Building school-wide improvement with long term impact

The Association of Independent Schools of NSW
The peak body supporting and representing independent education, specifically independent schools, through offering services in:

- advice and consultancy
- professional learning
- funded programs and projects
- support for students with diverse needs
- advocacy and partnerships

- 497 independent schools
- 208,855 students (17%)

**Priorities**

- Instructional Leadership:
  School leaders collaborating with teachers to implement explicit, whole-school literacy and numeracy planning, monitoring and reviewing processes.

- Tiered Interventions:
  Evidence-based, rigorous programs in the regular classroom support the specific needs of all children with complementary interventions when required.

- Diagnostic Assessment:
  Teaching is informed by regular diagnostic and developmentally-appropriate assessment including ESTA-L® and the Early Numeracy Screening Tool.

- Differentiated Teaching:
  Teachers tailor explicit teaching strategies to provide sufficient opportunities for all students to acquire and apply essential skills and concepts.

**Terminology**

- Kindergarten, Kinder, K: First year of formal schooling
- Year 1: Second year of formal schooling
- Year 2: Third year of formal schooling
- Primary School: Elementary School

**Impact Snapshot**

- 38
  - Independent Schools
  - Principals
  - Executives
  - K-6 classroom teachers have participated in professional learning to strengthen their understanding of literacy and numeracy concepts.

- 721
  - Principals
  - Executives
  - K-6 classroom teachers have been directly impacted through improvement to literacy and numeracy outcomes.

- 6,400+
  - K-2 students located in Sydney metropolitan and regional areas of New South Wales, Australia.
**PROJECT TIMELINE | How does the initiative work?**

- Establish
- Develop
- Identify
- Lead
- Monitor
- Sustain
- Time for instructional leadership activities
- Whole-school L&N plan | marker | review
- Evidence-based L&N instructional practices

**EARLY LITERACY PROJECT COMPONENTS**

1. Strengthening Leadership Capacity
2. School-based and Online Professional Learning
3. Consultancy Support: Instructional Coaching
4. ESTA-L®: Early Literacy Screening Tool (app) and Early Numeracy Screening Tool (paper-based)
5. Parent Workshops

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**SCHOOL-BASED AND ONLINE**

Sample Survey Questions

- **Pre-project | Post-project**
- **Which of the following is the best description of phonemic awareness?**
  - a. Knowledge of sounds for individual letters and for common letter patterns such as sh and th.
  - b. The ability to use knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar printed words.
  - c. Awareness of and ability to manipulate individual sounds in spoken words.
  - d. The ability to rhyme spoken words.
  - e. I don’t know.

**Consultancy Support: Instructional Coaching**

- 1,022 consultancy support visits provided by an NSW/G Education Consultant with expertise in literacy and numeracy focused on lesson observations and feedback.
- 880+ lesson demonstrations undertaken by school personnel and NSW/G Education Consultants.
- 7200 instructional coaching sessions by in-school personnel.

**SCREENING TOOLS**

- Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 students
- Administered by class teacher 1:1
- Less than five minutes to administer per student.
ESTA-L® Demonstration

Class Overview Dashboard
This instructional priority area is of significant concern. Skills in this area are well below what is expected for this year level at this point in time.

This instructional priority area needs monitoring. Identified skill deficits need to be addressed.

This instructional priority area is within the expected range. Skills should continue to be developed and extended.

ESTA-L® Data: Kindergarten 2017 – Year 2 2019

Phonological Awareness

Phonics

Early Numeracy Screening Tool Data: Year 1 2018 – Year 2 2019

Place Value
5 PARENT WORKSHOPS

103 school-based workshops
► Strategies for selecting quality literature and encouraging home reading.
► Supporting schools in communicating to parents the rationale for changes to their literacy programs.

“…This has given me the utmost confidence to help my child to enjoy books and become a fluent reader. I am excited my child is a part of this initiative.”

Process for considering the case study

1. Case Study
Consider the information provided in the case study. Individual identify where you would place the school in each of the focus areas.

2. Group Discussion
In your group, discuss with your colleagues where and why you identified the school’s current position. Come to a consensus about where you would place the school on the rubric for each of the six focus areas.

3. Identifying Actions
Consider just what issues are involved. Identify strategies a school could implement to address the situation. Discuss the value, the practicality and the possible disadvantages of the various ideas around the table. Consider how these strategies could be reflected, measured and implemented within the roadmap.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Action Plan Priorities Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What improvements do you expect to observe and measure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What will be required to put this strategy into effect? (Include responsibilities and timeframe)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe the additional or increased strategies you will be implementing</td>
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Case Study

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Case Study | Background

Happy Valley Grammar School is a double-streamed school located in a regional area. The school has been identified for inclusion in the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan (Action Plan). The school met the criteria set by the Government which is based on the school’s previous State-wide results and Socio-Economic Status (SES). Assessment results indicate that more than half of the Year 3 cohort have not reached minimum benchmarks in literacy and numeracy.

The Principal has just been appointed to the school, the third appointment in five years. The staff are fatigued by the changes in leadership and with trialling new programs and approaches. There is a delicateness to overcome when working with the school leadership and staff as they are mindful of why the school was selected for this initiative.

Improving learning outcomes
- Visiting classrooms
- Speaking with staff
- School’s operations and structures

Poor results in school wide assessments
- Students’ backgrounds
- 3 x per year analyse results
- Similar results (to be expected)

Increase learning support allocation
Parents obtain further diagnosis/support
Additional funding needed

School events
Late arrivals
Absenteeism
Specialist lessons
 Unscheduled teacher/parent meetings

Regularly interrupt the morning routine

Additional support of existing programs and interventions, without improved instructional practices in the classroom, would be insufficient.
Describe the additional strategies that will be implemented

- Prioritise literacy and numeracy teaching throughout all facets of school operation (e.g., timetabling, newsletter, school plan, meetings, assemblies, budget allocations).
- Targeted, quality professional learning focused on practical strategies for teachers to strengthen quality teaching in the classroom. Staff visits to other schools as well as bringing experts into the school to work directly with teachers.
- Lead regular interrogation of all data, including diagnostic assessments.
- Chart current trajectories of students, showing progress and value adding.
- Students who require additional teaching at Tier 2 and 3 have been identified and are being catered for by the classroom and learning support staff.
- To ensure that extra support is provided in addition to the class teaching, classroom and learning support timetables have been carefully and mutually constructed.

What improvements you will expect to observe and measure?

- Lifting of teacher expectations to focus on all students gaining mastery of key skills.
- Teachers responding to student assessment with differentiated teaching, including additional instructional time and content broken down into smaller steps.
- Teaching programs informed by student data.
- Student diagnostic assessment and instructional leadership data determining content of demonstrations, observations and professional learning.
- Improvements in student attendance and lateness.
- Changes to timetables would rarely be needed.

What is required to put this strategy into effect?

- Establishment of a dedicated, uninterrupted, longer literacy and numeracy block.
- Differentiated literacy and numeracy groups to address gaps in student learning. These groups were formed by the executive as a school wide initiative, based on data about student literacy and numeracy reading progress. Classroom, learning support and release teachers were all engaged in teaching these groups.
- Principal to compile all data sets to review data and identify key issues.
- Principal to set aside meeting times to interrogate data.
- Data to be a critical component of all aspects of instructional leadership including:
  - Conversations
  - Coaching
  - Discipline dialogue
  - Observations
  - Demonstrations
- Policies and procedures to promote implementation of whole school explicit and systematic teaching of literacy and numeracy.
Difficulty scheduling times for feedback

Written feedback

Oral feedback

Difficult to build Momentum

Instructoral Leadership

Roadmap

01 Describe the additional or increased strategies the school could implement.

02 What improvements might they expect to observe and measure?

03 What will be required to put this strategy into effect?

Describe the additional strategies that will be implemented

What improvements you will expect to observe and measure?

What is required to put this strategy into effect?

► Integrate Instructional Leadership into whole school timetable before term begins.
► Publish timetable and consider it to be non-negotiable. These times blocked out in Principal’s diary.
► Clearly identify of who is allocated to cover Principal’s regular administrative duties at these times.
► Book casual relief for the entire term.

► Weekly review of Instructional Leadership record to monitor fidelity to timetable as well as an increase in number and duration of demonstrations and observations. Teachers reporting less anxiety due to regularity of in-class observations.
► All teachers will have identified their own goals for improving their instruction.
► Increase in student engagement and learning outcomes.

► Clarification of the position of Action Plan within in school priorities, with some other initiatives ‘put on the back burner’.
► Set times blocked out specifically for instructional leadership where other school issues do not intrude.
► All in-school communication to reinforce the priority of instructional leadership and change.

Improvement Considerations

Leadership and Cultural Considerations
School leadership building a supportive culture to ensure the sustainability of the program’s impact.

Expanding the Scope
Involving all staff in professional learning events.

Fidelity and implementation
Systematically building the crucial components of the program into professional learning and support materials to facilitate good implementation and maximize the program’s sustainability.

Effective Training
Professional learning should create opportunities to build on digital and face-to-face training with first-hand practical experience.

Length of Program
Sustainable improvements that become part of the school’s normal practice (3-6 years).

Professional learning should create opportunities to build on digital and face-to-face training with first-hand practical experience.
Feedback

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Recommended Resources | Literacy

Five from Five
www.fivefromfive.org.au

Florida Centre for Reading Research
www.fcri.org

Reading Rockets
www.readingrockets.org

Spellbiter
www.spellbiter.com.au

Letters and Sounds
www.lettersandsounds.com

Recommended Resources | Numeracy

Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers
www.mtpower.act.edu.au

Nick Metts
www.nickmaths.org

Education Endowment Foundation
educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

Recommended Professional Readings

