LLEAP Dialogue Series No.3

GROWING IDEAS THROUGH EVIDENCE

This Guide seeks to stimulate a new level of reflective engagement in thinking about what it is that schools should be providing students. It includes an Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool (EAST), thirteen cases of philanthropy in education practice and a range of practical tips and strategies. The Guide invites us to rethink what we notice, how we notice and whose noticing counts when leading innovation and improvement.

Michelle Anderson & Emma Curtin

LLEAP PARTNERS

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Foreword

Professor Bill Lucas
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Since its inception I have been pleased to be a critical friend of LLEAP, sometimes contributing ideas and more often responding to the innovative thinking that those leading this powerful initiative have been developing. This year's LLEAP Guide, is, as ever, packed full of thoughtful and actionable advice. I am particularly excited by the Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool (EAST) tool on page 11, which I believe will stimulate a new level of reflective engagement by teachers and all stakeholders.

One result of my relationship with LLEAP has been a crystallisation in my own thinking about what it is that schools should be providing students. You only have to glance at the case studies in this guide (and previous ones) to see that they espouse an approach to teaching and learning that my colleague Guy Claxton and I have termed 'expansive education'. By this I mean an education that expands:

▸ the range of the curriculum

▸ our thinking about what it is to be intelligent

▸ the reach of schools out into the community

▸ the roles that teachers play from teaching to teaching and researching.

It's this last expansion on which I want to dwell for a moment. For it is a significant mind-set shift which, I believe, is echoed in this year's LLEAP report. John Hattie puts it like this:

'…it is the specific mind frames that teachers have about their role – and most critically a mind frame within which they ask themselves about the effect they are having on student learning. Fundamentally, the most powerful way to think about a teacher's role is for teachers to see themselves as evaluators of their effects on students. Teachers need to use evidence-based methods to inform, change and sustain these evaluation beliefs about their effect.' [1]

EAST invites us all to become evaluators – schools, philanthropic bodies, businesses and community groups – to ensure that the efforts we are expending are having the desired outcomes. EAST suggests areas on which schools and their partners might like to focus and offers some indicators that they might like to use to track progress. They are just suggestions and we would hope that schools will use their normal creativity in customising them.

In the Expansive Education Network[2], which I have helped to create, it is a core value of members that see the evaluation or measurement of their endeavours as entirely natural, formative and useful (rather than in any sense judgemental). For, as James Harrington puts it:

'If you can't measure something, you can't understand it. If you can't understand it, you can't control it. If you can't control it, you can't improve it.' [3]

> **Expansive educators see it as part of their job to make evaluation a normal part of their role**

Expansive educators see it as part of their job to make evaluation a normal part of their role and it is our hope that EAST, along with the cases, make a helpful contribution to this process. Across the world we are realising the importance of using evidence in leading innovation and improvement.

The LLEAP project is now metamorphosing into LLEAP Plus and will build and expand on the evidence-led reflective practices begun through LLEAP.

I wish it well and look forward to continuing a critical friendship with it.

1   Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers.* Abingdon: Routledge (page 14)

2   See www.expansiveeducation.net

3   Accessed here http://books.google.co.in/books?id=YgkAAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA10#v=onepage&q&f=false on 28 November 2014

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their support and participation in the LLEAP project:

The Purpose Of The LLEAP Guide

This is the third LLEAP *Dialogue Series Guide*. These *Guides* have been specifically designed for different groups within education and philanthropy, as flexible, user-friendly tools.

Evaluation of outcomes is the key area of focus for LLEAP. How do you monitor and evaluate the impact of what you are doing?

Evaluating can be a challenge and the reasons for this vary. Sometimes it is seen as costing too much. In other cases, it is knowing what or how to evaluate that are the hurdles to overcome; while some think that evaluation is what academics do, that there is only one 'right' way to evaluate or that evaluation is for 'acquittal' purposes only. This year's *Guide* has been designed to address some of these concerns. We do so by looking at what schools and not-for-profit organisations and philanthropists working in education were especially trying to change. We take a look 'under the bonnet' of thirteen different approaches to addressing various student outcomes (e.g. student, family and community engagement). From this ground level view of practice we see what these groups focus on and what evidence and improvement approaches they are using to determine if things are changing for the better for students.

In the *Guide*, we also provide some other strategies and tips relating to broader engagement and the often complex issue of eligibility status. We encourage you to 'dip in and out' of this *Guide* and the other two *Guides* from 2012 and 2013. All three LLEAP *Guides* are available for free download via the LLEAP website: http://www.acer.edu.au/lleap.

> Evaluation of outcomes is the key area of focus for LLEAP. How do you monitor and evaluate the impact of what you are doing?

Terminology: We recognise that the not-for-profit and philanthropic groups move in spaces where the terms 'child', 'young person' or 'youth' may be more appropriate. For example, this may be because a young person is not attending or enrolled in a school, or is in another learning setting to school but is still of school-age. For brevity, however, and because LLEAP has always started from a focus on schools, we have used the term 'student' in publications.

Finding Your Way Around The LLEAP Guide

For simplicity, the *Guide* has been created in four main sections

About LLEAP

If you want to know more about the LLEAP project, you will find a brief overview of the research from 2013, including some of the findings that have helped shape this *Guide*, on page 3. You can also check out http://www.acer.edu.au/lleap

Growing ideas through evidence

If you need help in clarifying and specifying the student outcomes you are hoping to achieve and what evidence and approaches might assist, then page 10 onwards is for you. The *Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool* (EAST) is designed to help you identify specific 'ways of noticing' improvement – through evidence and various program approaches.

Cases

If you want to go a bit deeper or need inspiration for growing your ideas through evidence, then from page 22 onwards you will find 13 different cases of education practice to inspire and expand specific 'ways of noticing' improvement – through evidence and various program approaches.

Knowledge Bank

If you need some tips or strategies to help collaborate and make better connections or to understand more about eligibility requirements, then take a look at our knowledge bank from page 81 onwards.

About LLEAP

About LLEAP

The findings from all the LLEAP surveys have been widely disseminated and are available via the project website: http://www.acer.edu.au/lleap.

We have used this survey feedback and cases of practice to develop practical tools designed to assist those looking to improve educational outcomes for students. This includes the *LLEAP Dialogue Series Guide*. The first and second *Guides* are also freely available via the project website; this current document represents the third in the series.

Among the latest findings are issues that have helped shape this *Guide*:

▶ Outcome areas of focus varied significantly depending on the socio-educational advantage of the school.

▶ Once again, nine out of ten schools report that they are new or inexperienced when it comes to engaging with philanthropy; not-for-profits working in schools have considerably more experience.

▶ Not-for-profits are 'bridge builders' crossing the boundaries of different spaces within the community. They are an untapped resource for many schools.

▶ Philanthropy and schools agree about the issues that are preventing engagement, such as creating a culture of seeking this type of support, or having or knowing whether they have the right eligibility status; but these barriers are yet to be overcome.

In brief:

▶ In total, 1,416 responses to LLEAP surveys (In 2013: 604 responses).

▶ More than 2,000 accessed LLEAP Survey reports.

▶ More than 750 people engaged in learning forums around the work.

▶ More than 35 cases of practice.

▶ Three practical guides to help apply the learning from the surveys.

Growing Ideas Through Evidence

LLEAP found that relationships and activities of schools, not-for-profits and philanthropy generally seek to:

Overcome barriers to student learning

Access to education is a basic human right. It is a gateway to social and personal development, learning and achievement, understanding and future economic opportunities. Single or multiple factors may prevent access to education for students. These include socio-economic background; physical and/or mental health; learning differences; attitudes to school or students; expectations and aspirations; and geographic isolation. Any or all of these may impact on the *access to*, *engagement in* and *continuity* of education for students.

Create effective learning environments for students

Learning environments characterised, not only by 'bricks and mortar', but by positive interpersonal relationships and deep learning by teachers and students, can promote learning and achievement, social connections and wellbeing. Students who enjoy supportive relationships with peers, mentors, teachers, family and other significant others are better able to find assistance when needed, and to learn from and with those around them.

Broaden and connect learning for students

Education prepares students for the future, developing their confidence and capacity to flourish in the world. Education framed in this way recognises that rich learning abounds beyond the school gates and can contribute to the development of students within school.[4] In this way schools and their communities can help students develop a 'social literacy' for living.[5]

broadening and connecting learning for students

student needs

overcoming barriers to student learning

creating effective learning environments for students

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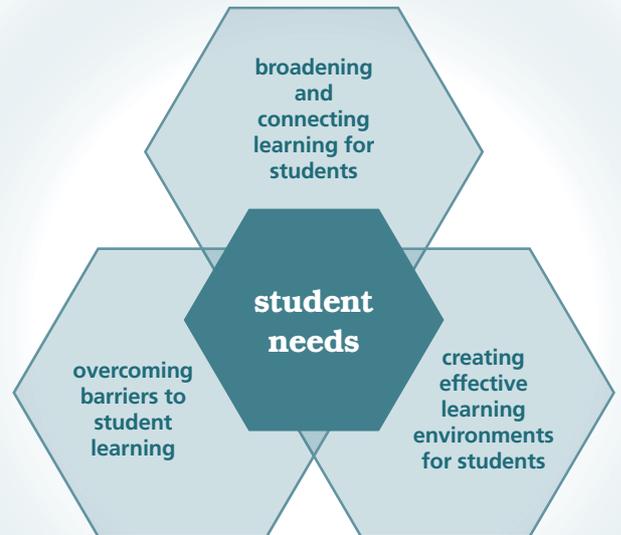
4   Lucas, B., Claxton, G. and Spencer, E. (2013). *Expansive Education: Teaching learners for the real world*. ACER Press and Open University Press

5   CBI (2012). *First Steps – A new approach for our schools*. www.cbi.org.uk

In 2013, the LLEAP Survey findings showed that relationships and activities across education and philanthropy are hampered when the foundations for relationships to flourish have not been laid. This can be seen in the top three issues preventing schools and not-for-profits engaging with philanthropy, which the survey identified:

- *Culture:* Don't have a culture of seeking this type of support;
- *How:* Don't know how to collaborate with organisations that can access this support;
- *How:* Don't know how to devote resources to these relationships.

More broadly, our work has shown that for many schools, developing school-community relationships - whether this is with business, philanthropy, not-for-profits, families or other groups - is an area they can find challenging. The reasons for this are numerous and different.

For some, it may simply be a case of never having done this before and so their awareness, confidence and capabilities need to be developed. Each LLEAP Survey has found, for example, that 9 out of 10 schools have never or rarely connected with philanthropy. For others, it may be that they are yet to see and understand the two-way benefits of such relationships.

Over the course of LLEAP, two evaluation issues related to improving the engagement of philanthropy in education emerged:

'Until doing this [LLEAP] survey I was unaware that these organisations were available to apply to or contact – so very limited information sources.' (2013 School respondent)

How have you come to view that a particular outcome area is what you need to focus on?

The national LLEAP survey findings have assisted in illuminating what matters most to schools, not-for-profits and philanthropics and in seeing patterns of commonality and difference across and between the groups.

Even if you know what you're trying to change and for whom, how do you know whether improvements are being made?

Failing to identify and articulate whether improvements are happening can be the undoing of a project or program even before it gets off the ground. It can also hamper bringing on board new supporters, or communicating the impact of the work to others.

The cases in the previous LLEAP *Guides* have gone some way in helping respond to these issues (See page 97). We build on this in the current *Guide*.

Why evaluate?

Evaluation is important if you want to:

▶ Find out how well you are addressing an identified need

▶ Decide whether 'x' intervention is making a difference

▶ Assess whether or not the outcomes have justified the effort

▶ Know if there are better ways of doing things

▶ Know if there are any unintended consequences

▶ Help attract funding by providing evidence of effectiveness or efficiency or both

▶ Help attract more or different partners

To evaluate means?

At the most informal level we evaluate every day in all kinds of ways. This involves identifying an issue, gathering information (even if only from your memory) and then making decisions based on that information. Doing this helps to improve understanding of an issue and as a result, what actions to take. In an every day sense, we might evaluate, 'What should I wear today?' 'How did I play today in the match?' 'Which route to work should I take?'

At a formal level, evaluation means the systematic gathering and assessment of information that helps provide useful feedback about 'something' (e.g. a need, a process, an approach, a program or a project). As with the every day examples above, evaluating involves being clear about what the issue is you are trying to address (and how you came to this view) and what you are trying to discover about it.

In education, we might ask, for example, 'How effective were the learning processes used in class today?' 'To what extent and for whom did 'x' program work?' 'Are in-kind and financial resources being used efficiently and effectively?' Discovering answers to these questions involves making decisions about what information you need to gather and how you might gather it.

> evaluating involves being clear about what the issue is you are trying to address...and what you are trying to discover about it

Types of evaluation?

The relationship between an evaluation and its impact is not straightforward. We live in a complex world. It is impossible to know all the factors that may be at work say, in a school in the families of the students at the school, in the community and so on. Knowledge will only ever be partial. Sometimes experiments can be used to help deal with this complexity. Experiments, however, are difficult to set up

because they can have deep ethical issues and almost always complicated practical problems to deal with. Why should only some schools, for example, be given access to an anti-bullying program while others are excluded because the experimental design requires such an arrangement? What cost for those students not accessing this program? There are compromises to be made, and these are often governed by the amount of resources available (including time), the burden the evaluation imposes on schools or the community, the type of program being examined and so on. At some point evaluators must decide what can best be done, and what that might imply for the quality of the information gathered, and the decisions that will flow from the use of this information. An evaluation, typically, is a juggling act; it is more an art than a science.

What an evaluation can help with is clarifying the purposes of a program and how it is supposed to act. This cleaning up can be very helpful, even if the outcomes of the program prove elusive when it comes to measuring them.

Terminology used in association with evaluation that you sometimes might hear:

▸ *Impact*
The effect – good or bad – on a significant issue [e.g. overcoming poverty; meeting the housing needs of the unemployed; ensuring all children can read etc]. This can tend to be long-term in focus because the issue is so significant, multifaceted etc.

▸ *Outcomes*
What has changed? For Whom? [i.e. the improvement: improved literacy, numeracy; improved student capabilities; improved wellbeing etc]. Collectively, outcomes are the building blocks towards impact. These, along with outputs, can provide interim indicators of progress towards a larger impact.

▸ *Outputs*
What has resulted from the partnership? e.g. Who has been reached? - we reached all our year 'x' students; we ran 15 mentoring sessions / workshops for staff etc. Or what have you produced? - we produced a video for sharing within our school community and within our partner's organisation

▸ *Inputs*
What resources did you put into the activity or relationship? e.g. a dedicated skilled volunteering coordinator.

Reporting on the inputs can help a funder and others see where resources have been directed. But where you want to focus your reporting is on the outputs and especially the outcomes. Together, these can provide indicators of progress towards making an impact on a big issue.

Noticing what and how?

A big part of evaluating is 'noticing'. Think of the great (big and small) discoveries that have been made in other fields (see break out box). If people had not expanded their thinking and practice around 'noticing', then would we, for example, be doing things the way we do today?

The adages, 'what gets measured, gets done' and 'what gets measured, gets noticed' is being challenged in education. Improving outcomes for students means we need to rethink what we notice, how we notice and whose noticing counts.

In this Guide, we have taken the key improvement outcome areas from the LLEAP 2013 Survey (e.g. Student engagement) and developed an 'Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool' (EAST). This table shows examples of evidence and how approaches can provide information of both kinds (e.g. number of attendees at focus group/ comments made at focus group). The key to 'noticing' is going into the design of improvement practices with your 'eyes' (and 'ears') open. In this sense, evaluation and improvement can sit hand-in-hand. For example, as illustrated in the Big Picture Education Australia case study (page 38), they include in their learning approaches a number of public exhibitions during which students make presentations. These are not only integral to the design of Big Picture, they also allow them to gather evidence around identifying, for example, student pro-social capabilities.

On 21 April 1820, during a lecture, Hans Christian Ørsted noticed a compass needle deflected from magnetic north when an electric current from a battery was switched on and off, confirming a direct relationship between electricity and magnetism. Relevant today in everything from medical scanners to car engines.

Growing ideas through evidence

Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool (EAST)

Evaluation information can be summative (e.g. real retention rates) and it can also be formative (e.g. feedback from a student and mentor session). It can be quantitative (e.g. the number of students who get a job or go onto further learning post school) and qualitative (e.g. unsolicited comments from parents about their child's enjoyment of a project). What this means is that noticing improvement can come from many different sources and perspectives. As such, approaches used in your 'innovations' can be a source of improvement AND evidence.

What can EAST help with?

▸ Inspire and expand thinking and creativity ('We hadn't thought of that as a source of evidence.' 'What could we be noticing?')

▸ Promote discussion in relation to specific outcomes ('What do we notice if student engagement is improving?' 'What do the students say we should be noticing?')

▸ Invite 'noticing' at different levels – micro (individual, within 'classroom'), meso (organisational) and macro (whole of community)

▸ Keep the focus on outcomes ('Why might noticing 'x' help us come to a view about student engagement?)

What can't EAST help with?

▸ The examples stop short of specifying what would be considered 'good enough' improvement (e.g. full student attendance) or 'how much', 'how' and 'how often' the information might be gathered (e.g. from all parents, students and teachers at the school; via an attitude survey administered online annually; via pre and post assessments). These types of decisions, important as they are, will be context and capacity dependent.

▸ Not all of the examples listed will be appropriate or relevant for your purposes. They are presented as 'stimulus' information.

▸ Neither are the examples 'locked' to specific outcomes, the information gathered may be relevant to a number of outcomes.

To assist link EAST to illustrative cases of practice, the evidence or program approaches within the tool are at times accompanied with a page reference to a specific case.

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Student engagement	• Visible signs of student enthusiasm (e.g. unsolicited positive comments from students, parents or industry partners). (See Case 4: page 38)
	• Students' body language changes in sessions from just sitting in a chair to leaning forward; walking to walking confidently. (See Case 9: page 62)
	• The students' emotive reactions to the school (i.e. happy, smiling youth!).
	• Students referring the program to peers with similar challenges. (See Case 3: page 34)
	• Questions directed at teachers and fellow students in discussion indicate a desire to learn.
	• Students personally connecting with the 'topic', 'teaching and learning methods'.
	• Students making connections between their learning and their community (local, national or global).
	• Collaborating with peers.
	• Students supporting each other with skills and knowledge (i.e. helping each other).
	• Students demonstrating greater confidence in addressing course requirements.
	• Self-management skills (e.g. is able to prioritise activities and manage their time in order to meet deadlines, is able to follow instructions etc.). (See Case 7: page 54)
	• Discussions continuing out of the classroom.
	• Completion of set tasks.
	• Students requesting continuation and extension of tasks including literacy and numeracy activities. (See Case 3: page 34)
	• Students continuing to work on their community projects out of school hours. (See Case 9: page 62)
	• School and community leadership roles.
	• Voluntary participation in different aspects of school life (e.g. council, fundraising, special events).
	• Student use of the library, sporting, science or other such facilities (school and public).
	• Students continuing at school or reengaging with local educational options (e.g. previous school; TAFE, training).
	• Number of children starting school who have attended pre-school. (See Case 12: page 72)
	• Number of absences recorded for children registered at pre-school to assist identifying barriers to attendance. (See Case 12: page 72)
	• Increased library membership for children aged 0 to 6. (See Case 12: page 72)
	• Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data. (See Case 12: page 72)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Approaches such as,
Student engagement	• Expanding the idea of 'classrooms' to include a diversity of sites (e.g. poultry houses). (See Case 1: page 24) • A focus on Functional literacy and numeracy, permitting extended learning options and improved self-competency. (See Case 3: page 34) • Students complete Learning Plans each term and exhibit what they have learnt four times a year. (See Case 4: page 38) • Students, who previously would not read due to trust issues or feelings of embarrassment, will read to dogs. The dogs are the 'volunteers'. (See Case 3: page 34) • Engagement as a student coach or mentor. • Students undertake short-term micro-social skills, referred to as focus plans in the Hands on Learning context (e.g. show us you can look people in the eye when you speak to them, show us you don't always have to have the last word etc.). (See Case 7: page 54) • A staff observation form for each child details engagement with activities; interaction with other children; ability to listen, cooperate and follow instructions; communication with others; level of independence; levels of aggression. (See Case 12: page 72) • Students creating their own books through the process of book making. (See Case 13: page 77)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Student capabilities	e.g. Personal and social competence: • In the Early Years, e.g. Students are taking turns; taking direction; making decisions. (See Case 12: page 72) • In Primary/Secondary, e.g. Students give public presentations. (See Case 9: page 62) • Students showing a willingness 'to have a go' and compare their performance with students within and beyond the school. (See Case 2: page 29) • Students taking on roles within a team (e.g. role of team leader for a particular job within a project, being an encourager of others, teaching someone a new skill etc). (See Case 7: page 54) • Setting and achieving goals. (See Case 9: page 62) e.g. Innovation and enterprise: • Students researching and turning ideas into enterprises (e.g. lavender farming). (See Case 1: page 24) e.g. Leadership: • Monitoring the number and type of individual student development (e.g. students taking on a visible leadership role, whereas in the past they did not. Students hosting students from other schools.) (See Case 2: page 29) • Students are called upon by external groups to give a formal presentation. (See Case 11: page 68) e.g. Intercultural understanding: • Students submitting a major project demonstrating benchmarks in this ACARA capability.
	Through… Approaches such as,
Student capabilities	• Annual school hosted curriculum events where peer to peer sharing is the norm. (See Case 1: page 24) • Students participate in two-terms of cultural understanding prior to going on trip to China. This not only improved the experience for students, but also provided parents, teachers and the students with a baseline from which they could see and hear improvements in their communication. (See Case 2: page 29) • Older students mentoring young students. (See Case 1: page 24) • Membership of student council. • Teacher reflections on progression. • Formal ceremonies to meet with all scholarship recipients. (See Case 11: page 68) • Students undergo coaching in 'networking' and then get an opportunity to practice these skills at a business event. (See Case 11: page 68)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Social and emotional wellbeing	• Incidences of bullying (cyber, physical). • Students and teachers are valuing the opportunity to develop close and productive relationships. Parents are valuing this too. (See Case 4: page 38) • Peer relationships. • Relationships with teachers and other adults. (See Case 7: page 54) • Students talk in class with volunteers about their future aspirations and expectations. (See Case 8: page) • Parents are reporting that their child is feeling safe, motivated and is learning. (See Case 4: page 38) • Proportion of households where school-age children and adolescents where their neighbourhood is perceived as safe or very safe. • Intentional self-harm hospitalisation rate. • The rate of children who were the subject of care and protection orders. • The rate of children who were the subject of child protection. • A significant relationship with an adult(s) / mentor other than a direct family member. • Positive associations with reading and sharing stories evidenced by encouraging feedback from loved ones and reading more books. (See Case 13: page 77)
	Through… Approaches such as,
Social and emotional wellbeing	• Students articulate their growth in confidence and public speaking skills from regularly exhibiting their work to peers, teachers and family. (See Case 4: page 38) • Peer teaching and learning scheme. • Student wellbeing survey. • One to one coaching/tutoring. • Participation in community volunteering. • Participation in whole day/week curriculum projects. • Tailored work experience. • Are connected to a positive adult role model through regular volunteer support at the school. (See Case 8: page 59) • A simple student feedback form using emoticons to assess how they feel about being in the program. (See Case 12: page 72) • A health and wellbeing survey is administered at the beginning and end of the program. (See Case 12: page 72)

continued

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Academic outcomes	• Gain and growth scores in NAPLAN looking for a reduction in 'red flags' on relevant dimensions. (See Case 6: page 49) • Achievement in various a school's tests of literacy and numeracy. • The proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy. • Being recognised through an award. (e.g. National award to a school or NfP) • Students going on to do further learning, traineeships or employment. • Students saying they feel better prepared for post-school life. (See Case 4: page 38) • Visits to the school from other schools, politicians, academics to learn about what they doing to be getting such good improvements.
	Through… Approaches such as,
Academic outcomes	• Schools in the program provide an annual written report that includes feedback on 'where are students now'. (See Case 4: page 38) • School has developed its own tool to understand student achievement in numeracy relative to national minimum standards and/or state averages.
	Through… Evidence such as,
Student attendance	• Attendance records by year. • Unexplained absence frequency. • Lateness or half-day/partial day attendance. • Injury hospitalisation rate. • Suspension rate. • Student attitude toward academic subjects.
	Through… Approaches such as,
Student attendance	• Student surveys seeking to understand barriers to attendance. • Student focus groups to explore support ideas. • Parent surveys or via Facebook seeking to understand barriers to attendance. • Student achievement data is used to help clarify and understand 'where a student is at' and whether shifts in student achievement correlate to their attendance, behavior, engagement. (See Case 7: page 54)

continued

Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool (EAST)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Student behaviour	• Improved concentration.
	• Attendance and participation – 'show up and have a go'. (See Case 3: page 34)
	• Greater interaction between teacher(s) and students.
	• Students are working supportively in their project teams with other children who are not in their friendship circle. (See Case 9: page 62)
	• Students actively participate in creating a safe space to learn for all students.
	• An absence of behaviours previously seen as standard (e.g. aggression towards staff and students).
	• Inter-personal skills (e.g. able to listen and communicate clearly with others, is able to resolve differences without resorting to violence or confrontation etc). (See Case 7: page 54)
	• Suspension rate.
	• Time out rate.
	• Time on task.
	Through… Approaches such as,
Student behaviour	• Attention building strategies in classrooms.
	• Innovative approaches to rewards.
	• Parent workshops.
	• Community or student mentoring scheme.
	Through… Evidence such as,
Student retention	• Real retention measure. (See Case 7: page 54)
	• Education and training completion rates (at a various milestone points and contexts).
	• Profile and number of students who have transitioned from K to 1; from primary to secondary school; from secondary school to further learning or employment.
	Through… Approaches such as,
Student retention	• 'Successful' student alumni initiative with students.
	• Employer mentoring scheme.

continued

Evidence and Approaches Stimulus Tool (EAST)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Quality teaching & Teacher quality	• The profile of teacher professional learning (Are teachers also learners? What type of learning are they doing? How is it used?) • Teachers are anticipating situations before they become an issue (e.g. identifying when students lose interest or are struggling to understand). • Student learning tasks challenge (e.g. emphasise application, analysis, judgement and synthesis, as these go beyond the mere memorisation of facts or copying information) (i.e. the focus is on the quality of the opportunities for learning). • Use of appropriate learning technologies in the classroom. • Diversity of projects (major, minor, long-term, short-term, community focused etc) and completion rates of these. (See Case 7: page 54) • Teachers are integrating new skills (e.g. book making) into their Literacy, Numeracy and Art with students. Positive associations with reading and sharing stories evidenced by encouraging feedback from loved ones and reading more books. (See Case 13: page 77) • How teachers talk about students (what is their "running commentary on students' struggles, achievements and behavior?")[6]. • How teachers interact with each other. • Recognition within the profession and wider educational communities. (See Case 2: page 29) • Teachers publishing. (See Case 2: page 29)
	Through… Approaches such as,
Quality teaching & Teacher quality	• Using culturally relevant social media tools (e.g. Rooty Hill High School students access the fastest social media platform in China – Weibo and have online contact with students in three sister schools.). Teachers deliver the listening and speaking requirements of Mandarin using social media. (See Case 2: page 29) • Teachers undertake a five day foundation course and a two day workshop on how to implement an internship program and various project-based learning workshops. (See Case 4: page 38) • Establishing regular feedback loops. (See Case 5: page 46) • School has developed its own tool to understand teacher confidence and a capability in the use and application of learning technologies across the curriculum). (See Case 6: page 49) • Level of teacher peer observation. • Engagement in professional enquiry. • Engagement in a community of practice / professional learning community. • Collection of pre-/post- baseline, and daily logbook data across a variety of measures. (See Case 7: page 54)

6   Claxton, G. & Lucas, B. (2013). *What kind of teaching for what kind of learning?* SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd, London, p. 11

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Family engagement	• Parents discovering things about their children they did not know they could do or had an interest in. (See Case 9: page 62) • Positive relationships between parents, teachers/principal (e.g. how parents are talked about, viewed in school documents). • How parents talk about school and learning. (See Case 4: page 38) • Parents 'tear-up' as they see and hear their children caring and doing something about a community issue. (See Case 9: page 62) • Positive connections with school / with home. • Parents' confidence to access services and programs (social cohesion). • Parent engagement in decision making. • Parental educational aspirations to learn / do further study. • Volunteering rates (i.e. types and quality). • Unsolicited phone calls to enquiring about enrolling their child at the school. • Language barriers are overcome. • Number and frequency of parents reading to their children as recorded in a community wide reading program. (See Case 12: page 72)
	Through… Approaches such as,
Family engagement	• Daily email updates and photos to parents from the teacher while their children are on a Chinese immersion exchange. (See Case 2: page 29) • School has developed its own tool to understand family engagement by mapping how well connected the student is with the school, his or her family and his or her community. This then enables an action plan to be developed. (See Case 6: page 49) • Parent engagement (use Joyce Epstein's 6 Level taxonomy, with an expansive education 'twist'). (See LLEAP Guide 2013) • Student-led projects give families a way to have a community-focused conversation at home. (See Case 9: page 62)

EAST: Evidence and approaches stimulus tool

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence such as,
Community engagement	• Mentors attending events and making positive comments about their relationships with students. (See Case 4: page 38)
	• New networks.
	• Students linked to groups or individuals in the community. (See Case 9: page 62)
	• Volunteering (in school and in community).
	• Volunteer retention rates. (See Case 8: page 59)
	• Student commitment to giving.
	• Student knowledge about their community. (See Case 9: page 62)
	• New or different or additional resources.
	• Use of community facilities / school facilities.
	• Number of new memberships to organisations (e.g. bushwalking, yoga, aquatic centre etc). (See Case 12: page 72)
	• Interactions across different settings and perspectives (these prepare students for personal and civic participation in a diverse and interdependent world).
	• Visibility of a program, project or organisation (e.g. in local news; radio; shop windows).
	• Attendance at school-community 'events' / celebrations.
	• Number of approaches to partner.
	• New or revised partnerships.
	• Retention of partnerships. (See Case 11: page 68)
	• Previously identified rural skills shortages are being addressed.
	• Reduced vandalism rates in the local community.
	• Proactive identification and nomination of community projects (e.g. gardens, boardwalks etc). (See Case 7: page 54)
	Through… Approaches such as,
Community engagement	• Vocational training is delivered on the school's premises to students from the school and neigbouring schools undertaking a school-based apprenticeship. (See Case 1: page 24)
	• Community outreach program events organised by the school, such as Harmony Day, information nights and assemblies. (See Case 2: page 29)
	• Students undertake internships in the community in an area of interest to him or her. (See Case 4: page 38)
	• Community projects. (See Case 7: page 54)

Going deeper

If you are interested in going deeper and seeing how these types of evidence and approaches play out in customised ways, then explore the 13 case studies provided in the next section.

In the context of different approaches and programs, these bring to life why the various groups focus on what they do and what they notice to ascertain whether improvement is being achieved.

If you want to go deeper into how to measure then we recommend:

▶ Muir, K. & Bennett, S. (2014). *The Compass: Your Guide to Social Impact Measurement*. Sydney, Australia: The Centre for Social Impact. http://www.csi.edu.au

If you want to better understand how to evaluate the 'what' of an activity and 'how' the relationship itself is travelling, then we recommend:

▶ *Evaluate to Grow: A Guide to getting the most out of your school-business relationship through evaluation.* (2012). Written by a team from the Australian Council for Educational Research with assistance from Schools Connect Australia for the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. http://schoolsconnect.org.au (See News & Resources: Partnering Resources)

If you are curious about what the evidence suggests are innovations that improve student outcomes, then we recommend looking at the 2013 LLEAP case on the work of the UK's Education Endowment Foundation:

▶ http://www.acer.edu.au/files/EducationEndownment.pdf and their Toolkit http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

Cases

Cases

Case structure

Each case begins with a short overview of the 'innovation' (e.g. a reading program). This is followed by what outcomes the innovation is seeking to improve and for whom. Next, an explanation about how the organisation came to a view to focus on these outcomes is given. Then, in relation to each case's outcomes, the information used to tell whether improvements are being made is identified. In conclusion, a 'lesson learned' is shared about 'noticing' improvements (e.g. how sources of data can help you notice different things; how to identify sources of potential data and then gather it etc).

About the cases

As Bill Lucas wrote in his Foreword, each of the cases espouse an approach to teaching and learning that he and his colleague Guy Claxton have termed 'expansive education'. In the context of this Guide, all the cases reflect this through different relationships between philanthropy and education.

The first few cases show how school-led relationships with philanthropy are simultaneously seeking to respond to local needs and in doing so build a more capable Australia (e.g. Case 2 used funding from philanthropy to reposition student and school community understanding and willingness to engage with Asian communities.)

Cases four to six show how leadership of change in education can also be driven from not-for-profits or philanthropy. In these cases systemic change is the goal through focusing on different 'levers' for improving outcomes for students (i.e. Case 4, the design of schooling and Cases 5 and 6, school leadership).

Within school approaches are evident in Cases 7 to 9. Here, in deliberate and creative ways, not for profits in collaboration with schools are improving various student outcomes. While the final four cases (10 to 14) show how the nimbleness of philanthropy allows it to be a catalyst at individual (e.g. Case 10) and community levels (e.g. Case 12).

Earlier we argued that a big part of evaluating is 'noticing', but that what we notice, how we notice and whose noticing counts needs some rethinking. The cases provide illustrative examples of schools, not-for-profits and philanthropy trying to be more explicit and expansive in 'noticing' change. In doing so, through different relationships and activities barriers to student learning are being overcome (e.g. Case 10); effective learning environments for students are being created (e.g. Case 7) and learning is being broadened and connected beyond the school gates (e.g. Case 13).

Schools

Philantrophic foundations

Not-for-profit organisations

Timboon P-12 School: Timboon Agriculture Project (TAP)

www.timboonp12.vic.edu.au/page/206

Innovation

Beginning in 2012, Timboon Agriculture Project (TAP) is a partnership between Timboon P-12 school and WestVic Dairy, Dairy Australia's regional development program for western Victoria. TAP integrates agriculture into the curriculum at every school level. This expansive education approach finds agriculture pursuits seamlessly embedded into the curriculum at every school level, with a special focus on Maths and Science. 'Classrooms' at Timboon now extend to poultry houses and gardens, food and textile production and processing businesses across the district; as well as a dedicated agriculture precinct for crops, such as lavender.

One-hundred and fifty-eight (158) individuals from industry and community have made direct contributions of time in the development and/or delivery of curriculum, or the development of the TAP precinct, since the start of the TAP in July 2012. This includes, presentations from a butcher (for Year 7 and 8 food and agriculture) and large animal vets (for Year 5 farm safety; Year 7 and 8 Science animal welfare; and Year 10 Science: genetics).

Overseen by a school and industry Steering Committee, early funding for the project came from a Gardiner Foundation grant and a Commonwealth Government Empowering Local Schools grant. The Foundation's grant enabled WestVic Dairy to appoint a project coordinator to work with the school for the first 12 months. This role has evolved into a 'learning broker' position liaising between industry specialists and teaching staff to facilitate, develop and trial new curriculum and so on. The dairy industry's training provider, the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA), is funding TAP in 2014-2015.

Outcomes

School data in the late 2000s showed that students had a poor attitude to learning. Academic results were not what they could be and school enrolment figures were dropping. Something had to change and, in 2010, the Leadership team of Timboon P-12 saw that what needed to change was the three way inter-relationship between students, learning and the local community. This led to the development of a collaborative vision for the school and the local community. Driving this vision were three key questions: 'What skills and/or strengths do our young people need to succeed?' 'What does this community need from its young people, now and into the future?' and 'What do young people need from this community to succeed?'

The location of Timboon P-12 school has an economy that is predominantly reliant on food production, particularly dairy. School enrolment data indicates that 70% of Timboon P-12's students come from families directly or indirectly involved in Agribusiness. Young people, however, traditionally have a limited understanding of the diversity of people and skills that contribute to these industries, and to the community that sustains it.

The TAP pilot was developed to give students a broad exposure to their own community and the opportunities it offers. More broadly, the TAP was developed to overcome knowledge gaps and (re)build interests and aspirations in agriculture. After all, there are well recognised skills shortages in Australia agriculture (e.g. the production of food, from paddock to plate). The TAP pilot developed around the nexus between students, learning and the community around this agriculture focus. While it is still early days for the pilot, the school, its community and others are noticing improvements in a range of outcome areas.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Academic outcomes	• Students' results in NAPLAN, since the introduction of TAP, have shown significant improvements leading to Timboon P-12 being singled out nationally for its 2013 results. • Most of the TAP VET students are studying Certificate II or III in Agriculture, with the NCDEA. One has a traineeship with the local veterinary clinic and is studying for her Certificate II in Animal Studies.
Student engagement	• By expanding the idea of 'classrooms' to include a diversity of sites, such as poultry houses, annual student surveys have shown a striking improvement in attitudes to learning since TAP was introduced. • Meeting specific curriculum outcomes (for example in Maths and Science) underpin the design of TAP. This creates a diverse range of learning opportunities for students (and teachers) allowing them to develop a range of skills, experiences and understanding far beyond what a traditional curriculum might offer. • Visible signs of student enthusiasm in TAP learning (e.g. unsolicited positive comments from students about what they are doing and from industry presenter parents noticing the vigour at which students applied themselves to a task: "It was fantastic to see how enthusiastic the students were about getting their hands dirty and doing some practical studies…") • Parental attitudes to the TAP focus at the school: "I look forward to my children taking part as the years go on".
Student capabilities: communication	• The applied learning approach of TAP requires students to question and engage with different presenters in the classroom and in industry settings. • Learning through TAP has brought significant attention to Timboon P-12 and the community more generally. Students have 'stepped up' to talk to visiting academics, industry reps and teachers from other schools about their curriculum activities. • Around 200 students from the school each year are involved in preparing and delivering an active snapshot of their curriculum at a TAPs On forum for students from other schools and year levels.

> "I look forward to my children taking part as the years go on".

continued

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student capabilities: leadership	• Older students mentoring younger students (e.g. VCAL students working with Grade 6 students on the construction and ongoing development of the poultry precinct. Year 8 students working with Year 1 and 2 students on tree planting. Year 4/5 students continue to be mentored by Year 7/8 Food Tech students in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program).
Student capabilities: social enterprise	• Students are researching ideas to remodel and kit out a food van for use at farmers' markets. • 1000 lavender plants form the basis of a business enterprise being developed in support of curriculum, in response to student demand at the conclusion of the first TAP Small Business unit. Mentored by a retired local lavender producer, the students investigated and sourced different species of lavender plants and developed a business plan.
Community engagement	• Increased number of partners in learning from industry. • The passion displayed by industry partners as they present and work with Timboon P-12 students on different projects. The presenters willingly share their expertise, provide insight into their work with students and offer education and career pathway advice. • External programs are integrated into the curriculum increasing the number and diversity of applied learning opportunities for students at all levels (e.g. Dairy Australia: 'Cows create careers' – manufacturing module; Wannon Water: 'Water it, Grow it, Cook it'). • The processes of TAP lead to the creation of active local champions for effective school-industry engagement among its staff and school families. These champions share TAP's processes and results in community, education and industry settings. • Vocational training is delivered on the TAP precinct to students from Timboon and neighbouring schools undertaking a school-based apprenticeship.

Lessons learned

'People power' creates the conditions to 'measure success':
This program would not be possible without 'People Power'. The amazing energy, enthusiasm and drive that our teachers, parents and agri-business partners contribute is truly outstanding. The industry-provided project coordinator (Andrea Vallance) supports our teaching staff to link with industry partners and this position is pivotal to the success of the program.

A clear focus helps you know what you are trying to change: The TAP is built on a strong belief that learning can be enhanced by applying scientific, mathematical, business and key learning concepts to real life situations. It is this curriculum focus that gives us the educational rationale for the program. The program provides our students with the opportunity to work with inspirational and aspirational adults from diverse career backgrounds and areas of expertise. The TAP connects text book learning to real life situations and creates those relationships that support career-defining moments.

Data comes in different forms for different purposes:
NAPLAN data, parent and student attitude and school data can all be used to validate the program, but it is the enthusiasm of the students and the positive, ongoing support of our program partners that keeps the project high on the school agenda.
In 2014 (up to today, and there's more to come), 93 people contributed their expertise and spent 167 direct contact hours with teachers and students - 57 of them for the first time, 36 coming back for a repeat or extension of their involvement. It is statistics like this, and the ongoing support we have had for the program over the last three years, that gives us the enthusiasm, energy and confidence to keep the program going.

Rooty Hill High School, Western Sydney

www.rootyhillhighschool.nsw.edu.au

Innovation

Via an Asia Education Foundation (AEF) grant, Rooty Hill High School collaborated with its three partner primary schools to develop an Asia Literacy project to address the government's "Asian Century" focus. The purpose was to use the grant to build teacher and student understanding of Asian culture across the schools and improve the teaching of Mandarin in the middle years of schooling (the last two years of primary school and the first two years of high school in NSW). The $35K grant was allocated to teacher release and the development of online classroom teaching materials. The latter also ensured sustainability of the work post the grant, when the materials were shared among 51 primary, secondary and tertiary teachers from all sectors.

From a relatively small initial grant from the Asia Education Foundation, three years on this has assisted Rooty Hill High School to shift its focus from doing an Asia Literacy 'project' to becoming now a much more inclusive and expansive program based on hosting the western Sydney region Confucius Classroom (sponsored by Hanban, the Chinese government's international program). The program now supports:

▶ An ongoing Outreach program with the partner primary schools.

▶ The study of Mandarin in the school: The school's Confucius Classroom is unusual in Australia, as none of the students at the school speak Mandarin as their first language.

▶ Chinese perspectives taught across the curriculum: Asia literacy and cultural immersion is now embedded in the classroom for 200 Year 7 students each year, is part of the school's community outreach program for 150 Year 8 students each year, and for the first time in 2014, the school had a Higher School Certificate (HSC) Mandarin class.

▶ Online partnerships with three sister schools.

▶ A Hanban sponsored teaching assistant who is a fully qualified teacher trained in China.

▶ A cultural excursion and exchange program to China for students, parents and teachers.

The commitment of the teaching staff and school leaders to innovation through this program has been critical in positioning the school in the educational, Chinese and wider community.

Outcomes

Repositioning the students and school community of Rooty Hill High School to understand and demonstrate its capacity to build relationships with Asia has been a deliberate objective of the school's leadership team. It reflects both the school's view of its future and its student demography, with more that 40% of students having an Asian language background. The school believes Australia's business, political, economic, employment and tourist relationship with Asia is going to grow and this means that young people from western Sydney will need to develop a deeper understanding and willingness to engage with Asian communities. Towards this end, the school is noticing improvement across a range of outcome areas.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Teacher quality *and* quality teaching	• Teachers are researching and implementing exemplary student learning units for the Australian Curriculum (e.g. using Chinese Myths and Legends in English, studying Chinese history, using Chinese case studies in senior courses)
	• Teachers have the confidence and capability to share these units with colleagues in and beyond the school.
	• Initial evaluations, benchmarked against the school's program requirements are very positive.
	• Access by teachers and students to online resources developed by the school, supplemented by online and more traditional resources provided by Hanban.
	• The publication in 2014 of a new text, Step Up With Chinese, for use across Australia for middle years students on which the Head Teacher LOTE was consulting writer. This text drew on resources developed by Rooty Hill High School in the original project, embedded the ACARA capabilities and the cross curriculum perspective: Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.
	• Access to and application of culturally relevant social media tools in the classroom (e.g. Rooty Hill High School students access the fastest social media platform in China – Weibo and have online contact with students in three sister schools.). Teachers deliver the listening and speaking requirements of Mandarin using social media.
	• Recognition within the profession and wider educational communities (e.g. The Rooty Hill High School teacher who implemented the original Asia Education Foundation grant was appointed as the President of the Chinese Language Teachers Association in NSW).

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student capabilities Personal and social competencies; Intercultural understanding	• Selected students participated in two-terms of cultural understanding prior to going on a 10-day trip to China in 2013. This process included twenty students eating lunch together once a week to be exposed to new foods, social and cultural customs. They practised conversing with adults and ordering food using Mandarin. This pre-trip process, not only improved the experience for students, but also provided parents, teachers and the students with a baseline from which they could see and hear improvements in their communication. The next exchange is planned for 2015. • Students showing a willingness to 'have a go' and compare their performance with students within and beyond the school (e.g. All mainstream Year 7 students sit a test in Mandarin administered by Hanban). The Youth Chinese Test (YCT) is an international benchmarking test of proficiency in Chinese. • Students have shown improvement in academic performance (e.g. of the students who sat the YCT test in 2013, 40% achieved a credit or above. The results have shown strong growth over the three years since the program was introduced.) • All Year 7 students submitting a major project on Chinese culture demonstrating the Year 8 benchmarks in the ACARA capabilities of intercultural understanding and critical and creative thinking.
Student capabilities: Leadership	• Monitoring the number and types of individual student development, for example: ▸ A student who had not previously taken a visible leadership role volunteering to MC the launch of the Confucius Classroom, speaking in both English and Mandarin to an audience of official guests, many of whom were fluent in Mandarin. ▸ A student who had been socially shy prior to going on the Chinese excursion and exchange has just been elected as school vice captain. The election process includes candidate interviews and speeches to the student body. In the student's speech, he attributed his communication experiences in China and membership of the exchange party as key reasons for why he was able to overcome his shyness. ▸ Students in Years 7 – 9 volunteer to host Mandarin speaking and cultural groups when they visit the school. In particular, the students now act as mentors to Year 5 and 6 students participating in the Confucius Classroom Outreach program.

continued

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement	• Observing greater student engagement with the academic and cultural cross curricular perspectives required in understanding Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia: ▸ As a result of the primary Outreach and Year 7 LOTE program, all students are demonstrating greater confidence in addressing course requirements related to studying aspects of Asian culture in Years 7 – 10. ▸ Over the three years of the program students, supported by the commitment of the teaching staff, have developed skills to enable them to transfer learning about Asia (and China in particular) across the range of courses they complete. Increasingly it is seen as the norm at the school to engage with Asian perspectives
Family engagement	• An increased frequency of unsolicited parent phone calls to the principal and deputy principal about enrolment at the school by families from Asian backgrounds and by parents interested giving feedback on the Outreach programs. • Anecdotes from parents - Most of the parents of students who travelled on the school's Chinese immersion exchange commented to the trip's leader that "they could not wait to get up each morning and see her email updates and photos" of the trip.
Community engagement	• Monitoring the impact of the Asia Literacy and Confucius Classroom programs on community engagement with the school: ▸ A higher number of primary school age student families attending community outreach program events organised by the school including Harmony Day, information nights and assemblies. ▸ Students assisting community members, where previously they would not have been confident or capable of doing so (e.g. students told a teacher that because they could now understand Mandarin, they were able to help a Chinese woman on a train who needed assistance). ▸ Partnerships with Chinese community associations and not-for-profit organisations within the Chinese community in Sydney. ▸ Approaches by other not-for-profit and philanthropic organisations wishing to work with the school in innovative projects (e.g. Bright Spots School Connection with Social Ventures Australia.)

they could not wait to get up each morning and see her email updates and photos

Lessons learned

Continuous research and evaluation builds teacher and student capacity: Our lessons learned have been about successfully leading for change, improvement and innovation. We have noticed that if we see each of our strategic partnerships as a process with which we undertake continuous action research, we can build the capacity of teachers and students to plan, implement and review (evaluate) their work. We have noticed that by embedding the Asia Literacy project in our school plans our teachers are now much more adept at evaluating using outcomes based evidence collection. They are able to notice how much we are doing in planning and allocating resources to the project, how well we are implementing the projects and what impact we are having across a broader range of academic, social and citizenship measures.

BackTrack Youth Works

www.backtrack.org.au

Innovation

BackTrack School began as a pilot in March 2013. The school is part of the broader offerings of BackTrack Youth Works, a not-for-profit organisation servicing Armidale and surrounding areas in New South Wales since 2006. BackTrack's goal is to take the most marginalized and disengaged youth demographic and empower them to make positive life choices and foster successful long term integration into industry and the community, thereby not only improving the quality of life of the participants, but also strengthening the wellbeing of the entire community.

BackTrack School seeks to complement the existing BackTrack skills training and life skills programs. Three of these programs have been a staple part of the organisation for many years:

▸ Paws Up – began as an engagement tool where participants train dogs and now jump them in competitions, performing at Agricultural Shows and invitational events

▸ Iron Man Welders – a fully functioning welding shed offering training in trade engineering skills

▸ AgLads – provides training and progression to paid work crews in agriculture

The BackTrack School pilot was the initiative of Carolyn Lupton, then Deputy Principal of Armidale High and Jim White, NSW Department of Education Regional Director for New England. In collaboration with BackTrack Founder, Bernie Shakeshaft, funding for the pilot was provided through the NSW Department of Education, and space for the classroom – also known as 'the paddock' – was made in an annexed area of 'the Shed' at the BackTrack premises in Armidale.

Classroom activities in 'the paddock' are led by a NSW Department of Education teacher, with additional support also provided by Backtrack staff, which includes youth workers and

artists-in-residence. Traditional subjects, such as Maths and Literacy, are taught alongside a range of activities including music; sports and recreational training at the local University of New England; healthy eating incentive programs designed by the University of Newcastle; and the Quicksmart online literacy program supported by the University of New England.

Outcomes

For around five percent of young people in Australia, continuing their learning at school is a challenge. Often caught in a cycle of suspension, the traditional school environment does not work for these young people.

Consistent with BackTrack's mission and approach, the BackTrack School learning programs start with where the young person is 'at', finding out his or her prior knowledge, interests and aspirations. Re-engagement and retention in learning are key outcome areas of focus and while it is early days for the pilot, by looking at where the young person is at now rather than laboring over past problems and looking at where they want to be in the future continues to pay dividends.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement	• Students either continuing with the BackTrack school or reengaging with local educational options such as formal school, TAFE or alternative certification training methods.
	• Questions directed at teachers and fellow students in discussion indicate a desire to learn.
	• Discussions continuing out of the classroom.
	• Completion of set tasks.
	• Students requesting continuation and extension of tasks including literacy and numeracy activities.
	• Functional literacy and numeracy which has permitted extended learning options and improved self-competency.
	• Students supporting each other with skills and knowledge (i.e. helping each other).
	• Students referring the program to peers with similar challenges.
	• The students' emotive reactions to the school (i.e. happy, smiling youth!).

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student behavior	• Improved concentration. • Attendance and participation – 'show up and have a go'. • Greater interaction between teacher(s) and students. • Actively participate in creating a safe space to learn for all students. • An absence of behaviours previously seen as standard (e.g. aggression towards staff and students).
Community engagement	• Previously identified rural skills shortage is being addressed by the agricultural and industry training of the BackTrack participants. • Feedback from teachers, parents and the community about improved family engagement and community involvement (e.g. http://vimeo.com/105406986). • Rural skills shortage is being addressed.

Lessons learned

Expanded approaches to learning: In order to evaluate 'what's working' and 'for whom', there is first a need to understand that this particular student demographic is quite individual. They face a broad spectrum of social challenges. Although the formal schooling aspect is a vital part in the reengagement of the youths with their learning and education, it forms a part of the holistic learning program and "by the way" learning opportunities.

As such, we have learnt that we have to create an environment that is not a threat to having a go. By involving the young people in the "rules" of creating a neutral learning space has been a challenge but is starting to have an enormous impact. Some examples include the length of the lessons, using peer pressure in a positive framework to find solutions to use of mobile phones during class and, most recently, finding and trialing activities such as reading to dogs in situations where a young person will not have a go at reading. What we are noticing then is the need for continued creativity and varied teaching methods in educating this largely kinesthetic dynamic group of youths and to incorporate learning opportunities in diverse ways.

Traditional and expansive approaches: Our improvement approaches integrates with the local public schools. We map the learning skills back into the Board of Studies curriculum. This enables the students to be able to receive the applicable study recognition. The resources and time involved in the process are large and can be quite challenging, especially when the available staff are addressing and supporting the youths with social issues. This might include substance abuse, homelessness, significant contact with the legal system, drug and alcohol dependency, mental health concerns and a lack of connectedness to the community.

Act on what you learn: Use of volunteers is a well-regarded approach to improving outcomes for students. In our context, however, we have learned not to persist with this approach in a traditional sense. For the young people we support, having volunteers sit with them in one-on-one reading situation did not work. It seems as though it was too much of a gamble for these students to take the risk of being seen as "dumb" in front of someone that has not had sufficient time to build trust into the partnership. These issues are overcome, however, when the 'volunteers' are of the 'four paw' kind (i.e. dogs). We are learning that volunteers can come in different guises.

Big Picture Education Australia

www.bigpicture.org.au

Innovation

Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) combines academic learning with real-world learning. All BPEA schools are designed around twelve common and interrelated characteristics called 'distinguishers', such as educating 'one student at a time'. The approach deliberately inverts traditional school education by placing the student, their passions and their interests at the centre of the learning process. Creating small schools within schools is a key design feature of the approach, with specific recommendations around the total number of students and teacher-to-student ratio, along with an emphasis on building quality relationships between students, teachers and parents. We believe that authentic learning takes place when each student is an active participant in their education, when their course of study is personalised by teachers, when parents and mentors know them well, and when school-based learning is blended with outside experiences that heighten the student's interest.

Each secondary school student develops a personal learning plan and project with input from an advisory group comprising other students, his/her teacher/advisor, and parents. In a BPEA school, students work two days a week in an interest-based internship, called the *Learning Through Internship* (LTI). The student works with a mentor from the community on their project. Four times a year, students exhibit the outcomes of their work to a public audience. Students learn through their interest projects, in internships and in regular lessons.

Outcomes

The aim of BPEA is to stimulate vital changes in Australian education by generating and sustaining innovative, personalised schools that work in partnership with their broader communities. The focus on whole school change around the twelve design distinguishers arose out of what the research was indicating as the deficiencies of past interventions and the relatively low impact of programs and school reforms on student engagement and achievement outcomes. Within BPEA schools, improvements in these and other outcome areas are sought.

BPEA has collected research and evaluation data from teacher, student and parent

interviews and surveys, school records, site visits and a peer
reviewed research report by Deb Hayes, Barry Down, Deb Talbot
and Kathryn Choules (2013) Big Picture Education Australia:
experiences of students, parents/carers and teachers (Sydney:
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney).

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student learning and engagement	• All BPEA students are required to complete Learning Plans each term and to exhibit what they have learnt four times a year. • Students report: ▸ **(Re)discovering purpose in education** (e.g. *"I was always studying ahead of the other kids in class so when I was repeating work it felt really boring, really difficult to stay interested in coming to school. So coming here gave me the opportunity to do things that are a bit beyond what I could have imagined, to be honest."* (I)) ▸ **Feeling positive about their progress** (e.g. *"My grades from spending a year at Big Picture shot up by a mile…it gives you a good feeling in your stomach, you're like I'm now doing well at school."* (A)) ▸ **With enthusiasm and knowledge about the 'personal interest projects' they are doing** (e.g. *"For my personal interest project I am writing a book on forensic science and how it all works. I have written a chapter on the history of it and now I am writing one on DNA profiling … I'm doing a lot of English due to the writing, lots of science and biology, maths from the blood spatter analysis, which uses trigonometry. And the history of science too."* (A)) ▸ **Improvements in their academic results** (e.g. *"I've noticed a change in my literacy and grammar. Before I could hardly spell. Now I'm developing my vocabulary through all my writing and my projects."* (T)) • Parent anecdotal comments reflect their child has (re)discovered purpose in education (e.g. *"Just over time to see her, how she responded to the program, and her performance and just unlocking a desire for learning was amazing. I sincerely believe she wouldn't have got that in any other way."*) • Students are reconnecting to and completing their schooling (e.g. In BPEA Greenfield sites such as City Campus (TAS) and Cooks Hill Campus (NSW) are re-engaged with learning at their new school. At the end of 2013 over half of Year 12 at Launceston City Campus achieved their Tasmanian Certificate of Education and most of Year 11 were on track to do the same.)

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Social and emotional wellbeing	Formal and informal evidence and approaches show: • **Students and teachers valuing the opportunity to develop close and productive relationships** (e.g. From student surveys, teacher surveys and interviews, and anecdotal feedback, such as *"Teachers at mainstream schools have so many students walking through their doors every year, so you can't really build that relationship with a teacher. But while you're at (name of BP campus) you've got three years with one teacher! So you build an amazing relationship with that teacher … so I reckon there definitely needs to be a teacher relationship or you just go downhill."* (T) and *"In the past, I'd have to rush through the curriculum. Now I think, what are these kids' strengths and how can I help them? Now it's more about depth than quantity."* (Advisory Teacher)) • **Parents also valuing the close and productive relationships between their child and advisory teacher** (e.g. From parent surveys and anecdotal feedback, such as *"His advisory teacher probably knows him better than I do! … I think it's really beautiful because when he does not want to speak to me, he has the trust to speak to her. And as a parent, you can't do everything so to be able to have other people in their lives to help them grow and become the person they are going to be, it takes a big load off my shoulders."* (D's mum)) • **Students articulate their growth in confidence and public speaking skills** (e.g. From regularly exhibiting their work to peers, teachers and family and anecdotal feedback, such as *"I gained more social skills, like I got to be able to talk in front of people, in front of the camera, in front of a big crowd of people that I never thought I'd be able to do because I'm such a shy person but exhibitions have allowed me to become better."* (B)) • **Parents report their child is feeling safe, motivated and is learning** (e.g. From parent surveys and anecdotal feedback, such as *"Those 16 kids have just really bonded and they've become a family and she needs to feel secure … so now she's happy and doing what she needs to do! At last!"* (E's Mum))
Teacher quality	• Teachers in BPEA schools receive substantial professional learning including a five day foundation course for those new to the concept, a two day workshop on how to implement an internship program and various project-based learning workshops. This is both an improvement process for BPEA and an opportunity to gather formal and informal data about the efficacy of the BPEA design. (e.g. Teachers expressing satisfaction with the training and anecdotal comments, such as *"… putting the child first with the goal of the child believing they really matter"*; *"…the chance to work collaboratively on solutions"*; *"I will implement some new strategies within my advisory, present new ideas to the team and try to push some whole school options along."*)

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student capabilities (leadership, maturity, personal and social competence, communication skills)	• Learning approaches, such as the public exhibitions, directly seek to develop a range of student capabilities. • Student anecdotal comments reflect they are developing a range of capabilities leading to, for example, improved understandings of themselves, performance and new social relationships (e.g. *"I stepped up and took leadership roles a lot and I wouldn't have taken leadership roles without the confidence from BP – I could never stand up in front of class before that – so I stepped up." (T); "I actually have friends now!" (I); "…you get all these social skills and you just learn to be an adult." (B)*)
Future Pathways	• Big Picture schools provide a written report each year to BPEA that includes feedback on 'where are the students now'. This provides evidence of the: ▸ Number of students entering university (e.g. some of our schools in WA and the Hunter Valley region of NSW have negotiated entry to local universities, such as Murdoch and Newcastle Universities via portfolio entrance). ▸ Numbers of students achieving vocational education certificates (e.g. students are leaving school already with Certificates 2, 3 and 4 in areas of vocational interest and are thus well on the path to further training and employment). ▸ Numbers of students finding employment (e.g. students find employment as a direct result of the experiences gained and skills demonstrated during an internship completed at a Big Picture school). • Student anecdotal comments reflect a sense of achievement and feeling better prepared for post-school life (e.g. *"The first person in my family to go to university…one of the first Big Picture students to get to university…I feel honoured." (A); "I feel that I'll be more prepared for the workplace - for the world - from Big Picture than any other school could have provided for me." (T); "Big Picture was definitely an advantage because I was able to experience what the industry was like and obtain proficiencies … to go further." (J)*)

> **The first person in my family to go to university… one of the first Big Picture students to get to university… I feel honoured.**

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student behavior	• Most interactions with parents visiting school are positive (e.g. Only 14% of parent visits to BPEA schools were about student behavior problems).
	• All BPEA schools report a fall in the number of student discipline problems, suspensions and bullying. This is believed to be due to a greater engagement and participation in learning, the 'culture of respect' that develops in a small school community where everyone is known, and to teachers having more time to emphasise positive relationships and well being.
	• Teacher anecdotal comments reflect a positive attitude to parent engagement (e.g. *"We made it very clear we wanted families to be there … In the beginning they think they're just there because you're going to say something bad about their kid, but now they know what it's about, they're more than happy to come in, now they give feedback and talk about exhibitions, it's great!" (L, Advisory Teacher)*)
	• Parent anecdotal comments reflect their child's behavior at school has improved (e.g. *"I have found that his level of maturity has gone up in levels because he is treated like an adult. He has so much respect for his teacher. It makes a massive difference." (D's mum)*)
Student attendance and retention	• All BPEA schools report improvements in attendance and retention (e.g. In 2011 and 2012, Grade 10 to 11 retention was between 82% and 92% at BPEA in Montrose Bay and Launceston (TAS); Halls Head Community School (WA) and Cooks Hill Campus (NSW) report that students' attendance is significantly improved compared to in their previous school or program.)
	• Students in BPEA schools have better attendance rates than their mainstream peers (e.g. those in Erindale College (ACT), Scottsdale High and Montrose Bay High (TAS))
	• Students are making reference to their improved attendance (e.g. *"I think I have had only one day off this term. I think last year I had two terms off, so this is a great improvement! I am happy to get out of bed in the morning and come work on things that I am interested in." (A)*)

I have found that his level of maturity has gone up in levels because he is treated like an adult… It makes a massive difference.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Family engagement	• Improved participation of parents in school activities (e.g. BPEA schools report that an average of 90% of students have at least one parent/carer attending their exhibition. This figure increases to 99% in longer established BPEA schools). • In a research document into the experiences of students, parents/carers and teachers with BPEA, parents described a range of positive experiences associated with their child's enrolment in BPEA, including perceptions of transformations in their child's attitude to school, great enjoyment of school and more academic success. • Anecdotal comments reflecting that parents are interested and actively engaged (e.g. *"My mum was a huge part of my education and she had a huge role in that she would come and sit at my exhibitions and I was able to show her exactly what I was doing at school and she was able to see and meet all the people that were behind and supporting me." (G)*)
Community engagement	• Students undertake internships in the community in an area of interest. (This is an integral part of the BPEA design.) • Students are connected to an adult mentor who shares their passion and can help them to engage more deeply with that interest over a long period of time, such as a school term. • Mentors attend students' exhibitions at the end of the internship. • Mentors are making positive anecdotal comments about their relationships with student 'interns' (e.g. *"[Student] approached us and said he'd love to coordinate, or what we call in the trade 'curate' an exhibition', and we said 'That's a great idea, we'd love to work with the high school sector'."; "There would have been about 50 people that have looked and used [student name] work on threatened species in the Tarkine so it's something that's absolutely valuable and real."*)

Lessons learned

Over the past ten years that BPEA has been working in school redesign, we find working across sectors particularly exciting. Our Board of Directors and founders have significant networks that they have developed over thirty years. We have found that there are many within systems of education willing to explore ways of developing new designs for schooling in partnership with BPEA; and we have worked successfully to connect these people to the philanthropic sector. This work extends to other government agencies such as ACARA, curriculum authorities and universities. In addition, we have found common ground with other not-for-profits such as the Stronger Smarter Institute and the Beacon Foundation. This three-way world is more complex, but well worth the pursuit. We now have formal relationships with systems of education, the first not-for-profit redesigning and establishing public schools to achieve this. Along this journey, we have been developing the evidence base for school redesign. Through this we've learned:

Methodology matters: We partnered with three universities to undertake a deep ethnographic piece of research in six schools in three states. Funded by the Origin Foundation, this research included extended and repeat interviews with students, parents and teachers. This approach yielded a substantial depth of information about what BPEA Schools were doing; the 'unique' features of the BPEA model of schooling and the extent BPEA schools were supporting student success across a range of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes. The lesson here is to match what you are trying to find out to the most appropriate approach: don't just pick an approach - 'a Randomised Control Trial' - because others have used this approach or it appears to be 'flavour of the month'.

Data matters: In general, commonly reported data about Australian schools is deficient. At all levels (macro-meso-micro), data about attendance, behavior and retention, while concerning, tends to understate the extent of disengagement and underachievement among young people. We've learned, for example, that school-level research can show that while some students were good attenders in their previous school, they didn't do much work and stayed below the radar. Similarly, we've learned, for example, that using only average attendance figures as an indicator of improvement is limiting.

We've also found it difficult to compare retention data when students change schools. Even states with reasonable data have student tracking problems. We've found that school-by-school 'snapshots' of student retention have been more informative for the school and us, than trying to aggregate and average student retention across very diverse BPEA schools. These school-by-school reports show significant improvements in retention in school and then on to further education, but we're learning that such changes can take time. Our longest established greenfield BPEA school reports that a quarter of its school leavers are now going into tertiary education compared to 5% in their early years as a BPEA school.

In the outcome area of student achievement we've found that 'progress' is best assessed against a student's previous achievements, as there are few 'similar students' against which they can be compared.

Overall, since Big Picture Education Australia began, with regard to data matters, we've concluded that far greater attention needs to be given to the measure of aspects that can really make a difference for students, now and in the future: student engagement in learning, student wellbeing and sustained student achievement.

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Social Ventures Australia – Bright Spots Schools Connection

www.socialventures.com.au/work/sva-bright-spots-schools-connection

Innovation

The SVA Bright Spots Schools Connection (The Connection) supports exceptional school leaders in disadvantaged schools to improve the outcomes of their students. The Connection empowers school leaders to advance their work and builds a network of exceptional educators. By supporting a coalition of Australia's most talented school leaders, SVA seeks to ensure that their work is furthered and that the Australian education system is informed by these schools' examples.

The Connection finds Bright Spots Schools that are achieving great student outcomes in challenging circumstances. Once these schools have been identified, SVA:

▸ Invest capital in talented and proven school leaders to autonomously further their work;

▸ Network the school leaders quarterly to share practice and learn from each other; and

▸ Contribute to a national evidence base of what it takes to be a successful school leader in low SES schools.

In challenged communities, schools provide more than just a place of learning; they're a source of stability. School leaders therefore assume a heightened role in the lives of their students. Great school leaders enable better education outcomes and are shifting the dial of social disadvantage in Australia. Illustrative of a SVA Bright Spot school is Dandenong North Primary School.

Dandenong North Primary School (DNPS) is a Prep to Year six government school in South-Eastern Melbourne, Victoria. The school has over 600 students, with 70% coming from families with a low SES context. The student population has an enormous diversity of cultural and language backgrounds. This includes 46% who were born outside Australia and 60 school families who have arrived in Australia in the past 12 months. 80% of the students speak at least one of 52 languages other than English as their main language at home.

The Bright Spots Schools Connection has enabled DNPS to invest in the professional development of their new teachers. Like many schools in low SES communities, DNPS has a large representation of new teachers in their staff. New teachers typically require greater levels of professional support to accelerate their effectiveness in classroom. Therefore, to further develop their excellent student outcomes, DNPS are using the capital provided by SVA to invest in comprehensive mentoring and coaching for their new teachers.

DNPS are accelerating the effectiveness of their new teachers by providing daily observation, appraisal, and feedback sessions with peers and teacher mentors. New teachers are released from classroom duties to observe classes of recognised highly effective teachers. DNPS are also investing in the external training of their teacher mentors to deliver effective feedback and appraisal when observing new teachers.

Despite this project only being implemented since Term 2 2014, the school leaders of DNPS have seen a notable acceleration in confidence of their new teacher cohort. This confidence is translating to improvements in teaching quality at a rate that the DNPS school leaders have not before seen. By accelerating the professional growth of DNPS new teachers will help ensure that every student is taught by an effective teacher, every day.

Outcomes

A central aim of SVA through The Connection is to improve knowledge and extend the evidence-base on what works to advance education outcomes in disadvantaged communities. To this end, SVA seeks to find, evaluate and support the growth of these 'Bright Spots' in education to help move Australia towards a 'Bright System.'

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Teacher quality	• The core competencies and capabilities of school leaders of the Bright Spot schools who develop strategic successful school partnerships explored through: ▸ Comparative analysis of Bright Spot schools and leaders. ▸ Student learning growth outcomes (e.g. school data and student feedback). ▸ Staff feedback and appraisal (including classroom observations). ▸ Teacher surveys. ▸ Staff retention rates.

Lessons learned

We know that evaluating what we do is critical to understanding what successful school leadership in low SES schools does to improve the education outcomes in disadvantaged communities. So the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) is independently evaluating The Connection. This is a five-year evaluation partnership that is to address two key objectives:

▸ Identify the unique competencies and capabilities of effective school leaders in Bright Spots Powerhouse schools

▸ Measure the impact of the Bright Spots initiative on these schools. ACER is seeking to find the 'counterfactual', that is, what would have been the case in these schools had Bright Spots not been in place.

Through the evaluation, unintended consequences (good and bad) are also being identified.

Work in partnership and develop formative feedback loops: It is important to work with a highly credible and independent evaluation partner, in this case ACER. As part of the evaluation design, we have developed various feedback loops *with* ACER. These include:

▸ Having teams from SVA and ACER ensured that time was well spent co-designing an evaluation process that took into consideration all stakeholder needs. It included ensuring that demands on schools were carefully engineered to be considerate of competing priorities for limited school resources.

▸ Ensuring that processes of data collection are efficient, but also sufficiently comprehensive to collect what details were important.

Complimenting the above, SVA team members visit schools twice a term in support of school teams and to broker partner relationships such as the important relationship with ACER. These and other processes provide 'check points' for us all on how we are progressing. This helps develop trust in each other and in the evaluation processes. We use the evidence gathered through these feedback processes to inform the project design and any necessary adjustments.

time was well spent co-designing an evaluation process that took into consideration all stakeholder needs

Fogarty EDvance
(part of the Fogarty Foundation)

www.fogartyedvance.org.au

Innovation

Fogarty EDvance (FED) aims to improve the educational outcomes of children attending schools located in low socio-economic communities. The focus of this case is FED's School Improvement Program (SIP), designed to build school leadership capability and increase a school's effectiveness. A total of 20 schools are currently undertaking the SIP, as part of two separate cohorts, with their participation lasting three years.

The SIP is designed for the school's principal and leadership team, with a key output from the Program being the creation and delivery of a major school improvement plan. Support from the SIP includes: regular one-on-one mentoring and coaching; a customized and carefully spaced program of course work and skill building; access to, and implementation of, diagnostic inventories of effectiveness; and facilitated and regular face-to-face cohort meetings. These meetings serve as a support network and opportunity for leaders to share expertise and reflections on the change process.

The SIP's on-the-job learning program has been made all the more powerful by the presence of the mentors who support individual schools throughout the three years of the Program. Principals and leadership team members have found these mentors invaluable in assisting them to process, reflect on and apply the lessons learned through workshops and cohort meetings as they effect change at their individual schools. In addition, the mentor component allows the program deliverers to 'stay close' to each school without being a noticeable presence or influencing the journey directly.

Outcomes

Equity in education remains a significant issue in Australia and schools in low SES communities are facing increasing challenges and complexity. After researching interventions that have shown to be successful in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and also by considering best practice in business, a cross-sectoral team was brought together from government,

education, philanthropy and business to develop the program that has now become Fogarty EDvance. The program is based on the lessons learned from reviewing other successful initiatives, namely that a longitudinal and highly supportive program could yield significant improvements in educational outcomes for students in low SES communities. Consistent with this proposition, and as part of the SIP process, each school identifies what it needs to focus on and then implements change with the support of the SIP. As a result, there is a wide spectrum of outcomes sought and improvements that schools are noticing (evidence and approaches). In addition, the SIP monitors three key outcome areas across all the schools: student attendance, student behavior and student, staff and parent engagement.

The outcomes and improvements listed in the following table do not reflect everything that the schools are focused on and neither do the examples pertain to each school that is involved in the SIP. Instead, the list is an illustrative example.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Quality teaching	Teachers: • Use of appropriate learning technologies (IT) in the classroom (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand teacher confidence and capability in the use and application of learning technologies across the curriculum). • Seeking to understand specific areas of student learning and achievement (e.g. sight-word knowledge and spelling performance using testing standards such as the SA Spelling Test). Students: • Pre-primary exit scores for reading and mathematics (e.g. using Performance Indicators in Primary Schools – PIPS data). • Achievement in various school's tests of literacy and numeracy (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand student achievement in numeracy relative to national minimum standards and/or state averages) and other national testing standards such as PIPS, PATR, PATM). • Percentage of students studying Stage 2 English or Maths through monitoring enrolment records. • Gain and growth scores in NAPLAN reading and numeracy looking for a reduction in red flags on relevant dimensions.

continued

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
School leadership	• Seeking to understand and then build leadership skills and capabilities pre-SIP and at key points throughout the SIP (e.g. Principals complete a leadership measurement tool, such as AITSL Principal Standards). • Leadership staff use of research based tools and strategies to plan their school improvement plan (e.g. the University of Queensland's Diagnostic Inventory of School Alignment, which maps the student, staff and parent views of the school's operations against a suite of key criteria that align with the core content of the SIP's workshops and framework) • Seeking to understand the overall school morale, teacher and staff engagement via the use of independent, external diagnostic tools.
Student attendance	• Full or part day student attendance data from state system records and comparing this to school level records of student attendance, paying particular attention to improvements in attendance of students who have historically attended school the least.
Student retention and Year 12 outcomes	Evidence gathered through education system data of: • The percentage of students entering Year 11 who then complete Year 12. • Percentage of students achieving a Certificate II qualification or higher or a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). • Percentage of students achieving an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR score) due to being able to complete the necessary requirements
Student behavior	• An improvement in student behaviour at school identified through teacher feedback, regular surveys or education system statistics about classroom behavior.
Student *and* teacher engagement	Students: • External, independent surveys of students seeking to understand student motivation Teachers: • External, independent surveys of teachers seeking to understand teacher engagement and the quality of teaching • All staff familiar with Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) requirements for future years (e.g. one school has developed its own method for understanding its teachers' familiarity with these requirements so that lesson planning can be improved).

improvement in student behaviour at school identified through teacher feedback

continued

Fogarty EDvance (part of the Fogarty Foundation)   www.fogartyedvance.org.au

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Family engagement	• Percentage of Aboriginal families participating actively in supporting their child's education in the home (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand family engagement by mapping how well connected the student is with the school, his or her family and his or her community. This then enables an action plan to be developed). • Involvement of parent members in the School Board or Council (e.g. evidence in membership and meeting records) • Seeking to understand parent involvement in, and engagement with the school, through response rates, and responses to, independent, external surveys of involvement. • Parent attendance at meetings, events and functions (e.g. schools are monitoring how many parents attend key events and aim to increase attendance over the time of the SIP and beyond) • The number of parents providing help in primary classrooms (e.g. one school has developed its own approach to engaging parents in the early years classrooms, in support of their children's learning and adjustment to the school environment)

Lessons learned

Sustainable school improvement takes time: The first cohort of schools is participating in its third year of the program and has shown positive improvements as a result of its involvement. The pace of change observed by us, however, is consistent with the view of leading academics in the field that significant, sustainable change takes between 5 and 7 years to achieve. As a result, our program has worked to establish a solid foundation for change within each participating school – through a strong, aligned culture, reduction in behavioural issues, etc – so that the journey can continue beyond the school's three year involvement with our program. Awareness of this issue also saw us focus on ensuring each cohort group is very strong so that the Principals and leadership team members participating in the program are able to stay connected and support each other beyond the end of the SIP. In addition, we are also creating an alumni program so that schools can remain focused on the improvement agenda and we can continue to support their learning and networks in a positive manner.

Choose your metrics wisely: Although conscious at the beginning of the program that social change is complex, and given that major, sustainable change takes significant time, we are encouraging our second cohort to focus on lead indicators (e.g. engagement, attendance, behaviour) more than lag indicators (NAPLAN results) as the former may be the most appropriate for improvement programs that are limited to the short term (e.g. three years or less). In addition, lessons from our first cohort (participating from mid-2012 to mid-2015) have shown that schools can have a tendency to take on too many improvement initiatives and thus may achieve better results by prioritising, so we are being more directive with our cohort two schools as they set their KPIs by the end of 2014. In addition, schools in the first cohort set targets that may not be able to be measured on an annual basis, thus making it difficult to track progress over the duration of our program. Future participants are encouraged to identify more frequently measured progress markers in addition to more significant, longer-term KPIs.

Hands On Learning Australia: The Hands On Learning method

www.handsonlearning.org.au

Innovation

Hands On Learning (HOL) is a method used by schools to reengage students who otherwise fall between the cracks. The HOL method is predicated on the formation of respectful relationships that are both enduring and endemic to the students' normal environment. To these ends the structure of HOL is intended to establish an environment *within the school itself*. The focus is on forming and maintaining quality relationships between disengaged students, peers and adults for periods of time measured in years rather than weeks. Teams of ten cross-age students work with two adults on creative building projects around the school and community, effectively providing these vulnerable young people a place to belong, people to belong to, real things to do, and a chance to contribute to their local community.

Outcomes

Schooling has a pivotal role to play in young people's lives. Government secondary schools, or indeed all schools catering to disadvantaged communities, face many pressures making it difficult to cater to the needs of all students, particularly those who are disengaged. The dominant culture currently privileges academic success above all and this creates an incentive for schools to exclude disengaged students, especially disruptive ones. As such, the impetus for HOL to begin was the need to give schools an alternative to exclusion.

HOL's approach privileges relationships with disengaged students. By providing students with emotional support and developing their social skills and capabilities, it is possible to 'turn around' these students so they reconnect to their academic schooling in a more positive way than they did before.

In a number of cases, the same evidence can identify improvements across different outcome areas. For example, pre and post data on a student's intra-personal skills can assist with the clarity of analysis and understanding around 'student behaviour', 'social and emotional wellbeing', 'student engagement' and the development of specific 'student capabilities'.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement **Social and emotional wellbeing** **Student behavior**	• Self-management skills (e.g. is able to prioritise activities and manage their time in order to meet deadlines, is able to follow instructions etc.) • Changes in students' own detention rates (e.g. are they increasing or decreasing?) • Changes in students' own suspension rates (e.g. are they increasing or decreasing?) • Inter-personal skills (e.g. is able to listen and communicate clearly with others, is able to resolve differences without resorting to violence or confrontation etc.) • Achievement of short-term micro-social skills, referred to as focus plans in the HOL context (e.g. show us you can look people in the eye when you speak to them, show us you don't always have to have the last word etc.) • Relationships with other students (e.g. Ability/inability for students to form constructive and cohesive relationships with peers) • Relationships with HOL artisan-teachers (e.g. Ability/inability for students to form constructive and cohesive relationships with the HOL artisan-teachers) • Relationships with classroom teachers (e.g. Ability/inability for students to form constructive and cohesive relationships with their classroom teachers – evidenced by feedback to and from teachers, frequency of disciplinary incidents, and reflections of the students themselves during focus plan sessions)
Student capabilities: resilience; personal and social competence; functional literacy and numeracy, leadership, critical and creative thinking	• Intra-personal skills (e.g. is able to exercise self-control, is able to bounce back or get over things etc.) • Literacy and numeracy skills (e.g. is able to read and understand written instructions, is able to do basic maths etc.) • Roles undertaken within HOL team (e.g. taking on the role of team leader for a particular job within a project, being an encourager of others, teaching someone a new skill etc.)

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Quality teaching	• Collection of pre-/post- baseline, and daily logbook, data (e.g. successful completion of pre- and post-baseline data to assess student ability before and after HOL, and completion of daily logbook tracking student performance across a variety of measures) • Attendance and active participation (e.g. vocal contributions, partnering with other schools on community projects, utilizing shared resources etc.) in school cluster meetings, regional meetings, and the HOL annual conference. • Engagement of teachers at the learning gatherings noted above • Observations and assessment by HOL support staff of their practice via day-to-day operations, communication and working with others in the school, competence with practice elements, management of OH&S, maintenance of evidence of educational outcomes • Participation in annual events, including regional raft races, billy cart derby, and annual conference • Diversity of HOL projects (major, minor, long-term, short-term, community focused etc.) and completion rates (indicative of the impact HOL is having in the school and community)
Student attendance	• School Attachment (e.g. has a positive attitude to school, attends school regularly) • Attendance records • Unexplained absence frequency • Attitude toward academic subjects • Student achievement data is used to help clarify and understand 'where a student is at' and shifts in student achievement over time and whether this might correlate to their attendance, behavior, engagement (e.g. national and within school test results, and value-added data)
Student retention	• School Attachment (as noted above) • Real retention measure (not apparent). (i.e. real retention relates to which students in Year 10 started at the school in Year 7, while apparent retention relates to the number of students in Year 10 compared to the number of students in Year 7 – it is possible to have greater than 100% apparent retention, while real retention must always be less than or equal to 100%)

> Student achievement data is used to help clarify and understand 'where a student is at' and shifts in student achievement over time

continued

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Family engagement	• How many parents and students turn up to 'HOL pizza nights' during Parent/Teacher Interviews at the school • Frequency and number of parent volunteers involved with HOL • Changes in Parent Attitude to School survey (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/performsurveyparent.aspx) • Incidental feedback from Parents
Community engagement	• Participation in Community projects • Participation in annual inter-school HOL billy cart and Raft races • Reduced vandalism rates in the local community • Proactive identification and nomination of community projects - such as community gardens, hall restorations, boardwalks, decking etc. - provide a vehicle for at risk young people to make a positive contribution to their local community as a way of increasing their sense of belonging, and improving their perception within the community

Lessons learned

Individual and program-wide data: We realised early on that while it is obvious to students, parents, and teachers what a difference HOL makes with young people, these improvements were as individual as the students themselves. Therefore, in addition to these individual improvements, we have learned that it is important to establish some sort of regular data collection from the HOL practitioners (the HOL team, students, teachers and families) about aspects of the method that were sufficiently general so we could aggregate these more personal improvements *and* capture 'method-wide' improvements. As part of this approach, we ensure baseline assessment data and post-HOL 'intervention' data is gathered around our priority outcome areas (e.g. student pre- and post-HOL method interpersonal skill data).

Capacity building with schools: Given that we had identified the need to capture very specific data, and we were in the fortunate position to have dedicated staff implementing our method, over time we realized the importance of developing an easy to use framework and provide specific support to

improvements were as individual as the students themselves.

it is important to establish some sort of regular data collection

the dedicated HOL staff at each school to assist with their data collection. Such resources and specialized expertise are often not available within our school system, particularly in the less well-resourced government sector. If as a not-for-profit we did not support HOL schools in this way, there would be no true and accurate way to understand how and why our method works.

Joined up resourcing and learning: Alongside our current evaluation practices, over the years we have learned to look for and be open to opportunities where we can align (not 'shoe-horn') our evaluation needs with other organisations. For example, we are working on a joint project with The Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne and several other not-for-profits that also connect with schools. The project has developed and is evaluating a framework that identifies three key strands of student 'Connection (e.g. How much did you feel listened to today? How effective did your team or class feel today?), Control or Capacity (e.g. How much did you feel you got to use or improve your skills or learn some new skills today?), and Meaning (e.g. How much of what you did today felt like it mattered to you or was part of something important?) (CCM)'.

In HOL, the quality of relationships is viewed as a critical success factor for reengaging disengaged school students. So this joint project is allowing us to 'test' this assumption in a broader context with external feedback and joint learning sessions with other project 'partners'. In this sense, the project is a source of data as well as an improvement strategy for us. Through the CCM Framework, we are trialing gathering data from students, through a questionnaire, about the kinds of things that make a difference to how they feel about school and themselves. The CCM Framework is being piloted with other agencies and we hope it can start to form a shared basis for measuring the impact of relationship-based projects like HOL. We welcome hearing from others who might be interested in further collaboration.

> we have learned to look for and be open to opportunities where we can align (not 'shoe-horn') our evaluation needs with other organisations.

> the quality of relationships is viewed as a critical success factor for reengaging disengaged school students.

Ardoch Youth Foundation – Stonnington Primary School

www.ardoch.asn.au

Innovation

Ardoch Youth Foundation works with over fifty schools and early childhood centres across Australia. They have a focus on volunteer based programs and respond to school and student needs in each setting through their locally based Education Partnership Coordinator. Ardoch notes that their partnership with Stonnington Primary School is one of their best practice examples. Feedback from volunteers at the school shows they feel fully part of the school community; that they understand their impact on student wellbeing and learning; they feel valued, supported; and that their skills and time are being well used.

Ardoch's Education Partnership Coordinator for inner Melbourne works with the school's leadership team to identify needs, review progress and support the volunteers. The partnership includes:

▸ Ardoch volunteers (skilled volunteers support students in the classroom with literacy and numeracy, learning and wellbeing)

▸ Broadening Horizons (providing students in areas of high need with inspiring learning and life experiences, includes excursions, camps, sport, art and music activities)

▸ Learning Essentials (resources and services to address barriers to education for children and young people, including emergency food and stationery packs) and access to partnerships with other agencies (e.g. FareShare)

There are currently seventeen Ardoch volunteers at Stonnington Primary School, providing over 300 hours of volunteer time in the classroom each term. Many of these volunteers attend the regular Ardoch professional development training sessions. The volunteer retention rate is the highest for Ardoch partner schools.

Outcomes

There was a synergy between Stonnington Primary School's priority on student wellbeing to facilitate improving student learning and the Ardoch Youth Foundation's mission and approach (e.g. to overcome barriers to students' full participation in education through mobilising volunteers). This synergy led to Ardoch mobilising volunteers in the school's local area to support children's education and welfare.

Building capacity to support schools through volunteers is an ongoing process and doesn't end once volunteers are trained and placed. There is a need for ongoing training, support, communication and management, both by the school and Ardoch Education Partnership Coordinators. From the regular Ardoch professional development training sessions for volunteers on, for example how best to support literacy and numeracy teaching, Ardoch is noticing this has positive benefits. The partnership with Stonnington has helped to develop a more resilient and cohesive community with positive learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. The community also benefits from the positive social and emotional wellbeing outcomes for the volunteers themselves and the opportunities to support the education and raise the aspirations of local students. It increases the knowledge, skills and capacity of volunteers to support the learning and wellbeing of students at Stonnington Primary School. In turn, this enables the volunteers to play a more active role in the school and local community and improve the long-term prospects for the children and young people with whom they work.

In addition, they are also noticing improvement from other evidence and approaches.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Social and emotional wellbeing	Students: • Have positive relationships with at least one adult outside their family. • Are connected to a positive adult role model through regular volunteer support at the school. • Talk in class and with volunteers about their future aspirations and expectations. • Show improved competence in literacy and numeracy. • Show improved attendance, particularly those with previously poor attendance rates.

positive relationships … outside their family

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Community engagement	• Volunteers believe they are more skilled and confident as a result of Ardoch's professional learning and training, as reflected in their feedback to the annual survey of volunteers. • Shifts in a volunteer's experience and their perceptions of their impact and their level of engagement in the school/kindergarten, through volunteer pulse checks' mid-year, a survey at the end of each academic year and exit interviews volunteers • Numbers of volunteers and the time they have contributed, captured through attendance sheets at each host setting. • Volunteer retention rates. • Greater local community engagement in the school (e.g. peer-to-peer activities with students from Presentation College Windsor and FareShare providing fruit and other food, both originally facilitated by Ardoch with relationships managed by the school).
School leadership	Through Ardoch's regular planning and review meetings with the school leadership and a mid- and end-of-year survey of staff, school staff are: • Utilising and retaining skilled volunteers to support children's education. • Showing greater expertise in tailoring community resources to meet their school's identified needs. • Accessing additional services for students through Ardoch's facilitation that they otherwise did not know about or have the time or skills to investigate (e.g. FareShare)

Volunteers believe they are more skilled and confident

Lessons learned

Evaluate: We developed a program logic framework to assist us evaluate our impact. This has helped us to clarify for Ardoch the outcomes we are seeking from our work with schools and communities. In relation to short-term outcomes, we focus on participatory action research approaches, such as cyclical outcomes-based planning, observing and reflecting, including stakeholder feedback. Indicators of long-term impact are monitored through year-on-year shifts in student, family, school and community behaviour and educational progress sourced from the school's data.

Kids Thrive: InSchools Philanthropy

www.kidsthrive.org.au

Innovation

The Kids Thrive *InSchools Philanthropy* (KTISP) program enables primary school-aged children to connect with their communities through philanthropy. Young children engage with their significant adults, the professionals who work with them, and with the communities through arts based experiences.

The children use music, writing, play-acting, drawing and dance to understand and explore philanthropy, community and their personal values and motivators. The children then initiate and forge partnerships with local organisations that share their values to create and deliver projects to benefit their communities.

Outcomes

Young children can play a pivotal role in bringing communities together and leading positive social change. Children are rarely considered as agents for social change, however Kids Thrive's child-led approach supports children to: develop a positive sense of self; engage with their communities; and create the world in which *they* want to live. This approach recognises that children are able to initiate and lead positive change from their own perspective for the benefit of all. In practice, Kids Thrive defines this approach as children:

▶ Taking a lead in identifying community strengths, and finding ways to increase those strengths through their own actions;

▶ Identifying community problems and finding solutions and actions they can take to remedy that problem - with or without the support of adults;

▶ Taking life-transforming ideas and skills back into their homes and communities, leading their adults by example into new ways of being in the world.

The approach requires adults to:

▶ Respect children as capable and able to achieve great things;

▶ Give children space to be deep and insightful people;

▶ Create opportunities for children to participate in community decision-making;

▶ Accept children's offers and viewpoints respectfully;

▶ Be open to having our entrenched prejudices or limitations challenged and even changed by children.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student capabilities: Personal and social competencies	Students are: • More organized and demonstrate improved time management; • Setting and achieving goals; • Functioning as part of larger group of students to develop and implement a project from start to finish; • More able - post the KTISP program - to direct their own learning; • Making phone calls to community groups on their own. • Developing budgets and managing finances
Student capabilities: Leadership	Students are: • Willing to try something new; • Using their experience of KTISP as evidence of their leadership skills in their 'pitch' for school captain speeches; • Initiating and forging relationships with local community groups; • Initiating policy changes at school (e.g. flying the Aboriginal flag)
Student behaviour	• Students are referring to themselves now as philanthropists – this cultural shift is noticeable in the playground with one school teacher and principal noticing that the students in the program are being more helpful and considerate in the school yard; • Students are listening to each other respectfully in their project teams. • Students are working supportively in their project teams with other children who are not in their friendship circle.
Student engagement	• When the Kids Thrive team arrives at a school, students are already waiting for them at the gate. • Students are working on their community projects out of school hours; • Students are working on their community projects even when it is not a set task; • Students talk in positive ways about KTISP, "I want to do this forever!" • Students with previously unexpressed attention to detail in their school work or its aesthetics now do so; • Students' body language changes in the sessions from just sitting in a chair to leaning forward; walking to walking confidently; • Teachers and parents discovering things about their students/ children they did not know they could do or had an interest in.

I want to do
this forever!

Kids Thrive: InSchools Philanthropy   www.kidsthrive.org.au

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Family engagement	• The student-led projects are giving families a way to have a community-focused conversation at home; • Family members 'tear-up' as they see and hear their children caring and doing something about a community issue; • Attendance of family members, who previously had minimal contact with the school, at the students' showcasing of their community projects and/or volunteering to be on the students' funding panel.
Community engagement	• Students know of community organisations in their local area that they did not know of or have a relationship with before KTISP; • Connections with community are being made in ways not normally done by students - via philanthropy; via doing their own research; via direct approaches; via informal conversations. • Talking with members of the community that otherwise had not been talked to by children; • Students are valuing their 'local' community context through such comments as, "the world is full of bad news… more important things are happening in front of us, but we can't see them because we are looking at bigger things. You need to look at the small stuff as well" and "it felt good to help the mums". • Members of community organisations are turning up to KTISP events, and participating in the program with students.

Two small evaluations were undertaken of the KTISP program in 2013: The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation commissioned an evaluation of the program in three primary schools; and the Maldon Community Bank (a local program delivery partner) undertook an internal and community-based evaluation in three regional primary schools. The evaluators gathered feedback through interviews with teachers, principals, students and community organisations. This formal method, as well as the informal day-to-day observations of the Kids Thrive team, teachers and principals helped to elicit what students now know and are able to do; who they now know in their communities that they did not know before; and their ongoing engagement with philanthropy and community.

Lessons learned

Ongoing learning and communication: Kids Thrive undertakes constant reflection about the processes and outcomes of the KTISP program, whilst it is being delivered, and at the end of each program cycle. Trainers and directors are in regular conversation with teachers, principals and community members to gauge their responses, and observations of the students as they progress through the course of the program.

Just as KTISP encourages students to disconnect from IT and practice social and relationship building skills, so Kids Thrive staff are encouraged to forge relationships with students, teachers, school and community leaders to ensure honest conversations and reflections continuously build the program.

Spend time with evaluators: Independent evaluation sits side-by-side with our learning and relationship building processes. This ensures we create space for critical feedback and to provide additional data and analysis. In order to achieve useful outcomes in the evaluation process it is important to spend time with the evaluator, ensuring they have a deep understanding of the aims of the project – and how it might differ from other programs they have evaluated. This keeps the focus of the evaluation on the aims of the project. It also ensures the emerging data is relevant and useful to the schools and to us at Kids Thrive, as well as the ongoing growth of the program.

Approaches can serve improvement and evaluation purposes: Keen observation and journal keeping are the key tools we use in our evaluation 'tool box'. When delivering programs in schools, we work side-by-side with teachers who are, after all, with their students every day. From this we can learn from the teachers' observations understanding of their students. For example, we listen to their comments, note their observations, and compare them to our own – as the outside 'eyes' who see the students afresh. Using this approach, we improve our program and we gather systematic evaluative data from student 'case studies' – "Waleed is so shy he will find it challenging to participate" ending with "I can't believe Waleed led the presentation, and approached the leader of the community organisation to ask if he can become a member."

Cowan Grants Pty: Young Endeavour grant

www.cowangrant.org

Innovation

Cowan Grants support a number of scholarships at universities in South Australia and Queensland for students experiencing financial, geographic and other forms of disadvantage. Depending on the grant, students use the financial support in different ways. This may include contributing to the purchase of a musical instrument or assisting with travel and accommodation expenses. Overall, Cowan grants help students attend and fully engage in their learning and development at university. Since its inception, $2 million in Cowan Grants have been provided.

One specific grant, designed to expose and enhance a student's social and leadership capabilities, is the Cowan Young Endeavour grant. This unique experiential learning opportunity is offered through the University of South Australia and James Cook University, Cairns Australia. To be eligible, students between the ages of 16-23 need to be enrolled fulltime in any of the university's programs and demonstrate their financial disadvantage, educational merit and provide a personal written statement. The grant of $5,000 covers travel expenses and enables a student to access the 11-day Young Endeavour sailing program with 23 other young people.

Outcomes

The Cowan Grants provide a vehicle for improving student outcomes. These include improving post-school transitions into tertiary education; academic achievement; student confidence and the development of personal, social and leadership capabilities.

Assisting students to overcome financial barriers to post-school learning has been an enduring focus for Cowan Grants, with the Cowan family believing strongly in the benefits of tertiary education. In addition, over the last couple of years, Cowan Grants have also taken a strong interest in the benefits of experiential learning opportunities because these can help foster leadership development through exposing students to different and challenging experiences. The Young Endeavour grant is illustrative of such an experience.

Discovering whether the grants have gone to those most in need and are helping to improve student outcomes can be a challenge.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Post-school transitions	• Meetings with all scholarship recipients. The Cowan family makes a point of trying to meet all recipients at a formal scholarship ceremony. • Family member anecdotes about how recipients have used the grant and to what effect (e.g. what have been their post-school transitions experiences, employment opportunities etc).
Student capabilities personal and social competence; confidence; leadership	• Family member anecdotes about the impact of the grant in terms of personal and social competence. Over the years, through conversations, family members have become attuned to identifying the impact of a grant (e.g. sometimes parents will spontaneously describe the changes in their child). • Anecdotes from students reflecting on how the experience has changed them (e.g. improved confidence, a shift from feelings of apprehension to feelings as expressed in such statements as, 'it's been a life changing experience'). • Student summaries of their experiences are compared to their personal written statement prior to selection to identify shifts in attitudes, leadership development and confidence.

Lesson learned

The need for quality relationships: Quality assurance is the most difficult part of administering grants. We have talked about tracking grant recipients over a number of years, but the most important lesson we have learned is to get to know and work with the people who are selecting the grant recipients. This builds trust and transparency. In turn, this leads to fully frank conversations about what is and is not working.

Doxa Youth Foundation: Doxa Cadetship Program

www.doxa.org.au

Innovation

Doxa Youth Foundation has been creating education-based opportunities for young people since 1973. Three programs form Doxa's core activities: a camps program located at Malmsbury and the Melbourne CBD; a school in Bendigo providing an alternative education program; and the Doxa Cadetship Program. Collectively, these programs reach 5,000 Victorian children and young people (8-24 year olds) each year. This case focuses on the Cadetship Program.

The concept of the Doxa Cadetship Program emerged quite unconventionally after a series of meetings between prominent Melbourne-based businessmen in the early 1990s. Through these discussions, the development of the social and professional capital of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was identified as a need to be addressed. The first intake of cadets was in 1993.

Through a recruitment process, talented young people are identified in Year 12. Recruits are provided with a suite of supports over a three to four year period to enable them transition from school to a tertiary and professional pathway. These supports include: a living allowance; a new suit (important for tertiary and employment interviews); a book allowance; professional learning (e.g. how to network in social settings); and eight weeks of an annual work placement, under the guidance of a matched

industry mentor. Through these combined resources, skills and experience, the Cadetship Program seeks to accelerate the development of each cadet to become a highly successful graduate.

Since 1993, 425 graduates have come through the program and now work as professionals in some of the largest companies in Australia and internationally.

Outcomes

Compounded or multiple layers of disadvantage can have the most dramatic effect on the educational potential of a young person. With this in mind and staying true to the original need for the program, Doxa's attention focuses on improving transition pathways to further learning and employment for cadets. Related to this, they also seek to improve a cadet's leadership, personal and social capabilities and engagement in learning. More broadly, the 'buy in' from business, philanthropy and, more recently, other collaborating not-for-profits, is believed as critical to the program's success. As such, community engagement from these perspectives is also an integral outcome area of focus.

'buy in' from business, philanthropy and other collaborating not-for-profits, is believed as critical to the program's success.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Transitions further learning and employment	• Number of cadet graduates in full-time employment after program completion. • Comparing the full-time employment rates of Doxa Cadet graduates to the national full-time employment rates of non-Doxa university graduates. • Retention rates of cadets as they progress through university.
Student capabilities leadership	• Number of cadets trained and utilised as public speakers to promote the program at school and Doxa events. • Number of cadets specialising on higher profile projects within their sponsor company. • Number of cadets taking on community, training and leadership responsibility inside and outside of placement.
Student capabilities personal and social competencies	• Observing cadets at networking social occasions with business leaders. Immediately prior to the 'event', the cadets are coached in networking, how to introduce and excuse themselves to a person or group; asking questions and active listening. They then get the opportunity to immediately practice what they have just learned with the business leaders. • Participation in broader activities such as SRCs, sport community involvement. These are checked and encouraged from application and throughout cadet involvement.
Student engagement	• Involvement of alumni in current cadet program (e.g. as peer-to-peer guest speakers). • Ratio of cadet attendance at professional development camps, social events, participation in social media avenues and drop in rates at office.
Community engagement of key 'stakeholders' – e.g. business	• Retention of businesses year-on-year. • Number of cadets a business takes on. • Increased diversification of business involvement from individual sponsors to trainers, event attendees, in-kind supporters and financial program sponsors. • Champions spread – what starts as support from one champion spreads to other business units and in many cases becomes a whole of business partnership.

They then get the opportunity to immediately practice what they have just learned

Lessons learned

Use of external expertise: The Cadetship Program is well established and the number of businesses and young people involved has grown. This could lead us to take a 'business as usual' approach, but we know that factors internal and external to the program won't necessarily stay the same. So periodically, we draw in external groups to work with us to ensure we are maximising the impact of our programs. For example, from a recent review of the Doxa Cadetship Program with The University of Melbourne, we now work with a group of not-for-profit organisations, including The Smith Family, Teach for Australia, Western Chances, Ganbina and Skyline. From another focused piece of research on the key development phases of young people by Regina Hill Effective Consulting, this has led us to rethink the age groups we work with (at the 'engagement and aspiration' phase of Year 9 students) and how we might do so. These investments in our own learning allow us to gather data *and* simultaneously see improvement opportunities that we might have otherwise missed. This is beneficial to Doxa, but more broadly to the collective impact we and other organisations can have on young people with tertiary potential.

Feedback: It is important to understand the needs of each supporter to maximise their experience. This is key to the growth and longevity of the Cadetship program. Our formal program design processes not only assist us develop relationships with our sponsor companies, but they also provide opportunities for gathering important informal feedback. We visit sponsor companies twice over the course of a year. These visits help us gauge company goals and methods of how they can be acknowledged for their efforts. For example, company A may wish to support young female engineers while company B may wish to support young people from regional Victoria. Knowledge of these goals has seen Doxa jointly win company awards, place media both externally and within the company publications and create opportunities for companies to use their expertise to train young people.

Tomorrow:Today Foundation - Education Benalla Program

www.tomorrowtoday.com.au

Innovation

The Education Benalla Program is a large-scale community initiative that works with Benalla and district families, all schools in Benalla, public sector agencies including local government, small and large community groups and businesses. Now in its fifth year of a planned 10-year implementation period, the desired outcome is that by 2030 the education and training completion rates for Benalla 17-24 year olds will equal or exceed the Victorian State average.

Within the program are a number of specific sub-programs focussed on four specific areas:

▶ School readiness and early years (0 to 8 years sub-program

▶ Wellbeing of students (focus on teenagers) sub-program

▶ Transition to tertiary education sub-program

▶ Community Grants (small grants to community groups for projects that help address identified local issues).

The Tomorrow:Today Foundation has commissioned a team from the University of Melbourne to evaluate the program. This evaluation seeks to report on the achievement of the program's desired long-term outcomes, aims and objectives and the implementation of identified sub-programs.

For the purpose of the LLEAP Guide, three of these sub-programs have been selected for the purpose of exploring examples of evidence used to help report on improvements. These are presented below.

> the desired outcome is that by 2030 the education and training completion rates for Benalla 17-24 year olds will equal or exceed the Victorian State average

Early Years Programs

Innovation

The PEEP (Parents Early Education Partnership) program and playgroups encourage parents to interact with their children through, songs, rhymes, stories and play. These programs and playgroups also assist parents/carers in increasing their parenting skills and confidence. Whole of community collaboration across agencies is also promoted through a combined early years plan.

Outcomes

As part of the objectives of the overall Education Benalla Program, the key outcome is to address the fact that over 30% of Benalla children who start school each year are identified as vulnerable on one or more domains by the Australian Early Development Census.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement	• Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data • Number of children starting school who have attended pre-school • Increased library membership for children aged 0 to 6 • Numbers of absences recorded for children registered at pre-school to assist in identifying barriers to attendance • A staff observation form for each child details engagement with activities; interaction with other children; ability to listen, cooperate and follow instructions; communication with others; level of independence; levels of aggression.
Family engagement	• Number of families participating in early years activities across the municipality • Number and frequency of parents reading to their children as recorded in a community wide reading program • Increase in the breast feeding rates for the municipality • Staff observation form for each parent/carer details engagement with child; participation in activities; sharing books with child; confidence in parenting role and knowledge; management of child's behaviour; support for child's independence (form attached) • Parent self-reporting observations re themselves and child

Reading Buddies

Innovation

This sub-program represents a partnership with local primary schools to improve literacy by providing volunteers to work 1:1 with Prep, Grade 1 and 2 students identified as not meeting reading and writing levels. The Tomorrow:Today Foundation finds, trains (including literacy training) and supports volunteers. Schools coordinate the classroom and child connection and complete evaluation forms.

Outcomes

As part of the objectives of the overall Education Benalla Program, the key outcome is to address the fact that Benalla students are well below the state average for NAPLAN results in reading, writing and numeracy. Other projects and activities in the Education Benalla Program are focussed on improving community-wide NAPLAN measures; whereas Reading Buddies specifically targets children who are significantly behind in their literacy levels.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement **Student attendance** **Student behaviour** **Student capabilities**	• An evaluation form is completed by teachers for each student recording details of evident improvement in such areas as writing output, level of academic confidence, use of interesting language, current reading level, current spelling level, attendance at school, attendance on reading Buddy days, punctuality, other valid information. • A simple student feedback from using emoticons to assess how they feel about being in the program. • NAPLAN results.
Parent / Family engagement	• Number of families attending thankyou celebrations for Reading Buddies. • Number of families attending thankyou celebration for Reading Buddies who have not previously attended a school function.
Community engagement	• Reading buddy volunteers are surveyed to determine level of satisfaction with role.

Connect9 mentoring program

Innovation

This community mentoring program is run for a one term duration, twice a year. Approximately twenty Year 9 students are matched to volunteer mentors. The program is designed to connect them to the Benalla community to learn new skills, explore local opportunities, and learn more about careers.

Outcomes

As part of the objectives of the overall Education Benalla Program, the key outcome is to address the fact that Benalla teenagers generally report low levels of wellbeing, compared to state-wide averages as documented in the Student Attitudes to School Survey. In addition, family and community members have low expectations for students to go on to tertiary education or training.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Social and emotional wellbeing	• A Health and Wellbeing survey is administered at beginning and end of program
Student engagement	• Number of students assisted to join other clubs or organisations in the Benalla community
Student capabilities personal social competence, confidence	• Number of Connect9 students who undertake training offered for After School Part-time Work program • Number of Connect9 students who take up an after school part-time job • Number of students who visit a workplace or do career research during the program • Anecdotal evidence from mentors re increase in mentee confidence, aspiration.
Community engagement	• Number of new memberships to organisations participating in the program, mentees and mentors (e.g. Benalla Library, Benalla Aquatic Centre, numerous clubs – Bushwalking, Camera Club, Scouts, Yoga, Archery)

Lessons learned

We know that evaluating what we do is critical to broadening our understanding, improving our effectiveness and communicating our successes. Some learnings we have gained over time:

External evaluation: An external evaluation is really valuable to continual improvement, if you can afford it. Our external evaluators were invited to design the evaluation at the very start of the Education Benalla Program, and they understand what we are seeking to achieve:

▸ Establishing baseline data and control groups are important in gauging effectiveness of programs

▸ If you are unable to access data at a local level, you may have to set up your own data collection methods or change existing practices to provide the information you need

▸ Exit surveys may not show marked improvement compared to intake surveys because participants appear to overrate their initial knowledge and skills when self-reporting. We tend not to collect subjective data in intake surveys.

▸ Ensure your partners are aware of your goals and your evaluation measures and have the same understanding of them.

▸ Data specific to your local situation, such as the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results are valuable in gaining consensus across collaborating organisations about where effort should be concentrated (e.g. Benalla's worst results were in the areas of social competence and emotional maturity.)

▸ We have always stuck to a belief that our efforts should not be diluted in an attempt to reach more participants. The 'dosage' is often the most important feature of whether you will be successful or not.

Collaborate: Work with your evaluators to make sure the data you are collecting and the measures you are using are relevant and informative for you both.

Kids' Own Publishing

www.kidsownpublishing.com

Innovation

Kids' Own Publishing gives voice and agency to the most vulnerable members of the community through the collaborative creation of books that are published by children for children.

Working in partnership with a range of stakeholders – including libraries, schools, festivals and local government - Kids' Own brings artists together with children in a workshop program to produce tangible books that are published in English or in the community's first language. Combining digital print-on-demand technology with traditional hands-on approaches of artists, the Kids' Own publishing process enables participants to tell their stories and publish them in books. The socially contextualized arts based approach to Kids' Own Publishing embeds children's literacy practices at the centre of family, friends and community.

In 2014, Kids' Own celebrated publishing 100 books and is publishing new books all the time. In addition, the Kids' Own *WePublish* App is putting a digital version of the program in the hands of children, and adults, around the world to write and illustrate their own small book to share with others.

Kids' Own vision is a world where books by children for children strengthen culture, language and literacy in all communities. To this end, our goal is to embed children's community publishing in different settings; such as schools, early years centres, libraries, after-school care, local festivals and events.

Outcomes

Too many children face significant obstacles to successful literacy learning through a lack of book experience and do not feel personally connected to the books they encounter in their journey to literacy. An overarching outcome for Kids' Own is for children to develop a deep investment in their own books and have a strong sense of ownership where they feel confident to share their books with the people they love. Through this approach, Kids' Own creates real opportunities for improvements in literacy, self-expression, self-confidence and social connectedness.

Illustrative of this approach is a partnership, begun in 2012, with Cardinia Shire in Victoria through Cardinia Best Start to develop The Cardinia Children's Community Publishing Program. The program is a good example of the changes for good that can take place when a children's community publishing initiative works across local government through a comprehensive series of professional development opportunities for early years staff, librarians, teachers and community workers. The Clear Horizon group undertook an independent evaluation of the program using a Program Logic approach and engaging all the project partners through the Best Start steering committee. This evaluation identified and described the rationale for and relationships between the activities, illustrated intermediate and final outcomes and evidenced *an overwhelmingly positive feedback from children, significant adults in their lives who participated in the Program and early years professionals*.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Student engagement	• Students being able to create their own books expressing their sense of fun, pride and love of publishing their own book and sharing stories. • Students go onto producing their own books at home. • The popularity of the books produced by students being borrowed from the library by students.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through… Evidence and approaches, such as
Social and emotional wellbeing	Through the process of book making students develop: • A sense of worth and value by willingly sharing their texts with peers, parents and wider family. • Positive associations with reading and sharing stories are evidenced by encouraging feedback from loved ones and reading more books.
Family and community engagement	• An increased personal interest in books and in reading to their children *"What came out in conversations with the Mums was [their] increased interest and enthusiasm in books and reading to their child"*. • Participants strongly commenting on the strengthened social connectedness across generations, within families and the wider Cardinia community. • Parents visibly developing new communication skills through the book making process to better engage their children in foundational literacy activities. • Families, in particular Aboriginal participants, validating the importance of family and community story and the role of story sharing to communicate culture.
Quality teaching	Professionals are grasping key messages from their book making workshop training and they apply this in their practice, for example: • Early years professionals understand how and are able to make (origami) books and are confident to teach others how to make these books. • Teachers are integrating book-making workshops in their work programs, such as Literacy, Numeracy and Art with children.
Confidence children, significant adults and early childhood professionals	• Post the training sessions, professionals are indicating in their post-program feedback survey forms that they now feel 'very confident' or 'quite confident' in using what they learnt independently. • Children have a new found confidence in their creative expression and are independently making their own books at home.

students develop a sense of worth and value

Lessons learned

Seek continuous improvement, in both program delivery and design, over time: A powerful legacy is left in the hands of participants when books are written and produced by, with and for a community. The community is on the road to being stronger and more resilient when the capacity for reading, writing and publishing is strengthened and participants have the skills and confidence to publish their individual and collective stories. Kids' Own experience shows that three-year projects, such as the partnership in Cardinia, provide greater social impact than three one-year funded projects. The reach may be broader in three separate projects, but a deeper impact is possible when engagement is with the same partners and community over a longer period.

Pay attention to implicit and explicit evidence of improvement: One valuable lesson for us working in Cardinia has been the need to articulate more clearly how our publishing process embeds valuable literacy lessons implicitly, not just explicitly. As the Project facilitator in the Cardinia project said: "We didn't talk about literacy consciously but it was very much a theme that happened…" Spending time with your partners, such as external evaluators, school and community members, at the outset can help you better articulate and clarify what's working (and what's not) and why and for whom.

Use key learnings from one context to another, but not prescriptively: Each of our projects or books brings fresh challenges and each new partnership demands a different approach. The next phase of the Cardinia Shire program extends the reach and depth of the engagement by working with new associated groups; In Transit, will support transition for children between communities to school and between schools. Our Books and Art Playgroup, based in the City of Melbourne, transfers our process to skill up participants to be able to create books with their very young children in a supportive and fun environment for new mothers. The work of Kids' Own is inherently transferrable as the core activity output, the book, is a common currency and can contain content from a range of participants.

Knowledge Bank

Knowledge Bank

In our LLEAP work, we asked schools, not-for-profits and philanthropics what they considered to be barriers to effective engagement. The key issues identified by all three groups were:

▶ Not having a culture of seeking this type of support

▶ Not knowing how to collaborate with organisations who can access this support

▶ Not knowing how to devote resources to these relationships

▶ Not having or knowing whether they have the right eligibility status

▶ Not knowing enough about the philanthropic eligibility requirements

To address these issues, this section focuses on:

1. Some **Strategies for Effective Engagement**

2. **Working through the Complexities of Tax Eligibility Requirements**

This *Knowledge Bank* also includes some guidance for once you have explored potential collaborations and established what eligibility status is required. This is covered in:

3. **Tips for Grant Seekers** and **Grant Makers**

And, finally, this section provides some insights through actual experience:

4. **LLEAP Case Studies of Effective Engagement**

Strategies For Effective Engagement

Schools

Philantrophic foundations

Not-for-profit organisations

The following strategies have been updated from last year's *LLEAP Guide*, using responses from the 2013 LLEAP surveys.

Creating A Culture Of Seeking Support

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* – It's OK to acknowledge that you can't always make a difference on your own.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* – Take the time to explore what a potential supporter might be able to offer <u>beyond money</u>, such as mentoring, expanding networks, or advocacy. These kinds of support can be extremely beneficial and help build capacity.

☑ *Schools* – Appreciate the willingness of others to work with you to support students, in all types of activities, whether as volunteers or funding partners.

☑ *Schools* – Take a whole of school approach to seeking philanthropic support, don't leave it to one 'champion' alone.

☑ *For schools and not-for-profits* – Get organised and be systematic. Create a grant calendar and annual plan for more efficient allocation of time and resources and to avoid the last minute 'dash to the deadline'. Gather all material and documents relating to your project (e.g. tax documents and financial statements) and possible grants in a central location.

Capacity Building To Support Improved Collaboration

☑ *For schools* - Make the most of existing networks and structures to help build partnership opportunities (e.g. establish a sub-committee of your school council to focus on community partnerships, ask parents' associations to assist you, or form an education community of neighbouring schools to share ideas and networks).

☑ *For schools* - A not-for-profit with a specialist focus can take the burden off schools to do a program themselves. Are there not-for-profits in your community that could work in partnership with your school around a particular area?

☑ *For not-for-profits* - A not-for-profit organisation can also take the burden off reporting from schools; they become the lynchpin between the school and the philanthropic supporter(s).

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* - Seek advice from experts who might be willing to share their time and expertise (e.g. from high performing executives in multi-national companies who may be happy to share their networks or help you build relationships in the community).

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Consider sharing your experiences in a particular project with others via an online portal or a community consultation process. This facilitates learning across all realms of activity and sectors. Collaboration is not about 'what's in it for us' but what we each do around a skills or resource base. Sharing skills, knowledge and resources is critical to building capacity.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Building the capacity of each partner in a project (whether not-for-profit, school or philanthropic organisation) is vital, because some may have good intentions but no capacity to implement. Embedding a longer-term project in organisational strategic plans means that organisations will need to resource the initiative and address capacity issues.

Effective Communication And Knowledge Sharing

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* - Send updates and progress reports to interested parties, whether you have received funding from them or not. Celebrate success with all parties.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Consider site visits or local ideas symposiums to assist in communications and dissemination of information, as well as encouraging local ownership of an initiative. Provide as many opportunities as feasible for shared involvement.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* – Where possible, lobby and share what you are doing at the local, state/territory and Federal government levels.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* – Be prepared to share information on unsuccessful projects, not just the successful ones. Lessons learnt from 'failed' activities can be extremely valuable.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Communication works best when partners meet around the table with 'all their cards showing'. Honesty and really listening to what everyone is saying strengthens the relationships.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* – Emphasis should be placed on relationship management; make sure everyone's expectations are established and managed.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - A project should not be personality driven. Partners may not get along on a personal level but if they are aligned around values and goals and have clear communication processes, then they we can connect and move forward.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* – When communicating with partners or stakeholders, polite persistence can be important in terms of communication; people are busy and may not always respond immediately, but persevere.

Making Well-Informed Decisions

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Consider conducting a scoping study to understand the community and its needs. This will help guide your initiative and ensure that intended outcomes are clear and agreed upon. Incorporating the views of key stakeholders will inform project development.

☑ *For philanthropics* - Meet with those who fund in the education sector as well as prospective grant applicants. Undertake an environmental scan of current policies and issues relevant to geographic areas where the trust or foundation funds.

A 'Good Fit', Matching And Collaboration

☑ *For schools* - Find not-for-profits to partner with who have DGR status, but ensure that these are genuine partnerships not just conduit opportunities.

☑ *For philanthropics* - Build cross-sector partnerships between schools and not-for-profits so the not-for-profit can receive the grant for use by the partnership. Offer suggestions on who a group might consider partnering with.

☑ *For philanthropics* – Consider promoting projects to the corporate sector for sponsorship support.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* - Ring a prospective supporter and discuss 'fit' with your project. One-on-one conversations with potential partners are extremely valuable, especially when exploring how you might work together and how they might 'shape' your project.

☑ *For not-for-profits and philanthropy* - Collaborate with existing funders to identify additional supporters with similar interests and/or engage in joint funding arrangements. Pooled funding approaches are an effective way to overcome short durations of funding or limited amounts of funding from any one trust or foundation.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Knowing potential partners and understanding the context you are working in (i.e. school or philanthropic organisations) will help facilitate connections and enable appropriate 'translation' across the sectors.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Partners should be able to agree on a common area of need to ensure that their goals are aligned and connected. Work collaboratively, but make sure you stay within your own organisation's mission and scope.

Strategies For Effective Engagement

Committing Appropriate Resource Levels

☑ *For schools* - If possible, dedicate a role to ongoing relationship building and/or grant writing.

☑ *For not-for-profits* - Consolidate activities to streamline program development and resource usage.

☑ *For philanthropics* – Consider focusing effort at the local or regional level through a place-based approach.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* - Build into your budget the necessary funding leadership, project management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Be more honest and communicative with donors around the need to allocate funds to administrative costs.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* – Explore opportunities for in-kind support from experts that can model activities for schools.

☑ *For not-for-profits and philanthropy* - Consider catering for different possibilities, such as short-term gifting and/or explicit longer-term funding according to the needs of specific initiatives.

Being Impact Focused

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* - Gather information around student outcomes in your project so that you remain impact focused when talking to potential supporters. Use the framework developed earlier in this Guide, in the section 'Key indicators – quick reference guide, to get you started.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* – Do your research and understand what impact each potential partner is looking to have (i.e. what does impact mean to them?). Never lose site of the end goal.

☑ *For not-for-profits and schools* – Consider setting up an evaluation team to keep the focus on intended outcomes and measuring impact throughout the project. Make these evaluations available to other potential grant makers.

☑ *For philanthropics* - Set up a separate impact program area in education. This will enable allocation of funds to the 'bigger picture' and long-term projects. Immediate needs projects can explicitly fit within these impact areas.

☑ *For not-for-profits, philanthropy and schools* - Consider whether the project being funded can be developed into an evidence-based model for others to benefit from too.

Working Through The Complexities Of Eligibility

What we know from the LLEAP Research

Our research in LLEAP tells us that about two-thirds of the philanthropic organisations that we surveyed require their potential recipients to meet certain tax eligibility requirements, most commonly 'Tax Concession Charity' status (TCC) and/or 'Deductible Gift Recipient' status (DGR). However, the research also tells us that from a school perspective…

▸ A key barrier to accessing philanthropic support is that schools often *don't know* whether they have the right eligibility status; tax eligibility requirements can be complex and understanding them takes time and resources that many schools just don't have.

We also know that Australian Taxation Office approved funds, such as **Building**, **Library** or **Scholarship Funds**, can provide pathways for philanthropic giving to schools. Again, however, we know that:

▸ Approximately a third of surveyed schools have *no such fund* set up; others simply did not know whether they had such a fund.

Understanding eligibility requirements … Where do i start?

1. Check out the definition of philanthropic terms that we added to the LLEAP website via: http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/LLEAP_2013_TermsPhilanthropy.pdf. This will give you a brief outline about what we mean when we talk about philanthropy and such things as DGR. Definitons are also provided by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) via: https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/NP/List-of-definitions---Tax-basics-for-non-profit-organisations/

2. Go to the ATO website and look through the section of 'Gifts and Fundraising' http://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Gifts-and-fundraising/. This provides an overview about what not-for-profit organisations (which includes schools) should consider when conducting fundraising activities, particularly any concessions available to them such as entitlement to receive tax-deductible gifts.

▸ If you're not sure about your organisation's tax eligibility status, you can do a search via the Australian Governments' *ABN Lookup* service: http://www.abn.business.gov.au/. Simply type in your organisation's name in the search field and all the associated tax status details will be provided.

Why would i want to set up a building, library or scholarship fund?

As already mentioned, one of the most common requirements for eligibility to philanthropic funding is DGR and there are pathways for schools to obtain this status for specific fundraising purposes.

As outlined on the ATO website, to qualify as a DGR your organisation must be endorsed by the ATO; there are two types of DGR endorsement:

▶ 'where an organisation as a whole is endorsed as a DGR - in which case gifts to the entire organisation may be tax deductible' (*note: schools are not commonly endorsed under this category*).

▶ 'where an organisation is endorsed as a DGR for the operation of a fund, authority or institution that it owns or includes - in which case only gifts to this part of the organisation may be tax deductible' (*this includes Building, Library and Scholarship Funds, for which schools may be endorsed if they meet the requirements*).

Setting up a Building Fund

There are a number of steps to take in setting up your fund (these are summarised below for simplicity, but you must ensure that you explore full details via the ATO site. You can also access the ATO's GiftPack, which is designed to help you work out whether your organisation can receive tax deductible gifts, via: http://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Guides/In-detail/ Guides---booklets/Gifts---fundraising/GiftPack/):

Step 1

Are you eligible to apply? – The ATO states that before an organisation can apply for endorsement, it must have an Australian Business Number (ABN), or, if your organisation is a charity, you must also be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) to apply for endorsement to access charity tax concessions.

Step 2

Check that you are setting up the *right* fund for your needs - A building fund is what it says: a fund set up to raise money for building. This might include a new sports facility or a performing arts space. So, it is important to remember that a school may have set up an ATO approved Building Fund, but donations via this fund can only be used for the purpose for which the fund was established (i.e. you can't accept a $50k contribution through the Building Fund and then use it to create a literacy program).

How does ATO define 'building'? – According to the ATO states, a building can be one or multiple buildings, a part of a building or additions to a building. The building needs to be used as part of delivering the curriculum for the school. A Building Fund will **NOT** cover:

- construction of non-school building like a wing of a building designed to be used as a church;

- furniture and equipment, unless they are actual fixtures of the building;

- maintenance costs that relate to the non-school use of a building, like the costs of hiring a cleaner to clean school buildings following weddings unless the fund is fully and promptly reimbursed;

- running expenses of the school that don't relate to buildings such as water, gas, electricity, sewerage, contents insurance, teaching staff salaries or the general upkeep of furnishings;

- costs of maintaining facilities which are not buildings including sports fields, sports equipment, playgrounds, landscaping and open-air car parks.

For more detail, see: https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Gifts- and-fundraising/In-detail/Deductible-gift-recipient/DGR- categories/School-building-funds/?anchor=building#building

Step 3

The specifics of setting up a Fund – The ATO states that a Fund must:

- be a Public Fund – that is, a fund that the pubic will contribute to and the fund must be administered by members of an organisation that have a degree of responsibility to the community as a whole;

- have clearly set out objectives that reflect the purpose of the Fund;

- have a separate bank account and clear accounting procedures and gifts to this Fund must be kept separate from any other funds;

- the Fund must operate on a non-profit basis, that is, money must not be distributed to members;

- a fund may have its own rules or constitution, or they may be part of the governing documents of your organisation or of the fund, authority or institution.

Step 4

Instructions and the application form – Go to the *Instructions for endorsement as DGR* page on the ATO website via http://www.ato.gov.au/Forms/Endorsement-as-a-deductible-gift-recipient/ to read the instructions and access the application form.

Step 5

More information? – The ATO provides further information, including a contact phone number via: http://www.ato.gov.au/Forms/Endorsement-as-a-deductible-gift-recipient/?page=10#More_information

Setting up a Library or Scholarship Fund

To set up either of these funds, **Steps, 1, 3, 4 and 5 above still apply**. In addition, you'll need to be clear about the purpose of your fund and how that is defined:

Step 1

Are you eligible to apply? – See above

Step 2

Check that you are setting up the *right* fund for your needs:

- To be eligible, a **Scholarship Fund** must be a public fund (see **Step 3**) for scholarships, bursaries or prizes that are:
  - ▸ awarded only to Australian citizens or permanent residents of Australia;
  - ▸ open to individuals or groups of individuals throughout at least a state, a territory or a region of at least 200,000 people;
  - ▸ promotes the recipients' education in approved Australian courses, and/or at educational institutions overseas by way of study of a component of an approved Australian course;
  - ▸ awarded on merit or for reasons of equity.

- To be eligible, a **Library Fund** must be a public fund (see **Step 3**) and for a library defined as follows:
  - ▸ Includes books, journals, magazines, videos, DVDs and other electronic access.
  - ▸ Expenditure from an approved library fund can be applied for the purchase of reference material, furnishings, equipment.
  - ▸ It **cannot** be used for building costs.

Steps 3,4,5

The specific, instructions, application and more information – as above for the Building Fund.

Tips For Grant Seekers

In the last two years we asked philanthropic organisations, not-for-profits and schools to provide some useful tips around the grant application 'journey'. These include comments in survey responses and are presented again here with some **new and updated tips**.

Pre-Application

☑ Get 'the story' or case outlined: Know your project well and believe in it. Are you ready to accept a grant and progress the project within the granting timeframe?

☑ Do some background research on the different types of foundations and trusts. Have someone who is passionate and knowledgeable about your project make contact with foundations or trusts who might be a 'good fit'. Read their funding principles, conditions and guidelines.

☑ Just because one foundation does not require a specific piece of information, this does not mean that another foundation won't.

☑ Be clear whether a foundation has a preference for discrete stand alone projects or whether the project can be part of a larger project. First cuts can be the deepest, so make sure what you are seeking to do or how you are seeking to do it is a good fit with your potential supporter.

Application

☑ Not sure about your Tax Status for a grant? Check with your financial advisor or the Australian Government's ABN Lookup website (see http://abr.business.gov.au). See also the section 'Working through the complexities of eligibility' later in this *Guide*.

☑ Don't forget to include (and where appropriate quantify in dollar terms) in-kind contributions (e.g. teachers' salary, volunteer time that might otherwise incur a dollar cost) in your budget. But don't confuse in-kind and dollars and be clear exactly what part of your project you are asking the grant maker to fund.

☑ Take into account what a grant maker will and won't fund, and total dollar amount they are likely to fund (previous successful grant recipient information in a foundation or trust's Annual Report or on their website can help you out here). But don't water down your budget. Be realistic. There is no point being funded for a project that may well fall over half way through its implementation because you have run out of funds. Don't over-promise and under-deliver!

☑ Ensure that questions are carefully read, what is the grant maker asking? If you are not sure many grant makers are happy to provide clarity. A great example is looking at questions around risk. What grant makers actually want to know is whether risk has been considered and mitigated.

☑ Don't assume that a question about evaluation just means doing post-project surveys and taking photos. Try clearly identifying your goals, strategies, outputs, outcomes and expected impact in a table; this can then be referred to in the acquittal. Even if grant makers haven't asked specifically for it, they will be impressed by a systematic approach.

☑ What type of grant maker are you applying to? What language is required? Avoid jargon unless it is absolutely necessary.

☑ Avoid generic funding applications. Make sure you address the specific interests, priorities and requirements of the grant maker you are applying to.

☑ If you are unsuccessful in your application, seek feedback, many grant makers may welcome grant seekers calling for this, especially if they are planning on applying again. This is all part of building the relationship. At the very least, grant seekers could look at generic feedback reports or lists of who has been funded.

Acquittal

☑ Before you get to the acquittal stage, keep track of your progress and keep in touch with the grant maker throughout the journey, sharing any delays and setbacks along the way. Tell the truth about things that didn't work, grant makers appreciate this as part of their own learning. Setbacks do happen, but misunderstandings and 'nasty surprises' can be avoided with good communication and honesty.

☑ Share both intended and unintended outcomes with the grant maker.

☑ Acquit your grant in a timely manner. If you were eligible to apply again to the same foundation or trust, you will be asked whether you submitted an acquittal last time.

☑ Ask the grant maker to share the results of your project within their networks.

☑ With a few tweaks, think how else what you have prepared could be used (e.g. communications with your board or parent body, an article, within your strategic plan).

Tips For Grant Makers

Pre-Application

☑ Do you have a process for recording enquiries about your grant program(s)? Collate and analyse these. These can not only inform your decision making, but they can be framed as FAQs on your website.

☑ Group all relevant information about your education grant together, for each phase of the grant process. Your website shouldn't feel like a 'treasure hunt' for grant seekers.

☑ If you are unable to take pre-application enquiries directly over the phone, do you have an alternative option for grant seekers? (e.g. submit a question via email, with a note that enquiries will be replied to by return email at the end of each week).

☑ If your foundation or trust is not a good fit for the potential grant seeker, does your website include links to other possible sources of support? (e.g. search tools).

☑ Could you be collaborating with another foundation(s) or trust(s)? Could you be engaging with your target group in the formation of your grant scope and focus? Not-for-profits and school participants in the LLEAP project sought more engagement at the front-end of education grant making so grants could be even more effective.

Application

☑ Tell people you have updated your guidelines and/or application form. An astute grant seeker will know to check your website prior to putting in their application. But they may not pick up any subtle, yet potentially significant, changes. "Please note our guidelines for the 'XXXXXX' education grant have been updated in the area(s) …" (and include a date when the guidelines were updated).

☑ Provide a simple summary checklist of all the critical information and documentation that an applicant will need to have included with their application (e.g. copies of their Tax Status etc).

☑ If at all possible, could information about the grant amount be provided or at least a guide based on the previous year?

☑ Part of a grant seeker's decision making is to weigh up the amount of the grant versus what the project will require. (Does what is being asked of a grant seeker by a grant maker seem way too much for the dollar amount they are offering?). Grant seekers will not want to waste your time or theirs.

☑ Be an inquiring grant maker in education. This might include, bringing successful grant recipients together for a facilitated conversation about a key challenge they face and that you, as the grant maker face. Or taking the time to participate in a cultural awareness program to develop a greater appreciation for the people you seek to invest in. Or, offer a simple anonymous avenue of feedback (such as a survey) for successful and unsuccessful grant recipients, and /or those who are just 'passing through' your website and considering whether or not to proceed further. This tool should be separate from your application or acquittal forms.

Acquittal

☑ Don't make it too onerous.

☑ Can you communicate with grant seekers how you will use the feedback you gather from the acquittal forms? For example, will it be used to inform your decision making about priority areas in the future or the development of FAQs for other prospective grant applicants or will it be used in some other way?

☑ Can a grant seeker see your acquittal form on your website? What they have to do to acquit a grant is part of their decision making about whether they will apply.

Previous LLEAP Case Studies

Central to the suite of practical tools that have been created from the LLEAP work is a series of case studies. Although these case studies are available in the **LLEAP Cases Companion Document** (April 2012) and the **LLEAP Guide** (April 2013), we have also produced the case studies as individual documents to allow you to 'dip in and out' more easily.

To help you target your selection, the case studies have been clustered under three overarching areas of priority (identified from the LLEAP research):

▶ Overcoming barriers to student engagement and learning

▶ Creating effective learning environments for students

▶ Broadening and connecting learning for students

Overcoming Barriers To Student Engagement And Learning

The Education Benalla Program

The Education Benalla Program is a large-scale community initiative focused on improving educational attainment in the region. The desired Program outcome is that by 2030 the education and training completion rates for Benalla 17-24 year olds will equal or exceed the Victorian State average. **Read more about the Program from 2012** and a **follow-up case study in 2013**.

The Evolving Learning Program

The Evolving Learning Program is an experiential and applied learning program that provides young people with personal growth and development opportunities through educational and vocational engagement. It also provides skills development for teachers and leaders. Overall, the Program seeks to prevent early school leaving and/or engage young people into employment and vocational pathways. **Read more**.

School Passport System

The Community Development Foundation initiated the School Passport System in Western Australia in low socio economic areas where student attendance and parent engagement are serious challenges. The initiative seeks to increase the active participation and engagement of parents in school and increase student attendance. **Read more about the Program from 2012** and a **follow-up case study in 2013**.

Hands on Learning

The in-school program, Hands on Learning, was developed for secondary school students most at risk of leaving school early. The program runs in 18 schools across Victoria and Queensland and acts to change the experience of learning at school for students. Students work on creative building projects that benefit the school and local community, in the process they develop confidence, new social networks of support and a sense of personal achievement. **Read more about the Program from 2012** and a **follow-up case study in 2013**.

Beyond the School Gates

Beyond the School Gates aims to engage, build knowledge, skills and confidence to increase the employability and improve the quality of life for young people with intellectual disability and learning differences (15 years+), and their families. It focuses on out of school hours vocation, recreation, health and family support and aims to break down the barriers that prevent these young people from inclusion in the community. Read more.

Doveton Learning Centre

Doveton College is the first social-government partnership of its type in Victoria, embedding educational and family and children's services both conceptually and through its service model. Four schools established the Doveton Learning Centre in response to community data that indicated some key barriers to learning in the area. The birth to Year 9 community learning centre has attracted a total of $A32 million, from state, federal and philanthropic funding (from the Colman Foundation). Read more.

DonorsChoose.org

The US DonorsChoose.org is a website that helps people give a donation to learners (students) from public schools most in need. Teachers post a brief synopsis of their project and donors can choose which project to fund and how much to give. The general public (local, national or international); philanthropic foundations or trusts; or businesses can donate. DonorsChoose.org uses free school meals as an indicator of need. Read more.

Education Endowment Foundation

Inspired by the Obama administration's Race to the Top initiative in the USA, the UK Secretary of State for Education announced in late 2010 plans to establish an Education Endowment Foundation to help raise standards in challenging schools in England. The Foundation is designed as a vehicle to generate evidence of innovations that support pupils from low socio-economic families to fulfill their aspirations. The Foundation's target groups are pupils eligible for free school meals in primary and secondary schools. Read more.

Creating Effective Learning Environments For Students

Solving the jigsaw

Solving the Jigsaw helps kids learn to manage the growing threats of bullying at school and violence at home and in the community. The program was developed in 1997 by the Centre for Non-Violence (formerly EASE), a domestic violence support service. It operates throughout Victoria and includes more than 80 schools, 27,000 children and 1,300 teachers, who have taken part in comprehensive training programs. Read more.

Fogarty Edvance

Fogarty EDvance is an intensive school leadership mentoring project for a select group of principals working in low socio-economic communities in Western Australia. Over a three year period, the program seeks to equip each principal's leadership capacity to improve key needs for their schools. Support is offered through a combination of matched mentor support and frequent whole group professional learning, with a focus on building the school's capacity to bring the resources of the community into the school. Read more.

Stonnington Primary School

Stonnington Primary School has a student population with a diverse cultural and socio-economic mix. The school places high priority on student wellbeing to facilitate high learning outcomes. The Ardoch Youth Foundation developed programs in partnership with the school, including: the Literacy Buddies program for students in Grades 5 & 6 with corporate volunteers and family support work to encourage parental engagement at the school, as well as support parents with material aid. Read more.

Supporting Parents – Developing Children

The focus for the Supporting Parents – Developing Children initiative is families from non English speaking backgrounds in nine primary school communities in the Victorian City of Hume. It was initiated with the Scanlon Foundation offering to commit $1 million dollars to improve social cohesion in the City and the Federal Government seized the opportunity to seek a whole of government approach to service delivery in the area. The project began by focusing on the literacy of mothers as a pathway to improving the educational outcomes for their children. Read more.

Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA)

Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) aims to stimulate vital changes in Australian education by generating and sustaining innovative, personalised schools that work in partnership with their greater communities The Big Picture network involves schools, education systems, universities and other communities. BPEA has a bold goal to create change and influence the future of education. Beginning with schools in Western Australia and Tasmania, BPEA now has more than thirty sites across all Australian states and the ACT and is helping to establish the design in New Zealand. Read more.

Play for life

Play for Life promotes and encourages placing a greater value on the importance and benefits of play for children. Play often surpasses any societal barriers such as age, ability, gender, race, religion and social standing, so therefore can be inclusive to all children. Overall then, play is critical to children's physical, social and emotional development and is central to a healthy child's life. Vital life skills acquired through childhood play are taken through adolescence into adulthood. Read more.

The Quality Education Fund

The Quality Education Fund was established by the Education Bureau, Government of Hong Kong with the aim of supporting non-profit making initiatives that promote quality education in the context of pre-primary, primary, secondary and special education. Innovation in capacity building in schools to enhance the quality of student learning is recognised as an important part of the Fund's work. It aims to galvanise school initiatives in enhancing the quality of student learning by supporting innovation, generating knowledge and disseminating effective practices. Read more.

Broadening And Connecting Learning For Students

Cowan Trust Young Endeavour Practicum Grants

The Cowan Trust Young Endeavour Practicum Grants involve a 10-day berth on the STS - Young Endeavour. Australian youth learn how to sail while developing a range of life and leadership skills. The Cowan Trust funds the University of South Australia to select one to three undergraduate students each year to complete the program. Read more.

Learning Neighbourhood Asia Literacy project

The Learning Neighbourhood Asia Literacy project was established when four schools in New South Wales received a $35K grant from the Asia Education Foundation. The schools (one high school and three primary schools) wanted to use the grant to develop a project to focus on language and culture. The aims of the project were to: 1) Build teacher and student understanding of Asian culture; and 2) Improve the teaching of Mandarin in the middle years of schooling. Real-time video-links facilitated the teaching of Mandarin across the schools. Read more.

InSchools Philanthropy

The InSchools Philanthropy pilot is part of the social enterprise stream of the not-for-profit organisation, Kids Thrive. The program's arts approach empowers primary school aged children to connect with their communities through philanthropy. The children immerse themselves in music, writing, play-acting, drawing and dance to understand and explore philanthropy, community and their personal values/motivators. Read more.

Youth in Philanthropy

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program aims to help secondary school students learn about philanthropy, social issues and community leadership. Underpinning the program, is the intent to inspire young people to begin a life-long commitment to giving through activities that have a positive impact on the communities they live and will, one day, work in. Read more.

Kids In Philanthropy

The focus of Kids In Philanthropy is to build social awareness, a social conscience and a practice of giving by children, for children. Kids In Philanthropy engages children between the ages of 5 and 18 years, and their families, in an annual program of proactive philanthropy where activity is focused on raising awareness of areas of need in their own city, and providing opportunities for these young people to take a leadership role in addressing these areas of need. Read more.

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