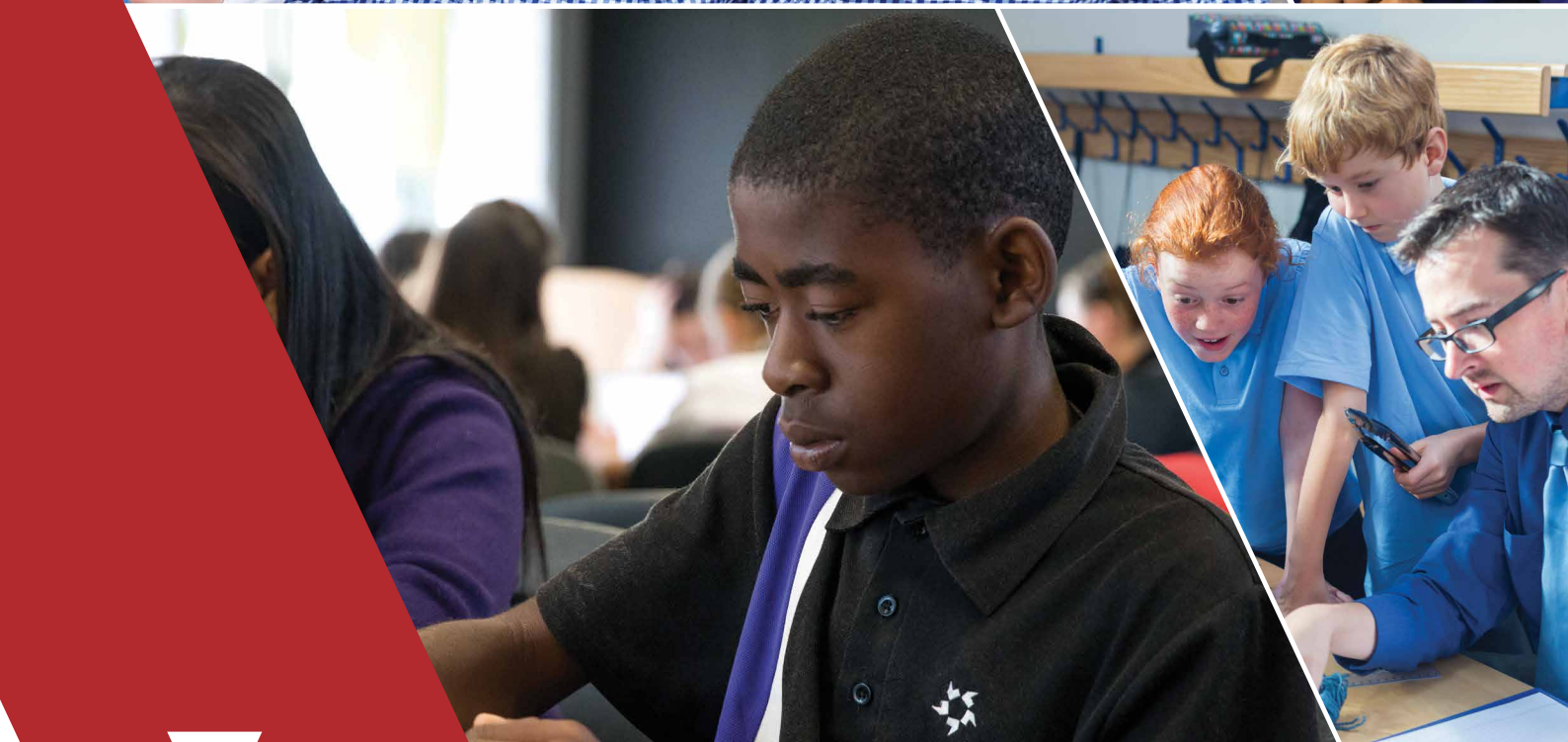


Using evidence for impact



Building on our strengths to face the next challenge





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Deputy Secretary's Message

Over the past 12 months, we have realised inspiring improvements across schools in Victoria. Leaders, teachers and students have come together to put evidence to work and learn differently. We have improved in more NAPLAN domains and more year levels than in previous years. Your willingness to cultivate collaborative learning cultures and use evidence to drive improvement is recognised.

School leaders are creating an environment in their respective schools which values collaboration, trust and collective responsibility. This has been guided by an increased emphasis on self-evaluation, as all school members reflect on what they are doing well and what they can do better.

Teachers are working collaboratively using inquiry approaches to build curriculum and assessment knowledge, and deepen their pedagogical repertoire. They are using data and evidence to understand the progress of their students.

Highly skilled teachers are being offered further opportunities to lead instruction and teams, building the skills and knowledge of their peers through professional learning communities.

While we celebrate these successes, challenges lie ahead. As John Dewey said, 'Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another'. The results we have achieved are the starting point for the next phase. Although the pathways you take will be unique to your school, we must ensure we are all heading in the same direction.

The ongoing challenge is to secure consistent and sustained improvement for *all* students in *all* schools. A sustained commitment to building a high performing learning culture will require ongoing leadership - leadership that embraces open communication, flexibility and a focus on learning for adults and students in all learning communities.

To sustain and accelerate the learning growth of all students, we need to further support teachers to rigorously use collaborative inquiry approaches to examine, develop and broaden their teaching practices.

'Teachers who are students of their own impact are the teachers who are the most influential in raising students' achievement.'
John Hattie

In the words of Atul Gawande, 'People underestimate the importance of diligence as a virtue. No doubt it has something to do with how supremely mundane it seems. It is defined as "the constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken."... Understood, however, as the prerequisite of great accomplishment, diligence stands as one of the most difficult challenges facing any group of people who take on tasks of risk and consequence. It sets a high, seemingly impossible, expectation for performance and human behaviour.'

The purpose of this guidance is to support the work you are already doing, as we enter a critical time of reflection, planning and prioritisation for 2019. To meet the learning needs of all students, we must meet the learning needs of all teachers, and create the enabling conditions that will support learning cultures.

This document will support your decision-making as you evaluate the impact of your key improvement strategies on student learning, and commence planning for 2019.

The next 12 months will be crucial to sustaining and securing the improvements achieved. It will require leadership at all levels of the system that can adapt our strategies to the ever changing conditions at different stages of our improvement journey.



Bruce Armstrong

Deputy Secretary
Regional Services Group

Introduction

Victorian schools are in a better place to implement effective teaching and learning strategies, but the results for students are varied. Schools are increasingly focusing on evidence-informed strategies and practices, but vary in their approach to ensuring continuous improvement in their local contexts. Using evidence-informed strategies is only one piece of the puzzle. What matters is how those strategies are implemented in the daily context and routines of each school.

To understand the impact of key improvement strategies, school leaders measure student learning growth by comparing where students progress over time. School leaders identify the dimensions of teaching that might need strengthening through professional learning for their staff. They create enabling environments and school climates that encourage good implementation.¹ They use resources to support organisational learning, communicating what is important to the school and to students' learning growth.

What schools implement is important, and Victorian schools are increasingly using evidence-informed strategies and practices emphasised in the Framework for Improving Student Outcome (FISO). However, choosing the right goals and strategies informed by evidence is not enough to assure improved student learning outcomes. Improvements to practice and learning are strongly dependent on how effectively implementation occurs within an evidence-based improvement cycle.

The FISO Improvement Cycle guides school leaders and teachers to follow an effective inquiry process that is informed by evidence. This enables schools to identify areas of strength and areas of practice that need improving and to plan the right improvement strategies. Approaches to the Improvement Cycle should be woven into the fabric of teacher's daily work through whole-school instructional approaches, curriculum planning and assessment.

Effective use of the FISO Improvement Cycle is a staged and continuous process. It is a collaborative approach that is flexible, disciplined and focused on learning. This requires agile school leadership, which consistently monitors key improvement strategies, fosters a culture of social learning and a willingness to work with a growth mindset.²



¹ Education Endowment Fund (2018). Putting Evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation.

Retrieved online: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/a-schools-guide-to-implementation

² Breakspear, S. (2016). Agile Implementation – Learning how adopting an agile mindset can help leaders achieve meaningful progress in student learning. Retrieved online: www.simonbreakspear.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Agile-Implementation-for-Learning.pdf

Dweck, C, Walton, G. M. & Cohen, G. L. (2014). Academic tenacity: mindsets and skills that promote long-term learning. Retrieved online: www.ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/manual/dweck-walton-cohen-2014.pdf

How to use this document

The first section presents evidence of impact across schools in Victoria. The evidence points to a number of challenges and opportunities for you and your leadership team to reflect on and consider as you approach planning for the 2019 school year.

At each stage of the Improvement Cycle, a specific critical decision point is introduced to illustrate the actions that best support school improvement. Each stage also highlights actions for your school improvement team, key connections, capability checks and resources. Please refer to page 19 to see a summary of the four critical decision points located within each stage.

You can use this document to guide your leadership efforts with your school improvement teams and business manager. It is intended to inform annual implementation planning for a new school year. It can support your resource decisions to help you maximise value for every dollar you spend, and can be consulted throughout the year at critical decision points. The actions outlined can be adapted to your school's context as needed.

This document is intended to be used with other key teaching and learning resources, including but not limited to, the *School Leaders' Guide to Improving Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes*, and the *Victorian Teaching and Learning Model*.



Evidence of impact across Victoria

Since 2015, there has been positive changes in student learning, teaching practices and school improvement initiatives. Through NAPLAN, surveys and case studies, we are seeing these changes take place in real time.

Here are five changes happening in our schools based on evidence to-date.

1. In 2018, the results achieved for NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy are the best ever by Victorian students.

In both primary and secondary schools, the 2018 mean scores for Years 3, 5 and 9 for Reading and Years 5 and 9 for Numeracy were the highest recorded since NAPLAN commenced in 2008 (see Figure 1).

YEAR 5	2017	2018	
Reading	514.6	519.9	↑
Writing	485.6	478.2	All jurisdictions declined
Spelling	503.5	507.5	↑
G&P	504.7	510.7	↑
Numeracy	501.7	503.1	↑

YEAR 9	2017	2018	
Reading	582.4	588.4	↑
Writing	561.0	550.9	All jurisdictions declined
Spelling	579.5	584.4	↑
G&P	571.8	581.7	↑
Numeracy	593.3	599.9	↑

Figure 1: Comparing Victorian year-on-year results across NAPLAN domains

2. Victoria continues to lift more students into the top two bands of achievement in NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy, and reduce the number of students in the bottom three bands.

The proportion of students in the top two bands for Years 3 and 5 Reading increased in 2018 and have improved since 2015. The proportion of students in the top two bands for Year 9 Numeracy also improved in 2018.

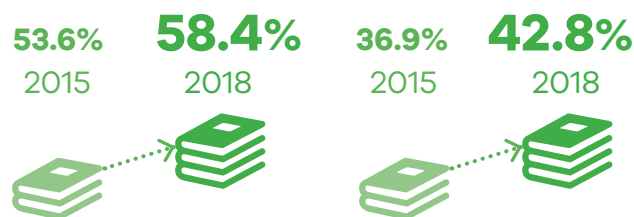


Figure 2: Percentage of Year 3 students in the top two bands for NAPLAN Reading

Figure 3: Percentage of Year 5 students in the top two bands for NAPLAN Reading

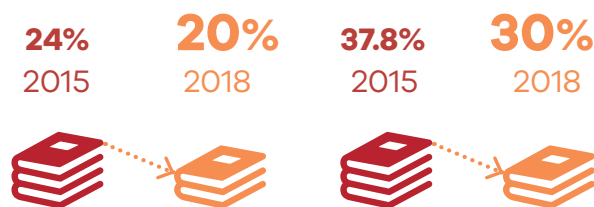


Figure 4: Percentage of Year 3 students in the bottom three bands for NAPLAN Reading

Figure 5: Percentage of Year 5 students in the bottom three bands for NAPLAN Reading

3. The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) has been almost universally adopted by government schools. FISO is supporting practice changes in schools and classrooms by:³

- providing structure, guidance and a shared language of practice
- supporting the use of the Improvement Cycle (see Figures 6 and 7)
- supporting the increased adoption of distributed leadership structures in schools
- fostering the use of data and evidence to inform planning, implementation and regular monitoring of student progress
- enabling teachers to translate FISO into action in the classroom.

Over the next 6 months, I will use the FISO Improvement Cycle as a cycle of inquiry to guide or inform my teaching practice

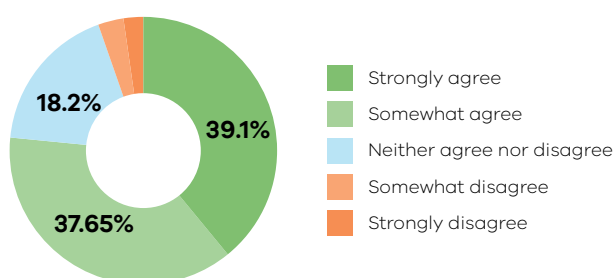


Figure 6: Teacher survey response to use of the Improvement Cycle

Over the course of 2017, compared to 2016, the way I approached implementation and monitoring at my school was increasingly influenced by the FISO Improvement Cycle

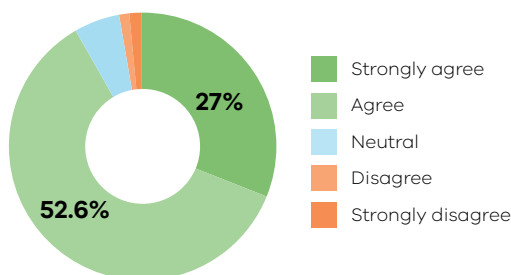


Figure 7: Principal survey response to the use of the Improvement Cycle

4. Practice changes in schools are driven by three key elements, including professional learning communities (PLCs)/professional learning teams (PLTs), whole-school approaches and data use.

- Teachers identified PLCs/PLTs as the most effective strategy to improve teaching and learning in schools.
- Teachers identified consolidation of whole-school approaches is the second most effective strategy for improving collaboration and learning in schools.
- In 2018, 63 per cent of principals reported that increased data literacy and use of data has improved the quality of teaching practices.

5. PLCs are a catalyst for collaboration and practice change.⁴

- The PLC initiative is supporting schools to change structures, improve teacher curriculum and assessment knowledge, distribute leadership and enable teacher collaboration.
- Teachers are providing more feedback to others teachers on their practice, and 72 per cent of teachers in PLC initiative schools felt comfortable with others observing their instruction.
- Teachers are meeting with increasing frequency, about twice a month on average.
- Teachers are supported and led by instructional leaders to regularly collect, moderate and analyse student assessment collaboratively.

³ Deloitte (2018). Framework for Improving Student Outcomes – Implementation Evaluation. Final Report. Prepared for the Department of Education and Training.

⁴ Learning First (2018). PLC Evaluation – Pilot Year Report. Prepared for Department of Education and Training.

To sustain and accelerate this progress, there is more work to do together. The evidence also points to a number of opportunities and challenges to improvement.

Workforce planning

Evidence indicates that distributed and shared leadership is an area for improvement. Few schools (9 per cent) selected building leadership teams as an improvement initiative in their 2018 Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs). Evidence from the evaluation of FISO suggests that responsibility for actions of key improvement strategies are not appropriately delegated and/or leadership not sufficiently distributed. Finally, 64 per cent of principals surveyed have more than 12 staff members direct reporting to them.⁵

Go to Page 10 to reflect on your workforce planning.

Research indicates that schools' daily routines and structures should be changed to allow for both informal and formal leadership to grow and be sustained.⁵ In addition, teacher leadership, as a form of distributed leadership, can help build and sustain professional learning communities.

Strategic resource management

Schools indicated that they have used equity funding to supplement and expand existing initiatives, rather than create new initiatives or changes.⁷ Evidence from surveys of principals suggests there are challenges in strategic resource decisions to improve student learning outcomes.

An effective approach to strategic resource management shifts the focus from providing inputs to providing the resources needed to improve student outcomes. Improving the targeting of resources to achieve better outcomes for all students can be achieved by aligning resourcing to individual student learning needs.

Go to Page 12 to reflect on strategic resource management.

Professional learning

In the Strategic Planning Online Tool, schools documented their professional learning plans and priorities. While the majority of professional learning activities took place within schools, collaborative and ongoing strategies for professional learning could be strengthened:

- Forty five per cent of professional learning activities were organised within PLCs/PLTs.
- Twenty five per cent of professional learning activities identified collaborative inquiry/action research as a learning strategy.
- Twenty five per cent of professional learning activities identified PLCs/PLTs as a learning strategy.

Go to Page 14 to reflect on professional learning.

Collaboration requires creating spaces which cultivate and build the expertise of everyone. This means changing and building teachers' professional and pedagogical practice. International evidence demonstrates the importance of building professional capital and capacity for successful reform implementation.⁸

Monitoring using the Improvement Cycle

Although the majority of teachers reported an increased focus on discussing, analysing and sharing student data to evaluate and diagnose student learning needs, schools vary in their use and adaptation of the Improvement Cycle. Evaluation of PLC initiative pilot schools found that most were not spending significant time on developing new practices, and therefore, not embedding an effective approach to using the Improvement Cycle.

Go to Page 16 to reflect on monitoring using the improvement cycle.

⁵ Tian, M., Risku, M. and Collin, K. (2016). A meta-analysis of distributed leadership from 2002 to 2013: Theory development, empirical evidence and future research focus. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership* 44(1) pp.146-164.

⁶ Bevington Group (2018). Principal Work and Wellbeing Survey. Prepared for the Department of Education and Training.

⁷ Deloitte and Victoria University (2018). Education State: Government School Strategic Evaluation - Draft Preliminary Report. Prepared for the Department of Education and Training.

⁸ Harris, A. and Jones, M. S. (2017). Professional learning communities: A strategy for school and system improvement? *Wales Journal of Education* 19(1) pp.16-38.

Evaluate and diagnose

Building on our strengths – facing the challenges

Continuous school improvement requires the disciplined use of good evidence within the Improvement Cycle to make sound judgments. This includes not only evidence from within schools, but also research evidence of best practice.⁹ Making sound judgements using good evidence requires a disciplined approach and mindset that: identifies assumptions; poses probing questions; pursues deeper understanding through reflection; and makes informed decisions in preparation to take action.¹⁰

School leaders, teachers and students should reflect to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Variability between classrooms and poor teaching quality adversely impacts student learning growth.¹¹ Student learning growth can be supported by identifying and meeting the professional learning needs of teachers, who through reflection and self-evaluation, can clarify those needs. Reflection is more than 'vague musing about one's practice' – it is the active inquiring into and improving teaching practice.¹² Self-evaluation data however, is one data point that needs to be considered in addition to good evidence of student learning growth including learning progressions against curriculum achievement standards.

Key connections

As part of the professional practice elements in the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017 (VGSA 2017), new classroom based learning specialists support teachers to improve student learning. The learning specialists' proximity to the classroom positions them well as agents of change. School leaders are encouraged to advertise learning specialist roles when vacancies in the classroom teacher profile become available. Funding for the VGSA 2017 has been built into the student price of the Student Resource Package.

Critical decision point: Workforce planning

School leaders build an improvement culture by developing the capabilities of their leadership team. In an effective model of distributed leadership, leaders have roughly equal numbers of direct reports, which is essential for the effective performance and development of teachers. Evidence suggests that school leaders should reduce the number of staff they supervise and reorganise leadership structures.¹³ Leadership is highly contextualised, and school leaders should adapt their strategies to suit changing conditions at different stages of the Improvement Cycle.

Good evidence to inform practice

Evidence-informed practice is about integrating teachers' professional expertise with good evidence to improve the quality of teaching practice and student learning. What counts as good evidence can be contentious, as many professionals have strong views about what research methods are better than others (Nutley, Powell & Davies, 2013). It is perhaps more useful to start from the position of what teachers need, and work backwards. For teachers, it is about what works, in what contexts and for which students. For example, good evidence is generated through peer observation, student feedback on teaching practice and formative assessment. The goal should be to empower teachers, school leaders and students with good evidence.

⁹ Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Taylor & Francis: London.

¹⁰ Archibald, T. & Buckley, J. (2013). *Evaluative Thinking: Principles and Practices to Enhance Evaluation Capacity and Quality*. Retrieved online: <http://comm.eval.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=d6678329-5ebd-44bb-99a7-260509b36b40&forceDialog=0>

¹¹ Barber, M., Chijioke, C. and Mourshed, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*. McKinsey & Company; Hattie, J. (2008).

¹² Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H. and Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher professional learning and development – Best evidence synthesis iteration*. Retrieved online: www.oecd.org/education/school/48727127.pdf

¹³ Bevington Group (2018). *Principal Work and Wellbeing Survey*. Prepared for the Department of Education and Training.

Actions for your leadership team

1. Evaluate and diagnose the state of your school's distributed and shared leadership.
 - Identify and examine the current leadership profiles within your school.
 - How is the current leadership structure meeting the needs of this school in addressing the defined barriers and improvement priorities?
 - To what extent is there reliable evidence that your school's current leadership structure is having the desired impact?
 - Diagnose students' learning needs using your school's Panorama report and other data.
2. Reflect on how instructional leadership could be further developed in your school. For example, through the appointment of a learning specialist.
 - What are you planning to achieve by appointing a learning specialist?
 - What internal or external support is needed to maximise the appointment of a learning specialist?
 - What are the potential implementation barriers that might emerge? How could your school easily remove them?
3. Develop and plan for implementing the changes in workforce planning, particularly in distributed and shared leadership.
 - How will changes or decisions in workforce planning impact on students' learning growth?
 - To what extent are the changes feasible in your school's context?
 - What changes in your school's daily routines and structures should occur to allow for both informal and formal leadership to grow and sustain?
 - How can the changes in the workforce, particularly in the leadership, be funded in the short and long term?
 - How will the learning specialist interact with teaching staff at your school?
 - How will the learning specialist interact with the leadership team and leading teachers?

Capability check: Evaluative thinking

Evaluation and evaluative thinking provide school leaders and teachers tools for gathering and interpreting good evidence. In turn, good evidence can be used to provide information about progress and provide information to inform adjustments, learning and adaptation in implementation.¹⁴ Evaluative thinking processes (see Figure 8) align, and can be embedded within all stages of the Improvement Cycle.

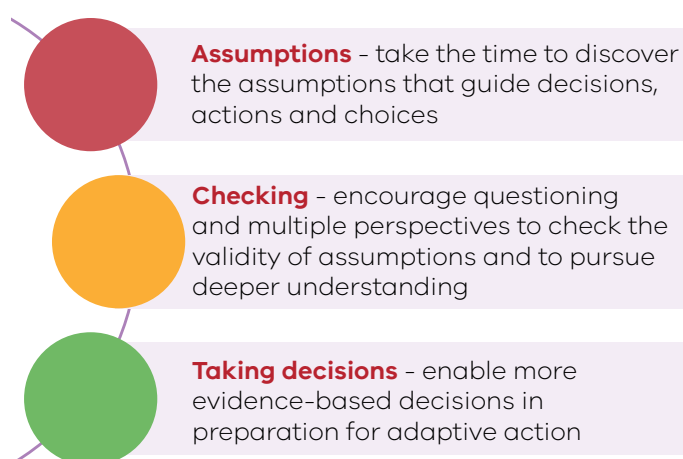


Figure 8: Adapted from Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves & Trochim (2015)



¹⁴ Earl, L. & Timperley, H. (2015). Evaluative thinking for successful educational innovation. OECD Education Working Papers, 122. Retrieved online: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/evaluative-thinking-for-successful-educational-innovation_5jrxtk1jtdwf-en; Buckley, J., Archibald, T., Hargraves, M. and Trochim, W. M. (2015). Defining and teaching evaluative thinking: Insights from research on critical thinking. *American Journal of Evaluation* 36(3) pp.375-388.

Prioritise and set goals

Setting our sights high

Setting high expectations for both teachers and students can have a positive impact on learning.¹⁵ In setting your sights high, ensure that where you invest your resources reflects your AIP actions. An unrelenting focus on learning and improving student outcomes helps ensure goals are appropriate and relevant.

Making critical decisions using resources strategically requires school leaders to prioritise improvement strategies, identify precise areas of focus and set appropriate goals. Decisions, such as those of workforce planning, are underpinned and guided by strategic resource management. Effective leaders embrace uncertain, complex and challenging contexts and work together to seek creative and innovative solutions within available resources.

Critical decision point: Strategic resource management

Resources are enablers to communicate what is important for a school to parents/carers, teachers and students. By communicating with informed transparency around budgets, school leaders foster confidence in their improvement vision, enable innovation and flexibility and shape a learning culture. Developing a theory of change is an effective method for prioritisation within resource constraints, and to communicate what is important.

Key connections

The Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT) provides support to improve the quality of a school's strategic planning and resource management. SPOT captures estimated spend of all activities aligned to each key improvement strategy and actions. In addition, SPOT includes a new Equity Funding Planner to assist prioritisation and resource allocation for a school's most disadvantaged students.

Actions for your leadership team

A theory of change is an effective way to logically and clearly set out the purpose, activities, inputs and outcomes of any implementation action (see Figure 9). It supports a school community to understand long-term improvement goals and the steps involved to achieve it. A theory of change focuses on an individual program to be implemented, and goes into detail about how the activities within the program will result in the outcomes. It is usually a one-page, systematic and visual way of representing the theory behind a program.

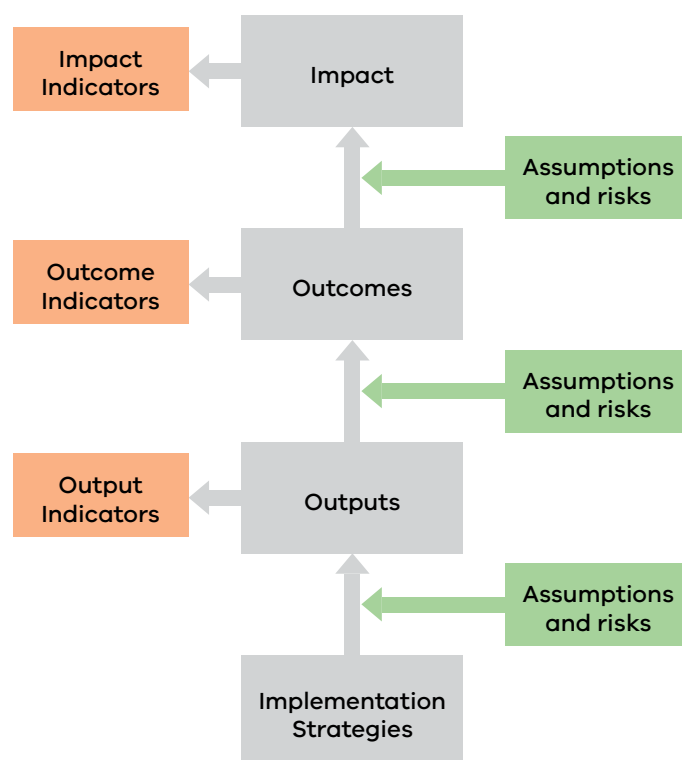


Figure 9: A model of a theory of change (UNICEF, 2014)

See page 20 for a worked example of a theory of change.

¹⁵ Hattie (2008).

In collaboration with your school improvement team, consider and reflect on the following questions for implementation and how resourcing can be used to drive learning, communicate vision and enable innovation. Responses to these questions could help form a theory of change for a tailored package of implementation strategies.¹⁶

1. What is the problem being addressed?
2. What good evidence supports the prioritisation of this problem?
3. What are the approaches you want to implement to address this problem?
4. How will this impact on students' learning growth?
5. What resources are required in the short, medium and long-term to ensure effective and sustainable implementation?
6. To what extent is your school ready to deliver this implementation?
7. What other things can we stop doing to create resources for this implementation?
8. To what extent do you have sufficient and appropriate workforce capacity and capability to implement?
9. How will you collect, analyse and share data during implementation?
10. How will the school improvement team monitor implementation and evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness and outcomes of the implementation?
11. How will professional learning support teachers and school leaders to implement, innovate and sustain?

Capability check: Strategic management for school leaders

Bastow's course on strategic resource management is divided into 11 discrete modules, delivered by a range of divisions within the Department. The modules are appropriate and suitable for substantive and acting principals, assistant principals and school leaders with management responsibilities. Each module is delivered throughout the year and can be registered for individually.



¹⁶ Education Endowment Fund (2018) p.22

Develop and plan

Planning with precision – an unrelenting focus on student learning

Simply picking an evidence-based key improvement strategy (KIS) and working through the Improvement Cycle does not guarantee improved student outcomes.¹⁷ KIS need to be appropriate for your school's context and readiness. Packages of multiple KIS and actions are often needed to support change at different levels in a school.

Supporting the implementation of evidence-informed strategies, and teachers as evaluators of the impact of their practice, requires ongoing professional learning. Teachers build professional skills and knowledge around curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to continuously improve their practice and improve student learning. The *Victorian Teaching and Learning Model* brings FISO into the classroom, and supports linking ongoing professional learning to the implementation of school improvement initiatives.

Ongoing professional learning for teachers ensures that implementation is focused on the instructional core – on the interactions between teachers, students and the learning tasks. By engaging all levels of staff in this work, implementation of evidence-informed strategies within a broader theory of change will be better supported.

Critical decision point: Professional learning

The professional learning needs of staff should be informed by students' learning needs. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are an effective way to determine learning needs across a school and support teachers' ongoing professional learning. PLCs are an evidence-informed approach for schools to create and sustain a learning culture amongst teachers that is grounded in adult learning principles, collaboration and the Improvement Cycle. Using the Improvement Cycle to drive changes in teaching practices through professional learning and collaboration is the core work of PLCs.

Key connections

There are a number of evidence-based resources to support teachers' professional learning and practice. These include, but are not limited to:

- High Impact Teaching Strategies
- Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Schools
- Victorian Numeracy Portal
- FUSE
- Data walls



¹⁷ Education Endowment Fund (2018) p.22

Actions for your leadership team

To examine instructional practices, develop new practices and innovate, teachers and leadership teams need ongoing professional learning, which can be facilitated and fostered in collaborative settings such as PLCs. School and instructional leaders should take several key actions, which include, but are not limited to:¹⁸

School leaders

- Discuss with your leadership team and staff, *'what professional learning do we need?'*
- Prioritise student and teacher learning in planning and decision-making through the development of a whole-school professional learning plan.
- Engage actively as an instructional leader by focusing on students outcomes and be knowledgeable about, and directly involved in the work of teachers.

Instructional leaders

- Prioritise learning design and make high impact teaching strategies accessible to teachers, building knowledge and confidence in their use.
- Ensure all teachers have input into the planning of professional learning programs that reflect their individual and collective needs.

Teachers will respond effectively when school and instructional leaders:

- customise professional learning, differentiated to teacher needs and linked to student outcomes data
- plan professional learning that incorporates different approaches and multiple sources of feedback (e.g. classroom observation, feedback from students, coaching and action research)
- continuously focus on aspects of learning, pedagogy and curriculum
- accommodate adult learning preferences e.g. job-related, directly applicable and known to have impact.

Capability check: Joining the Victorian PLC initiative

The PLC professional learning program is evidenced by best practice for leading culture change, collaborative teams and the continuous improvement of teaching practice. A new practical guide to using PLCs to implement FISO will be released in Term 4, 2018 and available from the Department website.

The PLC initiative is delivered in regions and offers two concurrent streams for school leaders and PLC instructional leaders. Regional teams of experienced educators, including dedicated PLC regional managers, provide coaching and support to school and instructional leaders in all aspects of PLC implementation. Learn more about joining the initiative by speaking to your Senior Education Improvement Leader or a PLC regional manager in your region.

Using SPOT to develop and plan professional learning

A school improvement team meets to discuss developing a whole-school professional learning plan. They have diagnosed students' learning needs at a whole-school level using their Panorama report and other evidence, and have reviewed their Annual Implementation Plan on SPOT. The team's next step is to plan their teachers' professional learning needs, opening the *'professional learning plan'* tab on SPOT. The team identifies a range of learning priorities, key professional learning strategies, the structure for these strategies and what expertise they can access. SPOT supports structuring this discussion, and provides a method for documenting and sharing the plan for consultation with the school community.

¹⁸ Department of Education and Training (forthcoming). The Professional Learning Community Approach to Implementing The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes: A Practical Guide. This guide will be available from the Department's website in Term 4, 2018: www.education.vic.gov.au/plcs

Implement and monitor

Agile leadership – evaluating impact

This stage is arguably one of the most important during which school leaders ensure that key improvement strategies and actions are having a positive impact on student learning growth.

The implementation of key improvement strategies requires consistent monitoring, agile leadership and a focus on learning. As your school moves through an implementation process, there are inevitably challenges and barriers, from workforce capabilities and professional learning, to resource management and leadership.

An adaptive approach to implementation that focuses on ongoing and open communication with staff and students, distributed leadership and learning can help ensure successful outcomes.¹⁹

'What does matter is teachers having a mind frame in which they see it as their role to evaluate their effect on learning.'

John Hattie

Critical decision point: Monitoring using the Improvement Cycle

Schools use FISO and SPOT to monitor their progress against their respective AIPs throughout the year. School improvement teams have an important role in this work, undertaking all stages of the Improvement Cycle to monitor progress against their school's targets and delivery of actions within the AIP.

The Improvement Cycle is used to monitor progress of student learning growth within different timeframes. It can be used within an annual cycle, within a school term and/or within a four-six week cycle.

Victorian schools use a range of approaches to inquiry or improvement cycles, many of which adapt or align to the FISO Improvement Cycle. What is critical in using the Improvement Cycle for implementation is a disciplined approach that uses good evidence to make sound judgments.

Key connections

Monitoring the implementation of KIS should be grounded in collecting, sharing and understanding data and evidence of student learning progress and achievement. Evidence-informed strategies involves more than implementing them in a school and classroom. It depends on integrating local, reliable and teacher-collected evidence with evidence from external research and student progress and achievement. Peer observation (including feedback and reflection) can help teachers continue to improve their practice in ways that better promote student learning. Peer observation is one element which teachers may choose to focus on during their professional practice days. For more on integrating peer observation within your existing school's structures, see peer observation resources on page 21.



¹⁹ Yamaguchi, R. et al. (2017). Adaptive Implementation: Navigating the School Improvement Landscape. Rowman & Littlefield: London. Goss, P. (2017). Towards an adaptive education system in Australia. Grattan Institute: Melbourne.

Actions for your leadership team

With your school improvement team, reflect on the following principles of adaptive implementation and consider to what extent is there evidence of their operation in your school's approach to using the Improvement Cycle:

- school leaders manage expectations of staff at the initial stage of implementation
- routine processes and procedures are in place to enable a disciplined use of the Improvement Cycle
- an appropriate amount of risk and uncertainty are accepted
- solutions to challenges and barriers are collaboratively negotiated and discussed with students and staff
- implementation values and prioritises reflection and learning
- professional learning for staff is embedded in the approach to implementation
- data and evidence is used to monitor progress and adjust strategies (for example, the school's Panorama report, peer observation, student feedback surveys, etc.).

Capability check: Adaptive implementation

Adaptation is not always necessary in implementation, even though school leaders should be open to the possibility of adapting.²⁰ The table below (Figure 10) can be used to reflect on whether a problem your school is addressing needs an adaptive approach to implementation. The horizontal axis represents agreement between school staff on how to address a problem. The vertical axis represents how certain staff are of the cause of the problem.

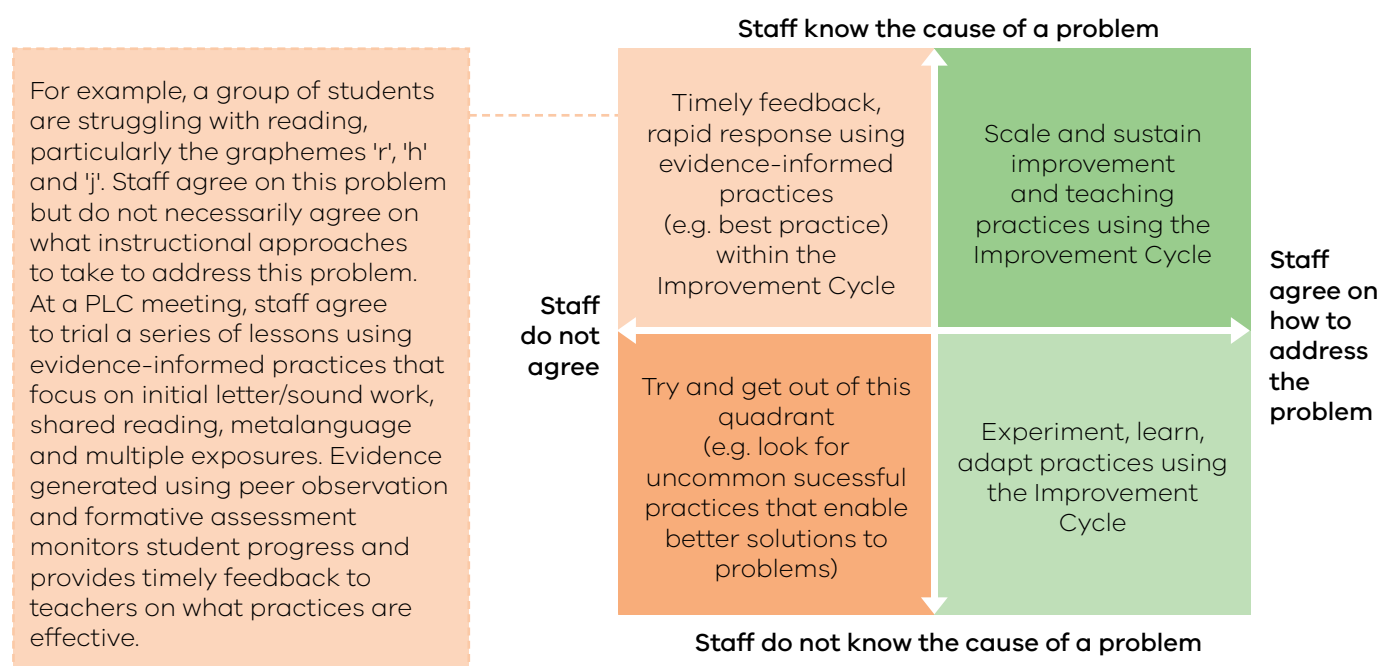


Figure 10: Adapted from Bond (2016)

²⁰ Bond (2016). Adaptive management: what it means for civil society organisations. Retrieved online: www.bond.org.uk/resources/adaptive-management-what-it-means-for-csos

DET Values

The Department's Values describe the behaviours that strengthen the capacity of school staff to implement FISO. The Values should be read in conjunction with your professional standards and with school-based values. They work in partnership and are complementary. By upholding the Department's Values, your school staff act in a way that is consistent with their professional and ethical standards and school values.



Locating critical decision points across the Improvement Cycle

FISO IMPROVEMENT CYCLE	Workforce planning		Strategic resource management		Professional Learning	Monitoring using the Improvement Cycle
	Evaluate and diagnose the state of your school's distributed and shared leadership. Reflect on how a learning specialist could support instructional leadership and building practice excellence in your school.	p.10	Self-evaluate against the FISO Continua of Practice and use the results to help determine the allocation of resources to key improvement strategies.		Work with your instructional leaders to diagnose teacher professional learning needs informed by students' learning needs. Encourage reflection on teaching practice and evaluate the efficacy of your school's PLCs/PLTs.	Evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of current leadership structures, routines and procedures to monitor the school's progress against goals and targets. In particular, look at the role of the school improvement team.
	Prioritise changes in workforce planning and set goals for leadership teams. Determine what you are planning to achieve, for example, by appointing a learning specialist, and how changes in workforce planning will impact on students' learning growth.		In making critical decisions with resources, prioritise improvement strategies, identify precise areas of focus and set appropriate goals.	p.12	Prioritise student and teacher learning within planning and decision-making. Record this through the development of a whole-school professional learning plan. Ensure prioritised professional learning needs are appropriately resourced and expectations are communicated clearly.	Prioritise what leadership structures, routines and procedures need to be changed or refined to support effective monitoring activities.
	Develop your school's plan for implementing changes in workforce planning, considering what changes in daily routines, structures and resourcing will be required.		Develop a theory of change for the implementation of key improvement strategies within resource constraints and communicate to teachers, students and community members the vision for improvement.		Plan professional learning that incorporates different approaches and multiple sources of feedback (e.g. classroom observation, feedback from students, coaching and action research).	Develop appropriate and suitable leadership structures, routines and procedures to enable effective monitoring. Create a professional learning plan to support the building of school leaders' knowledge of the Improvement Cycle.
	Implement the new or revised leadership structures, distributing and allocating actions and activities to appropriate leaders. Monitor regularly against key indicators and through open communication with staff.		Monitor expenditure and resource management in your AIP, adjusting allocation based on emerging needs, outcomes and results.		Engage actively as an instructional leader by focusing on students outcomes and be knowledgeable about, and directly involved in the work of teachers. Accommodate adult learning preferences and continuously focus on aspects of learning, pedagogy and curriculum.	Ensure quality data and good evidence are used in the monitoring of implementation plans and strategies. School improvement teams use the Improvement Cycle across different timeframes to monitor progress against the school's goals and targets.

Theory of change worked example

Impact indicators

Percentage of Year 7 and Year 9 students in top two bands of NAPLAN

Percentage of Year 7 and Year 9 in bottom two bands of NAPLAN

Impact

Impact

- improved student outcomes in language and literacy components of English and other subject areas
- improved student efficacy and meta-linguistic awareness

Assumptions

Teachers regularly reflect on their practices, incorporating feedback from peers and students to develop new practices that support students to improve their learning

Outcome indicators

Percentage of teachers reporting positively against 'collective responsibility' and 'collective afocus on student learning' survey items in School Staff Survey

Outcomes

Short and medium outcomes

- whole-school assessment and moderation routine
- improved use of metalanguage by students
- improved student capability to write with choice and control

Access to shared resources will be used in teaching practice consistently, and teachers will use student feedback to reflect on their practices.

Output indicators

Number of teachers:

- using rubrics
- collecting student feedback
- using practice videos

Outputs

Outputs

- rubrics for assessing specific language use in student work
- annotated student work samples
- model units with detailed planning for explicit language instruction
- collection and sharing of student feedback
- video models of classroom practice

When teachers understand how language works within their specific disciplines, they will see the purpose of teaching it, and seeing this purpose will lead to a change in practice.

Implementation strategies

Key Improvement Strategy

Implementing a language and literacy for learning strategy in a secondary school context

Actions

- build common language rubrics for English (and other nominated subject)
- develop shared assessment schedule
- facilitate assessment moderation sessions
- build teachers' knowledge of language pedagogy through disciplined based, literacy focused PLCs

Problems

At a large secondary school in north western Melbourne, the literacy outcomes for Year 7 to 9 students have been static. Through the analysis of student assessment data, staff identified common language and literacy challenges for students across curriculum subject areas. In their PLCs, staff identified the need for professional learning on the language and literacy requirements of their subject areas. In addition, staff identified that they collectively needed professional learning in the explicit teaching of language and literacy.

Resources

Department of Education and Training

Data walls: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/classrooms/Pages/approachesdatawalls.aspx>

Equity Funding Planner sample: <https://apps.edustar.vic.edu.au/spot/handlers/files/prinfo/Equity%20Funding%20Planner%20Sample.docx>

FISO Continua for Improvement Cycle: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/management/ContinualImprovementCycle.docx>

FUSE: <http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/?SearchScope=All>

Growing High Potential Leaders: <https://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/leadership-initiatives/growing-high-potential-leaders-framework>

High Impact Teaching Strategies: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/hits.aspx>

Learning specialists: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/ppe-specialist.aspx>

Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Schools: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/Pages/default.aspx>

Organisation Design Guide For Victorian School Leaders: <https://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/Research/Organisation-Design-Guide-FINAL-26April2016.pdf>

Peer observation: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/peerobservation.aspx>

Professional Learning Communities: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/plcs>

School Workforce Plan template: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/School-Workforce-Plan-Template.docx>

Strategic Management for School Leaders: <https://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/professional-learning/course?eventtemplate=263-Strategic-Management-for-School-Leaders>

Strategic Planning Online Tool: <https://apps.edustar.vic.edu.au/spot>

Strategic resource management – support for schools: <https://apps.edustar.vic.edu.au/spot/handlers/files/prinfo/Strategic Resource Management Guidelines.docx>

Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017 Frequently Asked Questions: www.bastow.vic.edu.au/Research/Organisation-Design-Guide-FINAL-26April2016.pdf

Victorian Numeracy Portal: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/vicstem/Pages/numeracyportal.aspx>

Victorian Teaching and Learning Model: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/improve/Pages/VicorianTeachingandLearningModel.aspx>

Workforce Planning – Schools: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/wrkplanSCH.aspx>

Education Endowment Fund

Putting Evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/a-schools-guide-to-implementation/>

UNICEF

Theory of Change: http://devinfohive.info/impact_evaluation/img/downloads/Theory_of_Change_ENG.pdf

VCAA

Literacy Learning Progressions: <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/literacy/intro.aspx>

Numeracy Learning Progressions: <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/numeracy/intro.aspx>





