

LEARNING RESOURCE

Active reading

The amount of information available to teachers can sometimes seem overwhelming. This exercise allows you to focus on just one source and study it in detail in order to cast light on an issue of your choosing.

- 1** Identify a topic you wish to find information about. It is usually best to identify a specific topic, or at least one of the Five Domains of Effective Teaching (i.e. Vision, Climate for learning, Teaching and learning strategies, Reflection and Teacher's personal and professional domain) that merits attention. The choice of topic should be influenced by an aspect of your professional practice you want to improve. It helps if you frame your research by posing a specific question or two that you wish to investigate. Examples include:
 - How can I differentiate in my classroom more effectively for less able students?*
 - What can I do to create a better climate for learning when students are obviously stressed?*
 - What reflection tools are other teachers using to get better results?*
 - What can I do to look after myself better in order to stay on top of things in the classroom?*
- 2** Select the information source you're going to use. Examples include the *Times Educational Supplement*, *SecEd*, a professional journal linked to the main subject area you teach or one of the many web-based sites.
- 3** With highlighter pens and sticky notes to the ready, skim through the resource marking up articles that appear to be of interest. If it's an electronic source you could copy and paste these into a word-processing program and highlight using the electronic tools.
- 4** Then go back over the articles you've identified and read them more carefully, noting down in bullet point form in a notebook the salient points. Spend some time mulling over any key principles that emerge as you do this. Keep asking yourself the questions:
 - How is this relevant to my circumstances?*
 - How could I try this?*
 - What positive effects will this have?*
- 5** Using your notes, and some reflection on the issues they raise, write a mini action plan which sets out what you will do to address the question you have set yourself. This should be as practical as possible. Share this with someone at your school (e.g. subject leader, head of CPD). Make sure you then try your best to introduce any changes and monitor their effects.
- 6** Keep the original clippings in a folder, as a source of inspiration. This can form part of your personal CPD portfolio, providing examples that you can draw upon. You could separate things out into the Five Domains of Effective Teaching.