressed, even if it was painful. It required people to pay close attention to their own behaviour and to the way they interacted with others. Argyris and Schön suggest that ‘in general, Model II learning tends to facilitate others’ learning which in turn facilitates one’s own learning.

The more I examined my own beliefs and assumptions about how I engaged with teachers, I realised my part in creating these barriers to learning. I videoed my conversations with teachers and realised what mind set I was operating from. This was huge for me personally. I am much more conscious about my assumptions and values now. So now when I first go to a school, I don't jump into planning how we are going to deliver the PD plan. I now go in with a more open approach and talk through their needs are, what are the issues they are grappling with, what would they like to do and use that to help co-construct the plan. I don't make any judgement about what they need or go into an engagement with any pre-conceived idea about what will happen. I am also much more conscious about my body language and reading the teacher's body language. The reason is that I am now not focused on delivering my plan, I am actually focused on ways in which I can work with the teacher on things that matter to her/him (National Facilitator).

## **De-privatising practice**

Many ISTE's involved in INSTEP pointed out that their practice had evolved over the years on the basis of their experience and additional study they had undertaken. However the notion of taking a more systematic approach to collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to gain deeper, more meaningful insights about practice was investigated in INSTEP by most participants. The tools and approaches used to gather data and evidence included audio and video recordings, peer observations, student voice, teacher feedback, role plays, field notes, and case notes.

INSTEP was a trigger, it really was, for us to actually start talking about our practice, you know. Actually what are we doing as facilitators? What is facilitation? So, it's that de-privatising or whatever you want to call it really. I don't like that term. But, it got us to open up our practice. One of the other things was that we used audio and video - I was videoed and audioed in those six months and now as team leaders, we are extending that practice across all of our teams and expect that each member of the team will bring at least one video or one audio to analyse. We then analyse it as a group together. (ISTE)

In this way, ISTEes created their own cultures of evidence-based inquiry and sought support and challenge from trusted colleagues, interrogated a range of data selected to address specific problems of practice, and drew on external feedback and research to help make sense of the findings. By inviting colleagues to comment on and discuss individual recordings of practice, ISTEes were confronted by the reality of what they were actually doing and provided them with valued feedback that helped them improve their practice. The following quotations illustrate the role of these artefacts in enabling inquiry into practice.

Listening to my recording of the conversation with a teacher and reading the transcript with my INSTEP group really showed how much I was trying to dominate the conversation. I was jumping in with a solution without hearing them out fully, like as if I wanted to end the interaction. (ISTE)

Videos were powerful as they offered a number of benefits – a tool for reflection, a record of the event, training of new staff to demonstrate how the conversations can unfold and how they can strategise, and most importantly it is the first step towards using other tools for learning. (Regional facilitator)

The critical insight we got from videoing our practice in our project was the number of us that thought we were great facilitators but when we looked at ourselves we were shocked. It challenged us, and it was so visible that it shook us – we realised that we were actually not listening, we were sometimes quite manipulative, we were there to have our say and move on. It was very uncomfortable to be in the spotlight, and many of us were quite threatened initially. But we ensured that the climate was right and that everyone felt they could trust the other person to put learning at the centre of the discussion and not make it personal. That was the key. But there is no going back for us, we will now incorporate this in some way in or work for the future. It is powerful. (National facilitator)

As part of INSTEP we had the opportunity to have the Regional Facilitator come and observe our practice and give us feedback. Talking through my work and how I work with another person was very helpful as it brought an external perspective to my work. Initially I was uncomfortable but then I thought that this is what we ask of our teachers, to let us come in and observe them, it made me realise that we need to demonstrate our own comfort levels with this process. We set the rules of engagement early (ISTE)

All the above examples point to the need to have an agreement and willingness of participants to the observation and a shared understanding of the purpose of the observation. In each instance, care was also taken to ensure that feedback was not personalised and was relevant to the purpose of the observation as this was felt to promote learning. It also highlighted that analysing and critiquing practice on the basis of these tools needed a level of understanding and skill which took time to develop for some facilitators in INSTEP.

### **Taking a school-based approach to inservice teacher education**

One of the case studies took an explicit school-based approach to facilitating professional development and professional learning owing to their belief that PD/PL was most relevant when it responded to the context of the school and learners in the school. This approach was consistent with the definition of ISTEes in INSTEP which included school leaders of professional development. Consequently, in this case a learning pod was



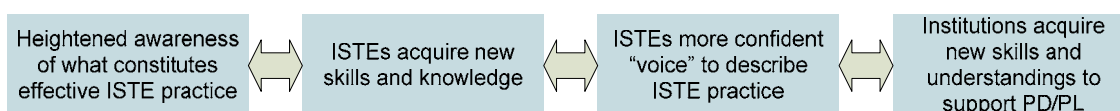
created within the identified INSTEP school and lead teachers or syndicate leaders played the role of a Regional Facilitator who facilitated professional learning for the teachers in their school. This allowed the ISTE's to recognise and respond to the diverse and unique context of the schools in which they worked. Two projects led by the National facilitators in this case were run entirely in schools, thus allowing the NFs, RFs and others involved to examine the conditions that helped/hindered engagement in PD/PL in sustainable ways. This approach also allowed for a whole-school approach where the NFs and RFs worked in the classroom alongside teachers and students more closely and invited teachers to be part of the research process.

Our project was based on our belief that learning occurs best when it is situated within authentic contexts and problems and that students need to learn the skills to be independent problem-solvers. Such a position requires then that students receive high quality instruction that reflects their learning needs, which in turn means that teachers receive high quality professional development and learning that meets their needs. By working with a group of teachers in a school and engaging leadership in the PD/PL, we were aiming to develop critically reflective skills necessary for ISTE's or those responsible for PD/PL support to identify, analyse and problem solve their way through the issues faced by teachers (National Facilitator)

By engaging us as teachers in the design of the professional learning package, we feel like it is not something that is being shoved on us. We are all involved, we all need to upskill to ensure that we are able to provide ongoing support, develop learning communities in our school and establish systems in the school to record and monitor student's progress. Whatever shifts we make we have enough support within the school to make it happen and follow it through (teacher as ISTE)

## Impact on ISTE's

Participating in INSTEP has had the following impact on ISTE's and their provider organisations:



Through the trialling of the various approaches to inquire into ISTE practice facilitated through INSTEP, ISTE's gained significant insights about what constitutes effective ISTE practice and the knowledge and theoretical base that influences, supports and shapes their practice. In this section of the report, we discuss the short to medium term impacts of participating in INSTEP for those involved. The purpose of the longitudinal case study research was to explore the extent to which the early effects and perceived value of INSTEP have been sustained and embedded into the everyday practice of ISTE's. Consequently, the discussion in this section combines a case study story built over two data points – immediately on completion of the INSTEP project (October 2007) and 12 months after the project drew to a close (October 2008).

Overall, INSTEP participants unanimously stated that they found the INSTEP project to be invaluable. Adopting a R&D approach over three years and investing in understanding ISTE practice in great depth has contributed significantly to the knowledge base around this area. This investment was seen as an

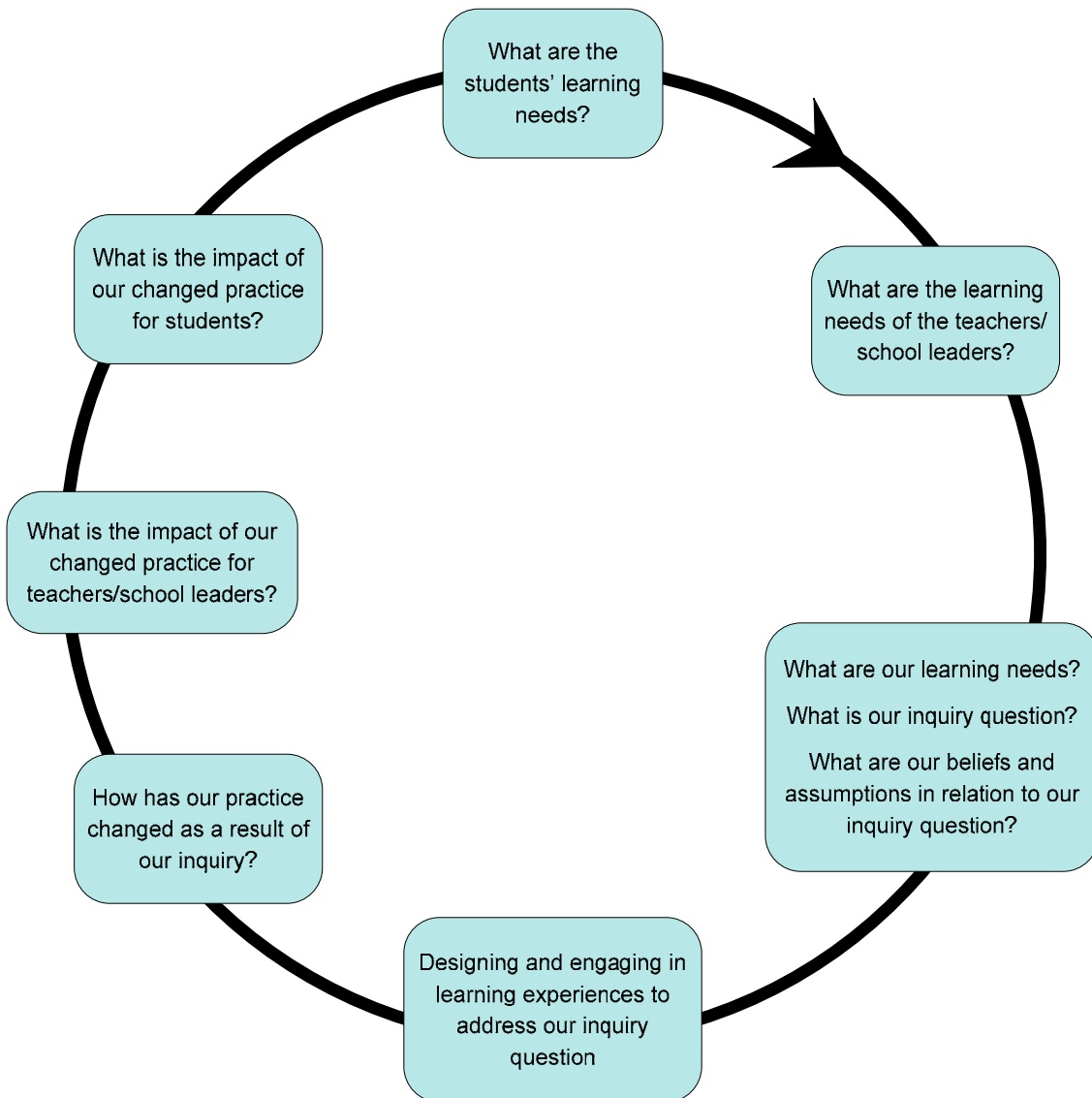
acknowledgement by the Ministry of the importance of inservice teacher education as a lever for change and enhanced connections and collaboration between ISTE organisations within New Zealand. Prior to INSTEP, the sector was seen as a collection of individuals and providers with different views and concepts about what works in inservice teacher education resulting in variable and inconsistent practice. The investment in developing the *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)* was seen as the first step towards building a knowledge base around what we know about learning for teachers. The INSTEP project was felt to have extended these understandings and heightened awareness and understanding of what constitutes effective practice and also extended the knowledge and skills of ISTE's more generally. These benefits and impact of INSTEP on ISTE practice are discussed below.

Let me put it this way. There is no going back. Some may think it is a good idea because we were able to hide behind our busyness and workload but personally it means you are going back to a system where nobody knew what we were doing including ourselves. There was no quality assurance about what went on. Now we know what we want, what to expect and how we can get there. (Regional facilitator)

### **Heightened awareness of what constitutes effective ISTE practice**

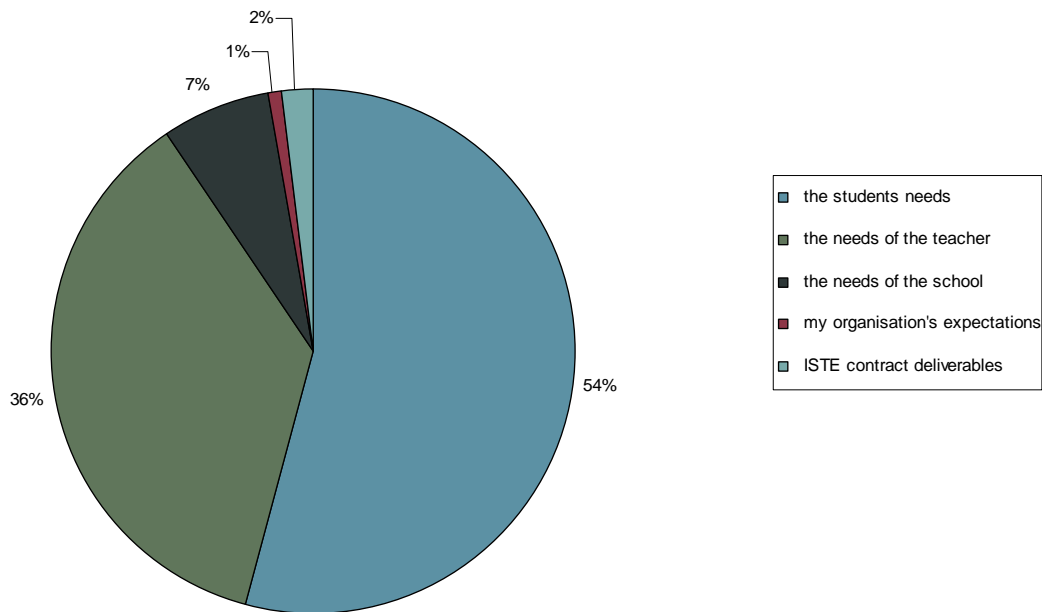
Through implementing INSTEP in their particular contexts, engaging in problems of practice and working as a community of practitioners to research and further their understandings, INSTEP participants have developed a shared understanding and awareness of what constitutes effective ISTE practice. This is a significant achievement as, prior to INSTEP, these understandings were mainly personal and not widely shared across the sector. In particular, INSTEP had sensitised inservice teacher educators to their own practice and demonstrated the value and need for an anchor to ensure that professional development and professional learning was relevant and responsive to teachers' needs. Prior to INSTEP, ISTE's viewed their role as one that was limited to facilitating professional development and professional learning and believed that they had a limited role in promoting successful student learning since their practice was a step or two removed from direct teaching of students. However involvement in INSTEP highlighted the ways in which ISTE's practice could impact on student outcomes, particularly through ongoing analysis of student and teacher needs. Asking questions of themselves and linking their learning needs to learning needs of teachers and school leaders, which in turn leads back into student learning needs, is the essence of the inquiry and knowledge-building cycle that anchors ISTE's practice. This grounding of ISTE practice provided the context for their work and ISTE's believed this was achieved through the INSTEP inquiry cycle as illustrated in the learning materials published from INSTEP:

**Figure 8: An Inquiry and Knowledge-building Cycle for Inservice Teacher Educators<sup>1</sup>**



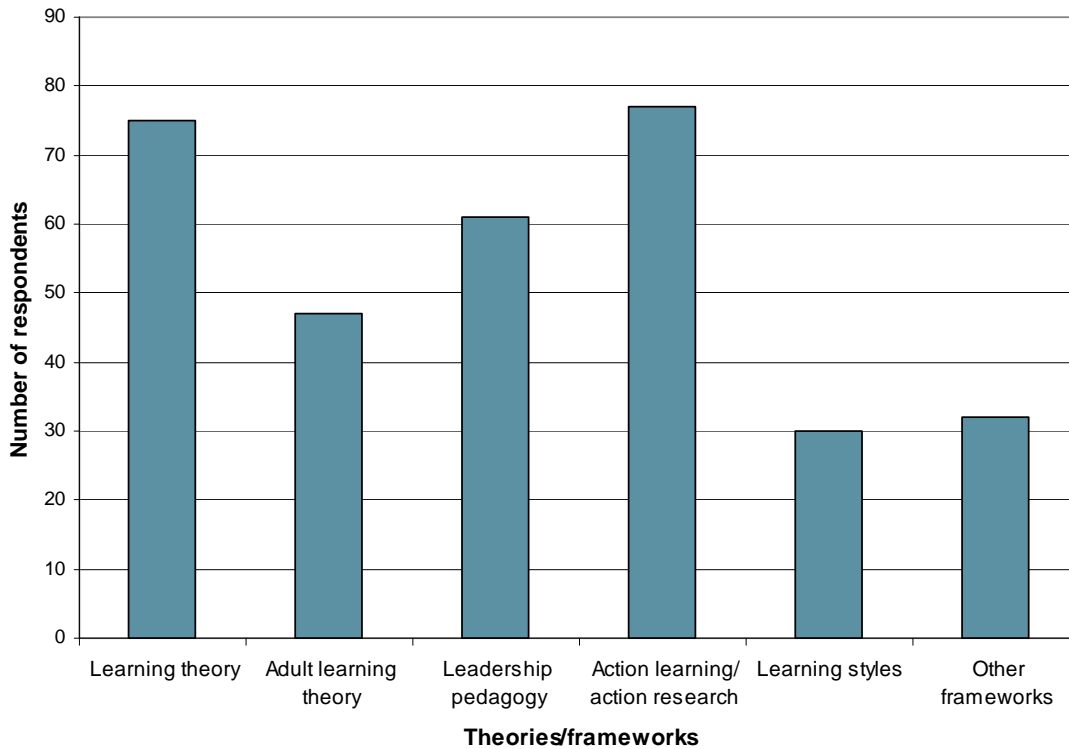
The findings of the survey corroborate these findings. When INSTEP participants were asked to identify factors that drive and influence their practice post INSTEP, needs of teachers and students emerged as being the most important with over 54% stating their practice is influenced by student needs and 36% stating teacher needs. A small minority of respondents stated that their practice was influenced by School Support Contract deliverables (2%).

<sup>1</sup> *Ki te Aotūroa: Improving Inservice Teacher Education Learning and Practice*, p 44 published by the Ministry of Education, Wellington.

**Figure 9: Factors that influence ISTE practice**

Yet another aspect that has been brought to their attention through INSTEP is an awareness of ISTE's own learning needs and experiences, particularly relating to content and activities. In *Ki te Aotūroa – Improving Inservice Teacher Education Learning and Practice* “‘content’ relates to *what* is being learned (conceptual understandings and theoretical principles, and their relationship to practice) and ‘activities’ relates to *how* it is being learned ie ways in which people try to learn, extend and apply new understandings and skills.” Applying these learnings in the context of INSTEP has led to heightened consciousness of the need to examine the evidence of their changed practice so that they can identify the impact of their learning on that practice. Therefore, asking questions that surface what ISTE's have learned and evaluating the impact of their own practice in promoting teacher and student learning have served to lend a level of rigour and robustness to ISTE practice.

Inquiry into practice through INSTEP has also led to increased consciousness of the different theories and frameworks that inform ISTE practice. When asked in the survey to identify the theories and frameworks that inform their work, ISTE's said that their practice was informed by theories of learning, adult learning, leadership pedagogy, and action learning/action research. These theories helped inservice teacher educators to understand how people learn and to use this understanding to make decisions about how best to support their own and others' learning.

**Figure 10: Theories that inform ISTE practice**

### ISTEs acquired new knowledge and skills

A key focus of INSTEP was strengthening the capability of teacher educators through an R&D approach framed around reflection and inquiry into their own practice. INSTEP was set up to allow ISTE in the project to play dual roles – engage in INSTEP as ‘learners’ (reflecting on their own practice) and also as ‘teachers’ (sharing their learnings with ISTE more generally). They were supported in this endeavour through a range of resources (such as materials, regular meetings, time, access to research mentors) that encouraged them to integrate and embed new knowledge into their practice. Therefore, examining the extent to which the ISTE involved did acquire new knowledge and skills was a critical question for the evaluation. A key focus for the evaluation was to identify:

- What new knowledge and skills have ISTE gained?
- What shifts have they made in their practice as a consequence?
- What is the evidence of these shifts?

Understanding these shifts offers insights into ‘provider pedagogical content knowledge’, a term introduced by Timperley et al. (2007) to refer to the knowledge and skills of ISTE. The term is defined in the glossary as follows:

**Provider pedagogical content knowledge:** The knowledge and skills that providers of teacher education need if they are to assist teachers to make a difference to students. This includes knowledge of the pedagogical changes teachers need to make in order to improve their practice, as well as knowledge of how to make the content meaningful to teachers and manageable within the context of teaching practice.

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The findings of the evaluation showed that participants involved in INSTEP have gained significant *new* knowledge and skills through investigating their problems of practice and engaging with their peers through the professional learning communities set up within INSTEP. These shifts have been well documented in the research reports written by participants. The sector survey further illustrates these shifts. When asked to identify aspects of ISTE practice that had changed as a result of INSTEP, respondents identified the following:

- better evaluation of ISTE practice
- greater understanding of ISTE practice
- increased reflection of personal practice
- more aware of their needs and where to get support for improving their practice
- greater focus on ISTE practice development.

Through the case study component of the evaluation, we were able to compare and contrast these shifts vis-à-vis current practice so as to discern the extent of the shift and how they do things now as opposed to how they used to do things in the past. This would provide important contextual information to help understand the true value of these shifts in light of current practice.

### Knowledge areas

The following table summarises the most significant learnings in the knowledge area of ISTE practice. The understandings of the shifts in the knowledge and skill areas were generated and validated in our interviews with NFs, RFs, ISTEes, teachers and provider organisations over a 12-month time frame through the longitudinal case study research.

Table 1: Shifts in knowledge as a result of INSTEP

	Knowledge areas	Conventional/ current understandings	Emerging, new understandings	Evidence of shifts
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>Data (gathering, analysis and use)</b>	Focused purely on standardised student achievement data as outcomes for students defined in terms of student achievement	Focus on student achievement as the ultimate goal but recognise the need to focus on development of a professional learning approach that could change teacher practice and understandings	<i>Source of evidence</i> ISTE self reports Teacher feedback Analysis of problems of practice <i>Actual evidence</i>
		Greater reliance on assessment data to tell the story	Appreciation of the need to integrate wider sources of evidence to build the story including surveys of students and teachers; observation guides; student voice	Enhanced capability to analyse data Use of data to inform teaching practices Data from surveys or interviews from students
		Data analysis limited to building a statistical picture of achievement for reporting purposes	Asking deeper and more complex questions of the data to challenge existing beliefs and assumptions or investigating hypothesis  Data as input into "collegial problem solving"	Student achievement data ISTEs investigating data more deeply and asking questions  Team based analysis of data within professional learning groups in schools
	<b>Ways of working</b>	Professional development often occurred outside of the classrooms	Supporting teachers to improve their practice by modelling ways of working	<i>Source of evidence</i> ISTE self reports Teacher feedback
		Operating on gut instinct, assumptions; habit-driven practice; knowledge is tacit	Recognition and valuing the types of theories that educators use to shape their practice  Knowledge about how to make the content meaningful to teachers	Analysis of problems of practice <i>Actual evidence</i> Practice informed by research Increased use of in class modelling
		Professional development focused on teachers; tended to be in isolation; minimal involvement from school leadership	Taking a wider systems view and involving leadership and management across the school	Increased advisor confidence to work with leadership and management Evidence of mentoring relationships
	<b>Nature of the job</b>	Focused on delivering a 'package', recipe book approach to professional development	Thoughtful, more considered, being guided by teacher learning needs and structuring professional development and learning around this	<i>Source of evidence</i> ISTE self reports Teacher feedback Analysis of problems of practice
		Out and about all the time; writing milestone reports; working alone	Engaging in professional learning conversations	<i>Actual evidence</i> Stronger, more evaluative relationship with schools Increased evidence of professional learning groups or pods within provider organisations
		Working alone and in particular curricular areas	Professional learning communities to share and grow practice knowledge and expertise; stronger mentoring and coaching role particularly for new ISTE	Teacher feedback on quality and effectiveness of professional development
		Isolated and siloed approach to professional development; no real sense of a community	'Brokers' who foster connections between research and practice; ISTE community and the classroom; within the different levels in the school	

## Skills

An explicit expectation of the INSTEP project was that through inquiring into their practice systematically and reflecting on the implications of this on teacher and student learning, ISTEes would acquire new skills and grow as reflective practitioners. The findings from the evaluation indicate that the project has been successful in building skills of ISTEes in a number of critical areas – planning and designing a professional development intervention; facilitation skills and critical reflection skills. Combined with new knowledge, the acquisition of these skills has led to significant gains for inservice teacher educators.

**Table 2: Skills gained as a result of INSTEP**

	Skills areas	Conventional/current understandings	Emerging, new understandings	Evidence of shifts
<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>Planning &amp; designing PD/PL</b>	Directed learning; solution focused; looking for quick fixes	Leading learning – co-constructing learning; seeking engagement from teachers in designing PD/PL programme	<i>Source of evidence</i> Teacher engagement and feedback
		Leading the agenda	The importance of mutual agenda setting; checking in	
	<b>Facilitation</b>	Death by questioning – ‘kept asking why till I get the answer I want’	Artful questioning	<i>Source of evidence</i> Review of video data from the learning materials Audio transcripts Teacher feedback Self-report by ISTEes
		Facilitator of professional development	Facilitator of learning	
		Delivery-oriented – “here are some resources for you to read and review that you may find useful”	Using more “we” language rather than “I” or “you”	
	<b>Critical reflection</b>	Reflection on the run	Critical reflection; honest reflection	<i>Source of evidence</i> Evidence of co-facilitation Timetabling time for reflection <i>Actual evidence</i> Professional learning group conversations Changing language of ISTEes
		Too busy to reflect or tended to locate the problem with teachers or principals	Developing an ‘inquiry habit of mind’	
		Personalised reflection; not explicit	Collaborative, shared reflection; inviting alternative perspectives on practice by involving others	
		Navel-gazing; reflecting for the sake of it	Reflection that reflects the ISTE inquiry and knowledge building cycle	

We all thought we did reflect on our work but did it differently. I went for a walk, others did it while they were driving on the way home and all sorts of things. We now realise that those sorts of reflection was not as effective and they were not timely and planned for. That actually the value of reflection is when we did it as a group and on all of focusing on the same thing, trialling something and then coming back to the group and talking about it and reflecting on the experience. It allowed a more thorough reflection. So there was a lot of



discussion about our journey as facilitators and how at the beginning we were very around delivery and information and we had to be the fountain of all knowledge almost and how we developed over that time, moving away from that to be much more interactive and recognising where our teachers are at, and moving them on from there sort of stuff.

I worked in this school for two years and pretty much use the model of facilitation I had always been using – I stand in the front and deliver a package and they pick it and run with it in their schools. When I looked for signs of change in the classrooms, as a result of my classroom observations, I didn't find any change. Teachers were doing all the talking and the children sat back and listened. The kids were passive. I blamed the teacher initially and through my inquiry in INSTEP I now realise that it is my professional development approach that is not working. I was putting teachers in a passive role of learning.

### ISTEs gained more confidence; 'voice' to describe practice

Inservice teacher educators commented that INSTEP had given a 'voice' to their work and practice. Prior to INSTEP, inservice teacher education were unclear about the 'professional' status of their practice and felt that they were often not given the respect or the mana that reflected their value and status to educational outcomes. With INSTEP and the knowledge gained as a consequence of the research and development project, there is a growing sense of a professional identity for ISTEs which was deeply comforting and rewarding for inservice teacher educators. Surfacing the underpinning theory around teacher education practice and highlighting the nature of its contribution to outcomes for teachers has imbued the practice of ISTEs with a level of respectability.

**Table 3: Attributes acquired as a result of INSTEP**

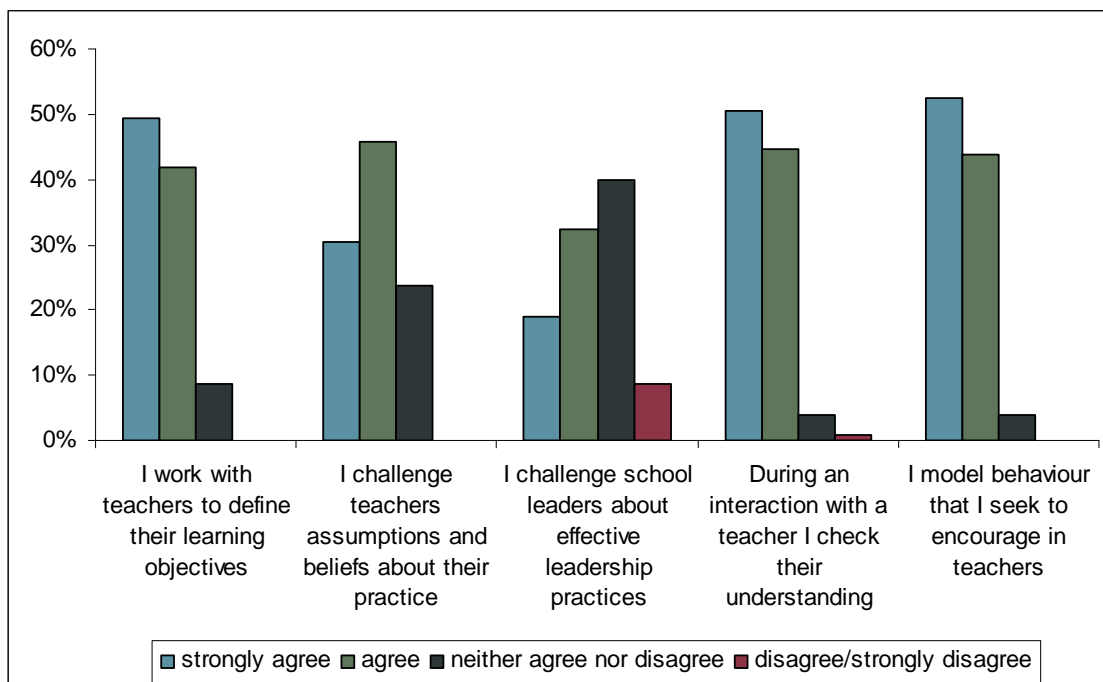
ATTRIBUTES	Personal attributes	Conventional/current understandings	Emerging, new understandings
	Confidence	Hiding behind structures, content and paper	Flexible, open and encouraging
		'I really want to be liked'	Challenging teachers respectfully
	Inclusive	<i>Owning</i> the initiative or the professional development	Collaborating and sharing the learning
	Listening	'Sharing my war stories with them and telling them what the problem really is based on my years of experience'	"Focusing on what they really are saying and listening"
Following the programme set by me		Checking in and making sure that the PD meets their learning needs	

Findings relating to the confidence and growing understandings of the ways in which ISTEs can work effectively with teachers through INSTEP were further validated by the survey results. When asked to describe how they work with teachers, over 50% said that their work now includes modelling behaviours, working with teachers to define their learning objectives and regular checking in to ensure shared understanding of the professional development purpose. Interestingly, ISTEs are still coming to grips with

some aspects of their role, particularly with respect to challenging teachers' and leaders' assumptions and beliefs about their practice. These findings point to the fact that the ways in which ISTE work with teachers are undergoing gradual change and ISTE are aware of the need to engage in behaviours that challenge current practice.

I do struggle with the whole idea of challenging beliefs and creating dissonance. I know that it is important as it is the beginning of self reflection. But it is a process that we still have to work through as ISTE. When I have tried to engage in challenging conversations, I have come away feeling hollow as people are not grateful and are not nice to deal with.

**Figure 11: How ISTE work with teachers**



### **Institutions acquire new knowledge and understandings about how to support ISTE practice**

Achieving sustainable shifts in ISTE practice depends on the extent to which education provider organisations introduce and formalise changes to their structures, systems and processes to embed new learning. In the absence of such institutional adjustments, learnings and insights gained from INSTEP could easily be limited to the life of the project and learnings not transferred to ISTE's everyday context. For instance, in implementing INSTEP, participants developed a deep understanding of the role and contribution of critical reflection to their practice and trialled ways in which such reflective practices could be integrated into their everyday work to enhance the impact of their work with teachers. This experience highlighted the power of reflection and inquiry for ISTE practice and participants were keen to build on this knowledge and experience post INSTEP. However sustaining these practices in an ongoing way requires provider organisations to structure their work differently and to provide appropriate mechanisms and support to allow meaningful reflection *on* practice. The purpose of the longitudinal case study work was to explore these issues in some depth, identify strategies used by organisations involved in INSTEP to address issues around sustainability and gain some insights into factors that helped or hindered institutions to embed changes in the wider system.

A key expectation was that as National Facilitators gained new knowledge, skills and understandings, they would use these to influence their organisational contexts and to lift the discourse on quality and effectiveness of ISTE provision. The evaluation found that the National Facilitators have had a strong impact on their own institutions and have worked relentlessly with the leadership and management in their respective organisations to discuss and debate the implications of INSTEP experiences. In a number of cases, it would be fair to say that INSTEP has triggered changes, including reviewing management structures, performance appraisal processes, structure and focus of ISTE professional development days, induction processes and creation of professional learning communities.

We created a new position in our organisation of a Professional Development Coordinator to provide leadership and structure to how we support the professional development and learning of our people. (Provider organisation)

In the past our professional development days were really business sessions really. Once in a while someone from the sector was brought in and they taking about something but there was no follow up, no discussions about how we could or would apply it in our work. We now realise that ultimately we need to work out what does this mean for us, what are we doing currently and how we can change that? (Provider organisation)

We as an organisation are now alerted to the fact that we need to look at how we work and how we support our people to work effectively. Now we now that you cant come here as an advisor and go out and do what you like. We now are clearer about what we expect from our advisors and are willing to support them to achieve optimum results for teachers and students. (Provider organisation)

### **Creating professional learning communities**

In one case, the provider organisation has set up Professional Learning Groups (PLG) as a structure for facilitating inquiry into practice. Each and every ISTE in the organisation is attached to a PLG which is run by a PLG coordinator. An ISTE engages with a problem of practice within a PLG and can choose to use the PL progressions to frame their inquiry. Their inquiry journey is mapped and documented in a Professional Learning Portfolio and they systematically inquire into their practice and gather evidence of the impact of the shifts they make using a combination of tools such as teacher feedback, observations, videoing, and narrative stories. These portfolios are then used as critical evidence of shifts and progress by the ISTE in performance appraisal discussions and meetings. In this way, the organisation is attempting to bring about greater synergies between the inquiry into problems of practice and its contribution to lifting the overall quality of ISTE provision. Key challenges faced in this organisation include growing variability between PLGs with some performing well and others tending to take a softer approach. There was also a reluctance amongst ISTE's to video their practice or to allow peer observations. Consequently, the management in this organisation is considering ways in which these issues can be resolved to be truly effective learning organisation.

### **Refocusing professional development days**

In another case, the organisation has reshaped their professional development structure and processes for ISTE's. In their team days, where the focus is on the professional development for all staff, there are sessions around the INSTEP project and sharing of the growing body of knowledge in this area. The management has

also initiated their own research to ascertain what ISTE's consider to be the most effective facilitator practices and tapping into the tacit knowledge of their own ISTE's to prioritise and come with a list. In this way, organisationally, there is a shared understanding and view about what constitutes effective ISTE practice and the characteristics of an effective facilitator. The aim is to use these understandings to inform induction processes and programmes, as a performance monitoring tool, input into the recruitment strategy or to focus and anchor inquiry into ISTE practice in more systematic ways.

One of the most important things post INSTEP for us as a provider of PD/PL services was to look for ways in which we could embed what we had learnt into our management structures and practices. We created a new role and a new position in our management structure for a Professional Development Coordinator. This person will help review our professional development days, programme content and develop tools and processes to help get maximum value of this investment and time. They will also provide advice in how new advisers are inducted and trained in our institution. (Provider organisation)

In the past our professional development sessions were really business sessions. Once in a while we invited someone to come and talk about something but there never was any follow up or discussion. We now realise that ultimately we need to work out what does this presentation or research or new framework mean for us. What are we doing currently and how can we change that to reflect what is best practice (RF)

### Induction

Induction is another area that has received significant attention in INSTEP. The lessons learnt from INSTEP have heightened awareness and understanding of the qualities and competencies of an effective facilitator and this has led providers to question and review their current recruitment and induction programmes. As a result, organisations were looking to creative ways in which they could integrate these understandings to set advisor expectations from the start and promote a culture of inquiry from the first day of advisory work.

We have really focused on induction of new advisers. We didn't really know what was needed prior to INSTEP. So we threw them the car keys and said here is a car, a map and told them to buzz off to schools and get started. When you come across a problem come and talk to us. Often we didn't see them for a while. But now, we know so much more and we are ensuring that induction is strong and sets up expectations that this is a professional learning environment. We talk, we discuss and solve problems collegially. This is a huge step. (Provider organisation)

### Reviewing management structures

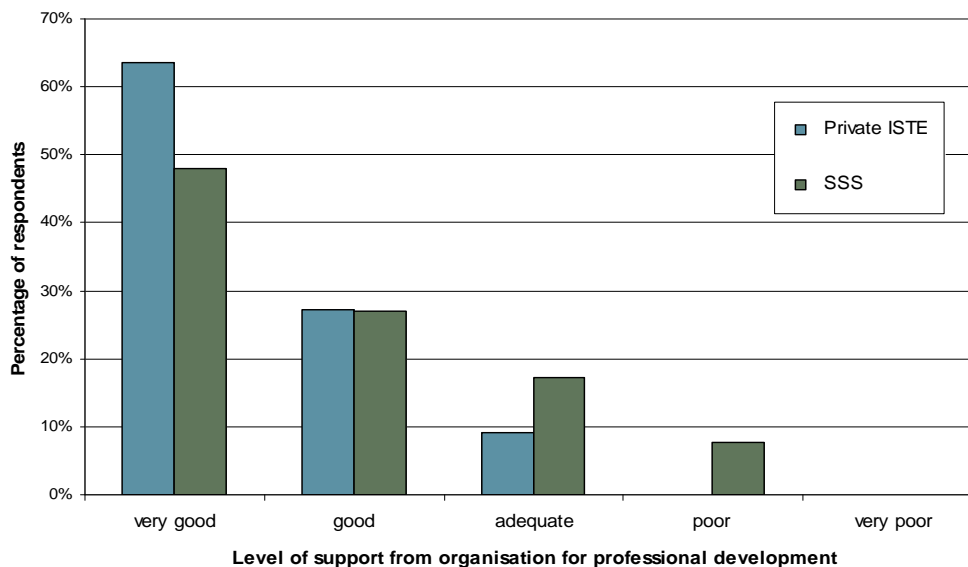
Growing awareness of the need to provide ongoing support for facilitators had led some large provider groups to rethink their current management structures. This was in keeping with the emerging understanding that if ISTE's were to grow and develop professionally, then organisations needed to provide the professional support needed to encourage this growth. In one case, the provider organisation has introduced a new team management structure in order to provide greater level of leadership and support to ISTE's. The support is wrapped around an ISTE's problem of practice or challenge of practice where they are supported by the team leader to undertake inquiry into the problem in a systematic way as illustrated in the following quotation:

We have a new management structure now and that is really a huge shift and I think probably directly related to INSTEP. We now have team leaders who support facilitators to inquire into a

problem of practice and they map this inquiry in what we call professional learning portfolios, where a facilitator is expected to pinpoint, I guess is the word, a challenge of practice and then talk about it, and then have a learning journey for a year and have a look at how they're going to meet that challenge. So there's, and part of that process is what I described to you around the audio videoing, so it's within the professional learning portfolio that the audio video.

These shifts in organisations' understanding and support are further validated in the survey. When asked about the level of support received from the organisation for professional development, the response was overwhelmingly positive with over 90% (n=161) stating that the level of support was either 'very good' or 'good'. Interestingly, those that work for private providers appeared to rate the level of support higher than those that work for a School Support Service organisation. Size could be a factor in this respect as SSS organisations are usually larger and support from management would be more formalised and limited by availability of managers. Some of the SSS organisations have introduced some changes to their structures to offer higher levels of support but these have yet to take shape. For instance, TEAM solutions have recently introduced a new team management structure to provide a greater level of support to advisors. However, at the time this survey was undertaken, these changes were yet to be fully implemented resulting in current perceptions.

**Figure 12: Level of support from management for professional development**



### Nature of support

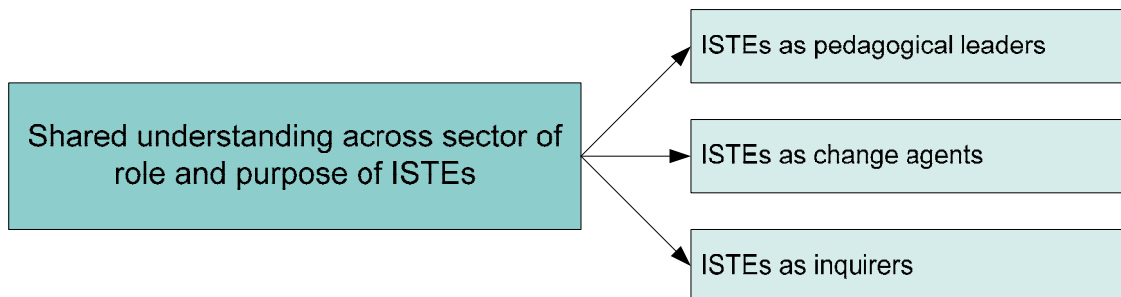
When asked about the various forms of support offered to ISTE, a combination of informal and formal support mechanisms appeared to be in place in provider organisations. The following table outlines the different forms of support available.

**Table 4: Forms of support offered by providers by provider type**

Forms of support	Private providers	School Support Services
Formal induction programme	50%	81%
Regular team meetings	82%	75%
Structured feedback	59%	35%
Professional development plans	50%	56%
Formal performance reviews	41%	58%
Time allocated to share best practice with colleagues	77%	79%
Time allocated to reflect on and review practice	68%	65%
Documented ISTE guidelines and procedures	45%	40%
Access to up to date learning materials eg INSTEP	91%	69%

From this table it appears that there is greater similarity than difference between the two provider groups, with the exceptions of formal induction programmes where School Support Services rated higher (81%) and formal performance review processes (58%) where again they rated higher than their counterparts in the private sector. Across both groups, team meetings and professional learning groups were the most common ways in which organisations promoted sharing of ISTE practice.

### Shared understanding and clarity across the sector regarding role and purpose of ISTE



Quality teaching and learning in any community requires a shared vision and understanding of what is to be achieved in practice. An underpinning rationale for INSTEP was to address a gap in educational research and literature about the practice and learning of inservice teacher educators. By adopting an inquiry approach for the development of practice, it was felt that ISTE across the sector would build a shared understanding of what constitutes effective ISTE practice. Therefore, ascertaining the extent to which INSTEP has been successful in building this shared understanding was critical to the evaluation. The evaluation findings suggest that there is a more sophisticated understanding of the role of ISTE. Whereas in the past ISTE were seen purely as facilitators of professional development, they are increasingly seen as agents of change and as facilitators of learning. These roles described above are believed to work *collectively* to enhance their impact on teachers.

The case study research and the sector survey showed that there was a clearer and sharper understanding of the role and purpose of ISTE's across the sector as a result of INSTEP. In the sector survey when asked whether they have a clear understanding of their role as ISTE's, 95% of those who responded said that they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement; 3% said that they were 'neutral' and 2% said they 'disagree' with this statement.

Through INSTEP they also appeared to have developed a clearer sense of their *place* and contribution to teacher professional development and learning, particularly in relation to achieving improved student outcomes. In this section, we discuss participants' understandings of their role post INSTEP and how they believed playing these roles contributed to bringing about changes in teaching practice.

### **ISTEs as pedagogical leaders**

Through INSTEP there is a growing awareness and understanding of the emerging role of ISTE's as pedagogical leaders. As leaders of teaching and learning, increasingly ISTE's are expected to have access to and know about what is best practice, provide leadership in teaching and provide a range of teaching opportunities for teachers that could upskill them in development of their own pedagogical practice. However, the findings from the evaluation suggest that the notion of ISTE's as pedagogical leaders is still in its infancy and while INSTEP has identified this as an important dimension of an ISTE's role, it would be fair to say that ISTE's have yet to come to terms with what this means for their day-to-day practice.

There are a few ISTE's that understand the implications of this role for their practice. In their view, as a pedagogical leader, they would be expected to possess both curriculum and learning knowledge and skill and would systematically assess and evaluate the effort of their demonstrated pedagogical practice. This would require ISTE's to think beyond inquiry and conversations and take a stronger research orientation to their work – increase focus on data and design interventions on the basis of the data and analyse and evaluate efforts vis-à-vis expected outcomes, regularly inquire into the *effectiveness* of their work and interrogate research literature to inform their own evaluations and progress.

As pedagogical leaders we will be developing learning approaches to assist teacher practice and development and ensure that these approaches are anchored in student learning. (ISTEs)

### **ISTEs as change agents**

ISTEs have traditionally seen their role as facilitators of professional development and over the years they have come to view their role as facilitators of learning. With INSTEP there has a further shift and there is a growing understanding of their role as agents of change. The current environment for schools is changing rapidly and teachers and school leaders need to learn how to change and adapt their practice to achieve better outcomes for students. This requires ISTE's to conceptualise their role differently and some ideas that are discussed in *Ki te Aotūroa* include ISTE's as 'brokers' (Wenger, 1998) or people who bridge and foster connections at the boundaries of two communities of practice: the ISTE community and that of the teachers and school leaders with whom they work as change agents.

Through engaging in a joint inquiry into real problems with teachers ISTE's are essentially attempting to (a) extend teachers' understandings of their context and (b) helping teachers to work towards a coherence model of teaching and learning to transform the culture of a school. This happens over time as teachers and their

leaders see the impact of the new learning on student learning and become more committed to ongoing cycles of improvement.

Sometimes the change is at the individual teacher level (assisting teachers to routinely reflect on their practice and understand the theories that inform their practice) and other times it is directed at the whole school as the school system needs to adapt to be more learning-focused. Therefore, ensuring that an inquiry results in change and improvement that is enduring and sustained requires a balancing act from ISTE. Understanding their role as change agents has been an important shift for ISTE in INSTEP. It has led to a stronger focus on supporting teachers to take ownership of their learning through continual goal-setting and monitoring their own progress towards these goals. It has also led to a focus on the design of an intervention rather than delivery of the intervention and a wider systems focus so as to bring about cultural shifts in the school that supports professional learning.

While sustainable improvements require a focus on long-term outcomes based on a vision of what is possible, ongoing feedback against smaller indicators of success helps provide both pressure and support for change (Guskey, 1995). Guskey (2006) also adds that it is ‘particularly important for participants in professional development to see some indication of success early in a change effort. This can help generate commitment to the change from key actors in the system and build strong learning relationships between members of the different communities of practice that are collaborating on the change process.

### **ISTEs as inquirers**

Modelling new learning appeared to be a central component of effective practice and an important step in scaffolding support to teachers and facilitating teacher learning. The inquiry approach embedded in the design of INSTEP was a critical factor in bringing about significant shifts in ISTE’s understandings about their role as inquirers. By trialling different approaches and undertaking inquiry into their own practice, ISTE critically reflected on various aspects of their role and developed their ability to identify problems of practice to interrogate data to analyse and make sense of these problems; and developed strategies to enhance the learning environment for teachers and students.

Through inquiry, ISTE in INSTEP critically reflected on what was happening in a given situation, with the ultimate goal of achieving improved learning outcomes for teachers and students. This helped ISTE to create new knowledge which they then used to inform their subsequent planning and actions. However, pre INSTEP, most of this knowledge was tacit and through INSTEP participants have gone through a process of critically reflecting on their current practices, beliefs and mental models to make these understandings more explicit. Specifically, as a result of INSTEP, ISTE have begun to understand the need to:

- continually reflect on their ability to support teacher practice in relation to student learning;
- ensure their own practice is based on sound theories of teaching and learning for adults;
- continually inquire into their own effectiveness in a systematic way; and
- adapt their institutional systems and structures to support ongoing inquiry.

These benefits were consistent with the goals of INSTEP as the project was designed to give ISTE the opportunity and the mandate to engage with inquiry into their own practice with a view to understanding it and transforming it.



In INSTEP, this was facilitated in a number of ways, including monthly meetings of national facilitators and ISTE's. In the meetings of national facilitators, participants could collectively inquire into their own beliefs and assumptions, ask hard questions about the lens through which they select and interpret evidence or observations and the impact that their decisions and actions have on the people they work with – teachers and school leaders. In the meetings of ISTE's, participants engaged with a problem of practice within their own learning groups. They acknowledged that inquiry was not a comfortable process but it certainly resulted in a willingness to explore different approaches and make use of tools to achieve better outcomes for students.

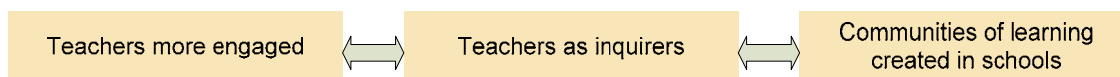
As inservice teacher educators and leaders of professional learning, ISTE's are well placed to model inquiry and evidence-based practice in their work. As they gained confidence ISTE's supported the use of inquiry in schools they worked with, at two levels: with teachers in classrooms through gathering, analysing and interpreting a range of information to help understand what was going on and to develop strategies to help the student achieve their full potential; and at whole-school level to create cultures of inquiry at all levels of the school.

In the long run it does help us with accountability, because we're really clear about what's going on. If you're looking at people that closely, you've got a really good idea about what they're doing, what they're not doing. We get accused of micro managing at the moment, because everybody is, you know the team leaders are in observing, they're doing their video audio, so people are saying, oh we're getting looked at much more closely. So some people are seeing it as a positive, and some people are saying, they don't trust us any more. So there's that kind of issue that we, you know, you hear them say, well yes we are looking at it more closely because we want to find out what you're doing. (Provider organisation)

Understanding of these roles combined with pedagogical content knowledge was felt to be critical in affecting change in teaching and achieving positive student outcomes. None of this work in isolation and in order to maximise gains from these understandings, ISTE's need to ensure they work in tandem and balance the emphasis placed on certain aspects of their role in relation to the needs of the teachers and schools they work with at any given time.

## Impact on teachers

ISTE's note that as a result of examining and inquiring into their practice, they are able to work with teachers in ways that ensures that teachers are more engaged, they undertake inquiry into their own practice and work towards developing communities of learning within their own schools.



### Teachers are more engaged

ISTE's commented that engagement from teachers was a vital clue that their efforts and focus on their practice was working. Videoing of practice in particular was felt to be most useful as it highlighted the ISTE's tendency to dominate the conversation or bring premature closure to the discussion resulting in teachers disengaging from the learning process. The term interactive professionalism (Fullan and

Hargreaves, 1996) offers a useful way of describing the ideas and principles that support relationships in which the knowledge and skills of all are shared and valued. The participants in these collaborative relationships are interdependent and there is an explicit recognition that each person brings their own contribution to the common endeavour. ISTE bring their own knowledge base from their own community of practice and teachers bring their own experience and expertise to the relationship. Valuing these contributions allows the relationship to be built on mutual respect, which in turn creates a positive learning environment.

Our conversations with teachers involved in INSTEP supported these ideas. Teachers commented that the openness and willingness of the ISTE to listen and focus on their needs determined their level of engagement with the professional development interaction.

### **Teachers as inquirers**

Inquiry is a way of reflecting on professional practice so as to help make decisions about practice that will help promote students' learning and well-being. Inquiry can take many forms and in the context of INSTEP, teachers engaged in inquiry by examining their practice with ISTE using in-class observations, undertaking critical data analysis to unravel interesting patterns in the data and participating in critical dialogue with their peers by interrogating the assumptions and beliefs on which their practice is based. Our conversations with teachers showed that ISTE were beginning to make forays into these areas and engaging in different types of conversations with their teachers, as is evident in the following quotations from teachers:

For instance, in the past I used to give the same text to all kids in the class. Since the kids are at varying levels by giving them the same text, I realised that some were struggling while others were flying. But I just continued with this approach as I didn't know what else to do. When X (ISTE) came into my classroom she observed and asked me what I was experiencing. I talked to her about my observations about how kids were doing and who was engaged or disengaged from the reading. She then asked me about whether I had tried other approaches and I said no, as I didn't know what to do. She then showed me how I could run a guided reading session by giving different texts to each child and using more visual cues to aid reading. I really feel that my teaching is so much more effective. I know that because the ones that don't usually contribute in my class are now contributing and engaged in the class. (Teacher)

She (RF) made me think about my practice and asked me whether I believed what I was doing was working. I knew it was not working but I didn't know what to do. For example, I was running a guided reading group and tended to give the same text to the group. I would ask the children to read it one by one and it was clearly boring and not motivating much interest. She (RF) discussed this with me and we figured out together that we needn't have all kids reading the same text. (Teacher)

At the beginning of the year, my ISTE videoed the two teachers' lessons in our school and after school one day we all sat around and watched this video clips. She asked us to identify all the teaching decisions that we had made in that 10 minute video clip and our reasons for that decision. It was soon apparent that in many cases, our decisions were based on what we always did! We then realised how our classroom was set up to suit them as teachers – it was really about our managerial issues rather than focused on facilitating children's learning. This was huge for me and the other teacher in my school.

## **Teachers create communities of learning**

Creating communities of learning that promote sharing of practice in schools was felt to be an important outcome sought by ISTE as it fosters a culture of inquiry that will sustain the improvement. Teachers felt that INSTEP offered the opportunity to engage in ongoing inquiry about issues that matter most to them, exploring data from different sources and making evaluative interpretations on which to base their decisions on practice. Access to mentors, a critical friend, and external expert in the form of an ISTE helped scaffold the learning. Consequently, as INSTEP drew to a close, these teachers sought alternative ways to create and sustain their own learning community in their region. In their view ‘there was no going back’ and the progress they had made was to be maintained. In one case, the ISTE engaged with a problem of practice relating to transference of literacy skills across curricular areas in the school with a view to improving student achievement across transitions and year levels. This involved creating a learning group of teachers drawn from different curricular areas from within the school and the ISTE working closely with the group to strengthen content area and pedagogical knowledge base. Tools such as observations, concept mapping exercises, literacy diagnostics assessment, student voice, and teacher journals were used to engage in collegial problem solving resulting in deepened understandings and targeted literacy instruction within the school.

This is best illustrated in one case where the RTLit involved in INSTEP as a regional facilitator was approached by teachers to set up a forum where they could discuss and critically reflect on their practice. This has led to the formation of a voluntary professional learning community of teachers in this region who share a common vision and purpose and have negotiated a way of working that reflects this vision. The group meets weekly and the agenda is set by the members. As members have built trust and respect for each other, they have begun to bring student work to the forum to inquire into the data with a view to developing different strategies to improve student learning. In this way, this group has created a professional learning community that is focused on making ongoing improvements to student learning.

I do think it has been incredibly beneficial and as I say it was a slow process it took its time and now I'm thinking some of those things that I learnt in these discussions are fabulous why did I not do them earlier! I have one of the youngest teacher in this group and I used to sit back and listen. But now I actually ask questions to help me plan and examine my work. For example, I have learnt so much about the need to focus on the learning intention. In the past I would have pulled the book out from the shelf, and given it to the kids and asked them to read but not told them why they were reading that or what I'm looking for when they are reading it. But through examining the value of learning intentions in this group, I now realise that I need to be more clear and explicit about this. I stop and think why am I giving the kid this book? Based on that I say to them what I want them to think about when reading the book. For example I may say today we are going to read smoothly and fast. This provides the child with the focus too. The biggest learning for me in these learning groups for me are learning to choose the book according to what that child needs and keeping a record and telling the child exactly why they are reading that book and what you expect them to do. (Teacher)

## **Challenges in sustaining shifts**

While teachers acknowledged that they acquired new knowledge and skills through their involvement in INSTEP, the longitudinal case study research findings indicated that sustaining these shifts posed some challenges to teachers. Lack of support from school leadership and management and a culture of resistance in

the school were identified as two critical impediments to sustainability. This is consistent with the work of a number of authors (such as Guskey, 2000; Earl and Katz 2002; Timperley 2003) who have identified a range of issues, conditions and systemic supports that are central to effective professional development. These include:

- building a shared vision for the work among stakeholders – raised expectations and a focus on student’s learning;
- increasing participation of teachers in professional development through effective delivery, reflection on and application of research and theoretical information;
- measuring effectiveness of any intervention using a range of methods;
- focusing at a school level on the development of strong learning communities of teachers where practice is ‘de-privatised’ and in which there is a focus on collaboration; and
- ensuring that professional development becomes an everyday part of a teacher’s working life that is sustainable, school-based, site-specific and relevant to all members of the school community.

In the context of school-based approaches trialled in INSTEP, the evaluation found that while there were some instances where there were systems in place to support professional learning, there were others where the actions of the school leaders did not match their espoused theory, resulting in *pockets* of good practice in the school.

## Impact on the students

Unlike other PD interventions where impact on students is paramount, in the case of INSTEP it was apparent early on that impact on students was likely to be achieved indirectly through impact on teachers. Essentially the project was aimed at developing and establishing effective evidence-base approaches focused on the learning and practice of inservice teacher educators and was seen as a capability building project. Therefore, ISTE’s viewed and tracked impact on students through their ability to ensure that teaching practice was informed by student achievement and outcomes. The inquiry cycle in the INSTEP materials clearly illustrates the linkages between ISTE inquiry and its impact on student outcomes and the evaluation suggests that ISTE’s are consciously anchoring their inquiry in teacher needs which in turn is anchored in student needs.

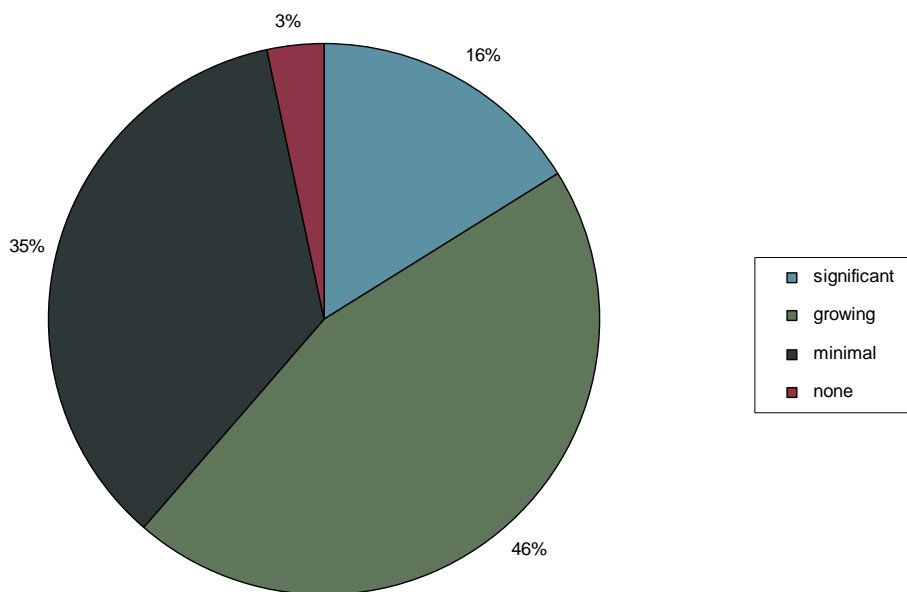
The Controller and Auditor -General’s report on Ministry of Education’s suite of professional development support for teachers notes that ‘although an analysis of student achievement information can identify areas in need of improvement, relationships between the professional development received by teachers and student achievement are complex. The performance of students can be influenced by a range of factors and circumstances’. This was even more challenging in INSTEP which was essentially a capability building project and aimed at strengthening inservice teacher education practice through inquiry approaches. By building the capability of ISTE’s INSTEP aimed to enhance the relevance and appropriateness of the professional development and leaning opportunities for teachers which in turn would create a positive learning environment for students.

The inquiry cycle in the INSTEP materials clearly illustrates the linkages between ISTE inquiry and its impact on student outcomes and there is evidence from the evaluation to suggest that ISTE’s are anchoring their inquiry in teacher needs which in turn are anchored in student needs.

## Impact on sector

A key objective for INSTEP was to support professional leadership and ongoing improvement within the inservice teacher education sector. Consequently evidence of the sector taking ownership and leading the discourse on quality of inservice teacher education can be seen as an important indicator of success in achieving objective 3. Survey data gathered from Sector Reference Group members indicated that INSTEP has had a reasonable impact on building a sense of ownership or community across the ISTE sector given the timeframe for the project. When asked about the extent to which INSTEP had built a sense of community across the ISTE sector, 61% felt that it was ‘significant’ or ‘growing’ while another 39% felt that it was ‘minimal’ or had ‘no impact’.

**Figure 13: Impact of INSTEP on the sector**



The survey results also showed that there was a greater level of awareness and understanding of the competencies of a good inservice teacher educator. Sector Reference Group members were asked to select the four most important competencies of a good ISTE. However, the following four competencies rated significantly higher than others (for example, cultural competence; knowledge of research; teaching experience):

- ISTE pedagogical knowledge (81%)
- ability to work in a research/inquiry frame (81%)
- pedagogical content knowledge (77%)
- knowledge of the curriculum/content knowledge (45%).

Respondent description of the essential attributes of an effective ISTE practice included:

- the ability to engage in ongoing inquiry and knowledge building
- the ability to tailor delivery to the clients’ needs
- the ability to gather, interpret and incorporate evidence

- the ability to reflect on and modify practice
- a continual focus on improved student outcomes
- communication skills and confidence
- in-depth content knowledge.



## Part 3: Implications for the future

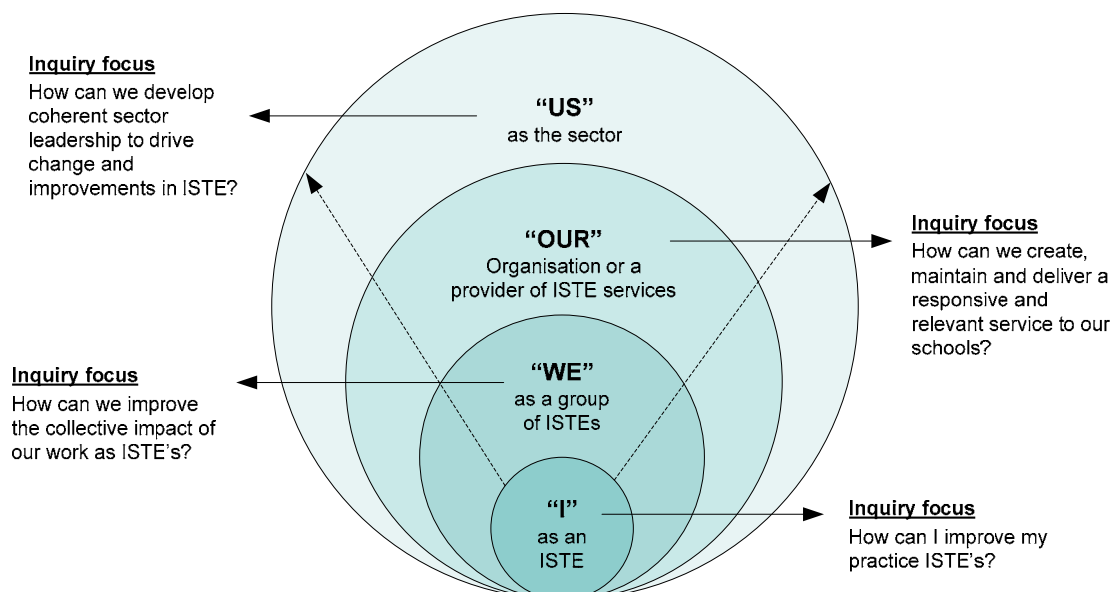
The findings from the evaluation indicates that INSTEP has been an invaluable and timely intervention in bringing about an awareness and understanding about what constituted effective ISTE practice across the sector. The project reinforced the basic principles articulated in the Best Evidence Synthesis on Teacher professional development and learning and demonstrated to ISTE's that when they examined their practice collaboratively, challenged each other's ways of working and shared and discussed ways in which they determined effectiveness of their work, they were able to achieve far greater engagement from teachers in the professional development and learning. The value of adopting an inquiry-approach in developing practice is well documented in *Ki te Aotūroa – Improving Inservice Teacher Educator Learning and Practice*. This evaluation report offers additional insights about the ways in which participating in INSTEP has contributed to bringing about shifts in knowledge, skills and expertise of ISTE's and identifies early indicators of change for the project.

Our analysis indicates that INSTEP has had an impact at a number of levels:

- at an individual ISTE level;
- at a group level;
- at an organisational level;
- at the sector level.

We see these levels as embedded within each other suggesting that there may be a time dimension to these impacts. For example, for changes in individual ISTE level to generate impact at the wider sector level requires time as it involves bringing about shifts in the world view of different sector groups. Further there are a number of other contextual factors that can impede these shifts from occurring easily such as the contestable nature of the environment and this need to be recognised. The following diagram illustrates the particular focus at each level:

**Figure 14: INSTEP levels of impact**





At an individual ISTE level, INSTEP can be deemed to be a success and all ISTE's involved in INSTEP were unanimous in their view that their views about their practice had been transformed. Focusing on the "I" and engaging in problems of personal professional practice, gathering and examining evidence of this practice and trialling approaches that challenge or push this practice, ISTE's involved in INSTEP had developed deeper understandings of his/her role as pedagogical leaders. Further tools like the video, audio transcripts or peer observations have led to de-privatising practice which in turn has created significant learning opportunities for ISTE's. As one ISTE put it, "there is no going back" and this illustrates the significance of the shifts that have been made and the value of applying these new understandings in their work.

At a group level, there is evidence to show that ISTE's are engaging in collaborative inquiry into their practice within their professional learning groups established during INSTEP. In some instances, these groups are formed around output groups within the School Support services contract such as literacy and numeracy, to discuss and debate issues relating to their practice. Through the consolidation initiatives, other groups have formed such as the ATOL or LPDP which aim to work across geographical boundaries or institutional boundaries.

The focus on the 'WE', as a community of inservice teacher educators, is clearly growing and taking shape and needs to be supported to investigate cross-cutting issues for the wider community. A key success factor in achieving change at a group level appears to be commonality of interest and purpose.

At an organisational level, the focus has been on "OUR" institution and INSTEP has made significant strides in getting provider organisations involved in the case study research to think differently about how they structure, support and monitor effectiveness of their advisory work. As a result, case study organisations have significantly reshaped their structures and systems particularly in relation to their induction programmes, professional development days, how they support ongoing professional development of their staff, performance appraisal systems and creating professional learning groups to facilitate ongoing inquiry into practice. This is a critical first step towards sustaining the benefits and lessons from INSTEP.

A closer examination of these structures and systems reveals that within these broader institution-wide changes, in most instances the inquiry on practice related issues still tend to be individually, "I" focussed. This is an emerging issue that needs to be addressed by the management teams, particularly in the larger provider organisations. Just as responsibility for improving student outcomes is a collective responsibility, so too is the responsibility of improving quality and effectiveness of ISTE practice. This means that over time the focus needs to extend beyond individual improvement to explore how ISTE's can contribute to lifting the quality of the services provided by their institution as a whole. This requires ISTE's to escalate the inquiry to include practice issues that face the entire organisation. It also allows the organisation to tap into the tacit knowledge of advisors to collectively reflect on aspects of their service including issues such as prioritisation and decision-making processes regarding selection of schools; aligning professional delivery to regional needs; gathering evidence of success. Focusing on these issues will help transition INSTEP from an individually focused intervention to bringing about shifts in the professional development provision system.

The following table offers some guidance for ensuring that the inquiry question is focused at the appropriate level as well as how ISTE's and provider organisations can track progress at each level.

**Table 5: Levels of impact and possible inquiry questions**

<b>'Us'</b> Sector level	How can we provide coherent sector leadership to ensure quality and effectiveness of ISTE provision?	Are we operating differently?	How do we know that?
<b>'Our'</b> Systemic; institutional level	How does the organisation create and maintain an effective, relevant, responsive service?  How do we prioritise?  What is our exit strategy?	How are we perceived by schools in our region?	How do we know that?
<b>'We'</b> centered Collective; group; output level	What do we need to do to achieve positive outcomes for teachers?  How can we share and grow our practice as a community?	What are we doing differently?  What do we need to do differently?	How do we know that?  How will we determine that?
<b>'I'</b> centric Individual ISTE level	How can I improve my practice?  What do I need to do to be effective with teachers I work with?	What am I doing differently?	How do I know that?  E.g. shared reflection; teacher feedback; video/ audio; co-facilitation; learning progressions; professional learning profiles
	Inquiry focus	Success criteria	Indicators/Evidence

At the sector level, the focus is on “US” which assumes a level of ownership across the sector for the quality and coherence in approaches to inservice teacher education. However, as noted earlier, impact of INSTEP on the sector appears to have been minimal suggesting more needs to be done in this regard. There was a sense that while INSTEP had got the ball rolling, there were no mechanisms to keep the sector engaged and no clarity around who would take the leadership in facilitating ongoing discussion and dialogue across the sector. When specifically asked about whose role it was to lead future development of ISTE practice, respondents repeatedly said that it could only be achieved with significant involvement from the Ministry. There are a number of reasons for this: first, the sector includes private and publicly funded providers with different interests and motivations. This impacts on the extent to which cohesion is possible and feasible as the providers operate in a contestable environment. Secondly, the sector is made up of a number of disparate groups who have strong regional presence and leadership does not rest with any one group in the sector. This means that any attempts to bring about cohesion at a national level will require a collective effort from a group of committed players who proactively lead the sector for change.

While sector reference group members acknowledged that there was strong need for a coherent sector leadership in the future, the contestable environment that ISTE providers operate in does not create the incentives to bring about this level of cohesion. This requires the Ministry to re-consider and review the structures, systems and processes that help/hinder the development of sector leadership for inservice teacher education and how it can overcome these.



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## Appendix 1: Project definitions

Key terms	Description/definition
INSTEP Project Manager	Project manages the project to ensure that it is delivered on time, within budget and to the expected quality.
INSTEP Senior Advisor	Manages the range of contracted relationships with the sector and provides advice and support to the Project Manager. Also has the primary responsibility for overseeing the development of the materials.
INSTEP Project Team	Comprises the Project Manager and the Senior Advisor.
National team of facilitators	<p>Comprises the core team of facilitators with the responsibility to lead the project at a national level.</p> <p>Responsible for leading the design of the framework, guidelines, professional learning approach and materials.</p> <p>Provides national coordination for the project and support regional engagement.</p> <p>The select, coach and mentor the regional facilitators.</p> <p>There are 12 NFs with three choosing to work in pairs, taking the membership of this group to 15.</p>
Sector Reference Group	Experienced educators drawn from the sector to provide advice to the INSTEP project team and national team of facilitators.
Project Advisory Group	MOE personnel who provide advice to the Project and the National teams and consider the implications of INSTEP for their own projects and initiatives
National Research coordinator	<p>Contracted researcher with primary responsibility to conduct ongoing research to support the development of evidence base of effective practice.</p> <p>Design and develop frameworks for facilitating analysis and synthesis of research reports.</p>
Inquiry/Action research	The methodology used in INSTEP by participants including but not limited to the national and regional facilitators.
Regional Facilitators	Regional level inservice teacher educators nominated or recruited by the national facilitator to work on INSTEP. There are five RFs per NF.