Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

2024 Teaching Innovation Fellowship

Insights Summit posters

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education

Independent Schools Victoria

Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Promoting excellence in teaching and learning through contemporary data, inquiry and collaboration.

Overview

Luther College is a coeducational, Lutheran Secondary in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, with approximately 1200 students and 135 teaching staff.
A new way of teachers evaluating and improving practice was required to meet Luther College's Exceptional Futures Strategic Plan to drive innovative and contemporary teaching and learning.

1. Teaching practice is led by contemporary data and research
2. Our people are empowered to thrive on challenge
3. Our teachers are committed to continual improvements.

My vision: The norm at Luther College is to have staff actively talking about, being involved in and working to enhance teaching practice inside and outside of formal meeting times. Teachers having autonomy to identify the areas they see as relevant to enhancing their teaching practice either as individuals or in teams.
My role: to research, plan and implement a pilot project for teaching staff to use contemporary research to drive enhancement into their teaching practice and when the time was right roll it out to the wider teaching staff.

Key learnings

The learning I have gained from the TIF includes:

> Ideas can be enormous, change can be challenging
> Hold your project lightly, don't rush the change, plan it thoroughly
> Talk to those who have been involved in change as they can be an enormous support when the barriers seen insurmountable. Use contemporary, relevant research to support your planning
> Stay firm on the ideas you have researched which are the crux of your change
> Allow others to assist as one person cannot do everything.

Findings and outcomes

In implementing the project, it was important to follow up in a meaningful way and practice the professional development learning from the guest speaker Ron Ritchhart at the start of the school year. 90% of people could see a direct link from the first session with Ron to the work being done on a Tuesday afternoon.
Discussion of pedagogy and research had not been an active part of staff time on a regular basis since well before Covid19. The data shows discussions with other staff on research/ teaching practice, bouncing ideas off other staff and being motivated by other staff was occurring.
I asked those surveyed if they would have made the change made in Term 1 2025 without the professional goal and time to do it.
Most said they would, however, most said not in the time frame or with the background research.
When staff were asked about the impact of the professional development time on their teaching practice, 80% responded there had been a positive impact, 20% said maybe. No one responded there had been a negative impact.
60% of respondents said they had received more than enough support to work through the professional development tasks set. The other 40 % said support was sufficient.
What does this data and my observations tell me?

> I have seen teaching staff actively discussing teaching practices
> Staff reading and making notes on the research from Ron Ritchhart's book
> Staff asking for further sources of information
> Learning teams trialling new classroom arrangements
> Teaching staff trialling new strategies and thinking routines
> Staff keen to discuss with others their results.

Would you have trialled this idea or made this change without the professional development time and reading? Please briefly explain your response.

- Yes - but the reading has informed and focused my practice
- The idea that I have trialled was something bounced around in my staff office by a fantastic staff member, however this was before the introduction of this PD time. I do think I would have *eventually* trialed it, however this definitely kicked me into action.
- Yes, it has been something I have wanted to focus on for a while, but this gave me the push and the time to think it through.
- In a manner. I don't think it would have been this directed, and I would not have been looking to get specific data on this aspect

From top to bottom:
Professional development PowerPoint opening slide for cycle two
Initial staff pilot day
Data graph from teaching staff reflection survey
Data, staff comments on question 11 from staff survey

Tania Bell | Luther College

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

A developmental approach for mathematics in the IB Middle Years Program (MYP) in an Australian school

Overview

This project aimed to address gaps in traditional assessment practices at Oakleigh Grammar, particularly within the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) Mathematics curriculum. By shifting from a summative to a formative approach, the project developed **learning progressions** and **developmental rubrics** to track student growth. These tools were designed to provide continuous feedback, allowing students to better understand their progress and take ownership of their learning.

Key learnings

- Deepened understanding of how assessment practices impact student outcomes
- Broke down complex mathematical concepts into digestible steps with learning progressions and developmental rubrics
- Gained insights into the potential of rubrics to provide clear, actionable feedback from teacher feedback
- Recognised the impact of teacher confidence on effective teaching strategies through rubric development.

Findings and outcomes

- Developed learning progressions and developmental rubrics for the statistics strand of the Australian Curriculum, aligned with IBMYP goals
- Designed the tools to offer a clear framework for tracking student progress and providing actionable feedback
- Despite the lack of classroom trial data, feedback suggests that the rubrics will support student growth and self-regulation
- The next steps involve scaling the rubrics to other areas of the curriculum and conducting full classroom trials
- The project lays the groundwork for a dynamic, developmental approach to assessment, with the potential to significantly impact teaching practices and student outcomes in MYP Mathematics.

A Learning Progression in Statistics Across Three Learning Phases And Five Key Capabilities

Phase 3 (Years 9-10)	Students can critically evaluate data collection methods, addressing sampling techniques, distinguishing between primary and secondary data, and recognising biases in data collection.	Students employ advanced techniques like stem-and-leaf plots, histograms, and box plots. They can compare data sets visually and critically evaluate different types of representations for clarity and accuracy.	Students can calculate the mean, median, and mode for grouped data and compare distributions. They can identify and discuss the effects of extreme values and make sophisticated judgments about the skewness and spread of data.	Students are adept at recognising complex patterns, understanding correlation and causality, and making predictions based on patterns in data.	Students critique statistical reports, identify potential sources of bias, and evaluate ethical considerations in data handling.
Phase 2 (Years 7-8)	Students engage in more structured forms of data collection, including surveys, observations, and using digital tools like spreadsheets to organise and categorise data (categorical and numerical).	Students gradually use more sophisticated visualisations, including scatter plots, line graphs, and dot plots, to represent more complex data. At this stage, they also begin to use digital tools for graphing.	Students begin to summarise grouped data using these measures. They also learn to calculate range and interquartile range to describe data spread.	Students can identify relationships between variables, compare distributions, and discuss correlations in data sets (e.g., scatter plots).	Students critically evaluate data representations, including spotting misleading visuals or bias in statistical reports.
Phase 1 (Years 5-6)	Students begin by working with basic, everyday data collection methods such as simple tally charts, frequency tables, and picture graphs.	Students start by representing simple data through pictographs, bar graphs, and basic pie charts. The representations are typically one-to-one, with minimal complexity.	Students focus on calculating basic measures such as mode, median, and mean for ungrouped data.	Students begin by identifying simple patterns in data, such as trends in a line graph or recognising symmetry in data visualisations.	Students initially interpret basic data representations to answer straightforward questions, such as identifying the highest frequency in a bar graph.
	Data Collection & Classification	**Data Representation & Visualisation**	**Summarising Data with Statistical Measures**	**Patterns & Relationships in Data**	**Data Interpretation & Critical Analysis**

A Student-Friendly Developmental Rubric for Statistics

Phase 3 (Years 9-10)	I can critically evaluate data collection methods, addressing sampling techniques, distinguishing between primary and secondary data, and recognising biases.				I can thoroughly critique and analyse statistical reports, identifying biases, and evaluating ethical considerations.
Phase 3 (Years 9-10)			I can analyse and interpret advanced statistical measures, including evaluating the impact of outliers on data interpretation.	I can identify and predict complex patterns, understanding causality and correlations, and make informed predictions.	
Phase 2 (Years 7-8)		I can create and critically assess advanced visualisations like histograms and box plots, ensuring accuracy and clarity.			
Phase 2 (Years 7-8)	I can engage in more structured forms of data collection, including surveys, observations, and using digital tools like spreadsheets to organise and categorise data.		I can summarise grouped data, calculate interquartile ranges, and use standard deviation.	I can identify relationships between variables, compare distributions, and discuss correlations in data sets (e.g., scatter plots).	I can critically evaluate data representations, including spotting misleading visuals or bias in statistical reports.
Phase 2 (Years 7-8)	I can organise data using surveys and digital tools, categorising data effectively.	I can gradually use more sophisticated visualisations, including scatter plots, line graphs, and dot plots, to represent more complex data.	I can begin to summarise grouped data using measures such as mean, median, and mode. I can calculate range and interquartile range to describe data spread.		
Phase 1 (Years 5-6)			I can calculate the mean, median, and mode for ungrouped data.	I can begin by identifying simple patterns in data, such as trends in a line graph.	I can initially interpret basic data representations to answer straightforward questions, such as identifying the highest frequency in a bar graph.
Phase 1 (Years 5-6)	I can work with basic, everyday data collection methods such as simple tally charts, frequency tables, and picture graphs.	I can start by representing simple data through pictographs, bar graphs, and basic pie charts.	I can focus on calculating basic measures such as mode, median, and mean for ungrouped data.		
	Data Collection and Classification	**Data Representation and Visualisation**	**Summarising Data with Statistical Measures**	**Patterns and Relationships in Data**	**Data Interpretation and Critical Analysis**

Table 1: "A Learning Progression in Statistics Across Three Learning Phases and Five Key Capabilities" outlines the developmental progression of student capabilities in statistics across schooling years. Each cell describes the expected student behaviours, skills, or understanding at a specific phase and capability intersection.
Table 2: "A Student-Friendly Developmental Rubric for Statistics" helps students understand where they are in their learning journey and what the next steps might be. Promotes student agency by clarifying expectations in simpler terms.

Guanghua Wu | Oakleigh Grammar

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Meet them where they are: using skill sequences in mathematics

Overview

The OPS Teaching Innovation Project focussed on enhancing mathematics instruction to address gaps in teacher confidence, assessment practices, and student engagement. The project aimed to build staff capacity (including education support staff), improve teaching practices, and support diverse learners. It sought to create a consistent, evidence-based approach to teaching maths that would reduce anxiety, improve assessment practices, and foster student success

Key learnings

Building teacher capacity: Professional learning sessions and a structured learning continuum empowered teachers to diagnose and respond to student needs effectively.
Development of a learning continuum: A structured skill sequence guided goal setting, assessment, and differentiation in teaching.
Resource bank creation: A user-friendly, accessible website was developed to house a wide range of resources for teachers, saving time on planning and providing high-quality, engaging tasks for diverse learners.
Research-informed strategies: The project was informed by best practices in maths education, including the use of manipulatives, explicit instruction, and a focus on foundational concepts like place value and multiplicative thinking.

Findings and outcomes

Improved teacher confidence: Teachers gained confidence in goal setting, student progress tracking, and planning through the use of the structured skill sequence and aligned assessment tools.
Enhanced student engagement: Clear learning progressions and high-quality resources led to improved student attitudes toward maths, addressing maths anxiety and building confidence.
Consistent teaching practices: A shared understanding of the skill sequence resulted in more cohesive and equitable maths instruction across the school.
Sustainable impact: Ongoing professional learning, collaborative feedback, and the development of a comprehensive resource bank ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes. Future steps include embedding the learning continuum into school planning and expanding resource development to support continued growth.

This project has set the foundation for improving maths instruction, fostering a collaborative and data-driven culture that aims to support all learners at OPS.

Figure 1

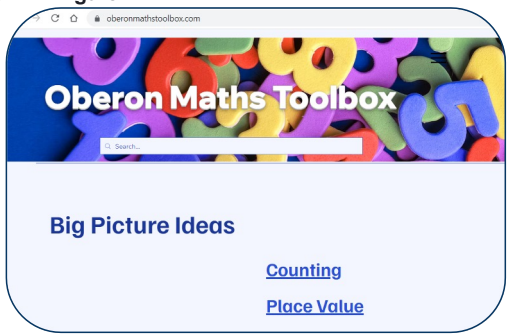


Figure 2

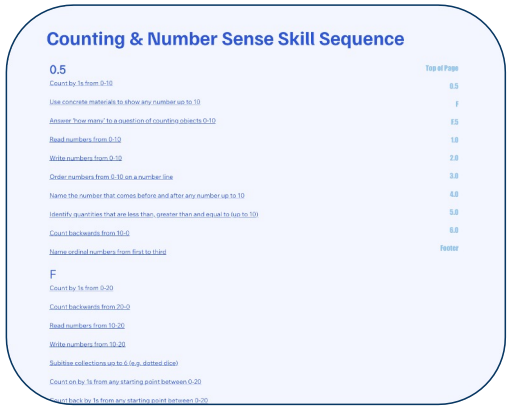


Figure 3

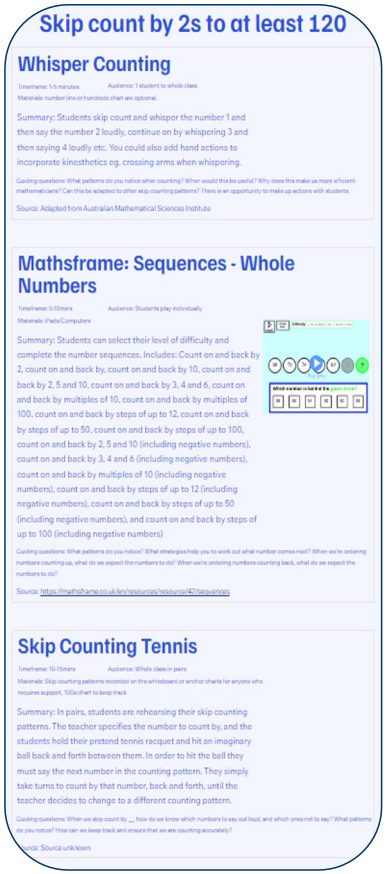


Figure 4

Scan to visit our website:
Oberon Maths Toolbox

Figure 1: The home page of www.oberonmathstoolbox.com
Figure 2: An example of our Skill Sequences.
Figure 3: Some examples of resources on the website (resource bank).
Figure 4: QR code to access our website.

Shilo Chan-Stewart
Heidi Tozer
| Oberon Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Reading for pleasure – improving literacy and wellbeing

Overview

Literacy is a prerequisite to opportunities and success. Literacy is the key that unlocks all doors; education, work, health, relationships and creativity. It therefore stands to reason that those who have the most to gain from improved literacy, are those who currently experience the lowest rates. This project sought to identify and implement a program that would improve literacy and wellbeing for students experiencing high rates of disadvantage. This project is about attempting a strategy that is often put in the "too hard" basket and about identifying the challenges and finding solutions to ensure we can put students on the paths to a literate and successful life.

Key learnings

- Spend time on the WHY and let it do the work for you
- Be uncompromising in adapting to your context
- Don't neglect the communication piece.

Findings and outcomes

- Projects based on quality research don't have to reinvent that wheel and you can focus on getting the change 'done'
- Changing a learning culture is hard and requires patience, persistence and fidelity
- Don't try and do everything on your own – you'll break yourself and your project.

These images capture key elements of the fellowship journey — student and teacher reflections, a welcoming classroom library, and strategies that empower students to choose and enjoy what they read.

Virginia Millard | Wyndham Central College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Empowering girls: enhancing enjoyment and changing attitudes towards STEM subjects and careers

Overview

"Empowering girls" highlights the critical need to inspire and support STEM learning among regional and rural students, particularly girls, who face barriers to engagement and achievement in STEM education. My passion for STEM education and commitment to fostering motivation in students guided this initiative, set in the small town of Woodford, Victoria, within our small school of 160 students. The outcomes of my teaching innovation project aimed at fostering meaningful connections with local stakeholders to enhance STEM education.

Key learnings

- Empowering student choice in learning
- Expanding STEM opportunities and leadership
- Building sustainable STEM education networks.

Findings and outcomes

Increased student engagement in STEM: The structured, engaging lesson sequence led to a significant rise in student enthusiasm for STEM subjects, with post-program data showing a notable increase in students looking forward to technology, math, and science subjects in high school.

Positive shift in career aspirations: Exposure to hands-on STEM learning influenced students' career interests, with more students aspiring to STEM-related professions such as engineering, marine biology, and healthcare.

Impact of STEM future career day: The event successfully connected students with industry professionals, with 99% of attendees reporting a positive experience and teachers noting high levels of student engagement and interest in STEM careers.

Strengthening industry and educational partnerships: The program facilitated valuable collaborations with local industry and educational institutions, leading to further opportunities for STEM education development, including consulting roles with Deakin University and involvement in the Warrnambool Tech School curriculum committee.

Figure 1: Drones purchase to empower student engagement in STEM, particularly girls.

Figure 2: STEM Future Careers Day Student Participant Lanyard

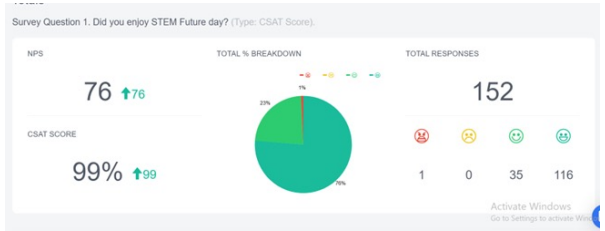


Figure 3: STEM Future Careers Day Student Survey Response Data

This fellowship has reinforced the importance of fostering student engagement in STEM and will continue to inform future initiatives aimed at empowering students with the skills and knowledge needed for success in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Casey Hutchins | Woodford Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Empowering communication through enhanced speaking and listening at Carlton Gardens Primary School

Overview

The project undertaken at Carlton Gardens Primary School aimed to address a critical gap in student proficiency in speaking and listening, particularly as these skills were lagging significantly behind reading and writing. This disparity highlighted the need for investigation. The project focused on integrating speaking and listening instruction into everyday classroom practices by developing and piloting a comprehensive learning sequence for Year 5/6 students. Strategies such as debates, group discussions, and role-plays were chosen to engage students and foster skills in both informal and formal communication. Through pre- and post-assessments, the project showed significant improvements in student confidence and communication abilities.
It also enhanced teachers' capacity to effectively deliver speaking and listening instruction. Moving forward, the project will be scaled school-wide, with new rubrics and resources developed to ensure consistency and sustainability.

Key learnings

- **Student voice and agency:** Involving students in selecting activities, such as debates and discussions, enhanced engagement and gave them ownership of their speaking and listening development.
- **Integrated assessment framework:** The use of clear rubrics for pre- and post-assessment allowed for precise tracking of student progress.
- **Flexibility and adaptation:** Adjustments made based on feedback and challenges allowed for effective integration of speaking and listening into the wider curriculum.
- **Student wellbeing:** Focusing on speaking and listening contributed to a supportive learning environment, boosting students' confidence, emotional expression, and sense of belonging.
- **Improved teacher capacity:** The project helped increase teachers' confidence and skills in teaching oral language, resulting in enhanced instructional practices and better student outcomes.

Findings and outcomes

Objective 1: Enhanced professional understanding
- Deepened expertise in effective speaking and listening instruction.
- Mini literature review evidences this.

Objective 2: Enhanced teacher confidence
- Empowered teachers with confidence and practical strategies for speaking instruction.
- Strong growth in teachers' ability to implement and adapt strategies in the classroom.

Objective 3: Enhanced student learning outcomes
- Students thrived, with major gains in communication skills, especially in debates.
- Feedback showed increased student confidence, emotional expression, and a stronger sense of belonging.

Objective 4: School-wide implementation
- Rolled out new rubrics and resources across all year levels, empowering teachers.
- Ensured lasting impact with ongoing resource sharing and plans for 2025 growth.

Figure 1

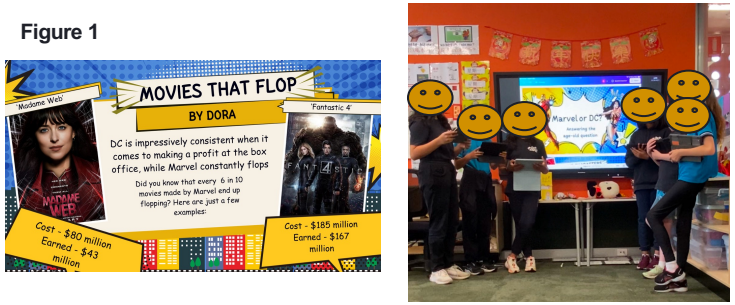


Figure 2

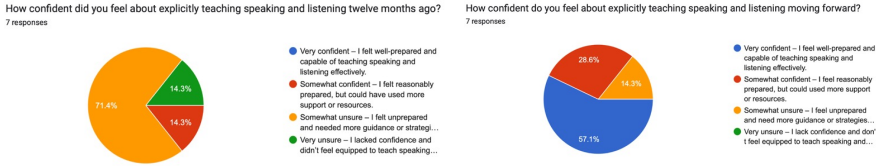


Figure 3

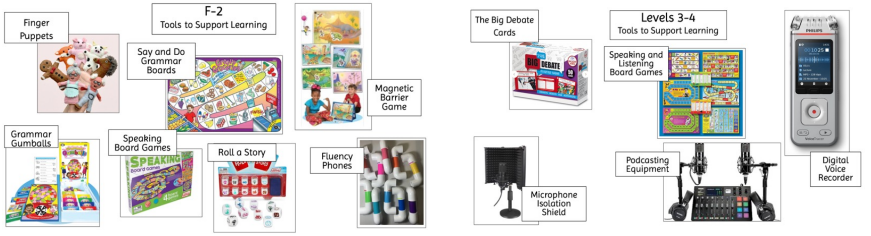


Figure 1: Students presenting their debate presentation as part of pilot 2.
Figure 2: The Google Form completed by participating teachers showed a significant increase in their confidence in teaching speaking and listening.
Figure 3: A preview of the tools to support learning purchased using TIF funding.

Brighde Keating | Carlton Gardens Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Evaluating low self-efficacy in second language speaking among all learners and creating experiential opportunities to boost student confidence and agency

Overview

The Teaching Innovation Project focused on improving student agency and self- efficacy in second language learning, with a focus on speaking with data-informed teaching, stakeholder partnerships, and the incorporation of various pedagogical approaches - CLIL, EPI, IPP, and the 8 Ways Indigenous framework. This was a shift from content-driven teaching to a student-centred, and reflective practice.

Key learnings

There were numerous key learnings throughout this project. In summary, student voice is essential in support meaningful language learning experiences, and collaboration between school leadership and learning areas is the key to drive sustainable change. Without proper support structures in place this journey can be difficult to navigate. Pedagogical diversity plays a critical role, it enhances curriculum relevance, engagement and differentiation. Additionally, formative and summative assessment of the language macro skills are essential for responsive teaching and providing student feedback

Findings and outcomes

Students reacted positively when their understandings and interests were incorporated into the curriculum. Teachers' capacity increased when new strategies are explained and supported by data to inform their teaching practice. All stakeholders – students, teachers, leadership, parents, and carers – were more responsive when results were visible, and growth was demonstrated.

There was a significant increase in student confidence and involvement in language learning, particularly in their willingness to participate in more speaking opportunities. There was more specific and purposeful use of data to guide planning. Going forward, it is recommended that Languages require much stronger alignment between school vision, teacher practice, and student needs. Languages should be classified as a core learning subject in alignment with English, as the two learning areas should support one another. Personally, connecting pedagogy, practice, and purpose not only within the language learning area but also in the integration across other learning areas, especially through the 8 Ways pedagogy, is essential.


IL GLOBO — In classe
Il Veneto Club apre le porte allo Xavier College


34 Melbourne — IL GLOBO
Alessandro Mocellin ha offerto agli studenti di italiano dello Xavier College una prospettiva unica di approfondimento
Alla scoperta della lingua e cultura veneta
FEDERAZIONE LUCANA
Pienone per la Festa del Papà

Examples of two of the experiential opportunities offered to the Italian language students.

1. The Year 10 visit to the Veneto club Melbourne.
2. Professor Alessandro Mocellin – Academia de la Buona Creansa Italy.

Both were feature in Il Globo.

Eleonora Luisetto | Xavier College, Kew

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Personal and social curriculum development

Overview

South Melbourne Primary School (SMPS) identified a gap in students' resilience and social-emotional skills despite strong literacy and numeracy programs. A school review highlighted the lack of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) for Personal and Social Capabilities (PSC), with inconsistent teaching approaches and low resilience levels (41% in 2023).
The project aimed to develop a structured PSC curriculum, improve teacher confidence, and enhance student social and emotional skills. A scope and sequence was created, professional learning opportunities were provided, and Year 3 trial lessons refined instructional models. Staff engagement, leadership support, and data-driven insights ensured a collaborative approach. Early success led to school-wide adoption in 2025, with increased teacher confidence and positive student outcomes. Staff surveys indicated improved confidence in the curriculum they were teaching in terms of the impact on student outcomes. The initiative reinforced the importance of structured SEL and proactive, research-based approaches to student wellbeing, ensuring long-term sustainability within the school's framework.

Key learnings

A key learning from this project was the power of collaboration and feedback in driving meaningful change. Early staff engagement fostered collaboration, encouraged feedback, and ensured long-term sustainability. Another key lesson was not being afraid to take a step back in order to move forward—ensuring a strong foundation before progressing further led to greater long-term benefit in the development of the curriculum. Data-driven decision-making and evidence-based approaches were crucial in refining the curriculum, guiding instructional practices, and measuring impact effectively. These learnings reinforced the importance of flexibility, responsiveness, and continuous improvement in leading whole-school initiatives.

Findings and outcomes

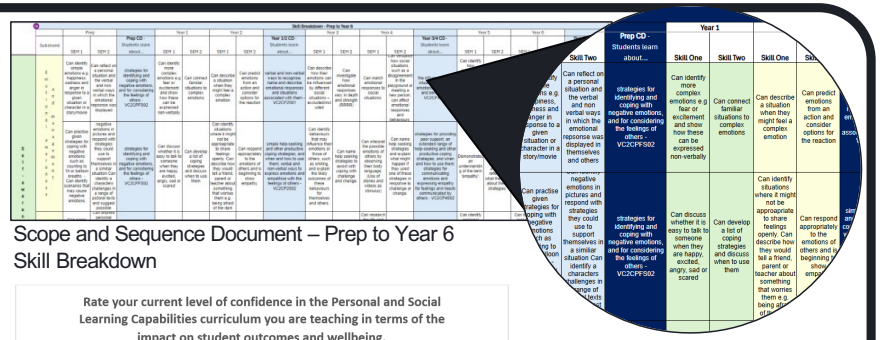
The implementation of the PSC curriculum has led to significant improvements in the delivery of a progressive curriculum, student growth and to teacher confidence and knowledge.

Improved teacher confidence and collaboration
Staff engagement and leadership support ensured successful implementation, fostering a shared vision and sustainable change.

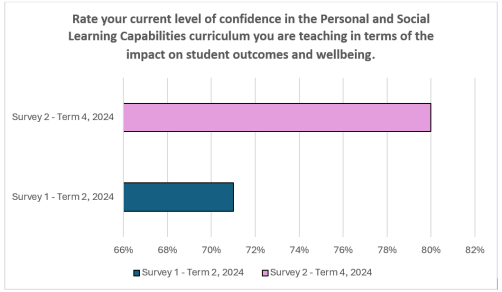
Stronger social and emotional learning
The creation of the scope and sequence and professional learning opportunities strengthened teachers understanding and practice. Created a more meaningful and structured approach that aligned with school priorities.

Positive student impact
Increased student collaboration, conflict resolution skills, and engagement led to reduced playground conflicts and greater social-emotional awareness.

School-wide adoption
Due to its success, the PSC curriculum will be fully implemented across all year levels in 2025, exceeding initial expectations.



Scope and Sequence Document – Prep to Year 6 Skill Breakdown



Outcome – Growth in teacher confidence in teaching PSC

Example Lesson

Check In	Question – Coming into Term 4, what is your battery (energy) level? (Battery levels image)
Hook	Students to complete simple puzzle activity in groups. Teacher to take pictures and videos of the groups working on iPad (looking for examples of team dynamics not posed)
Learn	Share learning focus on collaboration skills. Teacher to display pictures of groups from activity on the TV. Discussion: Students to talk about what they notice. What makes an effective team? Create mind map on whiteboard. Ask: What strengths did your team demonstrate? What area for improvement does your group have?
Practice and Apply	Students to complete another group activity (longest paper chain) using the effective team mind map as guidance. Teacher to roam and take pictures of examples of effective team work. Prompt groups to consider what qualities of an effective team they are displaying and what would be a goal.
Reflections	How did working in a group make the activity easier?

Lesson model and example Lesson

Refining and expanding curriculum: Dedicated time in Semester 1 to develop structured lessons for Prep to Year 3, ensuring consistency, clear skill progression, and integration of evidence-based strategies.
Extending to older year levels: Expanding the PSC curriculum to Years 4-6, refining lesson sequences, and enhancing teaching practice and pedagogy.
Coaching and mentoring model: Transitioning towards teacher support through mentoring, ensuring effective PSC integration, improved confidence, and consistency across all classrooms.

Ciona Cox | South Melbourne Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Establishing an effective Community of Practice for regional performing arts teachers

Overview

The Wodonga Performing Arts Community of Practice (CoP) was established to connect isolated regional teachers, strengthen advocacy, and foster sustainable professional growth. Now expanding in 2025, the CoP continues with structured meetings, a Professional Learning Day, and new initiatives like the Wodonga Federation Schools Choir. This evolving model aims to provide a scalable, sustainable framework for regional communities to build long-term professional networks and elevate Performing Arts education - enhancing student engagement, school culture, and broader educational outcomes.

Key learnings

- Trust must come first - building informal relationships before applying structured solutions creates stronger professional networks.
- Mentorship from experienced principals has been the most powerful learning tool, shaping both project direction and leadership growth.
- Primary and secondary teachers have distinct needs. Effective collaboration requires tailored communication and an understanding of different teaching contexts.
- This project was my first experience leading an authentic research initiative, evolving professional learning through real-world challenges and insights.
- Protecting personal wellbeing is essential when leading change. Setting boundaries and sustaining energy ensures long-term success.

Findings and outcomes

- Establishing genuine connections before structured collaboration fosters deeper engagement and long-term impact.
- Less frequent, pre-scheduled meetings with clear foci improve efficiency and consistency.
- A group of five or more participants is ideal for running protocols and fostering a strong professional learning community.
- Shared leadership is essential—I need to focus on building a team of invested colleagues.
- Even a single day of local professional learning can create lasting connections and a sense of belonging.
- Teachers need time to connect at a system level, particularly in isolated fields like Performing Arts. This broader perspective enables meaningful, community-wide change.

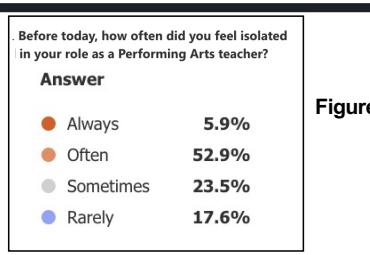


Figure 1

Figure 2

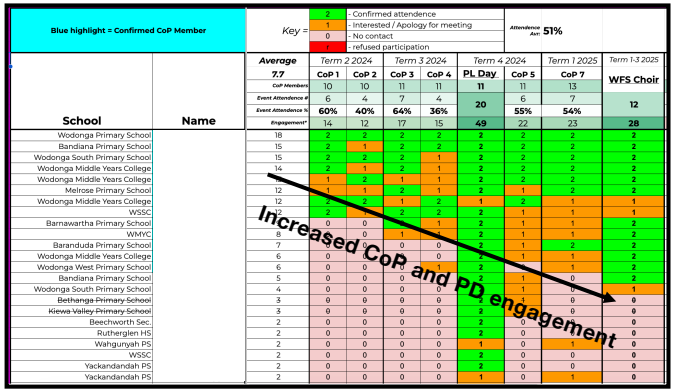


Figure 3

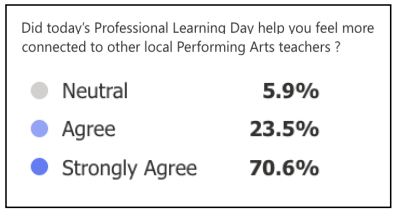


Figure 4

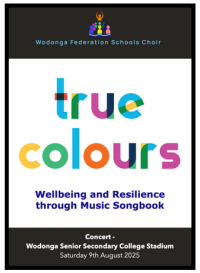


Figure 5

Figure 1: More than half of Performing Arts teachers feel isolated (inc. prim and sec)
Figure 2: Professional Learning day at Hyphen - Wodonga Library Space
Figure 3: CoP engagement tracker showing an increase in engagement and attendance
Figure 4: 94% of teachers felt more connected after our PL day
Figure 5: The Wodonga Federation Schools Choir songbook - a direct outcome of TIF

Aaron Silver | Wodonga Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

How can the explicit process of critical and creative teaching and learning impact our students to be future-ready individuals?

Overview

Critical thinking is a vital skill for students to navigate the complexities of future work and life, and Brentwood Secondary College (BSC) has recognised the need for explicit and systematic instruction to develop independent, empowered learners. This initiative aligns with BSC's vision of preparing "future-ready" individuals capable of analysing, evaluating, and synthesising information effectively. Research underscores the importance of critical thinking for academic and career success, linking it to problem-solving and workplace performance.
I adopted a phased implementation strategy, beginning with faculty-specific trials and expanding to pilot programs and professional learning workshops. Tools like Thinking Maps, Reflect to Perfect, Learning Behaviour Continuums, and critical thinking rubrics were developed and refined through teacher and student feedback. This culminated in an online Brentwood Playbook (website) to support staff in aligning critical thinking pedagogy, using the gradual release model of the BSC lesson framework.

Key learnings

- Leading this initiative required fostering collaboration and building trust among colleagues. Clear communication and iterative feedback were essential to align the project with school goals and teacher capacities. A dialogic approach encouraged engagement and innovation, while collaborative resource creation and data sharing reinforced the importance of clarity and adaptability in leadership.
- Reading on leading school change reinforced the importance of collaborative teacher learning environments. Aligning instructional strategies with neuroscience-informed practices and school strategic plans facilitated teacher buy-in.
- On a personal level, this experience has strengthened my ability to lead innovation and foster collaboration between disciplines. It has also developed staff capacity and excited middle school leaders to build expertise and lead staff professional learning.

Findings and outcomes

- Students demonstrated ownership and wonder in their learning because they know how to think independently and critically in their studies and for their future.
- High ratings were received for encouraging students to work harder (5.58), fostering discussions (5.49), and setting clear daily goals (5.49). Small group activities (5.42), fostering critical thinking (5.49), providing time to think (5.39), and offering actionable feedback (5.41) were also well received. With ratings surpassing the school average in most areas, these results reflect the effectiveness of the teaching strategies in engaging students and promoting critical thinking.
- Results from the PIVOT survey of Year 7–12 Humanities students highlighted strong student agreement that teachers pushed them to work harder (5.58 average) and encouraged idea discussions (5.49). The most significant improvement over the previous year was in feedback stating that teachers stimulated critical thinking by asking thought-provoking questions (5.44) and encouraged independent thinking rather than simply providing answers (5.49).
- Securing strong teacher buy-in and ensuring an effective rollout across multiple domains. More teachers joined the pilot project, later merging into the Playbook group and continuing into the 2025 AI working party.
- The broader impact lies in fostering collective efficacy. Teachers refined and strengthened the strategies to meet diverse student needs across different year levels, demonstrating the project's sustainability and long-term benefits for student learning.

Figure 1

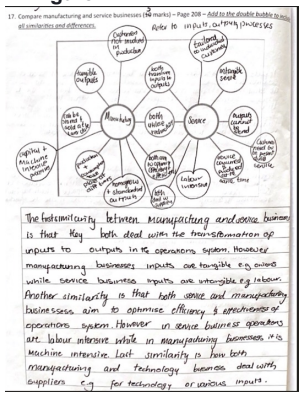


Figure 2

Insufficient	Towards standard	At standard	Above standard	Above standard
Inaccurately match a sample of work with the relevant success criteria.	Accurately match a sample of work with the relevant success criteria.	Identify my current skills by comparing to success criteria.	Reflect on evidence of my learning using success criteria to identify my next step(s) in learning.	Create a plan to achieve my next step in learning.

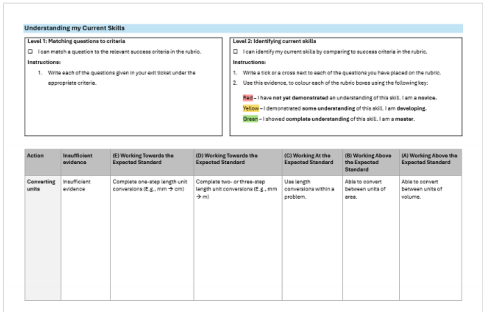


Figure 3

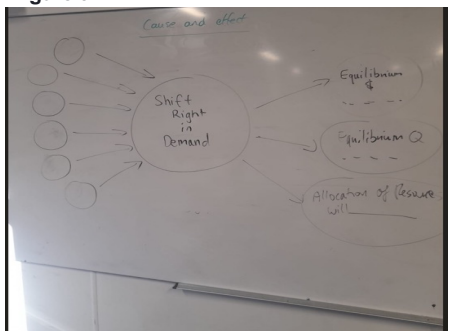


Figure 4

Figure 1: Use of thinking maps by student and teacher respectively
Figure 2: Example of critical thinking embedded in development rubric
Figure 3: Reflect to perfect trialled in Year 7 maths class
Figure 4: Website launched!

Heidi Cornelissen | Brentwood Secondary College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Empowering STEM teachers for disability inclusion

Overview

Problem: STEM teachers wanted more opportunities to collaborate and explore resources to support students with a disability.

My solution: Establish and facilitate a learning community for teachers and educators from local schools, to collaborate with each other and disability inclusion specialists, and find and explore resources for students with a disability in STEM.

Key learnings

- What do teachers really want? Ask questions and listen to understand what teachers want to learn for their students.
- Aim and target – apply teacher feedback to provide targeted professional learning opportunities to meet their point of need.
- Make it hybrid! Teachers are busy people. They have their own lives. They want the flexibility to meet in person or online.

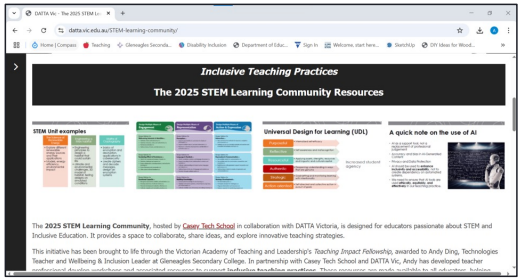
Findings and outcomes

Achievements:

- We created a hybrid learning community, consisting of 17 STEM teachers from local schools, to meet monthly at Casey Tech School.
- We collaborated with industry experts and explored 4 targeted topics and resources: (1) Boardmaker, (2) TapeBlock, (3) AI in STEM, and (4) Supporting neurodivergent students and challenging behaviours in STEM
- DATTA Victoria recorded and published the resources on their website.
- "If we could have more STEM-based PDs - We as teachers could learn some new hands-on STEM activities which we could then take back to our schools and use for our students" - a Learning Community Participant

Our journey!

The STEM Learning Community at Casey Tech School



Resource shared on DATTA Victoria's website:
https://www.datta.vic.edu.au/STEM-learning-community/

Call to action: Teachers are change-makers! What can you do today to empower teachers and your colleagues to create an inclusive school for everyone?

Hau Ong (Andy) Ding | Gleneagles Secondary College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Enhancing mathematical wellbeing through pedagogy

Overview

When alignment occurs between values and experience, learners have a greater sense of joy and fulfilment. This project set out to explore the impact on students' mathematical wellbeing of teaching pedagogy.

Enhancing students experience in mathematics has the potential to alter the direction of a student's life. With increased perseverance, engagement and positive emotions students broaden their opportunities for further study and their understanding of mathematics.

Key learnings

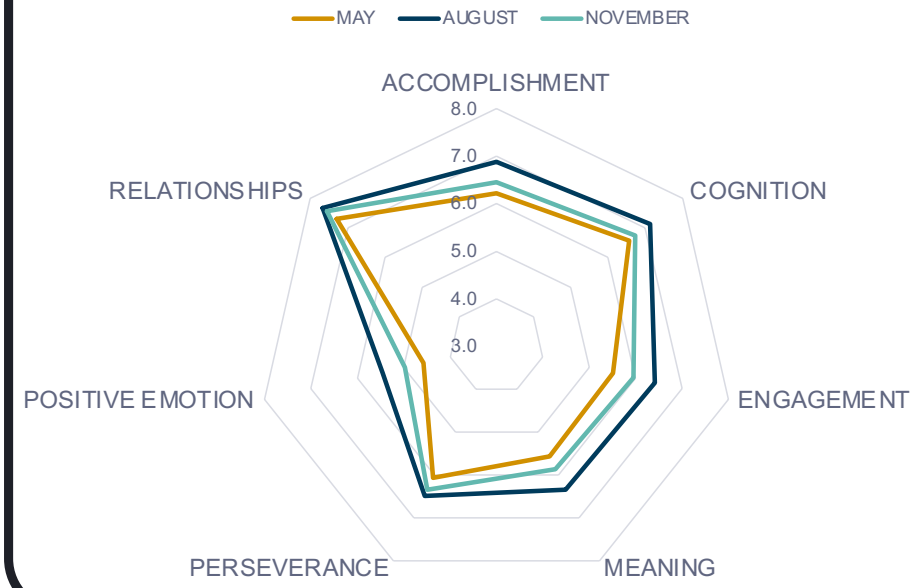
Drawing on a variety of pedagogy is needed for a broad cross section of students to experience an enhancement in their mathematical wellbeing.

Starter questions activate learning and the engagement value; providing encouragement and opportunity for goal setting develops students' accomplishment value. Essential for the enhancement of mathematical wellbeing are relationships, with their teachers and peers.

Findings and outcomes

Development of students' mathematical wellbeing can occur as students progress through the years of secondary school. The mathematical wellbeing values with the highest increase in mean scores over the course of the project were the values of engagement, positive emotions and relationships.

The project set out to explore if enhancing Mathematical Wellbeing through pedagogy, could impact retention rates of students, in intermediate mathematics classes in senior secondary year levels. The percentage of Year 10 Mathematics advanced students continuing with the intermediate VCE Mathematics study of Mathematical Methods has increased by over 17%.



Images of staff professional learning, student workshops and students working at a vertical whiteboard.

Data indicates an increase in students' mathematical wellbeing between May 2024 and November 2024.

Kim Walker | Balcombe Grammar School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Empowering educators: personalised and dynamic teaching practices

Overview

Baimbridge College, a rural school in southwest Victoria, has been addressing a significant disparity in teaching effectiveness between its junior and middle school cohorts. The school's recent innovation project focused on improving teacher practices through professional learning communities (PLCs), instructional coaching, and evidence-based strategies such as the Berry Street Model and Data Wise. Early results show enhanced collaboration and teacher confidence, particularly in Years 7 and 8, with ongoing efforts aimed at extending these improvements to senior levels. Key next steps include strengthening student voice, refining instructional strategies, and embedding sustainable, data-informed teaching practices school-wide.

Key learnings

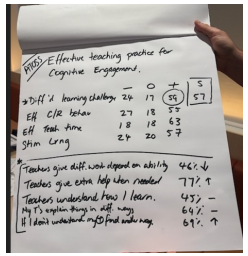
- Targeted professional development is essential: Building teacher capacity through structured professional learning, such as PLCs, instructional coaching, and evidence-informed models like Data Wise, is crucial for improving classroom practices and student outcomes.
- Data-Informed practice drives improvement: The consistent use of student feedback (e.g., AtoSS), triangulated data, and reflective inquiry enables teachers to make informed decisions, identify learning gaps, and refine instructional strategies to better meet student needs.
- Early intervention and structured programs work: The transformation of the Year 7–8 program led to clear improvements in student engagement and learning, demonstrating the effectiveness of early, structured, and collaborative approaches in setting a strong foundation.
- Sustainable change requires a whole-school commitment: Meaningful and lasting improvement depends on consistent effort across the school community, including leadership, teachers, students, and external partners, with shared values of collaboration, equity, and evidence-based decision-making

Findings and outcomes

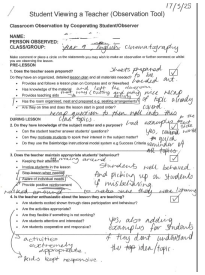
Improved teacher collaboration and confidence
Through the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers became more confident and skilled in collaborative inquiry, developing a shared language and consistent practices to improve teaching effectiveness.

Development of an instructional playbook
The school began creating an instructional playbook to capture and share high-impact teaching strategies, incorporating models like Berry Street and StepLab, providing teachers with a clear and accessible guide to effective classroom practices

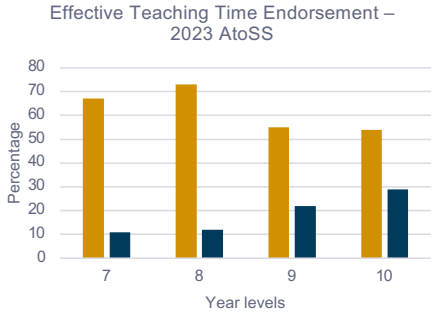
Artefact 1



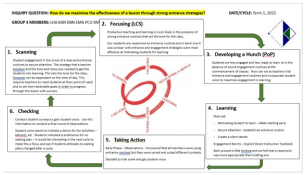
Artefact 2

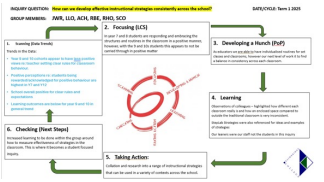


Artefact 3



Artefact 4





Artefact 5

Artefact 1: Baimbridge Instructional Model mapped to the VTLM2.0
Artefact 2: 'Digging into Data' phase of the Data Wise cycle
Artefact 3: Student observations feedback based on rubric
Artefact 4: AtoSS results from 2023 and 2024 highlighting the effective teaching time for each year level
Artefact 5: PLC inquiry spirals.

Jessica Wright | Baimbridge College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

An evidence-based approach to teaching writing

Overview

At Orchard Park Primary School, a lack of consistency and confidence in writing instruction prompted a whole-school focus on improving the teaching of writing. NAPLAN and internal assessment data revealed below-average results, while teacher feedback indicated a strong desire for professional learning about evidence-based practices in writing instruction.

This project introduced a staged, evidence-informed professional learning model, co-designed with an expert consultant, that aligned with existing school structures. Grounded in research including The Writing Revolution and the Evidence for Learning toolkit, this approach aimed to lift teacher capability, reduce within-school variability, and eventually, improve student writing outcomes.

Key learnings

- One of the most important insights gained from this project is the power of clarity, collaboration, and adaptability in implementing instructional change. Establishing a shared understanding of evidence-based writing instruction before launching new strategies was essential for staff engagement and long-term impact.
- A staged implementation process helped us embed change gradually, while professional learning led by an expert consultant provided the necessary depth and rigour.
- Challenges such as scheduling conflicts were inevitable, but the ability to remain flexible and adjust timelines ensured that quality learning was prioritised over rigid deadlines. The project also reinforced the importance of defining roles within the implementation team, protecting collaboration time, and ensuring that teacher voice was embedded throughout the process.

Findings and outcomes

Data collected through surveys and reflections throughout the project show a significant increase in teacher confidence in both planning for and teaching writing using evidence-based strategies. At the beginning of the year, no teachers reported high confidence in planning or modelling writing instruction. By Term 4, survey results revealed that teachers rating themselves at confidence level 4 or 5 had more than doubled, and no staff remained in the low-confidence range. Teachers reported greater clarity in lesson sequencing and increased understanding of how to explicitly teach writing, rather than simply assigning tasks. This growth in confidence, paired with more consistent pedagogical practices, has laid the groundwork for lasting instructional improvement.

Teachers are beginning to embed strategies from The Writing Revolution into their practice, and collaboration within and across teams has become more purposeful. Early signs point to the potential for sustained change, supported by increased teacher efficacy and alignment with our school's improvement goals. Key outcomes include an increase in high-confidence ratings in planning and teaching writing, the establishment of common instructional language and expectations, and a more strategic use of professional learning time. As we look ahead, the focus will be on deepening these gains, ensuring long-term sustainability, and continuing to track impact on student learning outcomes.

Figure 1

Figure 2

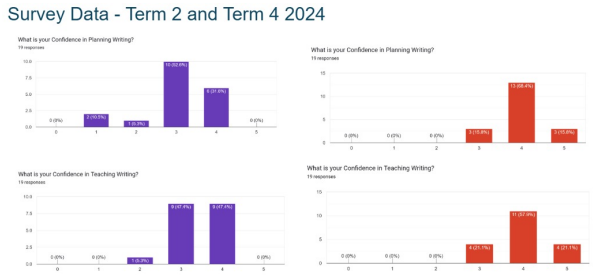


Figure 1: Orchard Park Primary School Writing Instructional Model
Figure 2: Pre- and Post- Teacher Confidence Survey Data

Kim Collis | Orchard Park Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Incorporating First Nations' perspectives as a whole school focus and activating student voice to support engagement and student well-being

Overview

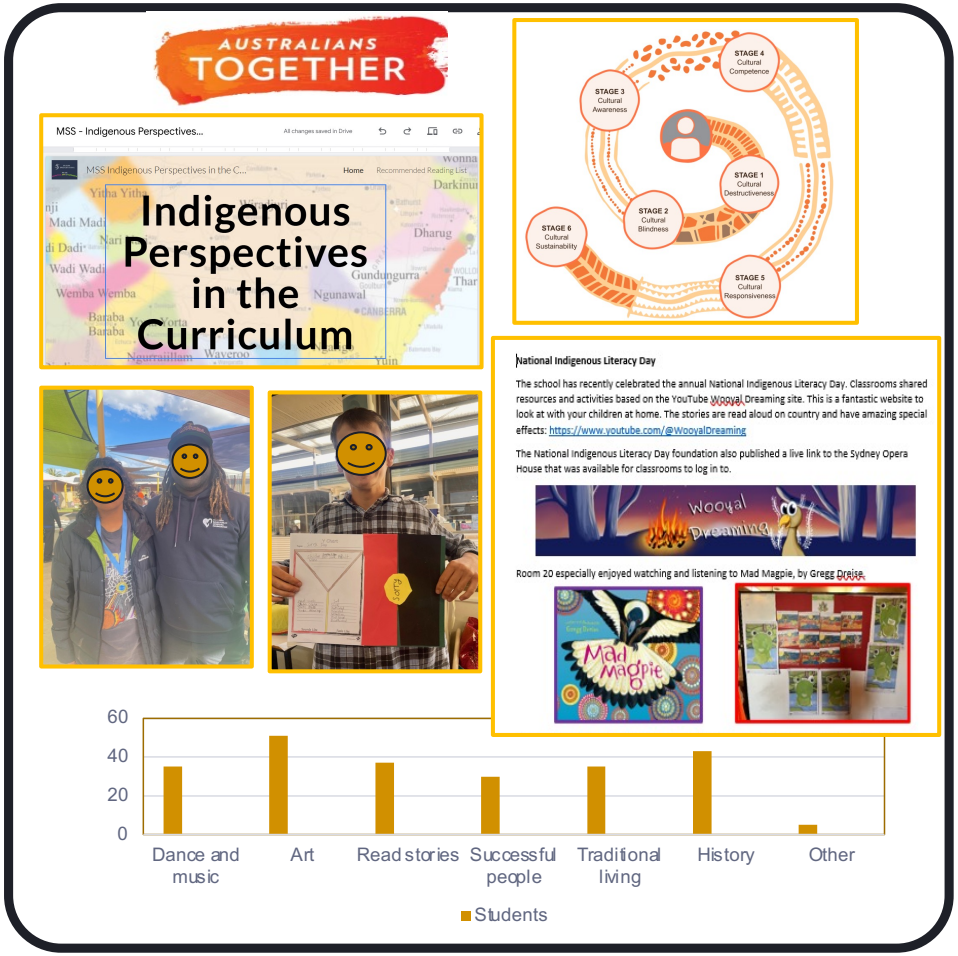
Mildura Specialist School has a 25% population of First Nations' students, who had limited learning opportunities to learn about connectedness to country and Indigenous culture in our school. This also impacted non-Indigenous students who had the same limitations regarding developing an understanding of First Nations' perspectives, connections to country and culture. An analysis of unit planners across the school's Four Year-cycle showed very few unit planners that incorporated First Nations' perspectives in the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge and confidence of how to teach and embed First Nations' perspectives in the curriculum were upskilled with opportunities for professional development, access to First Nations' content and resources, and activating voice to our whole school cohort. This resulted in staff and students having an increased sense of belonging and connectedness with First Nations' culture, country, and between First Nations' and Non-First Nations' identities.

Key learnings

- The aim of the "Australians Together" PD was to build on staff awareness and capability of embedding First Nations' perspectives to become more culturally aware and to develop cultural teaching practices.
- "Inclusion needs to be done in a planned and sequenced way so that teachers can develop units of work with some confidence and so units of work accumulate into a body of knowledge about Indigenous worlds. The planning and staging of content is critical to avoid patronisation" - Nakata, 2011, p. 8.
- Teacher effectiveness is one of the most important factors that influences the achievement of students. Students will not reach their full potential if teachers are not reaching theirs. Teaching First Nation's' perspectives and content needs to be specific, focused and targeted towards a known outcome.

Findings and outcomes

- Quantitative data from a pulse check survey showed that the major factor of not having First Nations' perspectives already embedded in our curriculum was teachers being fearful of not knowing how to teach the content correctly.
- Mildura Specialist School 2024 cultural action tool review. The school reviewed resources within the library for currency and authenticity. The school explored what current resources relating to Koorie culture were available and purchased new culturally inclusive and related resources to Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people/culture.
- Qualitative data showed teachers were highly engaged in professional development opportunities; Australians Together full day workshop, AITSL self-reflection tool, and Aboriginal Art in Early Childhood. Feedback expressed that teachers were now more confident and felt empowered to deliver First Nations' perspectives and content.
- MSS 2024 AIP outcome: Teacher collaboration increasing from 48% in 2023 to 52% in 2024.
- Whole-school curriculum planning. As per the 2024 AIP, time was allocated in the professional learning schedule for teachers to collaborate in small teams to co-create a whole school curriculum with a focus on aboriginal perspectives.
- Student voice data in September: "Do you think that there are enough lessons taught at our school about Aboriginal culture?", asked to secondary students of which 59 students responded. 32 responded 'yes', '27' responded 'no'. This indicates, that while many students want more content taught, more students feel that there is currently enough. Regardless of the outcome, the responses show that content is being taught nonetheless.



1. "Australians Together", a four-hour cultural awareness workshop delivered as whole school Professional Development.
2. AITSL Cultural Awareness Self Reflection Tool, undertaken by all teaching staff.
3. Google Drive Document, available to all staff. Included are details and links to all internal and external Indigenous curriculum and beyond resources.
4. Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti and students.
5. National Literacy Day celebrated in the Mildura Specialist School newsletter.
6. Student voice survey – data on Indigenous content the secondary students would like to see delivered.

Leonie Tamala | Mildura Specialist School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Supporting differentiated instruction in mathematics through effective PLCs

Overview

At Devon Meadows Primary School, we recognised the need to strengthen differentiated instruction in mathematics to better support our diverse range of learners. My teaching innovation project focused on enhancing the effectiveness of our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to build collective teacher capacity and improve student outcomes. Drawing on evidence-based practices, we introduced a structured PLC model that fostered collaborative planning, data-informed instruction, and reflective dialogue. By embedding clear planning protocols and consistent frameworks, teachers gained greater confidence and clarity in implementing differentiation strategies that cater to individual student needs. Early evidence points to improved teacher efficacy, stronger alignment across teams, and greater student engagement during maths lessons. This project underscores the value of PLCs as a sustainable approach to professional growth and instructional improvement—proving that when teachers work together with purpose, meaningful change happens in classrooms.

Key learnings

- Collaboration is powerful: Structured and purposeful PLCs foster meaningful collaboration, leading to improved teacher confidence and instructional alignment.
- Clarity enables impact: Providing consistent planning templates and clear expectations supported teachers in understanding and applying differentiation strategies effectively.
- Data drives differentiation: Using student data in planning discussions helped tailor instruction to meet varied learning needs and monitor progress.
- Change requires patience and persistence: Shifting practice takes time. Trust, relational leadership, and regular reflection are critical for building buy-in and sustaining momentum.
- Teacher voice matters: Involving staff in shaping the process increased engagement and ownership of the innovation.
- Professional growth is ongoing: This project highlighted the importance of continuous learning, for both myself and my colleagues, as we refine our practice to improve outcomes for all students.

Findings and outcomes

The innovation project at Devon Meadows Primary School led to key improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in how differentiation was approached. Shared planning templates promoted greater consistency across year levels, while regular, focused PLC meetings strengthened staff collaboration and supported the refinement of differentiated practices.

Teachers began using student data more effectively to inform instruction and groupings, resulting in more targeted, purposeful teaching. This shift led to noticeable increases in student engagement in mathematics, with lessons better tailored to individual needs. These early successes have sparked interest in expanding the PLC approach across other curriculum areas, laying strong foundations for long-term sustainability.

Figure 1

Devon Meadows PAT Maths Data	50th Percentile (Mean)			5th Percentile			95th Percentile		
	Semester 1 2024	PAT Australian Norm	Semester 2 2024	Semester 1 2024	PAT Australian Norm	Semester 2 2024	Semester 1 2024	PAT Australian Norm	Semester 2 2024
Year 1	92.1	*99.5*	96.6	77.8	*80.6*	84.9	101.4	*118.3*	111.3
Year 2	103.1	*108.3*	112.5	87.9	*88.2*	94.7	116.3	*128.4*	128.8
Year 3	104.7	*115.4*	113.2	93.9	*94.0*	98.9	123.4	*136.8*	139
Year 4	114.8	*121.1*	121.5	100.3	*102.2*	106.4	131.0	*139.9*	141.5
Year 5	115.6	*125.5*	126	102.3	*104.8*	110.8	144.9	*146.2*	149.3
Year 6	121.9	*128.9*	127.8	111.6	*109.3*	120.7	137.1	*148.5*	150.5

PAT Maths Scores: To assess effective differentiated instruction, we have compared our 5th percentile, 50th percentile & 95th percentile growth score across each year level in Semester 1, 2024 and the results from the end of Semester 2, 2024, with the PAT Australian Norms (2019).

Figure 2

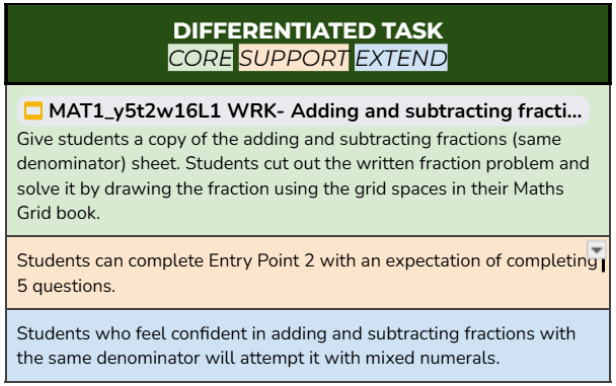


Figure 1: PAT Data indicates significant student improvement across the school year throughout the duration of the project.
Figure 2: Example of section of school-wide planning document to cater for differentiation.

Madeline Roberts | Devon Meadows Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

STRIVE: Strength through respect, inclusion, values, and empathy

Overview

In our Middle School, we noticed that while boys were engaged academically, there was a lack of structured opportunities to build emotional literacy, respectful relationships, and a deeper sense of connectedness.

Our project asked: **How can we foster connection, emotional literacy, and self-awareness in boys through a school-wide model?**

Informed by student voice and theory, the STRIVE model was developed to promote authentic conversations, challenge limiting norms, and build a culture where all boys feel seen, supported, and empowered to be themselves

Key learnings

- Student voice is essential. Boys offered deep insight into friendship breakdowns, respect, emotions, and stereotypes — shaping our approach from within.
- Connection and belonging cannot be outsourced to wellbeing sessions. They must be embedded through everyday conversations, language, and modelling.
- "Positive Masculinity" must be framed as relational and inclusive, not a behaviour fix — this shift in narrative changed how staff and students engaged.
- Using practice architectures allowed us to identify enabling and constraining conditions that shaped how inclusion, respect, and belonging were practised across the school.
- Leading change in this area required vulnerability, persistence, and trust — especially when challenging dominant cultural scripts.

Findings and outcomes

- The STRIVE model introduced structured peer conversations that built trust.
- Feedback from boys highlighted increased emotional vocabulary, greater comfort with vulnerability, and stronger peer support.
- Teachers reported improved relational dynamics, especially in homerooms where STRIVE conversations were embedded.
- The STRIVE model has potential to be adapted for boys in Years 5 to 7 as part of a broader approach to respectful relationships and emotional literacy.

In a world where toxic influencers like Andrew Tate glorify dominance and mock vulnerability, I'm working to build something radically different - a school culture where boys are free to be whole, kind, and emotionally literate.

A woman is killed by a man every four days. As a father of sons adopted from out-of-home care, I've seen up close the generational trauma caused by violence, neglect, and outdated notions of masculinity. That reality fuels my work.

This project is about breaking that cycle. It's about creating a space where boys aren't just expected to survive - they're equipped to thrive. Where being strong means being empathetic, and where real respect is modelled, not preached.

Research is clear: outdated masculinity scripts - 'toughen up,' 'don't cry,' 'stay silent' - are harming our boys. But new narratives are possible. Narratives that centre vulnerability, connection, and the courage to be kind.

STRIVE isn't a campaign. It's a culture shift - a deep, sustained commitment to redefining masculinity alongside the boys themselves. Not to fix them, but to free them.

Because lost boys shouldn't become hurt men. And schools can be more than places of learning - they can be places of healing.

Artefact 1

Artefact 1: Reflections of the innovation project.

Mark Donnelly – Haileybury College, Brighton

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Fostering growth through mapping teaching and learning

Overview

This project, a pilot program, was a cross-curricular collaboration between primary and secondary teachers at St Mary's College, Seymour. An initial SWOT analysis of school data generated a shared understanding of opportunities for improvement and informed the development of key objectives. Professional reading and expert instruction led to skill-building in curriculum mapping, leading to the development of draft learning progressions. These progressions were used to engage student voice, deliver explicit instruction, and promote self-regulated learning strategies such as reflection and peer-feedback. An external program was also used to explore data on growth and wellbeing associated with explicit numeracy instruction.

Key learnings

Some "aha" moments from project participants:

- The curriculum says the same thing for some skills every year from Year 5 to Year 10 – it's up to teachers to decide what it looks like at each level and how to build capacity/growth in our students
- This could drive a change in the way we program and timetable the whole subject
- The return to VCE has highlighted a need for explicit skill instruction in Junior Secondary, so that our students are ready for what is being asked of them in the senior years.
- Students are building skills, self-regulation and growth mindset in primary, why do they lose that when they move into secondary?
- The learning progressions can be accessed at any level, making them the ultimate tool for differentiation. The excitement of students who managed to move up a level was equally valid for those at the lower end of the progression as for those reaching for the top.
- We (students) want to do well, we just don't know what that looks like.

Findings and outcomes

Outcome 1: A group of teachers across year levels and domains agreed on a vision for intentional and explicit teaching at SMC, based on school data and observations.
Outcome 2: Draft progressions were co-constructed with students and trialled using explicit teaching strategies. The result was an increase in motivation to obtain higher marks and an improvement in overall scores across the class.
Outcome 3: An existing online learning platform was used to analyse data on growth from explicit instruction. Students as young as Grade 3 were demonstrating elements of self-regulated learning and were very responsive to the program's extrinsic motivators. A strong need was identified for teacher input into levels selected through pre-assessment.
Outcome 4: Students used self-reflection to evaluate their place on a progression with encouraging accuracy and reported a positive experience with peer coaching to identify improvements.

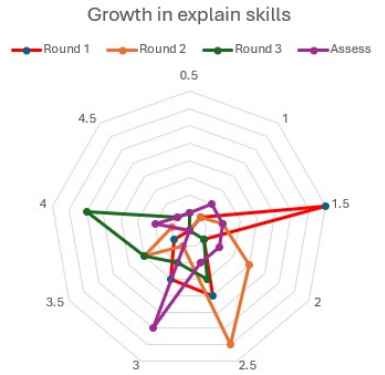


Figure 1: Frequency of scores across the Year 10 cohort for each 'Explain' task showing increasing scores following co-construction and explicit teaching. A dip in the assessment task could be explained by the different task context, or premature removal of scaffolding for terminology.

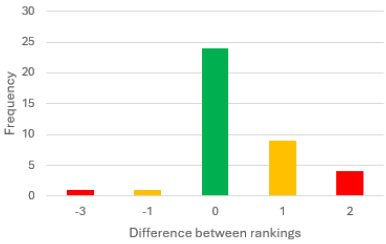


Figure 2: Strong alignment shown between student and teacher evaluation against the skill progression (net games unit)

Figure 3 (right): Positive student reflection on the value of peer coaching against the provided progression.

Level (pre-test)	Well below (F-1)	Below (1-2)	At Level (3-4)	Above (4-5)	Well above (5-6)
Average growth	0.47	1.19	0.41	-0.16	-1.50

Figure 4: Student growth in numeracy was found to be highly dependent on the level determined in pre-testing, demonstrating the importance of teacher-guided placement based on extensive knowledge of the curriculum and students.

Data from this pilot supports the benefits of co-constructing learning progressions with students and using them to underpin explicit instruction and assessment. Explicit instruction led to higher assessment scores, demonstrated qualitative improvements in wellbeing and motivation, and increased confidence in self-assessment. It is hoped that the strategies explored in this project will stimulate teacher and staff buy-in and inform the professional development that will underpin a whole-school shift in the way teaching and learning is planned, communicated, delivered and assessed going forward.

Rebecca Scollen | St Mary's College, Seymour

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Teacher and student collaboration to increase engagement, voice and agency in languages

Overview

Students at Keilor Downs College study one language compulsorily – Italian or Japanese – until the end of Year 9. Student survey data shows low engagement levels in Italian and a significant drop in positive student responses in the Attitudes to School Survey in areas of stimulated learning, motivation and interest and student voice and agency from Year 7 to Year 8, with results declining even further in Year 9.
I addressed this issue across three different key objectives – through a curriculum audit, establishing a student voice group and promoting a culture of collaboration across languages, prioritising opportunities for staff professional learning. By aligning my key objectives to the College's AIP and SSP goals, I made good use of existing structures, helping to ensure the project's success.

Key learnings

- Student voice enhances engagement: When students are given real choice and ownership over their learning tasks, their motivation and performance improve.
- Student agency is not a free-for-all: Student agency does not mean students run wild and teachers lose control – parameters are necessary and appreciated by all.
- Professional learning time needs to be prioritised: When opportunities are created for professional development, staff engage more meaningfully and see better alignment and connection between department, PLC and college priorities.
- Student feedback is powerful and invaluable: Developing systems for collecting and responding to student feedback allows for authentic refinement of teaching practice.

Findings and outcomes

- Positive responses in an Italianised AtoSS, completed by the Italian student voice group, improved in the areas of stimulated learning (65% to 93%), motivation and interest (50% to 62%) and student voice and agency (56% to 83%), compared to the Year 8 cohort means of 41%, 47% and 33% respectively.
- Student feedback was actioned and embedded into Italian summative learning tasks and the Italian teaching and learning program. After revising a Year 9 cultural immigration task to include creative choice options, 83% of students reported increased motivation and engagement.
- Students described feeling "more connected," "less stressed," and "intrigued to do the work," confirming the value of learner agency.
- Italian and Japanese staff collaborated to create a set of metacognitive prompt questions to be used during different lesson stages.
- A culture of professional inquiry, collaboration, and innovation has been embedded. Teachers feel more empowered, connected, and capable of sustaining this change.
- A space dedicated to Staff professional development has been created on the Languages department SharePoint page to share resources and learnings.

Figure 1

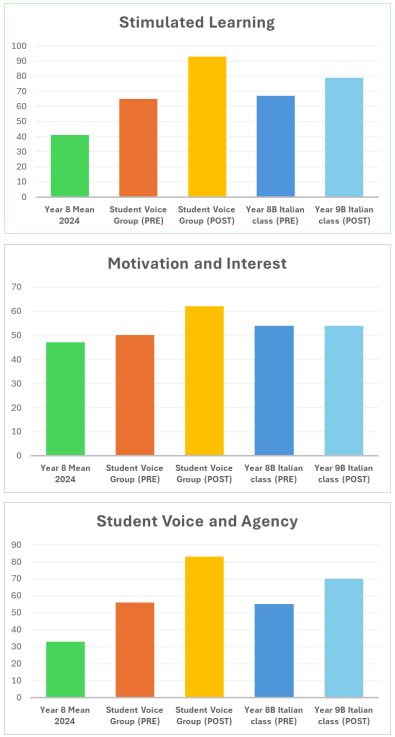


Figure 2

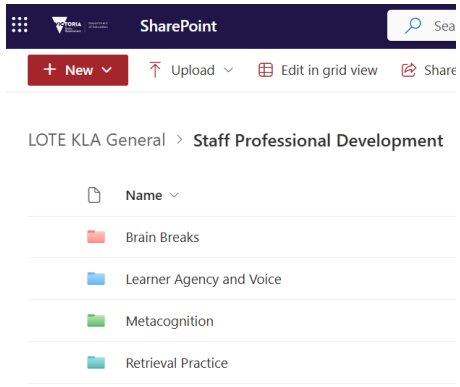


Figure 3

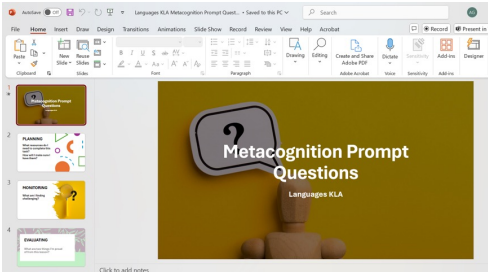


Figure 1: Italianised Attitudes to School survey data compared with Year 8 cohort data
Figure 2: Languages Department SharePoint Staff Professional Development folder
Figure 3: Languages department co-constructed Metacognition Prompt Questions PowerPoint presentation

Ashley Green | Keilor Downs College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Engagement: Let's start with a shared language

Overview

My project evolved over the 2024 year from simply the beginning of implementing a shared language of engagement between students and teachers, to a study skills program scope and sequence and ongoing learning and teaching program geared towards helping students move up the continuum from participation to investing and driving their learning.

Killester College students were, according to anecdotal and survey evidence, quite passive in taking responsibility for their learning. This project was designed to help students recognise this and hence take responsibility for their own education.

Key learnings

> Finding out what staff and students think of when they think of the word "engagement".
> Have a shared understanding of what engagement means, particularly within the classroom context through the use and visual distribution of Amy Berry's Engagement Continuum.
> Students required explicit and direct instructions in each of their subjects in order to know how to move up the continuum. A shared language was not enough, a shared how was also needed.
> Teachers need accountability in whole school change.

Findings and outcomes

> My student and staff surveys, combined with our MACSISS data and our anecdotal teacher data indicated that students fell most often on the engagement scale in the passive engagement realm, often only participating, sometimes withdrawing, and rarely investing or driving their learning.
> Initial outcomes comparing MACSISS data from 2023 to 2024 did not indicate a positive change in engagement levels within the classroom, however the Implementation of the study/cognitive skills program, the study skills sessions and the earlier exams have yet to be put into practice. We shall see what 2025 brings.
> What was exciting was to come into the Year 11 area and find the artefact to the right that indicated there was a student led study group that was trying to start up after school in order to form a community of learners. If this isn't driving learning, I'm not sure what is.

THE ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM

Active ——— Passive ——— Active

DISRUPTING	AVOIDING	WITHDRAWING	PARTICIPATING	INVESTING	DRIVING
Distracting others	Off-task behaviour	Being distracted	Doing work	Asking questions	Setting goals
Disrupting the classroom	Looking for ways to avoid work	Physically separating from the group	Attending	Value the learning	Asking for feedback
Persistent talking about something other than the topic of the lesson	Returning to class late from a break	Sleeping in class	Responding to questions	Collaboration with peers	Teaching others

Figure 1

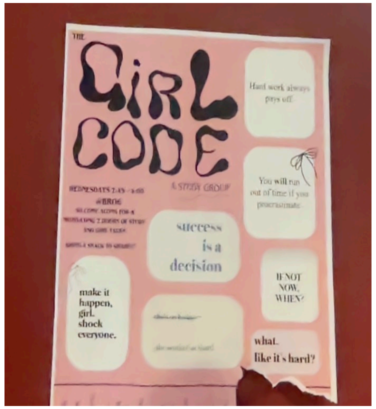


Figure 2

Whole School Study Skills Curriculum Scope & Sequence

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Concepts	Organisation Routine Homework	Organisation Routine Homework Study / Revision	Organisation Routine Homework Study / Revision	Organisation Routine Homework Study / Revision	Organisation Routine Homework Study / Revision	Organisation Routine Homework Study / Revision
Habits	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead → Study Smart	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead → Strive for excellence → Study Smart	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead → Strive for excellence → Study Smart	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead → Strive for excellence → Study Smart	→ Engage → Organise → Think ahead → Strive for excellence → Study Smart
Links to Wellbeing	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness	→ Healthy habits ♦ Nutrition ♦ Sleep ♦ Exercise ♦ Screen Time ♦ Mindfulness
Skills	→ Using a diary → Using a calendar → Creating a homework schedule → Using your computer, workbook and files to organise your work	→ Using a diary → Using a calendar → Creating a homework and study schedule → Active Recall → Mnemonic Techniques	→ Using a diary → Using a calendar → Creating a homework and study schedule → Active Recall & Mnemonic Techniques → Mind Maps & Flash Cards (The Leitner System)	→ Using a diary → Using a calendar → Creating a homework and study schedule → Active Recall & Mnemonic Techniques → Note-Taking & Colour-coding → Summarising (The Feynman Technique)	→ Using a diary → Using a calendar → Creating a homework and study schedule using the SAC and assessment calendar → Retrieval Practices → Note-Taking & Summarising → The Pomodoro Technique	→ SAC Calendar → Study Periods → Teacher Support → Habits → Exam Preparation
Resources	Study Skills Site					
How will this be supported in subject classrooms?	Habit building: → Term 1: Use of the diary → Term 1: Organisation of work (naming conventions, etc.) → Term 2: Routines (classroom and homework) → Term 3: Note-taking Outline Method (Headings/Subheadings)	Habit building: → Term 1: Active Recall (Mind Maps) → Term 2: Mnemonic Techniques → Term 3: Study timetable (time blocking) → Term 4: Notetaking Colour Coding	Habit building: → Term 1: Flashcards (the Leitner System) → Term 2: Practice Questions - using past assessment tasks → Term 3: Time Management (the Pomodoro technique) → Term 4: (multiple exposure - any of the year 7 & 8 habits)	Habit building: → Term 1: Time Management (Eisenhower Matrix) → Term 2: Practice Questions - with notes and without → Term 3: Summarising (Feynman Technique) → Term 4: (multiple exposure - any of the year 7, 8 or 9 habits)	→ Formation of Study Groups in Year 11 Study Group Periods → Study note creation through VCAA study designs → Year 11 'Success' Assemblies in Study Periods → Time Management Tips	→ Formation of Study Groups → Opt-In 'Study for Success' Workshops (Periods 5 & 6 Thursdays???)

Figure 3

Figure 1: Amy Berry's Engagement Continuum
Figure 2: Student led study group signing in the Year 11 hallway at the start of 2025
Figure 3: Killester Study Skills Scope and Sequence

Rebecca Fyfield| Killester College

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Improving teacher practice through the establishment of a pilot peer observation program

Overview

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead, American Anthropologist.

My project was based on the important work of designing and working towards the implementation of a well-functioning peer observation program - one that is built on respect, trust, self- reflection and collaboration. This will lead to improved teacher practice which will improve outcomes for students.

Key learnings

Along the journey, there were multiple key learnings for me as a leader and facilitator of change.

Number one being - take it slow. If you truly want the change to be embedded, then you need to give it the time it deserves.

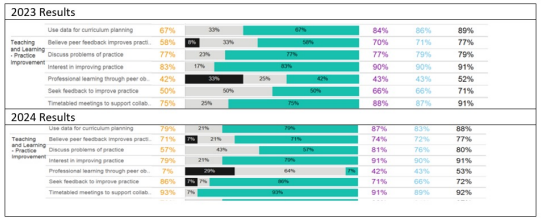
Additionally, the importance of creating a culture of trust and teacher voice and agency. That true self-reflection which is needed for this program to work and succeed is only achieved when the process is understand, teachers have a shared vision and can pinpoint for themselves their own goal.

Findings and outcomes

Early data compared from the 2023 and 2024 Staff Opinion survey indicates the following:

- "Teachers in this school believe peer feedback can improve their practice." 58% 2023 – 71% 2024.
- "In this school there is a focus on professional learning targeted to improving student Literacy and Numeracy outcomes" increasing from 25% in 2023 – 57% in 2024.
- "Teachers in this school regularly engage in professional learning to improve teaching practice" with an increase from 46% in 2023 – 71% on 2024.

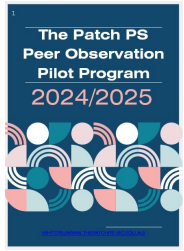
However, due to the fact it is only just rolling out across whole-school this year, it is difficult to measure the effect on student outcomes as yet.



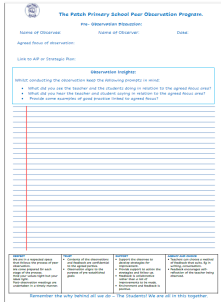
Data for 2024 has improved with 71% of respondents feeling positive towards believing that peer feedback improves practice, up from 58% in 2023.

There was also marked improvement with the 2024 data set around teachers' positive reflections of seeking feedback to improve practice - 86%, compared to 50% in 2023.

Interestingly, this data also indicates that there has been a drop in the positive reflection with regards to professional learning through peer observations. This was down 7% in the positive aspect, and was previously 50%. However we can see a shift from the negative to the neutral on this. 2023 33% negative and 25% neutral to 2024 29% and 64%. An assumption or wondering I have around this is because, now that it has been put at the front of their mind and they have a greater understanding around what peer observations are and aren't ,they are waiting for or wanting it to be their turn.

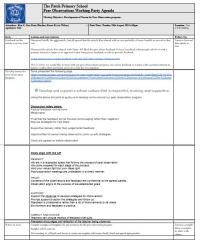


A how to guide has been developed.



Pg 1 of observation template with agreed norms down the bottom.

Protocols and documentation of working party meetings.



Reflections from a working party team member

"Meeting together to collaborate was really important. I felt that we were actually working as a team to develop the process. It was great to see examples of different planning/feedback documents so that we could develop our own and have a voice in what The Patch's peer observation would look like. developing a shared vision, goals and values was also great because it ensured that everyone would feel safe and supported during the process.

I really can't wait until we get this process out of planning stages. I feel like we have developed a really solid starting point for peer observation. Despite there now being a school coach, I can really see the benefit in teachers observing each other and collaboratively working on personal teaching/learning goals (and being supported in working on these goals) to improve practise and student learning. I think such a great part of it, which I haven't had before, was developing those shared norms/values, etc. It makes it feel like a much safer process than I have been involved with in the past." Kim, March 2025

My hope and belief is that through this program I have inspired my fellow teachers to reflect and believe that we can all be that small group of committed citizens.

Tania Blandthorn | The Patch Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

Teaching Innovation Fellowship 2024

Finding the fun in the challenge: improving mathematics wellbeing through teacher-led inquiry

Overview

'Like the only dead tree in a living forest.'

This is how a year five boy described the feeling he had in every maths lesson. How could I not try to take action when faced with the desolation of this metaphor? The idea that students in my school were feeling this way for a big part of every day was heartbreaking.

The purpose of this project was to turn some of those feelings around, to empower students in their learning so that maths was no longer terrifying. Through the process we not only empowered students, but also teachers, education support staff and even parents to find enjoyment in the challenge of maths.

Key learnings

- The importance of getting other people on board with the project has been the key to driving it effectively and successfully
- Be less of a control freak! Had I not been able to release some of the control to others the future of the project would be compromised
- Kids love to have their voices heard and we need to actively show them that we are listening and trying to act on what they are telling us.
- Staff are open to change if they are well supported through the process.

Findings and outcomes

We did make progress with improving students' attitudes towards maths with students reporting neutral or positive feelings increasing from 86% to 91% in our target grades (3-6) between terms 2 and 4 in 2024. However, a more significant outcome has been the change in school culture, where all teachers are now actively involved in collecting data about their students' feelings. Every teacher is now involved in professional dialogue about their class data, and every teacher is actively working in on inquiries in their classroom to act on what their students are telling them.

The results are:

- Students feel heard and appreciate the efforts their teachers are putting in to improve their experience of school.
- All teaching staff are engaged in collection of data, professional dialogue and active inquiry processes to improve teaching and learning.
- Collaboration across different curriculum teams

'I really enjoy maths now. Even when it is hard, it feels really good when I eventually work it out.'

Figure 1

Figure 2

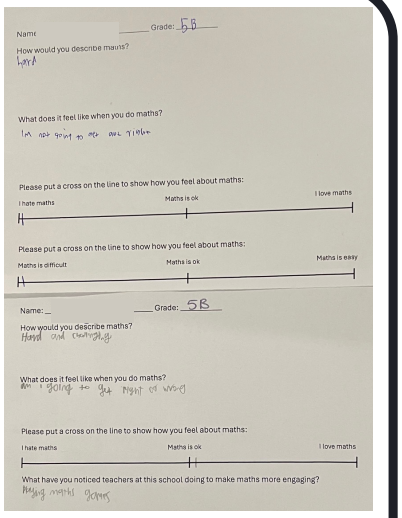


Figure 4

Grade/ Teacher(s)	Problem identified	Focus students/ group	Action	Timeline for collecting post data	Outcome and Further Actions
5B Mrs Palmer	Student hates maths.		Give him more 'in time'; 1:1 check ins and assistance, especially when at an independent work stage. Praise all good we see (throw a million positives his way).	Mid term 4	Student loved being spoken to 1 on 1 by me and also Sally. It made him feel empowered that his feelings were heard. He has made some improvements in his results and his attitude has also improved. He is more positive and productive. He contributes during discussions and offers answers.

Figure 3

Figure 1: Quote from a Grade 5 student
Figure 2: Students at Tyabb PS enjoying the Maths Mindset Show from Felstead Education
Figure 3: Details of teacher's action plan to target student who hated maths
Figure 4: Pre and post survey of student, showing impact of teacher's inquiry and change in student's mindset

Sally Watson | Tyabb Primary School

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education
Independent Schools Victoria
Victorian Catholic Education Authority