

Research Summary

Summary Title

Overcoming disadvantage through the innovative classroom

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Category

Student support

Subcategory

Equity

Abstract

This study is concerned with how schools in the most disadvantaged communities are responding to low student engagement and achievement. The study documents the learning strategies utilised by nine case study schools (five government and four Catholic) to engage low socio-economic background students in the middle years of schooling. Black states that the nine case study schools have all implemented student-centred learning in order to turn around disadvantage; and outlines a number of common characteristics of this approach to learning. Black proceeds to discuss the following regarding the case study schools:

- **What supports the schools** – a number of issues are detailed, including: finding workable models and owning new practice; a commitment to teacher learning; a whole school approach; and seeing good outcomes.
- **What challenges the schools** – the challenges outlined include: finding the money; bringing all teachers on board; engaging parents and the community; and meeting wider student needs.
- **Recommendations** – Black contends that “multiple barriers to good student outcomes require multiple solutions. This study makes four provisional recommendations for school systems and the sectors that support schools.” Furthermore, three models “for deeper change” are proposed as a result of the observations of the study.

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