Professional learning activity:
‘Hot’ and ‘cold’ issues

**Activity suggested duration:** 35 minutes

**Activity description:** This whole-group collaborative activity asks you to consider a variety of contemporary issues, rank them in terms of ‘temperature’ or level of controversy, and think about teaching and learning dilemmas.

**Required resources:** sticky notes, whiteboard or butcher’s paper and markers (or a digital alternative)

**Learning leader preparation:**

* On a whiteboard or wall, create headings of ‘cold’, ‘lukewarm’ and ‘hot’.
* Distribute sticky notes.
* Read 1.1.

**Participant preparation:**

* Read 1.1.

Activity steps

1. Learning leader directs participants to write down some issues that matter to their school community, society in general or specific students in your classes, using one issue per sticky note. (5–10 minutes)
2. Participants add their sticky notes under the headings (cold, lukewarm or hot) to indicate how controversial, emotive or challenging they think the issue is likely to be. (5 minutes)
3. As a group, participants read through the list of issues collected during the first two steps and use them to address the discussion questions (below) in relation to school values, the school’s agreed instructional model and the school community. (20 minutes)

Participant discussion questions

**Classroom environment:**

* How can we foster a safe learning environment?
* How can we support open, respectful dialogue?

**Diversity and inclusion:**

* How can we reduce the risk of students feeling unsafe or persecuted?
* How should we respond if a student says something discriminatory?

**Teacher knowledge:**

* How can we ensure teachers and students know about the issue(s) being discussed?
* To what extent do we need to be the ‘expert in the room’?

**Scope:**

* How can we fit these issues into one lesson or a series of lessons?
* Where do we regulate the depth of discussion and amount of time dedicated to the issue?

**Other things to consider:**

* teacher knowledge
* time to think
* shared agreement on the scope of the topic
* clarifying questions
* a genuine curiosity about the perspectives of others
* a commitment to respectful language and communication