

# BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



How schools improve teaching practice



Education  
and Training

### **Providing feedback**

This resource is the result of the collaboration of numerous educational leaders from across Victoria. Their input and feedback was essential in tailoring the guide to meet schools' needs. This is the first version of the resource and your feedback will assist the Department in further improving the guide. You can provide input into the development of future versions by emailing [fiso@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:fiso@education.vic.gov.au)

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# INTRODUCTION

To achieve school improvement goals, effective implementation is required. Schools have different strengths, starting points and contexts — there is no one-size-fits-all model for school improvement. To sustain and accelerate improvement, schools need to identify the right evidence-based improvement strategies, plan for effective implementation, and translate these strategies into the day-to-day work of staff.

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) Implementation Guides describe the professional practices of effective implementation within the improvement cycle. This includes identifying the education challenges where efforts will be prioritised, planning for how the prioritised challenges will be addressed, identifying and celebrating what is working, and adapting when barriers are encountered or changes occur.

## IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



The guides aim to support schools to effectively implement strategies in six FISO dimensions.

This guide focuses on **building practice excellence**. That is, it guides schools in building high levels of trust and collaboration among colleagues, understanding and using evidence-based practices, and adapting teaching practices in response to student learning.

The six FISO Implementation Guides focus on the following dimensions:

**BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE**

**CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT**

**EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE**

**SETTING EXPECTATIONS AND PROMOTING INCLUSION**

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**BUILDING COMMUNITIES**

**STRATEGIC ENABLERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

## FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide

Complementing this guide, the [FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#) aims to support schools to reflect on and strengthen four common enablers:

1. Self-evaluation capability throughout a school
2. Real-time data monitoring implementation
3. Leadership capability for school improvement
4. Robust implementation structures

Strengthening these enablers in schools supports implementation across all dimensions. The FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide contains guidance, research and supports for school improvement and leadership teams. Use the FISO Strategic Enablers Guide in conjunction with this guide.

## Principles

Three key principles underpin decision-making and ways of working when using this guide:

1. All school staff, students, families and members of the wider school community have a role to play in school improvement and implementation work.
2. School leaders actively engage other staff members, students, families and members of the wider school community in school improvement and implementation work.
3. Everyone in a school has perspectives, experiences and information that can help schools better understand context and educational successes, needs and challenges.

## How to use the guides

The guides can support schools to use the improvement cycle to implement improvement initiatives, for example as part of the school review process, for annual planning and monitoring or as part of Professional Learning Communities inquiry cycles. In this guide, the referencing of goals and actions can be related to four-year School Strategic Plans, Annual Implementation Plans or shorter cycles as established by your school.

**In school review:** School leaders, in partnership with the School Improvement Team (SIT) and school community, can use the guides to gather and examine evidence to inform the pre-review self-evaluation and reflect on the effectiveness of past improvement initiatives and their implementation. The guides can also be used by the school review panel, in partnership with the school community, to develop a new four-year strategic plan.

**In annual implementation planning and monitoring:** The School Leadership Team, in partnership with the school community, can use the guides to develop the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) targets, actions and activities during Term 4. The SIT can also use the guides to reflect on how the school monitors progress each term, and during mid-year monitoring activities.

**In regular cycles:** Professional Learning Communities/Teams (PLCs/PLTs) can use the guides to plan and implement inquiry cycles, using real-time evidence to monitor, evaluate and celebrate student progress and reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies.

# BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE

## EVALUATE AND DIAGNOSE

Student-centred challenges in the area of building practice excellence can be complex to define. The opportunity at this stage of the improvement cycle is to work with the wider school community to find the challenges where investing time and effort will have the greatest impact.

This is helped by working together to define the challenges, better understand the causes and build commitment around identified areas of improvement. Engaging in building practice excellence is important because effective professional learning is a key driver of continuous school improvement.

A research meta-analysis found that among 11 transformative school leadership practices, those that build collaborative structures and empower high-performance expectations towards a shared vision or goals have the highest impact on school outcomes, particularly on school coherence and coordination (Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

### Assess the school's readiness to build practice excellence

The first step at this stage is to determine the readiness of the school to implement change. The school can use the discussion points, FISO dimensions and key questions in the table below to reflect on readiness, using a range of information and evidence to inform the discussion.

The following resources can support schools in getting ready to improve teaching through professional learning:

- The Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM) [Practice Principles](#) (Evidence-based strategies drive professional practice improvement)
- VTLM [Vision for Learning](#) and [Pedagogical Model](#)
- [FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#)
- [Equity Funding Planning and Intervention Guide](#)
- [Organisation Design Guide](#).





Download and edit a template of the [Assessing readiness table](#) (below).

DISCUSSION POINTS	FISO DIMENSIONS	KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK
<b>A shared understanding that all staff are on a continuous journey of professional development, regardless of their current capabilities or level of experience</b>	Building practice excellence Instructional and shared leadership	Do school leaders use data to plan and differentiate professional learning based on teachers' needs?  Do leaders use the Professional Development Plan (PDP) process to align professional learning goals with the school's goals and priorities?
<b>A shared understanding that time and resources for collaboration and professional learning need to be prioritised by school leaders, teachers and staff</b>	Strategic resource management Instructional and shared leadership	Do the timetable and meeting schedules prioritise collaboration across all teams?  Do staff have the time and resources they need to engage with whole-school professional learning?
<b>A whole-school pedagogical model with embedded instructional approaches, such as the VTLM</b>	Building practice excellence	Do leaders monitor how the whole-school pedagogical model is being effectively used?  Are teachers applying professional learning to the whole-school pedagogical model?

## Identify the most impactful areas to build teaching capability

The second step in this stage is for a representative group of leaders and staff to gather and interpret evidence to understand the challenges they want to solve, and which will have the greatest impact.

As a starting point, reflect on the following questions:

- What assumptions guide how leaders, teachers and staff work together to develop their capabilities?
- Have multiple leaders, teachers and staff with different perspectives had the opportunity to validate the above assumptions?
- Are decisions about professional learning informed by evidence-based research?

## What does the research evidence say?

- Professional learning is a key driver of school improvement (Bouchamma et al., 2019; Bradford & Clarke, 2015; Glen et al., 2017).
- Effective professional learning is aligned with school goals, priorities and values, and addresses the learning needs of staff and students (Bouchamma et al., 2019; Bradford & Clarke, 2015; Glen et al., 2017).
- Teachers improve their pedagogical practice and positively impact student outcomes when they collaboratively reflect on and receive feedback in PLC/PLTs (Jones & Thessin, 2017; Voelkel & Chrispeels 2017).
- Features of effective professional learning include active learning opportunities for teachers to apply and practise instructional skills during the training, using data to guide instruction, and the inclusion of instructional materials. Professional learning programs are more successful when they provide opportunities for teachers to practise what they have learnt between sessions in their classrooms (Timperley et al., 2007).
- One specific professional learning model with promising evidence is ‘teacher coaching’. Effective programs tend to be individualised, context-specific and sustained over a semester or school year (Kraft, et al., 2018)

Further research evidence supporting the building practice excellence dimension can be found in the [excellence in teaching and learning evidence base](#).

## Examine existing professional learning efforts

The SIT and Learning Specialists can survey leaders and teachers to determine whether existing professional learning efforts:

- give teachers and leaders a clear ‘line of sight’ that connects their PDP goals to the SSP
- give all teachers the knowledge and skills needed to adopt evidence-based pedagogical practices
- support teachers to incorporate the high-impact teaching strategies into the school’s pedagogical model
- build collective effectiveness, as indicated by teachers’ interest in collaborating to improve one another’s pedagogical capabilities
- collaborate with Communities of Practice (CoPs) to share what has been learned, as well as actions and resources.

The SIT and Learning Specialists may also investigate and reflect on the effectiveness of the different types of professional conversations that occur in the school (see table below).

ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS	WITHIN SCHOOL TEAM MEETINGS	EXTERNAL NETWORKS/ MEETINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Classroom observation</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty or Learning Area team/s</li> <li>• Year Level or Key Stage Team/s</li> <li>• Teaching Team/s</li> <li>• PLCs/PLTs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoPs (interest-based or role-based)</li> <li>• Meetings across multi-campus/schools</li> <li>• Teacher networks</li> </ul>

## Gather data to understand current practice

After the SIT and Learning Specialists have examined current professional learning practices and processes, they can identify what other sources of data to gather.

### Use improvement measures in our system

Useful measures available include:

- School Staff Survey — all factors from the Professional Learning module and 'use pedagogical model' and 'understand curriculum' factors
- Attitudes to School Survey — the 'effective teaching time' factor.

### Generate school-level data to investigate the link between professional learning and practice

An indicator of the effectiveness of professional learning is the extent to which teachers adopt the practices they have learnt. Schools striving for practice excellence have strong professional learning cultures and expect all teachers to adopt the school's agreed pedagogical model.

To investigate this link, the school leadership team can:

- guide staff to complete the VTLM Practice Principles [diagnostic tool](#) for Practice Principle 7 (evidence-based strategies drive professional practice improvement)
- seek feedback from students on how evidence-based teaching strategies are being implemented
- engage in 'learning walks' or classroom observations over a set period to observe the extent to which practices that have been a focus for professional learning are a feature of lessons
- discuss with PLC leaders, Learning Specialists, literacy and numeracy leaders, and improvement teachers whether anything needs to be done to improve links between professional learning and classroom practice
- participate in a range of school-based professional learning activities to understand what the focus is on.

Instructional practices need to be developed from evidence about teaching and learning. The overall evidence quality of studies in this area is low (Filges, 2019) however a high-quality study offers some insights on data-based decision-making and its impact on student learning and achievement. A high positive impact (0.50) was found where teachers participated within professional learning communities to fine-tune their instructional practices and analyse data collaboratively (Lai, et al., 2014).

## Work together to make sense of the evidence

Once all data, information and assessments of existing efforts have been gathered, the SIT can work to ‘triangulate’ assumptions — that is, use multiple methods and sources to test their validity. This will help the SIT thoroughly understand the root causes of challenges, and identify and prioritise areas for focus.



Download and edit a template of the [Making sense of data and evidence table](#) (below) to help in this process.

SENSE-MAKING ACTIVITIES	REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS AND SENTENCE STEMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT PRIORITISING AND SETTING GOALS
<p><b>Identify patterns in the data</b></p>	<p>What were the trends? “In general I noticed...”</p> <p>What surprised you? “I wasn’t expecting to see...”</p> <p>Were there contradictions? “On the one hand... On the other hand...”</p>	<p>Document perspectives from each SIT member, highlighting where multiple members agreed.</p>
<p><b>Test assumptions about professional learning</b></p>	<p>What does our school do well to support teacher professional development? How do we know?</p> <p>What do you think are the highest-priority areas of professional development? How do we know?</p>	<p>Document perspectives on the highest-priority needs.</p> <p>This may also make it clear that more data is required. If so, data should be gathered and brought back to the group.</p>
<p><b>Build consensus on priority areas of focus for professional learning</b></p>	<p>Allow each team member to respond to these questions:</p> <p>Where is the data telling us we need to focus efforts to improve teaching practice?</p> <p>What are the root causes of challenges in those areas?</p> <p>What internal instructional leadership will support staff development? What external expertise will we need?</p>	<p>Record responses from each member. If there is not a clear consensus, ask members to justify their responses, seek additional data or use a voting system.</p>

# BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE

## PRIORITISE AND SET GOALS

Use the data, discussions and assumptions developed in the evaluate and diagnose stage to identify where improvement efforts will be focused. These may be the areas of greatest need, or where opportunities exist to maximise impact. Each school's goals will be specific to its context, including its community demographics, performance strengths and challenges, and staff climate and capability.

Goals are set to achieve outcomes. To be effective, they need to be tailored to support the specific roles in the school, while being consistent with the school's overarching vision and objectives (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Studies have found that school leadership practices have a small positive impact on student outcomes through teacher beliefs and practice (Goddard, et al., 2015; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). This implies that goals need to be as practice-specific as possible and consider the necessary changes to teacher knowledge and practice, and the extent to which they result in improved student learning.

### Differentiate goals to improve teaching practice

The practices and capabilities of teachers and leaders will be different in each school. Goals set in collaboration with the SIT will be differentiated based on the school's identified challenges and needs.

Schools should consider where efforts can be focused to best support their progress towards goals. They might consider:

- narrowing the school's professional learning focus to one or two practices that most staff endorse as the most impactful
- documenting the high-impact teaching strategies that one would expect to see in use in classrooms
- achieving consistency in the take-up across the school of high-impact teaching strategies
- mapping the needs of the school's student cohorts with areas of teacher expertise to identify professional learning needs
- leveraging Learning Specialists and expert teachers to model exemplary teaching practice in specific techniques targeted at the needs of other staff members
- enriching data and evidence practices to expand the use of student data to support improvement cycles and inform teaching and learning
- establishing a culture of open and effective communication led by Learning Specialists and expert teachers to guide colleagues in professional dialogue to support improved pedagogy.



Download and edit the [Identifying where efforts will be prioritised](#) template to help identify key opportunities.

A synthesis of 143 studies of online and blended learning approaches found that those that most improved student outcomes train teachers to be equipped instructionally and technologically before implementing the programs in their classes. In one example, a significant positive impact on literacy was found when teachers were able to effectively adapt and integrate new software into instruction, as compared to teachers who adopt it with minimal changes (Evidence for Learning, 2020).

# BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE

## DEVELOP AND PLAN

Once goals have been set and prioritised, the SIT can develop plans for how these will be achieved, mapping out all possible actions and approaches, then selecting those likely to have the greatest impact given the school's context.

### Use a theory of action to plan backwards from goal

Schools may choose to develop a theory of action to explain how change will be achieved. This describes the relationships between the intended impact, outcomes, outputs and actions to help schools see the changes that will need to occur for implementation to succeed.

Along the way, the SIT can test the theory using questions such as:

- What assumptions are being made about the relationships?
- Whose perspectives are we including? Whose are we excluding?
- Are the proposed actions informed by research evidence?



Download and complete the [Theory of action](#) template to help in this process.

Leaders may need to put implementation structures such as teams and schedules in place and ensure professional learning plans are aligned to teachers' and students' learning needs. For more information about leading change and structures for implementation, see the [Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#).

Common barriers include time constraints, and improvement strategies being too broad or ambitious. Schools should develop plans with a limited number of achievable actions.

A meta-analysis on the effects of professional learning interventions that target practice for teachers in P-12 settings found that duration and intensity of professional learning is less important than how it is implemented (Garrett et al., 2019). This suggests that short-cycle, continuous improvement efforts to address classroom practice may be successful and more efficient. Professional learning should ensure that classroom practices respond to intervention quickly.

**Illustrative practice case study**

At one school, AToSS data, lesson observations and feedback from coaches indicated that there was significant variation in how teachers were differentiating based on students’ literacy needs. NAPLAN reading results also indicated that most students in the bottom two and top two bands were not achieving high growth. Therefore, the following theory of action was developed to improve students’ reading through differentiation.

**Impact indicators**

- Increased percentage of students reporting positively against ‘motivation and interest’ in AToSS and increased percentage of students in the bottom two and top two bands achieving high growth.

**Impact**

- Increased student engagement and academic achievement .

**Outcome indicators**

- Increased percentage of teachers reporting positively against ‘applicability of professional learning’ and ‘plan differentiated learning activities’ in School Staff Survey.
- Increased percentage of students reporting positively against ‘differentiated learning challenge’ and ‘sense of confidence’ in AToSS survey.

**Outcomes**

- Whole-school take-up of differentiated teaching practices
- Improved proportion of students working at their level to maximise learning growth.

**Output indicators**

- The number of teachers using evidence-based differentiation techniques increases
- Differentiation principles available in all staffrooms and included in staff PDPs.

**Outputs**

- Professional learning on differentiation resources and professional readings for staff
- Agreed principles for differentiation and how this is reflected in planning documentation are discussed and collaboratively developed by staff
- Model lessons are developed and distributed to support spreading of best practice.

**Actions**

- Build a strong and consistent understanding of evidence-based practices to differentiate.
- Establish principles for differentiation endorsed by all teachers.
- Spread best practice across the school by enabling developing teachers to learn from expert teachers or Learning Specialists.

## Develop actions to improve classroom practice

In planning to build practice excellence, the SIT can discuss, adapt and document the following suggested actions, or add actions specific to their school's context. The actions selected will depend upon the maturity of the school and the extent to which teachers are effectively using evidence-based teaching strategies.



Download and complete the [Mapping possible actions](#) template to ensure benefits and potential barriers for each action are considered.

Schools which are 'emerging' or 'evolving' in building practice excellence, or which are beginning to focus efforts on this dimension, could consider:

- focusing on developing 'pockets' of good practice, spread across the school
- developing leaders' and teachers' knowledge of high-impact teaching strategies
- introducing or strengthening practices of peer-observation and mentoring
- exploring a variety of evidence-based approaches that will improve professional learning outcomes for teachers and leaders
- embedding an agreed instructional model and ensuring consistent use of learning intentions and success criteria
- developing a common understanding of differentiation and highlighting examples of good practice
- providing time for teachers to collaborate to develop their expertise in prioritised high-impact teaching strategies
- empowering middle leaders to implement whole-school instructional strategies and provide instructional leadership
- building the expectation that PLCs/PLTs give timely reports on their professional learning progress
- involving students in planning discussions and enabling them to contribute their unique perspectives on learning, teaching and schooling.

Schools which are 'embedding' or 'excelling' in building practice excellence, or which have a sustained focus on this dimension, could consider:

- achieving school-wide consistency in the way instructional practices are used
- including responsibility for assisting other staff to improve their teaching effectiveness in the role descriptions of experienced and effective teachers
- identifying and celebrating exemplary use of high-impact teaching strategies and establishing processes for other teachers to observe practice excellence and reflect
- developing coaching and mentoring structures to provide evidence-informed feedback to teaching staff
- sharing professional learning within and between schools through networks and CoPs
- conducting action research and trial approaches co-designed by teachers and students
- establishing processes to make external professional learning experiences and school-wide improvement planning coherent (for example, by establishing a working group reliant on input from professional learning investigations).

In developing actions, the SIT should discuss whether they meet the characteristics of effective implementation:

- ☑ Are actions and activities sufficiently 'bite-sized'?
- ☑ Are actions easy to understand? Is it clear what will be implemented?
- ☑ Can actions be embedded in the school's everyday structures and routines (making them easier to prioritise and adapt to)?
- ☑ Is it clear who will be responsible for what, and when? Are there systems for monitoring this?
- ☑ Are timelines and monitoring cycles short? (Completion builds satisfaction, opportunity for celebration, acknowledgement of achievement and momentum for further work.)



## Develop a professional learning plan for high-impact teaching strategies

Develop a professional learning plan that considers the goals identified by the SIT and how high-impact teaching strategies will be implemented.

QUESTION	SUGGESTED ACTIONS	RESOURCES
<p><b>Is a targeted and prioritised professional learning and development plan in place?</b></p>	<p>Creating a professional learning and development plan could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying teachers in the school most successful at using high-impact teaching strategies</li> <li>identifying what professional learning would be of most benefit to different cohorts of teachers</li> <li>reflecting on how knowledge could be meaningfully shared to help build the capacity of other teachers</li> <li>establishing processes to monitor how high-impact teaching strategies are being adopted</li> <li>using the Continua and action items in the VTLM to establish current levels of practice and to monitor improvement</li> <li>allocating time for coaching in implementing high-impact teaching strategies</li> <li>collaborating with networks and CoPs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional Learning and Development Plan in the school's AIP</li> <li><a href="#">AIP Guidelines</a></li> <li>The VTLM <a href="#">Pedagogical Model</a>, the <a href="#">Practice Principles action items</a> and the <a href="#">high-impact teaching strategies (HITS)</a>.</li> </ul>

One specific professional learning model with promising evidence is 'teacher coaching', in which expert teachers observe teachers' instruction and give feedback to help them improve. A study that reviewed 60 teacher coaching programs found a moderate positive effect on instruction, and a small positive impact on student achievement. Findings suggest it is more effective when implemented with smaller groups of teachers – highlighting the challenges of implementing coaching programs at scale. Effective programs tend to be individualised, context-specific and sustained over a semester or school year (Kraft, et al., 2018).

# BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR

The success of any plan depends on how well it is implemented. Implementation is not a one-off event, but an iterative process of actioning what is planned, identifying and celebrating what is working, and adapting when barriers are encountered, changes occur or plans fall behind schedule.

Teachers are more likely to improve their practices if they understand the 'active conditions' that are needed, through monitoring what has worked and what has not over time. When school programs are implemented with fidelity, the average effect sizes on student outcomes can be two to three times higher compared to programs not implemented with fidelity (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

## Identifying how actions will be monitored

Monitoring allows leaders to know which practices are changing in their schools and the impact those changes are having. Monitoring also identifies barriers to implementation early so that approaches can be adapted, and strategies put in place to get back on schedule. Monitoring usually involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data.

Sometimes, data collected across Victoria (available in Panorama) will assist with monitoring and assessing impact from year to year. At other times, schools will need to develop tailored tools to monitor implementation in real-time over shorter regular cycles, or at the end of each term.

Sources of data for monitoring actions to build practice excellence include:

- coaching and observation notes
- PLC/PLT agendas, minutes and observations
- teachers' formative assessment data and teacher judgement data
- data walls indicating student progress and documentation of teachers' analysis of data
- student feedback on changes to teacher practice. This may have a specific focus, such as differentiation, or use of the instructional model based on the schools' identified actions
- appointment/staffing of programs
- participation of staff in professional learning and staff feedback on the effectiveness of professional learning
- interviews or focus groups with leaders, teachers, support staff, regional staff or students discussing what is and is not working in implementing planned actions.

Annual progress in building practice excellence can also be monitored using suggested improvement measures in the Continua.

## Survey tips

- Short, focused surveys with a clear purpose are most effective for monitoring.
- Questions need to be carefully designed for your audience, use clear, accessible language and be presented in a logical order (Taherdoost, 2016).
- Pre-test surveys with a small group for feedback before sharing more broadly.
- Combine all monitoring questions for the same group into one survey. Consider other ways you can minimise the burden of completing surveys.

For more information about real-time data monitoring, see the [Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#).

Download and complete the [Mapping possible actions](#) template to ensure the benefits and potential barriers for each action are considered.



Teachers working in professional communities is one approach to ensure ongoing teacher learning in and across schools.

A study of 1606 teachers from 93 primary schools with a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds found that teacher collaboration improved collective teacher efficacy, correlating with better maths and reading outcomes for students. Findings suggest that the more school leaders serve as instructional leaders, the more likely it is that teachers engage in improving instruction and facilitate whole-school goals (Goddard, et al., 2015).

## Implement plans for professional learning

Once goals are set, plans have been developed, and monitoring tools are in place, school leaders and teachers can implement plans effectively by:

- ensuring enough time is allocated for planned professional learning, coaching, mentoring and collaboration actions
- ensuring the focus of effort is achievable, manageable and precise
- identifying champions of the work and seeking to engage them early
- preparing staff and students for change, and gaining 'buy-in' to the need for change
- conveying the expectation that all teachers contribute to the school's plans to improve practice
- establishing and celebrating implementation milestones
- using and adapting monitoring tools regularly, using a variety of evidence to understand changes in practice
- using the improvement cycle over shorter periods to diagnose challenges and adapt implementation.



## Case studies in collaborative approaches to building teaching and learning capabilities

- [Fairfield Primary School, Narre Warren South P-12 College, Brighton Primary School](#): implementing HITs to drive school improvement
- [Burwood East Primary School](#): implementing a whole-school approach to teaching and learning literacy to increase teacher collaboration and shared responsibility for student outcomes.
- [Wodonga Senior Secondary College](#): implementing the 'triad' model of small teacher support to improve quality instruction in every classroom.
- [Hume/Moreland Network of schools](#): establishing a CoP to work collaboratively and improve student learning outcomes in numeracy.

## Professional learning in practice: Thornbury High School

Thornbury High School has been on a sustained improvement journey, built on a whole-school professional learning approach and driven by a strong focus on improving senior secondary outcomes.

The school introduced a formalised VCE data review process at a whole-faculty and individual teacher level, improving staff's data literacy and creating a focus on extending high-ability students — one of the contributing factors to demonstrating a significant increase in VCE 40+ scores.

The school has seen significant growth, not only in achievement, but also in participation. Within the framework of the school's professional learning approach, the team has implemented several evidence-based developments. An exemplar is the Senior Science STEM curriculum, which is encouraging students to excel in their Year 11 and 12 studies.

The school's popular music and performing arts program has also had a markedly positive effect on student engagement and outcomes, supported by strong results in the attitudes to school survey, and by interviews with student and parent focus groups.



# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

## Links to key resources

- [AITSL Professional Practice Resource: Reframing feedback to improve teaching and learning: Spotlight on feedback and assessment](#)
- [DET Communities of Practice](#)
- [DET Professional Learning Communities](#)
- [DET Professional Practice note \(17\): Purposeful collaboration for excellence](#)
- [Evidence for Learning: Teaching and Learning Toolkit – Australia](#)
- [FISO Continua of Practice for School Improvement](#)
- [FISO Implementation Toolkit](#)
- [VTLM HITS](#)
- [VTLM Practice Principles](#)

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