

SuccessWorks

# Evaluation Summary Report and Case Studies

Teacher Professional Leave 2010

Prepared for Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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# 1. Introduction

This summary report provides a brief overview of:

- TPL and the Success Works evaluation
- the background
- the methodology
- the evaluation findings, including the teacher and student outcomes achieved
- the key influencing factors found on the achievement of those outcomes
- the recommendations provided to build on the 2010 learnings
- the agreed areas for investigation in 2011 as part of the longitudinal nature of this evaluation.

Teacher Professional Leave (TPL) allows teachers in government schools to access professional leave from the classroom to undertake professional learning. Teachers from all government schools are eligible to access TPL. It can be taken as a continuous block or spread over time during the year, or as a combination. TPL funding facilitates access to reduced teaching loads through Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs), allowing the teachers to leave the classroom. Teachers may undertake TPL as an individual or as part of a team either from the same school or from different schools within a regional network.

The purpose of TPL is to encourage teachers to take responsibility for generating, evaluating and sharing professional knowledge as active agents in analysing and improving their own practice. TPL has been funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) since 2004.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the impact of TPL on improving the quality of teacher practice and improving outcomes for students. The evaluation seeks to answer two key questions:

- Has the quality of teacher instructional practice improved as a result of participation in TPL?
- Are there examples of improvements in student outcomes resulting from teacher participation in TPL?

Recognising that it is likely to take more than one year for follow on effects of changes in teacher instructional practice to be observable, the evaluation is taking place over a three year period; 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In 2010 TPL gave teachers time to explore how teaching capability and teacher reflection on practice can be improved using the e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model, through professional learning aligned with the Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning. The e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model is a framework for defining high quality instruction in the Victorian government school system.

Longitudinal case studies form an important part of this evaluation. De-identified case studies are presented in chapter eight of this report. The case studies have been de-identified to ensure confidentiality for the participants involved. This facilitated the collection of quality, formative data.

Success Works would like to thank the participants in the 2010 case studies for sharing their journey with us. We look forward to working with them again in 2011 and to meeting the 2011 case study participants.

## 2. Background

This is the second period of Success Works evaluation of TPL. The previous evaluation conducted by Success Works evaluated the implementation and impact of TPL over its first four years of operation (2004-2008) and in 2009 I & J Management Services built upon these findings and investigated factors which enabled or acted as barriers for TPL participants in the TPL outcomes.

The previous evaluations provide clear evidence that TPL is a worthwhile investment in the capacity and skills of teachers. TPL participants and their principals reported improvements in outcomes for the teachers themselves, for students and for the school overall. There is also evidence that TPL has a direct impact on teacher morale.

A literature review which informed this evaluation provided evidence of a range of context and enabling factors that impact on the degree to which teacher professional learning impacts on student outcomes. The research also provided insight into the conditions likely to foster ongoing practice change and sustainability of outcomes. Many of these context, enabling and sustainability factors align with TPL.

## 3. Methodology

Case study methodology has been instrumental to our evaluation approach. This will allow for longitudinal evaluation as contact with the 2010 case study teams is maintained over the three years, and with the 2011 case study teams over a two year period. In this way evaluation of the progression of changes in teacher practice (and associated student outcomes) is possible over a longer timeframe.

The methodology allowed us to share in the learning journey of eighteen TPL teams in 2010. Teams were selected from each region, and spread across school and network-based teams. Focus was placed on forming relationships with the teams to share in their TPL learning journeys. Contact began in Term 1, followed by a site visit to their school or network, with further contact during the year, and a final site visit in Term 4. Their principal or Regional Network Leaders (RNL) was also interviewed during the site visits. Information gained through contact formed eighteen case studies.

Two online surveys were also conducted; one for the broader 2010 cohort of TPL teachers, and another for their principals and RNLs, with response rates of 68% and 71% respectively. These provided further data of the implementation and impact of TPL and were used to confirm the extent of case study themes, and analyse the impact of themes upon reported teacher and student outcomes.

Data collection was tracked across participant, principal and RNL respondents to allow correlation between the two surveys, however all data is presented in a strictly aggregated and non-identifiable manner to ensure the confidentiality of responses.

## 4. Findings

Our evaluation found the following common themes across the case studies which were supported by the survey findings:



### 4.1 Identified need

Fourteen of the eighteen case studies discussed a clearly identified need they were seeking to address through TPL and for which they were using an e<sup>5</sup> lens to guide their learning. The remaining four teams identified the need as implementing e<sup>5</sup> in their school or network. Just over one-third of teams (seven) identified NAPLAN data as a driving force behind TPL. One-third (six) had a numeracy focus, two had a literacy focus, while another two had their focus on improving the use of technology. One-third (six) discussed improving student engagement, interest or behaviour as an identified need, usually within a particular content area. Two identified improving teacher confidence in a content area as one of their identified needs. One team's identified need was creating a common curriculum across the school, another's was implementing team teaching.

In the survey, principals and RNLs strongly agreed that the participants' TPL was designed to address an identified need (74% of principals and 92% of RNLs strongly agreed).

## 4.2 e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model

The e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model was introduced in 2009 and was therefore relatively new to most TPL participants. TPL participants were required to link their application for TPL explicitly with a focus on the Model. e<sup>5</sup> featured strongly as part of the case study stories. It was a focus in seventeen of the eighteen case studies, with six focussing their TPL on the "engage" domain.

The feeling that e<sup>5</sup> was an "add on" to their work was expressed by some case study teams early on in the case study process. This became less of an issue for them as the year progressed and as their understanding of e<sup>5</sup> grew and they realised it can provide a structure to better engage students with their learning. However, one aspect of e<sup>5</sup> that a number of case study participants grappled with was the levels used for e<sup>5</sup>.

The survey found participant respondents shifted from low levels of familiarity with the Model when applying, to over half reporting that they were now using it confidently. Around nine in ten respondents (89%) reported that their TPL professional learning involved using e<sup>5</sup> to reflect on teaching practice.

**The e<sup>5</sup> is a powerful model to improve and reflect on practice. I really didn't believe this before embarking on TPL.**

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**Participant respondent**

## 4.3 Leadership

The case studies demonstrated that leadership played a pivotal part in several ways; both in the external leadership provided to TPL members, and leadership within the group. Connections between strong leadership, a clearly identified need, and how this contributes to teachers' belief in their professional learning were also evident.

### 4.3.1 Principal/RNL Leadership

Leadership by the principal or RNL facilitated support for team members to access their TPL time and to share their learnings with non-TPL colleagues. The leadership by the principal or RNL, in some cases, also set expectations for the team members and for other staff.

**My principal is very much about supporting teacher development especially in the areas of leadership. Having support from the top makes the whole experience much easier and meaningful. Especially if they are taking an active interest in it without overly dominating it...**

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**Participant respondent**

### 4.3.2 Leadership by TPL teachers and external experts

Leadership by TPL teachers was also shown in the case studies, with team members seeking out opportunities to undertake TPL, gaining support for their learning, accessing additional resources, advocating in their school for professional learning, sharing their professional learning and planning for the sustainability of the changes they were introducing through TPL. The case studies showed that most TPL teachers were personally committed to their learning, with some spending large amounts of personal time dedicated to their intended focus. This was especially the case where the need had been clearly identified.

## 4.4 Administration

The majority of participant respondents to the survey were granted between 21-30 days (56%) and 31-40 days (23%). The remainder (21%) were granted between 41-50 days. Nine out of ten respondents (90%) reported that they had been granted all of the days for which they had applied. The case studies indicated, however, that for the remaining 10% who were not granted their full days, that this had had a negative effect for those teams. It had been a disappointment because they either had to reduce the scope of their intended professional learning, or attempt to achieve the same outcomes with less time. This appeared to impact on the belief in their professional learning.

## 4.5 Implementation

TPL gives teachers “time”. This view of TPL was heard consistently across the case studies. It is also consistent with the findings of previous evaluations. This giving of time enables teachers to undertake a wide range of activities in implementing their TPL. In the survey, participants were asked about the various elements of TPL in terms of their usefulness to their learning experience with “having the time” and “working as a team” rating the highest. Being able to share learnings with others also rated highly.

## 4.6 Access to professional expertise

A consistent message across the case studies and from the survey data was that TPL teams need support in order to successfully and confidently pursue their inquiry. That support can be through professional learning, PLATO, the allocation of a coach or critical friend as well as direct support from the principal and/or RNL. Ten of the eighteen case study teams indicated that access to expertise had been useful to them. A further three case study teams indicated they would either have liked further access to expertise or expressed a desire for access to expertise.

Six in ten principal respondents (61%) with school-based TPL teams allocated additional resources to support the team, while two-thirds of RNLs (66%) provided additional

resources to support their network-based team. One in three RNLs (33%) arranged for a coach to support the team on a regular basis.

## 4.7 PLATO

A consistent finding of case study and survey data was that PLATO was a useful experience for TPL participants. Seven case study teams discussed PLATO days as being useful, five of these in relation to e<sup>5</sup> learning, with three also saying it was useful for hearing about other teams and reducing isolation. As one case study participant noted:

**If you didn't have those days, then TPL wouldn't work ... you would be adrift.**

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**Case study participant**

## 4.8 Peer observation/coaching

Twelve of the eighteen case study teams described peer observation and coaching as part of their learning processes. Many case study teams (12) dedicated TPL time to peer coaching and observation amongst the team members, with most of these teams (11) going on to implement these processes for non-TPL colleagues as well to share their learning. These teams indicated that these processes were seen as “informal” and non-threatening by non-TPL colleagues. Most principals or RNLs interviewed were especially grateful these processes were being teacher-led, with their establishment viewed as a move towards more transparent teaching, and facilitating higher levels of professional conversations.

For many teams e<sup>5</sup> and its common language was central to their approach, along with evidence-based, non-judgemental observations, usually with the observee designating the area of focus for the observation or coaching.

## 4.9 Sharing of learnings

Twelve of the eighteen were sharing their learnings through agreed processes and/or structures within the school, for instance, many were providing professional learning sessions for staff on e<sup>5</sup>. For some teams this had been an expectation from the school or network leadership. Teams reported that staff had generally received e<sup>5</sup> learning in a positive light. Principals in particular expressed their appreciation that the team was sharing their learning and leading professional learning sessions in the school. Those teams generally reported increased confidence in providing professional learning sessions.

Some principals and TPL teachers also talked about the change in perception in regards to in-school PD, and the strengthening of it as a useful process in the school.

**It took us a while to feel like we could [take the time to do professional reading], to give ourselves permission ... I think the biggest thing was realising that sitting down and having those research conversations is part of professional development. The best professional development you can do can be in the school, talking about what is happening in the school, sharing different views, and having the opportunity to talk about it.**

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**Case study participant**

Some teams were also actively using the existing structures in their schools to share their learnings, such as through the established Professional Learning Teams.

## 4.10 Teacher Outcomes

Teacher outcomes were found in improved classroom practice and improved leadership. Outcomes for teachers and the school collectively were also found beyond the TPL team. TPL teachers in the case studies were able to reflect on the changes in their practice; within their classroom, within their school, and in some cases within their clusters or networks. Many teams had involved non-TPL colleagues, and were able to reflect on the changes observed in those teachers, or in the collective practices within the school or network. Those seeking increased knowledge and skills, or increased confidence in an area of investigation, such as numeracy, often achieved those outcomes, as well as unexpected outcomes such as improved confidence in leadership.

Nine case study teams discussed that they were more aware of their practice, or had improved their ability to reflect on practice.

**The time and discussion among our team has changed the way I teach.**

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**Case study participant**

Seven teams discussed improved leadership skills or capacity, or improved confidence. Six reported higher levels of professional conversations in the school or network which was linked to classrooms feeling “more open” and there being less fear between teachers of showing practice and sharing learning. In three teams participants reported increased enthusiasm, and in two participants talked about improved ICT skills.

From the survey of participants, the greatest outcomes of TPL reported were improvements in knowledge and skills, ability to reflect on teacher practice, classroom practice and teaching performance, collaboration with other teachers at their own school, and enthusiasm for teaching.

Principals and RNLs also reported similar levels of outcomes for their schools and networks across improved knowledge and skills, ability to reflect on practice, and collaboration

within the school or network, including the teachers showing improved leadership capacity and enthusiasm for teaching.

#### 4.10.1 Improved classroom practice

The case studies found teacher outcomes consistently occurred across the teams. TPL teachers had increased their knowledge, skills and confidence in the area of investigation, and had increased their ability to reflect on their practice which increased their awareness of their practice. These findings are supported by the survey findings that “substantial” teacher outcomes occurred for the 2010 TPL cohort, as reported by participants, principals and RNLs. The strongest outcomes were improved knowledge and skills, ability to reflect on teaching practice, and improved classroom practice and teaching performance. For some this had been measured through observations or coaching within the team.

For case study teachers the changes they described as having occurred for themselves, team members, or colleagues were often described in terms of the impacts the changes had had on student behaviour.

Also the case studies outlined how such changes in teachers’ practice were continuing to develop, and how they were aiming and planning for the changes to be further embedded and spread across the school in 2011.

#### 4.10.2 Improved leadership

The case studies found confidence in leadership skills and abilities improved, especially in regard to team members sharing their professional learning with colleagues. This correlates to the survey findings from 2010 participants, that improved collaboration with other teachers in the school and improved leadership skills and capacity were “substantial” outcomes. It also correlates with the response by close to 80% of participants that their TPL learning involved leading professional learning in their school.

This corresponds with principals in the case studies expressing gratitude that the team members were taking leading positions in regard to providing professional learning in the school. In the surveys principals indicated improvement in leadership capacity as a “substantial” outcome for their TPL teachers, with RNLs indicating it as an ever stronger “significant” outcome for the team.

In the case studies many teams were formally leading an aspect of professional learning in their school or network, usually in relation to e<sup>5</sup> or their area of investigation. In the case studies many found PLATO helpful in providing learning about e<sup>5</sup>, especially obtaining resources and activities that they could share with colleagues at their school. This was reflected in the survey findings as well as being two of the four most useful aspects of PLATO.

### 4.10.3 Outcomes beyond TPL teachers

Outcomes were also reported for colleagues of the TPL teachers, and in some cases, the school community in general. Several ripple effects had occurred within schools depending on the impact the TPL team were targeting.

- Some teams had been working specifically with colleagues beyond the team, such as with those who had volunteered to be coachees or observees, or those who had been assigned by the school's leadership team (such as through the establishment of team teaching)
- Some teams had led whole-school professional learning
- Some teams had instituted whole-school processes such as peer observations or curriculum reform which had affected or involved colleagues.

This correlated with findings from the principals and RNLs survey that sharing of knowledge and learnings between teachers had improved substantially, and that both principals and RNLs strongly agreed the team had been supported to share their learnings within the school or network. In some cases additional funding was provided, with one in four principals funding additional teachers to participate in school-based teams and one in four RNLs funding additional teachers in network-based teams.

The most common collective outcome was that the level of professional conversations in the school had increased. This was usually described as being correlated to and supporting a "culture change" towards "more open" classrooms with a willingness to share learnings. Some teams had collected data on staff knowledge, skills and/or attitudes.

For teams which worked with specific volunteer colleagues, the team reported improved teaching practice in relation to those colleagues.

## 4.11 Student Outcomes

Fifteen case study teams described changes in student behaviour and attitudes as a result of the changes in their teaching practice. Ten teams described improvements in student engagement, eight teams reported improved student questioning or higher order thinking, seven teams reported increased student interest or motivation. Five teams successfully introduced self-direct learning in their classes and reported positive impacts. Four teams reported there had been less behavioural issues.

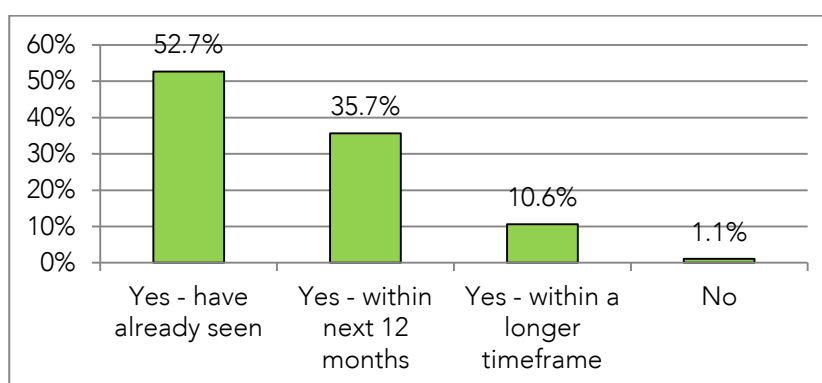
Despite most teams being able to describe changes in student behaviour and attitudes, and seven teams measuring these impacts, often these same teams still indicated that it was "too early to tell" in regards to the full extent of their impact on student outcomes. Ten teams discussed expecting delayed student learning outcomes.

For some teams this was because 2010 had been a trial and implementation year, the full results of which would be seen in 2011 in the next cohort. For others it was because their implemented changes began part way through 2010. For some solely relying on the

already established standardised testing regime, such as NAPLAN or Student Attitudes to School, the tests or surveys had occurred at times of the year which would not have produced meaningful results.

Many teams were hoping to see improvements in standardised testing such as NAPLAN, VELS, or Attitudes to School surveys. In the survey participants were asked whether they expected to see a difference in student learning as a result of their TPL.

Figure 1: **As a result of what you have learnt through your TPL experience, do you expect to see a difference in student learning in your classroom, school or network?**



Nearly all participant respondents (99%) indicated they expected to see a difference in student learning as a result of their TPL professional learning, with over half (53%) indicating they had already seen a difference.

#### 4.11.1 Improved student behaviour and attitudes

The case studies found that almost all teams reflected on changes in student behaviour or attitude as result of TPL, either as a result of changes in teaching practice, curriculum, or both. Almost two-thirds of case studies reported increased engagement from students. Half of case studies reported increased student questioning or higher order thinking. Increased interest and motivation were also reported in almost half. Around one-quarter of case studies also reported increased self-directed learning and reduced behavioural issues. This corresponds with the survey findings from participants, as well as principals and RNLs, reporting overall improvements in student engagement and motivation, as well as student learning outcomes, equating to “substantial”.

#### 4.11.2 Measurement of student outcomes

While nearly all TPL teachers expect to see a difference in student learning as a result of their professional learning, it is much more difficult for them to identify the way in which they will ‘know’ that it has made a difference for student outcomes.

The case study findings and survey analysis suggest that teachers understand the importance of using data to “investigate student learning needs” but are less likely to measure the impact of their professional learning on their students. Around three in five respondents (61%) indicated that they had measured or were intending to measure the

impact upon student learning, while almost two in five (39%) indicated they were not intending to measure the impact.

Almost half of case study teams were measuring their impact upon student outcomes as a result of their TPL in 2010. However it appears that involvement as a case study in this evaluation has influenced whether participants were measuring or intending to measure the impact upon student learning.

Given that two-thirds of participants indicate an understanding of the importance of using student data and measuring their impacts, yet fewer are actually involving this in their TPL, it may be useful for future TPL participants to be further encouraged and supported in practical ways of “how” to do this. This could aid participants to develop a stronger capacity and capability to measure student outcomes, which would likely be further shared within schools and networks with non-TPL colleagues.

### **4.11.3 Delayed student learning outcomes**

A key question remains as to whether behavioural and attitudinal changes will translate into improved student learning outcomes. Initial results from teams which were measuring student learning outcomes indicate this may be likely, but will need further investigation. This will be complicated by the changeover of cohorts and teachers in 2011 however some teams, schools and networks already have plans to measure changes through cohort-tracked data and standardised testing.

As noted above, each case study team was hoping their TPL learning would result in improvements in standardised testing for students. Many noted this would not occur until 2011 or onwards, although some qualified this, noting the interaction of other initiatives in the school meant it would be difficult to attribute any change to TPL learning alone. Even teams measuring the impact upon student learning in 2010 indicated they did not expect to see the full impact of their learning until 2011 and onwards.

Teachers were also generally hoping to see the full extent of student outcomes through their 2011 cohort, as they re-implement their changed practice or curriculum from the beginning. Many were hoping to test the full extent to which these changes would impact, although many noted that cohorts differ and that this would complicate any conclusions about impacts upon the new cohort.

It may also become evident, through further investigation, that certain behaviours are more indicative than others in leading to student learning outcomes.

### **4.11.4 Interrelationship between teacher and student outcomes**

Another key component is the interrelationship between teacher and student outcomes. Some teachers were able to describe the way in which student behaviour responded directly to the changes in their practice. In some instances this was aided by the videotaping of their practice.

## 4.12 Sustainability

Thirteen case study teams had active plans for the sustainability of the changes they had brought about as a result of TPL. Some had actively sought the support of the leadership of their school or network for the sustainability of their TPL learning. In some cases this had already been approved, such as team teaching structures agreed upon, or plans for streaming of classes. Other examples include resource allocations such as new spaces or buildings being built or planned, or additions to school professional learning processes, such as through revised meeting timetables, re-allocated professional learning time, or revised staff professional learning plans. Other teams indicated that they were already intimidated by the challenge of maintaining the TPL learning beyond 2010.

## 4.13 Culture change

Ten case study teams explicitly described the processes or structures they were implementing which challenged the existing teaching culture in the school. Seven teams described obstacles to culture change they were experiencing or observing, including having to allay fears and/or manage the expectations of non-TPL colleagues. In some cases these changes had been encouraged by the principal or RNL, and in other cases the teachers were starting it themselves.

## 5. Influencing factors

Through analysis of the findings the following emerged as the key influencing factors upon teacher and student outcomes.



### 5.1 Identified need

The case studies mapped several identified needs for teams. For about half, NAPLAN was a key driving factor. It is noted that NAPLAN solely focuses on literacy and numeracy. For about half of the teams, student engagement was also a clearly identified need. This aligns with survey findings that impacts upon student learning were expected predominantly in literacy or numeracy, with student engagement also being targeted.

All teams in 2010 had to have an explicit focus of their TPL learning on e<sup>5</sup>. Fourteen of eighteen teams brought an e<sup>5</sup> 'lens' to their identified need. The Model proved to be adaptable to support a diverse range of professional learning needs. The remaining four teams, rather than bringing an e<sup>5</sup> lens to an identified need, saw their identified need as implementing the *Model* in their school or network.<sup>1</sup> Further analysis is required to establish the impact on teacher and student outcomes.

### 5.2 Leadership

The case studies found leadership played a pivotal part in several ways both in the external leadership provided to TPL members, and leadership within the group. It was found to be pivotal to creating a vision around the identified need.

Improved leadership skills and capacity among TPL participants was noted in almost half of the case studies, and was found to be a substantial outcome as self-reported by participants in the survey, a substantial outcome as reported by principals, and a significant outcome as reported by RNLs.

Leadership was also on display among teams in planning for the sustainability of their TPL learning for future years, and in establishing processes and structures encouraging positive culture change within their school or network.

<sup>1</sup> It was determined that data on this issue could not appropriately be obtained using a survey instrument. As such, data on this issue in relation to the full 2010 TPL cohort is not available.

## 5.3 Support

It was generally found, through the case studies and survey results, that the more support teams received, the higher their ability to be confident in their learning, achieve outcomes and be able to communicate those outcomes and share their learnings across the school community. Participants who were supported to apply their TPL professional learning reported statistically significant higher outcomes.

Support is also necessary for participants to access their TPL time. Participants who were “on-track” to use their days reported higher outcomes. In terms of the use of time, those who were not granted their full days also reported impacts upon their professional learning and generally reported lower outcomes. Those with substantial administrative responsibilities and teachers with VCE classes experienced difficulty in taking their TPL time. The survey data showed teachers who taught Year 11-12 reported statistically significant lower outcomes.

Support among team members was also found to be important. Teams in the case studies were generally found to be working well, with positive group dynamics. Often it was noted by the team that different members’ skills complemented each other. Findings from the survey confirm that working as a team ranked as one of the most useful aspects of TPL.

## 5.4 Additional resources & expertise

Access to expertise and additional resources correlated with TPL teachers achieving higher outcomes for themselves, and for their students.

PLATO in 2010 successfully aided teachers towards two previously identified success factors: achieving a clearly defined purpose and objectives, and a reasonable and realistic scope of inquiry. It also provided valuable guidance for teams throughout their learning by providing professional dialogue, learnings about e<sup>5</sup>, and allowing for team-building and networking. It also provided valuable activities and resources which could be shared with non-TPL colleagues and helped teams develop strategies to measure the impact of their learning.

Case studies also found that additional resources were provided to TPL teachers by some schools or networks, including access to external expertise. Higher outcomes were reported by participants for those whose principal or RNL indicated they had provided additional resources. In some case studies access to the external expertise had been critical to identifying the need, and thus provided the main driving force for TPL.

The case studies also found those teams with access to a coach who was a specialist in the area of investigation were more likely to have indicated higher outcomes. Team members were more likely to talk about their increased enthusiasm for teaching and improved confidence, and their students achieving higher levels of self-directed learning, as well as higher order thinking and questioning. The teams were also more likely to be collecting data on teacher outcomes beyond the team, as well as student outcomes. The surveys

showed those with access to a coach “to support the team on a regular basis (ie, not casual or ad hoc)” reported statistically significant higher outcomes, particularly higher student learning outcomes.

## 5.5 Focus on teacher practice

The evaluation found that the e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model, PLATO and the prevalence of peer observations and peer coaching in 2010 had an effect of focusing teachers on instructional practice. This appeared to be supported by survey findings of higher teacher practice outcomes for the 2010 TPL cohort than in previous years (although qualifications in regard to this comparison hinder any definite conclusions). Notably, the ability to personally reflect on teaching practice was a new addition to the outcomes measured by the survey in 2010, so cannot be compared to previous years, but in 2010 it rated as one of the highest outcomes for participants.

It was found that, by the end of their TPL experience, the higher amount of use and confidence achieved by TPL teachers in regards to e<sup>5</sup> correlated with higher teacher and student outcomes reported. This aligns with the focus of TPL on e<sup>5</sup> in 2010.

Also in 2010 almost two-thirds of case study teams undertook peer observations, peer reviews, peer coaching or modelling, or self-assessments as part of their TPL, basing these activities on the language of e<sup>5</sup>. Almost half of teams then established these processes for their school or network beyond the TPL team.

Analysis shows that teams which undertook peer observations for themselves were more likely to report improved teacher outcomes and were also more likely (though to a lesser extent) to report improved student outcomes. These teams were also more likely to be collecting data on both teacher and student outcomes.

Teams which were establishing these processes beyond the team (some of which involved encouraging and supporting reluctant colleagues) were more likely to report improved confidence in leadership and were slightly more likely to report teacher outcomes, but were slightly less likely to report student outcomes. It may be that the focus on setting up complicated processes within schools and networks detracted from short term student outcome achievements. It should be noted, however, that their ‘macro’ focus across their school or network may lead to broader teacher and student outcomes in future years.

## 5.6 Sharing learning

Analysis of the relationship between case study themes shows those formally sharing their learning with colleagues (such as through running professional learning sessions for non-TPL colleagues) were more likely to report teacher outcomes, particularly improved leadership, confidence, enthusiasm for teaching, and improved levels of professional conversations with colleagues. Those teams were also more likely to report student outcomes and be collecting data on both teacher and student outcomes.

Survey analysis showed that stronger support from the school to share learnings related to participants reporting higher outcomes, particularly around improved collaboration.

In 2010 the TPL Application Form specifically required applicants to describe how they intended to share their learnings. In 2010 six case study teams desired to share their TPL days with non-TPL colleagues. It is understood that a central tenant of TPL is the professional learning of the individual TPL teacher, nevertheless, there appeared to be a tension in having a responsibility to share TPL learnings and not being able to grant additional resources to others to facilitate this to occur. In some cases schools were not in a position to grant these additional resources.

### 5.6.1 Artefact and review process

The case studies found several negative impacts upon TPL teachers from the requirement to produce an artefact as a result of their TPL learning, and engage in the artefact peer review process. Although some indicated that their artefact was planned to be used by their school or network in the future, almost two-thirds noted it was time-consuming and detracted from their TPL learning. Many case study teams also discussed the lack of clarity they received regarding the expectations placed upon the artefact. It is noted that the artefact and review process will not be undertaken with the 2011 TPL cohort.

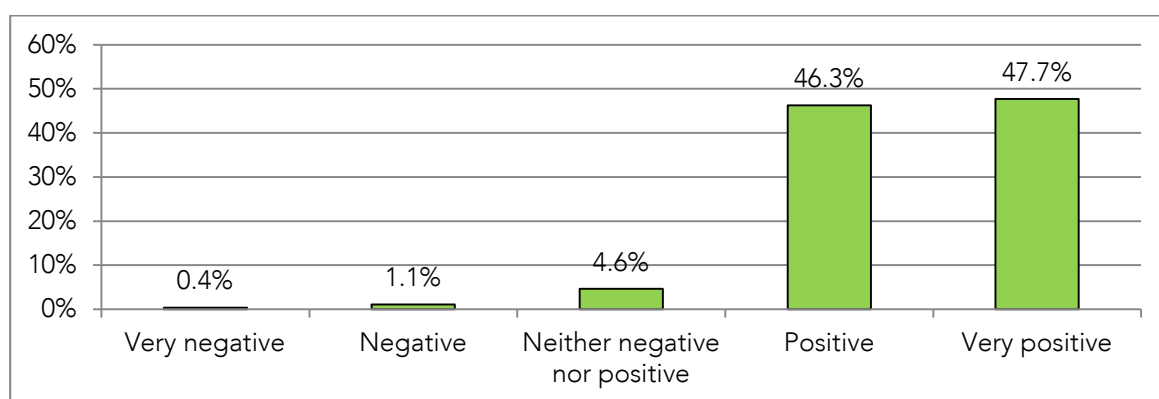
## 5.7 Longevity of outcomes

Sustainability and culture change were themes emerging from the case studies and through analysis are predicted to be key influencing factors upon the longevity of the outcomes created by TPL teachers through their learning. These themes will be areas of focus with the 2010 cohort as part of the 2011 evaluation.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

This evaluation has demonstrated that TPL participants continue to consistently report a positive experience of TPL. Consistent with the case study findings, respondents to the Participants Survey were positive about their overall experience of TPL as displayed below; 46% were positive and 48% very positive.

Figure 2: TPL experience – “Overall, how would you rate your experience of TPL?”



Respondent comments reflect this assessment, noting TPL contributed to their own personal and professional growth and had a positive impact for their school. The main reasons given were the time out of the classroom to expand knowledge through research and professional learning; working collaboratively; reflecting upon one’s own teaching practice; and having professional discussions with colleagues and to network.

**I've loved having this opportunity to expand my knowledge, work with a team, and have the time to reflect and analyse my own practice.**

**Participant respondent**

Principals and RNLs indicated they would recommend TPL to others.

- 83% of principals & 90% of RNLs would recommend TPL to others
- 16% of principals & 10% of RNLs would recommend TPL to others with reservations
- 2% of principals would not recommend TPL to others.

Additional comments indicate principals and RNLs believe TPL is worthwhile and provides a good opportunity for teachers to create positive change within their school or network.

**[I have] no reservation at all [in recommending TPL]. It is a brilliant model of professional learning to support focussed school improvement.**

**Principal respondent**

This evaluation has found TPL is continuing to impact on changes in TPL teachers’ practice which are resulting in immediate and measurable improvements in student behaviour and

attitudes. Teacher outcomes were found in improved classroom practice, and improved leadership, for TPL teachers. TPL teachers have indicated they were expecting to see student outcomes in the medium term through standardised testing for students such as NAPLAN, VELS, or Student Attitudes to School surveys. Teachers also indicated they have either already observed, or expected to observe, a difference in student learning in their classroom, school or network as a result of their TPL experience.

## 6.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to apply the learnings from this evaluation.

- As the evaluation found that PLATO was successful in aiding teachers toward achieving outcomes and highly valued by teachers it is recommended that DEECD continue to provide PLATO for all TPL participants.
- Most participants understand that the use of data and measuring the impact of their learning is important to targeting an identified need, but are less likely to incorporate measurement as part of TPL. It is recommended that DEECD, such as through PLATO, further encourage and support the capacity and capability of TPL teachers to utilise student data and measure the impact of their learning.
- Several influencing factors were found to impact upon TPL participant outcomes. It is recommended these be incorporated into the application and selection process, such as through outlining a selection preference for TPL learning where:
  - The identified need is clearly stated, possibly supported by evidence
  - There are plans to share learnings (including support from the school or network to do so)
  - The school or network provides additional resources
  - Specific strategies are planned to reduce the conflict of responsibilities for applicants who teach Year 12 classes and those with significant administrative responsibilities.
- It was found there were negative impacts for participants if the full number of days applied for were not granted, or if the full number of participants were not granted for a TPL team. It is recommended that in these specific situations applicants be provided with a process to apply for a review of the decision, and if the review is rejected guidance provided to the applicants and their intended team members.
- It was found that teachers who undertake TPL using CRTs dislike “missing” classes, have an increased workload in preparing those classes, and in a few cases teachers have reflected that this results in student behavioural issues. It is recommended that DEECD further consider the role of TPL in providing reduced teacher loads as opposed to access to CRTs.

## 7. Evaluation questions for 2011

The longitudinal nature of this evaluation provides the opportunity to further investigate the influencing factors and to refine the focus of the evaluation in 2011 to build upon the learnings from 2010.

### 7.1 For investigation with the 2011 cohort

Eighteen new case study teams from the 2011 cohort will be involved in the evaluation in 2011. It is also understood there have been several changes implemented for the 2011 cohort. With these points in mind, and the intention for the learnings to go deeper and be built upon, the following evaluation questions have been agreed with DEECD:

- What has been the impact on teacher practice, in relation to:
  - the requirement of using e<sup>5</sup>, including access to expertise such as PLATO and the e<sup>5</sup> Immersion Days? How is e<sup>5</sup> being used?
  - reflective practice, including peer observations and the provision of cameras?
  - the inquiry question? (with the assumption that it will help teachers focus on their own individual practice and learning)
- To what extent are the following factors present and how have they influenced teacher and student outcomes?
  - A need has been clearly identified
  - Leadership (of team members, Principals and/or RNLs) has created a vision of how to address the identified need
  - Support is provided, including access to professional expertise and/or additional resources
  - Sharing learning and to what extent this involves collaboration with colleagues.
- To what extent:
  - are there teacher outcomes?
  - are teachers measuring the impact of their professional learning? If so, how are they measuring and what have they learnt? Are they changing their practice based on evidence?
- To what extent:
  - are there student outcomes?
  - are teachers measuring the impact of their professional learning? If so, how are they measuring and what have they learnt? Are they changing their practice based on evidence?
- What are the factors inhibiting or supporting teachers measuring the impact of their professional learning?

## 7.2 For investigation with the 2010 cohort case studies

Given the longitudinal nature of this evaluation the continued contact with the 2010 case study team leaders will allow unique investigation, unlike previous evaluations of TPL, of how outcomes achieved through TPL develop and embed in the post-TPL years. The following evaluation questions have been agreed with DEECD for investigation in 2011:

- To what extent are the following factors present and how have they influenced teacher and student outcomes?
  - Team members have re-identified their need and how they will address it with reduced resources
  - Leadership (of team members, Principals and/or RNLs) continues
  - Access to professional expertise and/or additional resources continues
  - Peer observation and coaching established through TPL continues
- To what extent have the teacher outcomes (awareness of practice/reflection, leadership/confidence, level of professional conversations, enthusiasm) been embedded and continued to develop, including in relation to teachers' personal practice?
- To what extent have the student outcomes (engagement, questioning/higher order thinking, interest/motivation) been embedded and continued to develop, particularly whether behavioural changes have resulted in improved student learning outcomes?
- To what extent have plans for sustainability been followed through or adapted, and the impact this has had on the ability to produce sustainable changes?
- To what extent has culture change begun to embed in the school or network, such as through improved collegiality, sharing, levels of professional conversation, and/or transparent classroom and teaching practices?
- To what extent are teachers measuring the impact of their professional learning?
- What are the factors inhibiting or supporting teachers measuring the impact of their professional learning?

## 8. Case studies

### Case Study 1

The TPL team comprised three teachers who have thoroughly enjoyed working closely together throughout the year. They set out to find out if e<sup>5</sup> is applicable to English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching, and were each allocated thirty days of TPL which they reflected was insufficient to achieve all they would have liked to achieve. The team requested an additional five days however this was not granted.

The school principal encourages TPL and indicated that previous TPL resources developed are still being used in the school. She stressed that teachers have to want to do the TPL and that in order to grow professionally, teachers must continue to learn. TPL has given the teachers, and the school, time to really focus on e<sup>5</sup>.

When considering the levels for e<sup>5</sup>, the team received differing views and advice about what the levels mean and how they should be used. They agreed that the level at which they operate will depend on the situation and where the students are at.

As the TPL evolved over the year the team came to see that e<sup>5</sup> could be used as a planning tool and a mechanism for improving teacher practice.

The team developed and delivered fifteen hours of professional learning sessions based on e<sup>5</sup> using the elements they had developed and used including reflective tools, surveys for students, the development and delivery of two units of work, and fun activities. The professional learning sessions include snippets from films accessed via a link to YouTube. Whilst the clips add an interesting element to the sessions, they discovered that this can be problematic as YouTube is not always available to teachers; they may need to specifically ask for YouTube to be opened in order to access it. The team modified the sessions as they went and they have delivered it across multiple campuses of the school.

As the school does not have access to standardized tests such as NAPLAN they have developed their own assessment processes. Speaking and listening skills are assessed when students commence at the school and again by the class teacher when leaving the school.

The TPL team were keen to use measurement tools to help them assess the impact of changes made by teachers. They developed surveys for students to evaluate every lesson. Through the team's analysis of the students' feedback they discovered that students felt the engage stage was the most important one, and where teachers could improve most.

The student perception data collected during the TPL showed an increase in the teachers' impact from Term One to Term Two.

The development and delivery of two work units have been an important feature of their TPL. The units of work link together VELs, e<sup>5</sup> and the ESL continuum.

The first one focussed on oral skills via a debating program. The debating program is the only one that exists in the ESL arena and has been going for three years. The debating program unit includes activities linked to e<sup>5</sup>. The program culminated in a final debate which was well attended, including by other teachers from the school.

The second unit of work is an intensive reading program, over ten weeks, focussed on Australian values. Two classes came together, and pairs of students chose one value to work on and concluding with a poem about that value. For their final presentation the students invited other classes to attend. The poems have been incorporated into a 2011 values calendar.

The artefact developed by the team is an e<sup>5</sup> digital portfolio. It brings together all the components developed and used during the year and grouped into essentials and activities. It includes a one page diagram which has been a useful way to explain and share their TPL learnings.

A highlight of the year was the e<sup>5</sup> afternoon tea celebration. This was an opportunity for the team to report back to all the staff on the artefact. The staff not only got to see how the e<sup>5</sup> digital portfolio was progressing but got to enjoy all sorts of food beginning with E including an e<sup>5</sup> chocolate cake. The afternoon tea is a good example of the way in which the team has incorporated fun and creativity in introducing e<sup>5</sup> into the school.

The artefact can be adapted for any school. The team has received suggestions from some teachers to change the title as the artefact has broader application beyond ESL. However the team think is it very important to keep the focus on ESL.

Teacher inquiry based learning in the ESL context was an important focus for the team. They had been told that inquiry based learning couldn't be used in ESL, which the team took on as a challenge to demonstrate that it can be done successfully in the ESL context.

The team has mixed views about the peer review feedback on the artefact. Whilst their feedback was generally very positive in particular in how easily it could be used by others, other feedback was less useful such as having the artefact as one component rather than three. The technical issues relating to data limits for uploading information onto the Ultranet prevent this artefact being loaded as one component.

The team were disappointed to receive an Outcome Two through the peer review as they were very proud of their artefact and had put an enormous amount of work into it. They had been hoping to receive an Outcome One.

But they have continued to refine the artefact and as a result of the peer review feedback , they have included new sections including reflections and learnings, shared understandings of good teaching, common language and changes in teachers behaviour/practice as well as some photos.

They also added information on what they could have done differently. If the team had been granted additional TPL days, they would have been able to look at the data they

collected in more detail, and developed strategies for the primary school section of the school.

They also reflected that it would have been good for them to have knowledge about the size limit for the Ultranet at a PLATO day, rather than finding out when they were at the point of loading it on to the Ultranet. They would have also benefitted from assistance with programs like Movie Maker, as there was limited expertise within the school of such programs.

They do not think the peer review is a good way to assess the artefact, (they each had variable experience in reviewing other artefacts) and suggest that maybe a review at a PLATO day would be more appropriate.

The team were very keen to focus on research and to have what they were learning published. They have been very successful in this regard through the inclusion of an article on their approach to TPL in a Departmental publication; an article in an industry newsletter; and the presentation of a paper at a virtual conference.

The team also plans to present the units of work to staff at professional learning days in early 2011 and, as each teacher will be using the teacher's reflective journal in 2011, the artefact will be of real benefit. The school principal reflected that all staff now know about e<sup>5</sup> and share a common language around e<sup>5</sup>. She has found that the TPL has fed into the continuous learning approach at the school and that they will be able to have a more guided conversations using the e<sup>5</sup> reflection journals in 2011.

An industry body has also asked the team to run a professional learning session for ESL teachers in 2011, and they have been asked to run a session for all curriculum coordinators of the new arrivals program in 2011. Another school has requested to shadow one of the team conducting the debating program.

Each of the team reflected on what participating in the TPL has meant for them. For one team member it has been a great experience that goes beyond the thirty days, noting "It brings the sparkle in teaching." She has gained knowledge, has been enriched by being with different groups on the PLATO days rather than the same group each time, and gained ICT skills.

For another team member, it has been a fantastic way to get in depth into ESL teaching. She loved working on the reading unit of work, and sees a real benefit for her teaching.

Another team member reflected that she got more out of it than she put in. She enjoyed the creativity and spoke of being in awe of her team mates and their hard work and ICT skills. She found it good to visit each other's classrooms and to talk about what they were doing. She is much more conscious of e<sup>5</sup> and more aware of aspects of her teaching.

All three commented how much they loved working in the team, and that the TPL was a whole team effort. The school principal commented that she has been impressed by the high quality of the work and professionalism of the team, and acknowledges the extra work

by the team to make it so highly successful. The school has discovered e<sup>5</sup> is very relevant and applicable to ESL.

## Case Study 2

The 2010 TPL is the third time the school has had TPL and builds on previous TPL work which helped establish a number of innovative programs.

This school initiative was developed in response to changing staff profiles. As longer serving teachers, used to operating in isolation, are leaving the school, new teachers are coming in and establishing a team-work mechanism and differentiated learning.

The TPL team were using e<sup>5</sup> to work toward a team teaching and integrated curriculum approach to better address transition issues in Year 7.

The TPL team was granted thirty days each, structured in a timetabled allotment. The TPL team was split into three sub-teams: a "Communications Program" team (English/humanities), allocated two periods per week; an "Investigate Program" team (maths/science), allocated one period per week; and a French team which was not allocated any periods. Additionally, a few days were allocated for whole group meetings. Teachers also met weekly in their own time throughout the year which represented the level of personal commitment involved.

Initially, the team was not aware that the 2010 TPL was about producing an artefact. During the year, the artefact was one of the greatest causes of frustration. In three instances, the team felt they put in a lot of work which was then superseded by material they viewed at PLATO days. For example, a lot of time was spent producing unit templates which the team was planning to use as their artefact. However, in attending the PLATO days, the team found that the Department had developed unit templates, at a much higher standard than the team could have hoped to produce. In the end the team decided they would produce a Museum Box, containing a drawer with six boxes, one for each "e" and another for the planning tool. Each box reveals a cube that can be rotated to view different sides, with each side containing different information. For example, the sides of the "explore" cube included capacities, a descriptor, an outline of the activity, a video clip of one of the team members talking about how it went, and a video of the pupils doing the activity.

The flipcams used in recordings were found to be a great piece of technology, and made it easy to develop the videos. Having the e<sup>5</sup> model as a focus of the video brought a lot of other people in who were happy to be involved.

The team has used the TPL time to plan and implement a team teaching approach. This was a great benefit, as having the time to get together is ordinarily very difficult, and the additional time really allowed the teachers to be "on the same page" when team teaching. It became evident that for team teaching, weekly meetings were the key. The PLATO days were also helpful in planning as a block at the beginning.

The development of team teaching has had an impact on student outcomes. The larger group of students in one class makes it clearer that there are very different abilities across students, and it better enables teachers to target teaching to those abilities. During the year, the team teaching targeted three to four ability groups, moving pupils up and down, depending on the topic. The pupils come together at the end of the session to pick up on what each level had done. The teachers were able to tailor their approach to the groups. For example, with the lower group, there was the ability to work in a smaller cohort, to not have to compete with the main group, and to experience success more, even if the overall results had not changed. For example, one pupil said "I like getting some ticks on my page". There was also a better flow, so that teachers could address the behavioural issues at a class level, and there has been a noticeable reduction in referral of behavioural issues to co-ordinators, although this may be because the co-ordinators are more heavily involved on a day-to-day basis with the team teaching. While the results are not necessarily expected to show up in NAPLAN, on an individual basis the teachers feel that there was a positive change. There is an expectation that results will show up in the VELs data as well as the Student Attitudes to School Surveys.

Another aspect of team teaching is having more than one person involved in the planning. This made planning a much more necessary part of the lesson, which resulted in a more varied curriculum, provided opportunities for collegiate support and learning from other teachers, and allowed teachers to discuss students outside their own experience. In addition, having more than one teacher in the classroom resulted in the pupils getting more individual attention. There was also a more conscious effort made to be innovative and up-to-date with information and use of technology. The team are wary, however, of how this planning time will be accounted for in 2011 without TPL.

Some team members were involved in a presentation at a learning expo, which was well received by other schools and principals. The feedback was that it was useful to hear how the school had used the team teaching approach to make an impact, without spending millions of dollars on new facilities, and that the team gave a very honest assessment of team teaching; that it is useful but certainly doesn't solve every problem and also presents some new ones (like needing planning time together, having a larger cohort to connect with, ideally needing a larger space with 'break-out' areas, etc.). There was also a feeling that while the team had successfully managed within the space being used (a conversion of two old classroom and a corridor space), it was not ideal, especially given there is a big difference between open space and flexible space. The school during the year was asked to apply for the Building Futures Fund to develop new purpose designed and built flexible teaching/learning areas which will hopefully alleviate this.

The team teaching sessions also integrated subjects. For example, "investigate" married maths and science, and English was integrated with Studies of Society and Environment. There was a feeling, however, that the pupils did not love the integration, and that they would have preferred for the subjects to be separated out. While the team felt it was a good integrated program, sometimes it was hard for the pupils to understand, and it was

not apparent whether the links had been clearly made. The team felt this will be something to strengthen next year. The 3P model has also been utilised as an integral part of the planning, focusing on where the pupils are, what can be done to personalise teaching, and what needs to be done to achieve this.

Although the development of the team teaching approach would have gone ahead without the involvement of e<sup>5</sup>, the team found e<sup>5</sup> was a useful tool to support the approach and supported the goals of the learning. The TPL team presented at staff meetings 3-4 times a Term about e<sup>5</sup>. This has encouraged the other teachers to use the e<sup>5</sup> language, not only in discussing what the TPL team was doing, but also for the things that the other teachers were already doing, and recognising that this is not an accountability tool. The team found that it was valuable to share the outcomes of the PLATO days at the staff meetings, especially using the PLATO activities and materials that helped to introduce it. The team also created a feedback tool based on the e<sup>5</sup>, which produced some positive feedback, however much of the lesson observation was done informally.

The team indicated that it would have been beneficial to have a regional coach visit the school. The team did experience a visit from the RNL who visited the team teaching classroom but noted that this would have been more helpful if there was some prior indication of the scheduled visit, as well as timely feedback. The TPL team indicated that it had been well supported by the school's leadership, and benefited from having members of the leadership team within the TPL team.

Next year, the TPL team will be spread out across Years 7, 8 and 9 to "seed" the learning across the levels. However, the team felt it would have been useful to maintain the same team for another year in order to embed and consolidate the learnings. There was apprehension that it is too early to begin sharing the knowledge, and that there may not be enough planning time next year without the TPL, especially given that team teaching is being planned to spread to Year 8 next year. The team felt that the team teaching approach relied on people being willing to come onboard and commit "over and above", and there was concern that some staff members may not be as willing to do the work, which could cause resentment. However, the addition of new staff to the school in 2011, is seen as a positive move as it is felt that the new teachers will be involved willingly in the program.

## Case Study 3

This metropolitan secondary school designed a TPL application focussed on developing the capacity of the curriculum design teams to implement e<sup>5</sup> within the school. The members of the team were the teachers responsible for pedagogical and curriculum development across the year levels within the school. The team looked at all aspects of e<sup>5</sup>. The school had not had TPL funding previously and had decided to apply in response to encouragement from the regional office for them to take up TPL and e<sup>5</sup>. The principal encouraged team members to apply.

The school is in a region which has had a big agenda change over a number of schools for a number of years. Schools in the region have been working together for several years through the Leading Schools Fund and the Regeneration Project to look at the changing demographics in the region and about regenerating education in the area. The school has experienced a significant change in demographic over recent years, with around 20% of their students having ESL backgrounds. The principal saw the e<sup>5</sup> framework as creating a common language amongst the schools in the region, as well providing a common language and common ground within the school to help with the delivery of the new curriculum and change the teaching practice within the school.

The school has increasingly embraced an integrated curriculum learning program in its Year 7 and 8 classes, to address the issue of students coming in from a stimulating primary school environment and losing interest in school at the secondary level where the focus has been on teaching the “subject” rather than encouraging learning. The school has seen evidence in their Year 7 and 8 students now being engaged in activities and an increase in learning outcomes.

In 2010 the school introduced project based learning into Year 9 classes and is moving toward increasing democratic approaches to classroom teaching and learning. The team said that the school had struggled to integrate new curriculum and that it was one thing for teachers to be exposed to it; another thing to take it up. They reflected that the school is one where teaching practices have generally been based on traditional methods. The team felt that their TPL work was about creating a culture in the school in which it is accepted that there are a range of ways and means to achieve student outcomes and building an understanding amongst staff that teaching is about the needs of students. By having a project based learning approach the school will have a more engaging framework with students involved in activities, and e<sup>5</sup> will demonstrate that this approach can work rather than a more traditional method.

The team members felt that getting teachers to do an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses would be challenging, especially as the school environment was not one where staff really talked about teaching. One of the team described the environment as “convivial but not collegial” – that is, staff are friendly enough to one another, but their classroom practice is not collaborative.

Each team member had fifty days and was not able to use all of them. Their TPL time was not timetabled and it was hard to get the time release for TPL together. As secondary teachers they take a range of classes, across year levels and including Year 12. The team said that they tried not to use class time and use non-teaching periods instead, although they noted that this time is not “free” because their administrative responsibilities and tasks remain. For the days taken, they tried to find days where there were lighter teaching loads but whichever of them had Year 12 classes would leave to take them.

The conundrum had been to schedule time for TPL, given these other responsibilities. In hindsight the team felt that it would have been better to have an allotment reduction to 0.8 FTE to accommodate TPL. Another option, could have been to appoint a full time person to cover all of the team’s administrative work and allow them free time for TPL.

The team felt that, for teachers and schools who have not had TPL before and who don’t have the understanding of what it all means, it can be very hard to know how best to structure the time. More direction on this early on would have been useful. By the first PLATO day in December, the team noted that it is almost too late to change the allocated load for teachers for the following year.

They also felt that they did not have a good understanding of what the days could be used for and perhaps had not used them as effectively because of this. They would have liked to have had more flexibility with how the days could be used. This would have meant one of them could have spent time with a group of teachers working with them on e<sup>5</sup> and coaching.

During the year the team had to redesign the TPL, with their short term goals becoming medium term goals. They needed to spend the time building their own understanding and competency with the e<sup>5</sup> model before being able to do professional learning and development with other staff.

Initially they thought the e<sup>5</sup> model seemed jargon laden, but the more they looked at it they realised that it is really about how you teach. Being able to convey this to staff meant that other teachers are now sharing what they are doing and trying different things. The team introduced it to staff through immersion. They partly used the e<sup>5</sup> model to teach e<sup>5</sup> to staff, using e<sup>5</sup> terminology but simplifying it all to make it easy and by demonstrating the practical application of it.

The team felt that e<sup>5</sup> had been affirming for other teachers because it is about what they are already doing, the next step is working out where to take it to. They felt that the e<sup>5</sup> model helps teachers get organised in their teaching in that they can use it to think about how they are going to approach a lesson. It makes teachers conscious of what they are doing. They felt that teachers are in a position now where they can look at data in a meaningful way and are more confident in evaluating it.

In implementing e<sup>5</sup> the team set up forums for teacher discussion with a mix of gender, age, and domains represented. Following these, teachers indicated that they wanted a forum to talk about their teaching. They haven't had something like this before: a place to share what they are doing; what they are good at; their successes and to get some acknowledgement from peers.

They asked teachers to do an initial self assessment against e<sup>5</sup> and another one at the beginning of Term 4. This was part of encouraging teachers to use e<sup>5</sup> to assist them in evaluating their own teaching practices. They noticed that teachers underscored themselves in comparison to how their students scored them. There were a lot of good teachers who didn't know how good they were, so it has been affirming for them.

While the team have implemented the e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model across the school, they do not think they are there yet in terms of embedding it into teacher practice. Teachers are using the common language of e<sup>5</sup> and the whole school is committed to it. Everyone has it in their performance plan, and teachers are now possibly more open to peer on peer coaching. The team see it as a three year journey now, rather than one year.

The team felt that their involvement in TPL had been positive overall, in spite of having felt pulled in all directions by taking it on. Having the curriculum development staff in the team meant that the right people were involved. One of the team members had been doing some coaching and the school has a teaching and learning coach available to help them on aspects as necessary. The team felt that they did well as a group using their own resources, drawing on their own experiences and learning together. There was no additional external support other than that provided through the TPL due to school finances. Team members commented that they had found the team work approach positive and that it had given them some professional leadership experience.

The team said that it was too early at this stage to see student outcomes, though they note that there will be anecdotal outcomes in terms of student engagement and that student satisfaction surveys might show some outcomes.

The team intended to have a block of time to meet (after Year 12 finished) and work out the process for taking the work forward next year. A plan could be to use the Year 8 student data which is showing a lack of engagement and building e<sup>5</sup> into the student learning process by asking teachers to reflect on their practice to address this. It needs to be woven into the fabric of what teachers are doing. This process could also be linked more explicitly to the impact on student outcomes. While they acknowledged that there will be many other factors which will impact on student learning outcomes, they could expect to see impacts of their TPL over the next few years if teachers are reflecting on their own practice.

The team said that although they would not have allocated time to work on this next year, they felt that their positions in the school structure with responsibilities for curriculum management meant that work on embedding e<sup>5</sup> will continue. They have fortnightly meetings and could use these to continue the work. One member noted that having a

group involved in TPL meant there was a critical mass which would ensure that the work continued.

The principal was happy with the work of the team and thought their success was due to the personalities involved, as well as their positions in the school. The approach they had taken to implement e<sup>5</sup> had been effective in engaging staff. Having TPL had given the team time to prepare what they were going to do with staff. Instead of being just one step ahead, which quite often how teachers feel, they were able to be many steps ahead. It really bonded the team as a group of leaders demonstrating better practice. This gave other staff more confidence in the team and in going forward.

The principal said that for a while it felt that things were going slowly, but in retrospect the team needed that time for their own learning to happen and that gave them personal credibility when they were demonstrating it to staff, particularly from the ones who had been around a bit and seen new ideas come and go and have not always subscribed to new ideas.

The principal said that she wanted this work to continue without the tag of “doing e<sup>5</sup>”, preferring to use language about building a professional learning community, and having the e<sup>5</sup> embedded in professional learning teams next year. The principal said the next step is getting an agreed set of values in the school about what it means to be professional in our practice. Once these values are agreed, the school can use the e<sup>5</sup> language to hold people to expectations.

## Case Study 4

The two TPL team members applied for, and were granted, fifty days each. The two were very experienced teachers, who had honed their skills in a number of school environments and also in industry. Their challenge at the school was the issue of student engagement – that is, how to build a greater level of interest amongst students in the humanities. The teachers surmised that, among other factors, perhaps teaching methods were a contributing factor to disinterest in the humanities. They sought to test this theory and improve student engagement through combining their different strengths in developing a new approach to teaching and learning. One of the teachers was an ICT professional while the other had an interest in differentiated learning – both taught humanities subjects.

The teachers also brought an e<sup>5</sup> ‘lens’ to their endeavour. They familiarised themselves with the e<sup>5</sup> model, and began reflecting on aspects of e<sup>5</sup> as they related to their current practice, and the new practices they were intending to introduce.

In the early stages of their project, the team was funded by the school to attend a differentiated learning presentation by an external expert. Their practical work in the classroom was focused on three core concepts - negotiated curriculum, negotiated work mode (group or individual work) and negotiated reporting mode (written reports, power point, etc) with students. They were deeply committed to the benefits that could be gained from taking a team teaching approach, and had already been incorporating aspects of this teaching approach.

The team was able to schedule joint teaching availability through the timetable, and classrooms next door to one another, including one classroom that was ICT equipped. They commenced by scheduling TPL work time every Friday, however they found that school based responsibilities inhibited their capacity to focus on their TPL work. The Friday absences also prevented them from working with the very Year 10 student group who was the subject of their TPL. The teachers approached their principal and made a request to have the day shifted. The principal was very supportive of the request and the day was changed. The team reflected that the principal had been open to suggestions and concerns, and very supportive of the TPL.

In reflecting upon the way they structured and used their time, the team considered that more off site work would have been helpful. The team also speculated about the benefits of perhaps taking some more time in blocks.

TPL team made a number of comments about student outcomes. One of the team members was also teaching a Year 9 Select Entry Accelerated Learning (SEAL) program, and was able to introduce some of the action learning strategies into this group. The opportunity of introducing strategies to a number of different classes provided the teachers with a broader insight into the usefulness of their approach. While there were observable ‘improvements’ across all student groups, these were of a different nature for students of different ability levels. For example, team members observed that high and medium performing students became more engaged, motivated, and interactive. The TPL

strategies encouraged the students to gain a greater level of comfort with self direction. The positive results for lower performing students were not as clear. In the case of these students, the teachers noted less negative and disruptive behaviour and in some instances, more engagement.

Overall, the team reflected that their strategies appear to have created a far more positive atmosphere in the classroom. They introduced student surveys and have come to depend on the culture of feedback that it encourages. The students in their classes understand such feedback to be a part of the teaching and learning process.

The team has created curriculum 'one pagers' and shared their approach with other staff in faculty meetings. Some teachers within the school have observed the approach and taken up aspects of the practice in their own work. The team is hoping more staff will follow suit. Further, the school will be supporting team teaching in 2011 at the Year 9 level. There didn't appear to be a network within which the TPL team could share its learnings, at least not at this stage.

The team felt very positively about their PLATO experience. Early in 2010, one team member commented:

**If you didn't have those days, then TPL wouldn't work . . . . you would be adrift.**

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However, they felt that the structure and the purpose of the artefact wasn't made plain early enough in the year. They considered that day two or three of PLATO was too late in the year to focus attention on the artefact, making it difficult for teachers to get their heads around its construction. The team recommended that some TPL days or PLATO time should be put aside for developing the artefact design and parameters; that it would have been helpful to have professional guidance when developing the artefact. Such a PLATO day could involve bringing along ideas for the artefact, and gaining feedback about whether participants were on the right track or not. The team members were sceptical about the benefits of the assessment process that was to apply for the artefact.

Upon reflection, the team had mixed feelings about aspects of the e<sup>5</sup>. They had intended to focus on one or two aspects of e<sup>5</sup> at the outset, but ultimately found their attention focused on all aspects. They reflected that the large departmental publication had limited practical use, and that more should be done to make the e<sup>5</sup> 'accessible to ordinary classroom teachers'.

The team reflected that they sometimes struggled with leaving the classroom – especially their VCE classes. They also wished that they had been able to make time to visit other schools as part of their TPL. They would also like to have capitalised upon more external professional learning opportunities.

Overall their experience of TPL was positive. The positive group dynamic between the two teachers, their co-operation with and support for one another, was clearly a contributing factor to the successes they were experiencing in the classroom. Also of note was the emphasis they placed on reflexivity in the process of improving student outcomes. In their teaching and learning assessment plans the teachers added columns for ICT and differentiated learning to consider these variables in their approach. They developed tools and strategies for improving the classroom dynamic, implemented them in the classroom, and reflected on possibilities for improvement following their interactions with students. The TPL team viewed their own work in the school as an 'action learning process'.

## Case Study 5

The TPL application was network designed and focussed on all of the e<sup>5</sup> domains.

The teachers involved were all mathematics team leaders who had been stimulated by their involvement in a network project to improve teaching mathematics. The regional network office saw TPL as an opportunity for the teachers to progress this work. The Regional Network Leader (RNL) discussed applying for TPL with principals and teachers who then followed it through. The RNL said that state-wide data indicates that the maths knowledge of students is not increasing at expected growth rates between Years 5 and 9, and that this region is below the state-wide average, so the RNL sees it as a real issue to be addressed at the regional level.

The TPL application involved one teacher from four of the five regional secondary schools. Thirty days were granted for each team member (thirty-five days for the team leader), however one applicant was unsuccessful. The network subsequently provided fifteen days funding for this participant as the RNL felt that the impact of TPL for the region would be reduced if this school was not involved. The team were positive about this but noted that having fewer days made participation more difficult for this member. They timetabled their time on a fortnightly basis.

The regional office also funded a Teaching and Learning Coach to support the team during the year, by attending their TPL days and providing coaching in their classrooms between professional learning days. The team felt that having a coach attached to the team was good for them in terms of being able to direct and assist in their professional learning. The coach helped with reading and reflection, and was able to get the team thinking about how they will use their new knowledge or how they will know if things are working in the classroom.

The focus of the team was working on misconceptions in maths. The teachers know that maths is being taught in primary schools but felt that many students are not retaining the knowledge. There is a gap between what teachers teach and what students learn. Their plan was to work together on one topic per Term – using an assessment task to work out what the students know and what they struggle with, with the aim of building up a body of knowledge for differentiated units of work and identifying the scaffolding questions which allow the students to move on in their learning. The idea was to have a task for the class which allowed engagement of both lower and higher achieving students.

The team hoped to see a revised curriculum in Year 7 based on their work with other teachers willing to embrace and implement the model and take it forward into Years 8 and 9; teachers using evidence such as testing student levels for differentiated teaching and learning; teachers using language of e<sup>5</sup>; positive conversations about which rich tasks to use; that the “big ideas” they identify fit within new national curriculum frameworks. They wanted to see a less “stand and deliver” style of teaching with the teacher becoming a

facilitator of learning and the students taking more responsibility for their own learning, and improved attitudes to maths across the network.

In addition to the support provided by the team coach, the team had professional learning from external experts. Having the external experts come in and work with them on other tools and other ways of teaching helped them with their learning experience. It helped them see that teaching is not about “what I know as a teacher, it’s about getting the students to do the thinking and work it out for themselves”. The external experts provided them with coaching and modelling good practice teaching to them, taking team members’ classes in two of the schools.

In the first part of the year they focussed on teacher practice, building pedagogy and leadership practices. They did a presentation to the regional network leaders and coaches who asked them to consider “what does teacher practice look like when you put the student at the centre of learning?”

Following this feedback the team took a branch of mathematics introduced to students in Year 7 as the instructional core to focus on for their work during second semester. In secondary schools, students tend to “groan” in each year when they are studying this branch of mathematics, so the team looked at what teachers can do in Year 7 when they are teaching it for the first time to avoid the groan factor in later years. The team’s work was to identify the “big ideas” they need to teach in this branch of mathematics in Year 7 which are the powerful ideas which carry on into Years 8 and 9.

Through the previous semester’s work on identifying gaps in understanding of previously taught concepts, the team developed a shared understanding of what a “rich task” is, and were able to think more about the role of the student. Their approach for the second semester was to look at what the connections are between teacher practice and student learning, i.e.: What is the student doing? What level of thinking are they using? How can teachers build in higher order thinking?

They used a story board, a scaffolding tool with multiple representations of a question, developed and trialled by another of the regional coaches in the previous year. All Year 7 maths teachers in the region (including in the school not participating in the TPL team) agreed to try it and a pre-test was done for all Year 7 students in the region to identify student misconceptions and levels of understanding. While all teachers used it, the team said that there was some push back from some teachers. However the team was pleased with the uptake overall, and the student work samples that evidenced new learning.

The story board task allows students to elaborate their thinking and some of the team commented that their students were starting to ask higher order questions. They said that they weren’t seeing many of these questions previously and, if they were, were not always addressing them because it wasn’t part of the lesson plan. Their observational evidence is that their students are more engaged and getting better at explaining what they are doing. They are also finding that their students are more interested in investigation, are curious

enough to ask questions and that the ones asking the questions are not always the “bright” students.

One teaching team is starting to inquire into the pre and post testing data to explore what they are doing which leads to different results in the data. One idea was that the class that was taught second had better results as the teacher had had time to reflect and modify their practice. The TPL team noted that this school’s teaching team is further along the learning continuum than the Year 7 maths teams in the other schools. They have been together for a couple of years and have been willing to try new approaches, and have been working on it slightly longer than the other teams. They are getting slightly better results in the pre and post tests.

In terms of observations of teacher practice, some of the team introduced team teaching in their schools giving them the opportunity to see other practice. They have not had the time to observing each other. The modelling has either been the coach modelling and the team /other teachers observing, being coached while they take a class or team members demonstrating and modelling to each other. This has been a useful process.

In thinking about teacher practice, one “light bulb moment” was realising that they need to learn not to answer the question, but to engage the students in finding the answer themselves. Their motto (from research) has become “be less helpful.” The team said that they are learning to give enough time to let students sit and think, which they sometimes find difficult to do, especially if the students are really struggling. It’s also knowing about when and how to give the scaffolding to support them to get to the answer. Having a clear idea in their own head about how it all fits together, knowing the big ideas or the big themes which need to be covered, is also important. This will be the starting point for discussion in the professional learning teams next year; identifying what teachers need to be able to teach to those “big ideas”.

Overall, the TPL team felt they had made good progress, but also noted that there is still a way to go for them to be able to embed their learning and see student outcomes.

The team leader and coach also participated in professional learning with another external expert on setting up and maintaining professional learning teams, which was additional professional learning funded by the regional network office. This was not part of the TPL, but the rest of the team felt that they had also benefited from the shared information and being able to develop strategies for sharing their learning through TPL with their own professional learning teams within their schools.

By way of sharing professional learning, the team have offered teachers a range of strategies, such as modelling, coaching and using work samples together in a professional learning team to hone in on what students next level of learning is. One of the team members unpacked e<sup>5</sup> in their Professional Learning Team (PLT). The coach said that a number of teachers signed up for trial techniques where they were either coached or watched the teaching being modelled in their classrooms. Teachers recorded their

observations and had a follow up conversation about the process as part of the learning experience.

The team felt that having core time to do TPL and having the shared leadership in the team between the team leader and the team coach had supported their learning. The coach was able to model the teaching/ learning to the team. Having a professional coach was also useful for debriefing after the team members tried something in their classrooms in terms of what went well.

From the perspective of the team coach, it also helped the team to have a very clear understanding from the RNL of the strategic intent behind the TPL. They know that this work is part of the bigger picture and how it contributes to it. There is defined work on mathematics in the network with defined challenges and goals and that this work will continue in some form next year.

The team had a few ideas about how they would continue their work next year. It may be through supporting the 2011 TPL team by identifying the “big ideas” in the maths teachers would be teaching. This would help teachers identify their own learning needs, which would then be worked through professional learning teams, so that teachers are able to address student learning.

The team felt that their work through TPL would continue in their own schools, through working with their own teaching teams and introducing professional learning teams. It was noted that in schools where there had been more resistance, it would be more difficult to get change. The team generally felt that there was a joy in being involved in TPL, in developing new work and in seeing students improve, which motivated them to continue in some way.

The team felt like they were spending more time on doing the artefact than they needed to. They had essentially done it, but following some feedback they were having to spend time on making it “look good”. They understood the need for some accountability, and said that it was better than doing a report, but the level of work made it feel like an add-on. Having to produce something that other people look at and “score” added an element of pressure, and they wanted to get a top score so that their artefact is loaded onto FUSE.

The team said that every TPL day in Term 4 would be “the artefact” – either working on their own, or looking at what others have produced. They said they were “jealous” of how much of their allocated TPL time the artefact was taking, when they wanted to be spending it on working out the plan for progressing the work next year.

Team members were positive about their learning experience through TPL. One said that they now had more confidence in their own leadership, especially in leading a professional learning team. Other team members, who had been teaching for many years, said that they had learnt that there are a number of ways to get students involved in their own learning; to be active in their own learning. One said that it had encouraged them to change the way they teach across all their classes. For instance, instead of thinking “why don’t you get it?” they are now looking at how they are teaching, and ask probing questions to find out

*what* the student doesn't understand, and then implement a plan for developing the understanding needed.

## Case study 6

Five members of this TPL team were from primary schools, with one from a secondary school. The team was assisted by a Teaching and Learning Coach from the network who acted as a critical friend. The network coordinates a Numeracy Network involving multiple schools.

The issue which precipitated application for TPL was a concern about maths performance of students in the network which was identified through NAPLAN results. Although students in the network were not low performing compared with the rest of the state, they were under-performing compared with schools in a comparative bracket. The data indicated that, as students moved up a level in their school, their numeracy achievements decreased. Numeracy achievements amongst students in Years 3 and 4 were good; however, as they moved up to Years 5, 6 and through secondary school and VCE, their scores began to fall.

Given the high level of educational capital amongst parents in the area, network teachers hypothesised that the main factors behind the comparatively lower maths scores centred on the schools. Network members decided that they needed to focus on classroom teaching practices and maths tasks which influence student attitudes to maths. Their goal was to see an improvement in mathematics scores, and also to see improved engagement from students.

TPL was viewed as an effective means for addressing the problem as it provided the opportunity to extend the network's current research and work. The team had already contributed a significant amount of thought and planning in relation to the issue however they did not have the time to develop their research into practical tools for use in the classroom, or to co-ordinate test sites for implementation and evaluation. TPL provided the time and opportunity to consolidate and extend the research, and to see if new teaching practices would have the effects the teachers anticipated.

The TPL team were the key people who were already driving the numeracy agenda in the network. The RNL indicated that team members essentially self-selected by their willingness and desire to improve their own skills in numeracy as well as those within the network. Involvement in the Numeracy Network also meant that the team already had a structure in place for working together.

Team members received thirty TPL days each, which gave them six "floating days" once they had factored in fortnightly meetings and four PLATO days. At the beginning of TPL the team agreed to meet every second Thursday, which enabled their respective schools to organise the same replacement teachers for the entire year. TPL days were divided between group meetings and peer observation days with group meetings rotated between team members' schools.

They focused on 'rich' maths tasks and developing more 'open ended' teaching practices to facilitate a higher level of student engagement. The team conducted extensive research

into rich maths tasks and developed a shared understanding of what it is that makes a task 'rich'.

An e<sup>5</sup> focus was also a central element of the project. The team conducted self evaluation against the domains of e<sup>5</sup> and identified the areas they felt the need to improve. They produced proformas based around e<sup>5</sup> on what they believed they would see and hear if they were successful in improving their classroom practice.

The team indicated that the PLATO days greatly improved their understanding of e<sup>5</sup>. This emphasis on e<sup>5</sup> shifted the focus of the TPL from rich tasks to teacher practice, although the concept of tasks being investigative and open-ended has remained an important component of the TPL. They came to the conclusion that the definition of 'rich' maths tasks as open ended was somewhat misleading and that even 'closed' maths tasks could be made rich by adopting an investigative approach. The team then developed a range of 'rich' tasks and teaching strategies to pilot in their classrooms. Members of the team who had identified the same areas of need through their e<sup>5</sup> self-evaluations paired up with each other and did classroom observations of lessons piloting the new material.

The team reflected that their teaching practice has changed in a number of ways. Several team members indicated that previously they were focused on what they thought their students should be learning at any particular level rather than taking the task to an investigative level and extending knowledge. They have now introduced a strong investigative/exploratory component into their lessons. This has been achieved through allowing students to explore problems and not providing them with the answers when struggling. Instead, the teacher relates each task back to previous lessons and encourages students to apply what they think they do know which could help them find the answer.

For one teacher, one of the biggest change has been making sure she is planning and discussing beyond the learning. Instead of pitching lessons towards the bottom end of the class, she is pitching lessons to extend the top end. She (and the rest of the team) is also using enablers and extenders, i.e. language that enables students to enter a problem at their own level. The teacher said that it was amazing to watch students in the bottom half of the class "catch on" to more advanced problems.

One team member found that open-ended tasks have revealed that their students have picked up more knowledge in some areas than they thought. The team has also discovered that their students learn a lot from each other. Teachers stop during lessons and ask students to share their learnings with the rest of the class. The team has found that students are good at sharing and completing tasks on their own (e.g. giving lessons to each other).

Members of the team are now no longer talking about NAPLAN results very much. Instead their emphasis is on handing the thinking over to the students. The focus is on the learning rather than the task and the activities are therefore broader and plan for the possibilities of learning. One teacher said that her students are more involved in the focus of lesson planning. Now she tells them why they are doing a particular task and what she's looking

for in their work. For a number of team members one of the biggest changes has been letting students solve a problem the way they want to and allowing for different learning styles and different representations of knowledge.

The team is collecting a range of data to identify the impact of the changes they have made. They will be comparing VELS Teacher Judgements results from the previous year to 2010 results and will also look for improvements in NAPLAN data. In addition they have adapted the Perceptions of Teaching and Learning (PoLT) Student Survey to work as a perceptions of maths survey and are looking at the before and after results.

For most of the quantitative indicators it is too early to tell what impact the team's changes in practice have had. However, they have observed many changes through peer and classroom observation. One teacher talked about watching their students coming to the realisation that "maths is everywhere" and their excitement at having "wow" moments. The teacher could see students thinking in maths concepts and realising the importance and usefulness of maths.

Through peer observation the team believes that they are successfully implementing rich tasks. They also think that the improvements in planning have impacted on student learning. One teacher observed that open-ended tasks were sometimes very challenging for those students who were traditionally best at maths because their thinking was structured towards a format with more boundaries. The teacher felt that the fact that these students had to think outside their comfort zone meant that they did not get the "instant validation" of getting an answer correct. The positive impact of open-ended tasks has been that students are now more willing to explore new ideas. Overall the team feels that their students are being stretched and extended.

The team has been sharing their observations and learnings with each other and also with other members of the Numeracy Network. In part this was done through a wiki which was already in use by the Network. Learnings are also shared with other maths teachers in team members' schools through at department meetings and planning sessions.

The team came to understand what the artefact was through the PLATO days. However it was not always clear to them what was expected. Their understanding initially was that the artefact was supposed to document their TPL journey but on the fourth PLATO day they were told that this was not the case. The team was only given the criteria against which their artefact would be evaluated; however the criteria avoided the question of what the artefact was supposed to be and its purpose.

The team felt that the PLATO days gave them good information but needed to be earlier in the process for them. The first three PLATO days (focused on planning) occurred after they had done their planning, assisted by their regional network leader. The fourth PLATO day (covering the artefact) occurred closer to the end of the TPL and would also have been more useful if held earlier.

The team also felt that the time taken to produce the artefact interrupted their TPL learning and that the process became more about production. They felt the four days used to produce the artefact could have been better used to go further with their TPL learning.

Loading the artefact onto the Ultranet was very challenging, as was finding the artefacts that team members were supposed to review and communicating with the review team. The team ended up uploading a link to the animation component of their artefact because it was too large to upload onto the Ultranet. Several team members felt that the technical process around the artefact would have been easier if it had been done using FUSE.

The team had a negative experience with the person appointed to review their artefact. They felt that their review leader missed basic points about their artefact and questioned whether they had covered areas which they had. The team felt that appointing review leaders from other TPL teams created rivalry and a conflict of interest. Despite the many challenges the team was happy to have done the artefact because it provided them with a resource to take back into their schools.

The focus for the team is now transferring their learnings through the whole of their schools. One teacher has been given time release to coach others in their school. Another is incorporating open-ended tasks and peer observation into their school maths program. Another teacher will continue sharing learnings through their professional learning teams and whole staff activities. All the team's principals are very interested in the learnings from their TPL being passed on through their schools. The team's RNL is interested in what they can do to extend the learning.

## Case study 7

This TPL team consisted of three teachers; two are part of the school's leadership team, Each teacher teaches different levels: Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4, and Years 5 & 6. Each team member is also in one of the school's three PLTs: numeracy, literacy, and wellbeing. The team was seen in the school as a "fourth PLT" with an e<sup>5</sup> & ICT focus. One member is also the school's designated Ultranet Lead User and another member was pregnant during the year but has remained actively engaged with the team.

The TPL and the make-up of the team were designed to have a "ripple effect" throughout the school by having representation across levels and learning teams. The team intended to use the TPL days in blocks of time. The team were granted forty days each and intended their learning to involve shared classroom time, classroom visits and peer mentoring.

They focused on incorporating Electronic Whiteboards (Boards) as "authentic tools". Prior to 2009, the school had a single Board in a communal space, however it received several in classrooms through a grant in 2009, and a further three during 2010.

All of the staff had wanted the Boards but there had been frustrations with using them. The school has four hours technical support per week and there had been teething problems with using the Boards. There was a need to know how to use the Boards more efficiently and effectively, to engage students in a new way. The school also has netbooks in Years 5 & 6, so the team saw that this could work well with the Boards. TPL was seen as an opportunity to have the time to drive change around both the e<sup>5</sup> and ICT.

Even though the team had a meeting agenda for the whole year, they found they had to be flexible with other demands which could not be foreseen. The team always felt supported to take their TPL time, with school leadership being "proactive" in their support and valuing the team's work. The school and team successfully sought (for the most part) consistent CRTs which helped the team focus on their professional learning. One team member expressed a dislike of being out of the classroom, especially because she has students with special needs, but acknowledged it is often them (the teachers) thinking "I should be there" rather than the parents or students.

The team found the PLATO days "very useful" and commented the presenters were "particularly accessible". The days allowed sharing of ideas, networking, and facilitated a more structured approach. The days also helped allay fears in relation to the artefact. The team developed a close relationship with another school at PLATO; "...which has given us contacts ... it's another source outside what we have locally."

The team ran a whole-staff professional learning session on the e<sup>5</sup> using some of the activities obtained during the PLATO days. The team were also conscious of managing staff perceptions around e<sup>5</sup>; that it was not "something extra".

The team also provided two whole-staff professional learning sessions to help teachers find activities for the Boards (the team attended a professional learning session at a TAFE earlier in the year which gave them lots of websites to access materials). In the first

professional learning session the team showed the staff the websites and talked about how some fitted into the e<sup>5</sup> domains, with the team taking a focus on the *engage* domain. The team asked staff to explore on their own before the next professional learning session and to share what they found, including describing which e<sup>5</sup> domain the activity fitted within. During the second professional learning session some staff had also found extra websites and shared them with the group.

During the year the team interviewed all staff asking the questions in their team-developed staff survey. The survey focused on staff attitudes to the Boards and asked how they were using them. The team heard people were having a lot of basic technical issues. This made it clear professional learning was required at a “very basic level”. The TPL team investigated and found that the provider of the Boards would provide up to four in-school professional learning sessions to support their implementation. The TPL team arranged whole-staff professional learning sessions with the provider; two in 2010 and two in 2011.

The two conducted in 2010 were found to be very useful, especially around the basic trouble-shooting of the Boards. The team now feel confident to “fiddle” whereas before they thought this was strictly for a technician. This has gone some way in addressing the identified “teething problems” and frustrations with the Boards.

The team also organised three rotational peer observation cycles in 2010. The first rotation was “just a visit” where the visitor could get involved with the class, the second was more of an observation, and the third was an observation with an *engage* focus.

The team acknowledged that different people had done different things, with the team preferring not to set overbearing protocols. The team instead focused on the rotations being a positive opportunity to promote teamwork. Separate to TPL, the school experienced Instructional Rounds in 2010 which made the team’s rotational peer observation system “almost feel like a relief” for teachers. In comparison to the team’s system, the Instructional Rounds were “quite daunting”; in the Instructional Rounds the Acting Principal and the RNL spoke to the students directly for twenty minutes about their perceptions of their learning. The Rounds left a “bad taste” because teachers didn’t get feedback.

In the rotation system each teacher in the school observed the classroom next to theirs (in a clockwise manner around the campus). This ensured it was a transparent process for all staff and not volunteer-based; teachers were not offered to “opt-out”. The rotations were taken up more eagerly by the graduate teachers however the older demographic teachers have also been receptive, especially as some have classes with netbooks.

The e<sup>5</sup> was further introduced through the rotations via an observational tool the team developed. The team commented they had been “drip feeding” the e<sup>5</sup> into the school and feel there’s been a growing understanding in the school that it’s not an “add on” and that the language has started to filter through the school. The team see that the common language is useful; in supporting non-threatening peer conversations and observations, in having discussions with leadership, and in supporting graduates. The team has introduced

the e<sup>5</sup> levels to the staff but haven't "pushed them" as they felt there could be a perception the levels introduce judgement.

The team expressed that they don't feel "ahead of the curve" around e<sup>5</sup> but that the acting principal has said the school is now "ahead of the curve" in comparison to other schools in the area. The team feel the *engage* domain has "really supported" their focus this year, and that e<sup>5</sup> in general works well with ICT, especially for differentiated learning.

The team found the creation of the artefact helped them rethink their work and arrange all their documents into one package however the team experienced significant difficulties with the Ultranet. The team created a video for their artefact but could not load this onto the Ultranet and instead had to use a PowerPoint presentation about their professional learning. The team found the Ultranet experience very frustrating and difficult, describing it as "a real downer". The video which had been intended to be the artefact included interviews with all the staff in the school and interviews with students; some staff and students had interviewed each other. It included people's thoughts and frustrations in using the Boards, as well as some of the student learning outcomes.

The team also asked one student to use the flipcam to interview other students and found the responses to be more honest with students less nervous about having the camera on them.

**We heard it "really made us want to learn" which equals engagement. Hearing the kids use the language was interesting, we even had one kid use the word "engage". It was quite a diverse range of kids too, with various learning styles and ability.**

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The team noted, however, there was some cross-over in the students responses between the netbooks and the Boards so the exact effect of either is hard to separate out.

In the artefact also included the staff survey they created and the rotation roster. The team had also wanted to include a number of the activities obtained through the PLATO days but the Ultranet required that it had to be "your work" so the team didn't feel able to include those activities and instead offered to send these by email upon request. Some of the package was given to the acting principal to assist with future professional learning sessions in the school.

In the artefact review process the team only received three or four comments but none about how to make it better. They thought the review process could have been about celebration or assistance but that it was neither of these.

Overall, the team felt their work in relation to TPL was highly valued by the school and its leadership, and fitted well with the school's strategic goals. The team talked about outcomes for themselves, the school and the students. The team also described TPL as a "really positive experience, especially collaboratively working together."

In relation to the Boards team members commented their practice is still developing and that the two extra professional learning sessions next year will continue the learning. The

team reflected that teachers were already going back to their Boards and “having a play” and informally sharing what they were doing. The team observed that they, and other teachers, were losing their “fear factor” around the Boards, especially in regard to helping each other with them.

In relation to the e<sup>5</sup> the team felt it has become part of the language of the school. One team member said she didn’t really know what it was prior to TPL and that exploring it during TPL had helped her to be aware and reflect on her own teaching.

The team members also felt more confident providing staff professional learning sessions now. The team also discussed a change in their perception around effective professional learning, including an acknowledgement that:

**The best professional learning you can do can be in the school; talking about what is happening in the school, sharing different views, and having the opportunity to talk about it.**

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The team saw that its work in 2010 was fitting into a wider cultural shift within the school. There was a feeling that the peer observation rotations had been critical to this, with e<sup>5</sup> providing a basis and a language for this to occur. All team members talked about the culture of the school’s teaching staff now feeling more “open” with people talking about their professional practice and sharing ideas.

The team noted students can now be seen touching the Boards. The team had recently received the latest Student Attitudes to School Survey and had not yet fully analysed it, but noted while overall “connectedness” was down (one of their intended data points) the overall results were much better. The team described that connectedness and engagement had a feedback loop and that it could “still be better”.

Next year the team may arrange further school visits or professional learning sessions to “maintain the momentum”. The team talked about staff starting to realise they are now not so “behind the curve” in ICT as they might have thought and that this confidence may coincide with confidence about the quality of their units being delivered, for instance, and that staff may want to start sharing their units using their new ICT knowledge. The team are confident that next year the peer observation rotations will continue and that the culture has started to shift in the school.

## Case study 8

The principal identified pedagogy within numeracy as an intended focus for TPL and asked a staff member to lead the team and the role was filled enthusiastically. Four other staff became involved so that almost all numeracy teachers from P-8 in the school were involved. The original intention was that all P-12 numeracy teachers could participate however some did not want to.

The team saw TPL as an opportunity to implement a “numeracy intervention program”, something which the school had not yet had, and operated like a Professional Learning Team (PLT) within the school with a numeracy focus.

The program was to include changes in pedagogy (with a focus on the e<sup>5</sup> domain evaluation and building in professional reflection), along with designing and implementing coordinated curriculums to allow students to be grouped by ability and facilitate differentiated learning. The team hoped for student engagement and perceptions of mathematics to improve.

There was also an interest in “breaking down barriers” among the staff as there was a sense that staff were working in isolation. The team aimed to develop a “sense of togetherness”. It was noted that in these types of schools primary teachers had to be “multi-skilled across disciplines” and some may not have been as confident in presenting their numeracy content to the students. The team planned to build confidence in numeracy through professional learning, resources and helping staff to feel they could ask for assistance and “learn together”. Teacher assistants have also been used to provide support for the team members in the classroom which “means you’re never alone”.

The team planned to take most of their TPL days early in the year and focused their initial efforts on coordinating curriculums in the P-4 levels. Later in the year the team also coordinated numeracy across the 5-8 levels. This was supported by the school coordinating the timetable for numeracy in 2010 across years P-8.

The coordinated approach to curriculum planning meant particular content areas were taught simultaneously across the multiple year levels. Students move across different groups scaffolded to ability and/or interest, depending on the topic. Project learning was also utilised. Students moving between year levels meant teachers did not have to attempt to teach across a number of different levels and abilities. This fluid and highly integrated approach required the team to spend time planning collaboratively. Coordinating the curriculum for the 5-8 levels was harder, as it was harder to plan together with the levels spanning primary and secondary and also from a social point of view it is more challenging mixing students in these years. The team now feels the numeracy curriculum flows nicely from P-8, although notes next year the school is moving to a P-6 structure.

The team intended to track outcomes for teaching staff through peer observations and attitudes through the staff opinion surveys. Teaching practice was also a focus in their team

meetings asking each other “How have we changed our teacher practice?” at the beginning of each meeting.

During the year triads were set up throughout the school for peer observations with an e<sup>5</sup> focus. The team also conducted their own peer observations. There was no resistance to peer observation within the TPL team, and the teachers in the 5-8 levels are used to it through team teaching, but there has been resistance in other parts of the school. The greatest challenge has been trying to keep the evidence they collect factual.

The team ran several professional learning sessions for staff around the e<sup>5</sup>. The team members reflected they now understood it more in-depth and it had focused them “not just on content, [but] the way we teach”. The e<sup>5</sup> has been critical to the lesson plans and the peer observations, and has proved a “good aid” and “beneficial”. The team also had some extra e<sup>5</sup> training which showed even younger students could use rubrics effectively and these were implemented with results that showed the students when self-directing learning “aren’t afraid to say they’re a bit stuck, and question”.

For students the team developed Individual Learning Plans, using on-demand tests and numeracy interviews for all students P-6. The team have already seen student outcomes, especially around the project-based work:

**Students have been coming up independently with answers, controlling their own learning and understanding a concept from different approaches. We’ve increased the students’ control of their learning. Their concept of maths has changed to be positive.**

The Regional Numeracy Coordinator congratulated the team on the 2010 NAPLAN data (from May) and the team are keen to see next year’s results, although they understand this may take several years and multiple cohorts.

The TPL team found the PLATO days helpful. The team commented the days provided resources and allowed the team to listen to what other groups were doing which was “a very valuable experience”. The focus of the days was broad enough to be applicable to most teams, helping to develop a research methodology without dictating content. One downside was that the group did not get the dates ahead of time and that legalistic questions could not be answered (such as privacy issues relating to videoing students).

The team also found access to an outside numeracy expert, funded by the school, extremely helpful. Also the team has accessed the Regional Numeracy Coordinator meetings.

Although the team were on-track to use all their days, the team found it difficult to take days and secure CRTs, having to instead take it “here, there and everywhere”. The team reflected time built into the timetable would have been better as taking full TPL days is “counter-productive – we’re trying to do something in the classroom, and it’s taking us out of the classroom.”

Some members also expressed their dislike of being out of the classroom, away from their students. Two members intended to take blocks later in the year but this proved too difficult. There was an acknowledgement that team members, especially the team leader, had put in a lot of time over and above the TPL days. The difficulty of taking TPL was also due to competing responsibilities. One member with significant administrative duties commented that TPL should not involve people with administrative roles: "What actually happens is I just have more to do and more responsibility. It's OK for teachers who lose teaching but no-one takes away administrative responsibilities."

The artefact produced contained pieces of information from everyone which the team thought would be useful for other people. It was a PowerPoint with videos of them performing classroom activities, being careful to exclude the students. The school has a flipcam so no editing was necessary, although the team were also helped by students who knew how to use the flipcam. With hindsight if they had taken videos at the beginning and compared them to ones at the end this could have been more "hard-hitting". The artefact also included the peer observation form. The team noted the artefact didn't "just slide in ... [and] added to the workload". Although the team were keen to share their learnings, they noted that because their learning was about a real cultural change a written discussion paper would've been easier. The team experienced difficulty loading their artefact to the Ultranet and had to load the videos to FUSE and put links to them in the PowerPoint.

The team noted the reviewers' comments on their artefact included that people could not open the PowerPoint. One team member was thrown into doubt when she had to review another team's artefact which was a much more substantial piece of work but the PLATO days had emphasised they didn't have to stress about the artefact.

The team's professional learning has been spread throughout the school, such as to team teaching non-numeracy strands in Years 2-4, which the teachers are hoping to expand next year. Also, two numeracy teachers who weren't involved with the team have been enthusiastic in trying out learnings from the team; one has been "really engaged" and keen to trial new ideas, and another, a graduate, has built her confidence through the backing of the team. A team member reflected on the effects their learning has had on their own teaching practice:

**I'm far less content driven. And I can see the effect it's having. I'm seeing better results, and actual mathematical discussions ... The kids are coming up with their own ideas and explanations. There's joint exploration. Rather than just teaching the algorithm, kids can see simpler ways amenable to mental computation. A lot of it has been self-created. It's been an excuse to change teaching practice as 'always changing' – always trying to respond to student need.**

Next year the team leader will be moving into a 0.4 assistant principal role and will act as a mentor. Individual learning plans will be mandatory across the school. A new open-plan building will allow up to three teachers to team teach which will build upon the team's

work this year. The teams says realistically this year the TPL days have been quite pooled so next year should be sustainable, with numeracy team meetings being built into the school's meeting schedule pre-empting the lack of TPL days. The team meetings will plan how to work with students based on the data (on-demand tests, online interviews, NAPLAN, etc.) and discuss how to fit in the interviews. The team have been documenting the whole process and posting their lesson plans to the server although noted this is a work in progress. The aim is to allow the approach to be easily utilised next year, although if teachers change, the team noted they'll also just be able to discuss it with the new teachers.

## Case study 9

This network-designed TPL involved two teachers each from six primary schools within the region. It was initiated by the principals of each of the schools through the regional network. It was offered by the principals personally to each teacher in the team, with all those approached agreeing to be involved.

The focus of the TPL was on using the “evaluate” and “elaborate” domains of  $e^5$  to improve student outcomes in numeracy. This responds to a trend across the State for numeracy NAPLAN scores to drop between Year 3 and Year 5. The team suggested a number of reasons for this “dip” including that Year 4 is regarded as a “consolidating” year, with the new learning in Year 5 providing a challenge for the children. The team also said that public schools in the region lose a number of higher achieving children each year to scholarships and private schools at Years 5 and 6, which could exaggerate the effect of the “dip”. There is also anecdotal evidence which suggests there are confidence issues with the teaching of mathematics in primary teaching staff, who are not trained in this area. For example, where the curriculum is too full on a given day, mathematics is commonly left off. Similarly, it is harder to find teacher replacements for maths classes, and harder to find resources. This appears to be reflective of a lack of maths confidence in the community generally, with parents indicating they are reluctant to be classroom helpers in maths because they are not “good” at maths, or they don’t know how it is done now. One teacher also noted that in a classroom survey, the students marked themselves as being less capable in maths than they actually were. Even those students who indicated a high level of enjoyment of maths seemed reluctant to rate themselves as “good” at maths. The  $e^5$  Instructional Model was seen by the principals as an opportunity to address these issues.

Twenty-five days of TPL time was allocated for each team member and the team used the days to meet as a group. Early on, the team arranged to meet in blocks of time, but then moved to occasional days as the project progressed. The team mostly consisted of middle years primary teachers, as the focus of the work was in these years. The team found the PLATO days as helpful professional learning on  $e^5$ , and useful to establish a common language throughout the TPL. The team considered that twenty-five days was a good amount of time. While they were aware that some groups had had fifty days, they felt this would be too much time out of the classroom.

The team felt that TPL was a good opportunity to get to know others from different schools, as there had been little opportunity for this prior to the commencement of the TPL. The team initially met with the network principals for team support and direction. For the remainder of the TPL however, the principals stepped back in order for the team to continue driving their learning. The team felt that it was important for the group to take ownership of its identity and work separately from the principals.

The TPL team worked collaboratively, with the team leader acting as a central contact point for the group. During the year, the team built strong relationships and significant trust within the group, and created an environment of openness and honesty. Having more than one person from each school participate was a great benefit to the team, resulting in communication occurring within a school as well as between schools. The team shared resources and knowledge across schools, which had not been typical of the schools in the region previously. The team commented that there are some restrictive protocols about information sharing within the school network, appearing to result from competition amongst the schools for enrolments. This had, for example, prevented open communication about results in the past.

The project involved the introduction of a scaffolding kit to help children move from additive to multiplicative thinking, and using the  $e^5$  language. The kit was designed by an external expert who was a "critical friend" of the team. The testing allows the teacher to identify the "zone" a child is in and use this to facilitate differentiated learning and targeted intervention. While the focus of the TPL was on the middle years, the ability to identify zones also can be useful in the junior years. The aim of the TPL was also to increase teacher confidence and competence in teaching maths.

Team members viewed the TPL as being not only for personal development, but for the sharing of ideas generated with their schools. The TPL team is keeping the schools informed by disseminating information and providing the scaffolding kits. All the schools involved in the TPL have done the testing and are using the kits. Some of the teachers have attempted weekly "streaming" sessions with their classes, based on the level identified in testing.

Much of the early TPL time was used to become familiar with the  $e^5$  terminology and maths glossary, to generate ideas and activities, and to introduce the scaffolding kits to the schools. The team also spent time exploring how teaching using the scaffolding model and the  $e^5$  language would look in a classroom. Some of the time was used to consider the issue of teacher confidence in teaching maths. The team undertook some professional research about schools that are regarded as being "good" at maths in order to identify what teachers in those schools might be doing. Although they found anecdotal stories about what might work, there was no indication that there might be one "right" way to teach maths. Many approaches seem valid.

The team completed a teacher survey on attitudes to teaching maths, which measured attitudes to teaching maths at a teacher's own grade level and at another level. The team also tested teachers in order to model the assessment tools. In addition to developing these tools, the team also considered professional learning options in the area of maths teaching. Examples include undertaking refresher courses on particular maths subjects and taking part in maths teaching clinics. Another idea was to introduce a family maths program which could involve a regular night for families to do maths together so that parents could also gain some confidence in their ability to help their child. The team identified changing the culture of "fear" around maths as the greatest challenge.

Although the team members were positive about the TPL, they found there was not enough time to follow up or to share learnings with other school teaching staff. Staff meetings were felt to be an inadequate forum to introduce the concepts properly, with allocated meeting time commonly eroded by other issues arising. One of the schools discussed the possibility of employing a support person to release a team member for the classroom for the purpose of spending some time “skilling up” other teachers in the school. Ideally, the team would have liked some additional time to either model the delivery in a classroom or to support the teacher using it, but this has not been possible.

The teachers faced some logistical issues regarding communication with parents about the reason they were away from the classroom, and some dissatisfaction with the amount of time teachers spent out of the classroom during the year. Not all principals sent letters to parents regarding the teacher’s participation in TPL. One teacher used a parent-teacher interview to explain her involvement in the TPL because the parents were not advised at the beginning of the year. In addition, there were difficulties with getting consistent CRTs to replace the teachers in the classroom.

The TPL team experienced some confusion regarding the requirements for the artefact. They felt that the artefact had not been explained properly at the first PLATO day and that the requirement appeared to change during the year. The team thought they had finished their artefact before the last PLATO day in August, but then the rules changed on how big the artefact could be to allow it to be uploaded onto FUSE. The team then had to cut down what they had included in the artefact.

Some of the schools involved in the TPL included the e<sup>5</sup> language in the planning processes. It was felt that having a common language had a positive impact on numeracy teaching, and that particularly the “elaborate” aspect of e<sup>5</sup> had encouraged teachers to include activities, which has promoted higher order thinking in the students. In terms of student outcomes, it was felt that children were displaying higher order thinking as a result of the TPL. Children in the classroom had been observed teaching each other using the common maths language. Student work books have also displayed their thinking. The work relates to the VELs levels. The teachers felt that although they had been able to observe some changes in their students at this stage, it was impossible to know at this early point what the data would reveal.

The team would like to maintain the work in their schools. While they can maintain their own work as a group, they felt that to embed the work in their schools, something like a curriculum day would be useful to go through it with all staff. The team regard this year as a productive “set up” year and indicated that it would be good to have five days in 2011 and 2012 to keep the work going in order to ensure that at least the Years 4, 5 and 6 maths teams were across the material.

## Case Study 10

The school designed TPL involved a large team from a secondary school. Their focus was on all five of the domains of e<sup>5</sup>.

The particular issue the school wanted to address through TPL was the lack of student engagement with school, beginning at Years 7 and 8. It was felt that students lose their connectedness after primary school where they have been in stimulating learning environments but lose engagement as they progress through secondary school. Data for the school is not cohort matched, but they know the data for student outcomes is down, so they need to be looking at their own teaching to improve student outcomes across Years 7 to 9.

An issue for the school was that there had not been a consistent approach to curriculum delivery and consistent assessment within Year levels. Work in a previous year focused on consistent delivery in Year 9. This was seen as a trial for the work to be undertaken by this TPL team as many of those involved had been in the previous team. Improving and changing teacher practice with the focus on Years 7 and 8 student engagement and extended learning for students at all levels of ability builds upon the previous Year 9 project as well as linking to the Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

Not all of the team members received TPL, so the school put in additional resources. Team members thus received forty-six days of TPL each. The principal said that the school created the teams and had committed additional resources into it. The principal wanted to see shared norms in everything a teacher has to do, and said that e<sup>5</sup> provides the support to do this. The principal's role is making sure people are accountable and keeping on track.

Coordinators of core faculties were encouraged to apply. Of the ten team members one is the leader of the faculty and one is the teacher at Year 7 and 8 level. Although the team indicated that they had been asked to do the project, they also said that they were interested in doing it; they are like-minded and shared a vision. Team members were chosen on availability, capacity or nomination. Most team members go to the PLATO days. The school also allocated additional resources by attaching the Professional Development Coordinator and a coach to the team.

The TPL pair within each faculty met for two periods each week, and the whole team met once a week for one period to discuss overarching issues (such as the production of the artefact). Team members had an allowance of three periods per week and team leaders had an allowance of five periods. This time was used for documentation, developing strategies and curriculum development. The aim by the end of the year was to have the curriculum developed, trialled and amended. Faculty members were also expected to get staff support for using the e<sup>5</sup> model in their teaching practice. The team had faculty time of one staff meeting a week, but this may not involve all staff.

The teams from the English and maths faculties felt they could have been better supported by the administrative/ timetabling side of the school in the first half of the year. The maths team and the English faculty head were unable to participate in the whole team meeting due to timetabling. They felt that, given the magnitude of this project, there should have been some priority given to ensure their ability to participate.

Team members said initially the outcomes they were looking for were common assessment tasks and authentic tasks to be developed, and for the e<sup>5</sup> language to develop common analogies and metaphors within the school. The team were also hoping for more team teaching. They identified a range of benchmarks and measures to demonstrate that they were achieving these goals.

The team said there was visible leadership support and pronounced support. They felt that the language about how important this project is for the whole school would be crucial for supporting staff involved and for ensuring the staff not directly involved were also supportive. The team also felt that having the heads of faculties involved and two members per faculty would provide support.

Team members reflected that there were too many expectations with this project; it was always going to be impossible to achieve it all. At the early PLATO sessions, it was clear that the project was complex and layered, essentially involving systemic cultural change (moving from "good" to "great"), a more individualised, student driven approach to instruction (in particular, to extend high achieving students) supported by e<sup>5</sup> and a new curriculum.

The redesign of curricula is intended to provide multiple entry points for all students and extensions at all levels. This was difficult to design into the curricula and the team felt that while they trying to build this into their templates as far as possible, it is about ensuring that teachers in the classroom pursue this.

Team members learnt that writing curriculum in order to enforce e<sup>5</sup> is a tremendous amount of work and time consuming. Not just writing it, but also editing and making sure that the templates were effective in communicating how they were supposed to be used to the people who were using it. Some team members had trialled the curricula exactly as they planned to use it, and were now redrafting.

Team members commented that the development of common curriculum, common assessments, common skills, common understanding would really lift the school. The younger teachers were really engaged with adopting e<sup>5</sup> and improving teacher practice. Some of the team commented that they felt more professional in knowing that there was common criteria; that there would be a standard to which new teachers or stand in teachers could be referred to, rather than the lesson plan of the person on the desk next to them.

The team also felt that getting people on board with common assessment tasks and teaching the same topic at the same time had been the first step which needed to be done before they could actually really start looking at the e<sup>5</sup>.

**I feel that we are just getting to the nitty gritty of it now where we are starting to be able to ask the question 'what do you do in your classroom' with these topics and, then, when we are starting to ask this question we will start to work on e<sup>5</sup>.**

Faculty heads were also responsible for ensuring their staff were familiar with the e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model. As faculties have their own unique culture, different members of the team faced different situations in embedding e<sup>5</sup>. In some faculties it had been very difficult and "upsetting", with a lot of conflict in the group. Some faculty staff felt the common curriculum was threatening to their professionalism and creativity in being able to teach; others were reluctant to move from the textbook. Faculty heads needed to be very forthright and directive. They felt that more direction from school leadership would have helped them with the task of getting their own faculty staff on board. There was some additional support given to one faculty to manage human relations.

Looking at teacher practice and e<sup>5</sup> will be the next stage in 2011. The team felt that the curriculum planning and having common curricula needed to come first. It was not possible to ask, in an environment where teachers were teaching and assessing different things in different classrooms within the same year level and subject matter, about 'how' they teach, because the understanding of 'what' they were teaching was so disparate. They needed to understand the same 'what' first. Redesigning the curriculum, and providing notes on how it is intended to be taught, provides a common understanding of the what.

While "compliance" with the new approach seemed to present some difficulties, some team members thought that the performance and development processes in 2011 which will introduce "paired observation" will help. They have been doing a little bit of peer in 2010 and more in line with teacher being observed asking the observer to focus on specific areas. They are hoping that the idea of "what do you do in your classroom?" and the opening up of the classroom might become a positive thing through word of mouth, as teachers want to see how someone else teaches a particular topic.

The team felt that being involved had been an enormous amount of work. It had been good having TPL, and being given the time to talk and think, but expectations had been high and it had been difficult (particularly dealing with reluctant staff). They felt that school leadership tended to focus on the deficits, the things they hadn't done, rather than on what they had achieved. The principal commented that the process had been "frustrating and illuminating". There was an element of frustration at staff resistance and not seeing themselves as being part of the solution, but that it had also really assisted them personally thinking about how the school needs to be clearer about expectations for all staff.

In terms of ensuring the work continues in 2011, the team thought the current meeting system should work. In 2011 teachers will have common curriculum for Years 7 and 8 and this will provide the basis for the conversations about e<sup>5</sup> and teacher practice. This will make a difference to student outcomes. Impacts on student outcomes could be measured

through data such as student attitudes to school surveys at that time, but it is more likely that it will be seen in the VELs and other data a few years down the track.

Faculty heads said they will need to “pat staff on the head” for using the new curricula. It would probably also be a good idea to keep things fairly stable in faculties if possible next year, so that the Year 7 and 8 teachers who have been trialling it and providing feedback this year continue to use it next year. Some consistency will mean that teams can be building on the understanding of common curriculum and looking at teacher practice.

## Case study 11

The school was successful in securing TPL in previous years and the principal felt that much had been learnt from these experiences about how to maximize the process and benefits of TPL.

The 2010 TPL team of four members, whose teaching responsibilities spanned Year 5 to Year 8, was enthusiastic and motivated. The team members were candid about the challenges they faced at the school. Their interest was to drive change in numeracy teaching practice by encouraging greater interest by teachers in more 'open' teaching practices.

The principal and the TPL team described a set of disappointing NAPLAN data and the concern they shared to improve student outcomes. They also explained a state-wide trend whereby numeracy results between Years 5 and 9 appear to drop. Members of the TPL team felt a culture existed in the school whereby teachers of the junior classes were (unfairly) vested with the blame by teachers in the senior years for the poor performance of students in senior years. The TPL team felt that a more complex range of factors impacted student performance including the importance of examining teacher practice at all levels.

Team members held a strong belief about the potential benefits of team teaching for students at their school, despite strong resistance from around them. They focussed on the evidence to see how successful the team approach was proving to be.

The team chose to begin their TPL by visiting schools in which they considered there were high performing teachers and successful numeracy programs. This process of arranging visits was not obstacle free; at first the team found it difficult to access other schools and teachers. However the TPL team leader was persistent and, in consultation with the cluster leader, members of the team managed a range of visits and/or made contact with teachers in other schools. Team members reported a sense of satisfaction arising from these visits, in part because the visits enabled two way communications that allowed for the sharing of their own knowledge and experience. They learnt what was valuable in the work of other professionals in addition to what was valuable in their own work.

The 'in house' TPL process began with a set of team self assessments, including a review of strengths and weaknesses under areas of the  $e^5$ . This work included self-assessments during lessons. At first the team felt tentative about the  $e^5$  and its usefulness. However their work throughout TPL built a growing regard for the  $e^5$  language and its possibilities for teachers. The team commented that the written material on  $e^5$  was 'too dense'. They reflected that more face to face communication about  $e^5$  needed to occur. In particular, modelling would be a useful practice. In general, they suspected that  $e^5$  needs better explanation and promotion. Ultimately, they felt an impending concern about how they were going to share their learnings through the language of  $e^5$  because they were amongst only a small group in the school familiar with the framework. There had been no recent focus on the  $e^5$  within the school and it was not a language used by other teachers.

The team made strong attempts to find consistent meeting times and usually met in pairs (the primary teachers together and the secondary teachers together). Work on the artefact was undertaken as a group. As a general management issue, it appeared easier for the primary staff to arrange and access their TPL days than it was for the secondary staff. The secondary staff in particular faced a range of issues in attempting to leave their classes, including accessing consistent and reliable CRT. One of the secondary teachers spoke about the challenging behaviour of some of her classes, which was exacerbated when she was required to leave ad hoc, and when other teachers with less experience at dealing with challenging classroom behaviours took her place. The ad hoc nature of her absences could mean discontinuous learning materials for the students, made worse when the CRT was not consistent. The culmination of these variables left the teacher feeling that to leave her class was almost untenable. In each return to her classroom, as she described it, the students would have to be 'reeled back in'.

The team spent significant time on their artefact. However they felt frustrated by the artefact process. They believed that the original parameters of the process were not made clear; that the purpose of the artefact was not clearly defined. Instead, they said they were presented with some 'examples' of artefacts by the PLATO team, and left to divine what was expected of them. Their exposure to animations and other media left them believing that a very creative, high level ICT product was required. As one team member described it, the artefact was 'talked up'. Devoting their time to the construction of such a product, they were consequently directed that the artefact would no longer be uploaded onto FUSE, but instead onto the Ultranet, allowing for a much smaller bandwidth. They spent significant time trying to adjust their artefact, which in the end was linked into the Ultranet instead of being 'on' it. In this time of high stress, they were deeply frustrated that the only team member able to 'log onto' the Ultranet was the leader. The Ultranet was described as difficult to navigate and quite user unfriendly because its functions were not labelled in plain English or conventional terms for ICT users.

The team was enthusiastic about PLATO and the support it provided. In particular, they welcomed the opportunity of meeting other teams. They made mention that all other teams participating on the days they attended appeared to be from maths or numeracy projects.

In speaking about student outcomes and the future, the team emphasised that 2010 had been a 'set up' year. That is, they had spent much time researching, preparing learning materials, and trying out approaches in their classrooms. The real impact of the approach they were devising would unlikely be felt until a more comprehensive roll out of their strategies could occur across the school. For this reason they noted that it was unlikely there would yet be any visible improvements in NAPLAN data, or in results from internal measurement tools.

However, each teacher commented on changes they considered were taking place at their respective year levels. The Year 8 teachers were observing greater levels of student engagement. At Year 7, there appeared to be a greater level of understanding of course materials, and also greater retention of information. The primary teachers also noted higher levels of engagement from their students. This usually took the form of increased questioning and participation.

An interest in sharing what they had learnt was important to the team. They were already communicating some of their new strategies within current teaching teams. However they noted that the school was heavily pre-occupied with a range of initiatives apart from the product of their TPL learnings that took time and resources. One of the team participants was a year level co-ordinator and had some capacity to engineer dispersal of the research and new methods amongst other staff. However whether she would remain a year level co-ordinator was unclear – and the team was vague about how, apart from their personal efforts in staff teams, a more co-ordinated approach might be facilitated across the school. The team leader noted that there is no ‘maths cluster’ in their location to which the TPL team can report or feedback, and from which they can seek collegiality and support.

The TPL team described the school leadership team as generally supportive of their work. However the pathway to building a greater take-up of their newly acquired knowledge and strategies across the school perhaps required more time and discussion. Individual team members thought they would be able to share their learning with colleagues at year level and subject specific meetings; however it was not clear how this would lead to wider transformation if colleagues were resistant.

All team members reported that their experiences of TPL had been generally positive. They noted that their participation reflected a pre-disposition to being open to new approaches in the classroom, which was why they had gained so much from the experience.

## Case study 12

Literacy was identified as a priority for this school by a small working party of four in 2008 who visited a series of secondary schools to see what other schools were doing. The group were very impressed with what they saw at another school. The working party put together a proposal including a professional learning plan to the curriculum decision making body in the school. It was overwhelmingly supported and the school obtained the involvement of an external expert. The external expert uses a pedagogical approach based on an understanding that literacy is a responsibility of all teachers, not just English teachers, and that the curriculum in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) should reinforce literacy skills.

This school designed TPL was initiated as part of the work that has been underway at the school since the beginning of 2009. The TPL team comprises four team members: two teach physical education, one languages other than English and humanities and one science and maths. The team used the TPL to have non-classroom time built into their timetable in order to offer coaching support to other teachers implementing the pedagogical approach. They have the support of the external expert who acts as a “critical friend”.

The coaching has involved the TPL teachers spending three periods per week with another teacher (the ‘coachee’) for up to a Term to support them to implement the pedagogical approach in their classrooms. Over the year fifteen teachers have participated as coachees for different periods of time. The coaching has involved the TPL teacher assisting the coachee in class preparation and planning (in the first semester, coachees were given an extra free period by the school to facilitate this process, in the second semester planning and preparation needed to be in the coachee’s free time); observing the coachee’s teaching in the classroom and providing feedback and assisting their reflection and learning following the class.

As part of the TPL, the TPL teachers developed videos of their own and their coachee’s classroom practices that they have used in after school professional learning sessions with the entire staff (in their house teams) of which there are three per Term. There have been significant learnings in terms of, first, overcoming teachers’ resistance to the use of video and observation as a teaching and learning tool and, second, the power of video as a self-learning tool. In encouraging the use of videoing, the TPL teachers were the first to expose their own practice through the screening of videos of their teaching as part of whole of school literacy professional learning sessions. Several other teachers have now volunteered to be videoed and the school has purchased four movie cameras for this purpose.

In Term 4 the TPL team have used their TPL time to work on the development of their artefact. To date this has consumed between twenty to forty hours just on setting up the artefact on the Ultranet. Their aim has been to develop a resource that is useful both within the school and more broadly. They are keen for their artefact to receive a rating that will allow it to be published on the FUSE website (the highest level rating). Their artefact uses

audio and video links to illustrate key points and is built around a matrix in which the pedagogical approach's seven teaching practices are placed against the five domains of e<sup>5</sup> and the relevant instructional guidance included at each point of intersection (along with a video clip of the relevant guidance in action in the classroom). The team have found the technical aspects of the development of their artefact and the posting of the links onto the Ultranet extremely difficult and time consuming. They have also encountered difficulties in the interface between the school intranet and the Ultranet. This has extended to difficulties in deciding which operating system should be used (Internet Explorer or Firefox) as each has different levels of functionality in different areas.

The team feels that the requirements for the artefact have changed through the year. Their impression at the beginning of the year was that the artefact was a straightforward accountability process and not too onerous. They think that the expectations about the artefact have increased during the year with different instructions at each PLATO day. They believe the development of the Ultranet during the year has also had a huge impact on expectations. They admit, however, that they are keen to have their artefact ranked highly and have put themselves under pressure to prepare an excellent and comprehensive artefact. It is important to note, as well, that their artefact relates to the whole school literacy plan and its roll-out at the school rather than the coaching program that formed the basis of the TPL. While this is more than what is expected of the artefact, it makes sense to the TPL team members to develop a resource around the whole program that can be used as an ongoing training tool at the school.

The TPL team participated in the PLATO days. These have been the only days that the team has been able to spend together as a team outside the school environment. One thing they have learnt for the future is to not only schedule in time for their coaching but to also build in time for the team to work together and reflect and plan. They didn't do this and have therefore needed to meet in their own time on a regular basis. The team has therefore valued PLATO for the time it has given them to reflect and plan and for the chance to hear about each other's projects. They said as well that without PLATO they would have felt isolated. They felt that they have also developed a better understanding of e<sup>5</sup> through their participation in PLATO.

The team have used e<sup>5</sup> as part of their project, particularly in relation to the development of the matrix, however, e<sup>5</sup> was not the major focus of their project. Nevertheless it has provided a useful framework for them to 'hang' the instructional practice that comes from their implementation of the pedagogical approach. They note that other frameworks could also have performed the same function and feel that it is the pedagogical approach that provides more direct benefit to teachers in the classroom and that e<sup>5</sup> still feels like something extra that may or may not be supplanted by something else in the future.

In terms of student outcomes, the TPL team feel it is too early to see the results in the NAPLAN scores. They suggest that as a whole of school initiative it will take time for the pedagogical approach to be taken up consistently by teachers and for students to consistently apply the seven practices. Until there is substantial and consistent

implementation across the whole school it will be difficult to see the results in the NAPLAN scores. However, TPL team members have noted some real differences in terms of student behaviour at the classroom level. One team member recalled observing her students applying the several strategies during an exam (without instruction) and all said that they regularly heard their students using the pedagogical approach phraseology to describe what they were doing. However, one TPL teacher observed that now that she was on maternity leave and another teacher had replaced her who was not familiar with the pedagogical approach that the students were not now using the processes independently. For her, this suggested the need for consistency and reinforcement by multiple teachers in order for new teaching and learning processes to be fully embedded. The same teacher also noted that there had been improvements in her classroom literacy test results, particularly for those at the lower performance levels. The TPL teachers also noted that the literacy coaching seems to most effectively be implemented in the junior years of high school.

The TPL teachers said that their main focus was on teachers and building their capacity and they also had evidence that teachers were changing their curriculum and practices to achieve the literacy outcomes. One team member described the changes she and other teachers had made to the science curriculum to include things like a vocabulary building table and other literacy practices. This is an aspect that is now common practice in all in house publications across the school. The TPL teachers also spoke positively about multiple opportunities for KLA to share with the rest of the staff (in house teams) how they have implemented and are using the pedagogical approach in their own teaching. This was a very positive and reinforcing experience with all KLAs able to identify changes they had made. The teachers also pointed to the increasing interest in the pedagogical approach over the years as evidence of its success (with thirteen teachers expressing interest in the program in 2009, eighteen in 2010 and twenty for 2011).

The school has been successful in obtaining TPL for implementation in 2011. This TPL will build on the 2010 TPL and the pedagogical approach by seeking to draw together diverse pedagogy across literacy and numeracy. The 2011 team is made up of the leading teachers in English and maths and in professional learning and curriculum development.

The TPL team noted that they had received excellent support from the school in terms of finances and resources but felt that there was a lack of real interest in their project from senior staff. They were concerned that this lack of interest and passion may result in the project losing focus next year, particularly given the departure of the team leader to another school in 2011 and the commencement of a new TPL. A further possible risk to the project could be the fact that the regional network has more recently chosen to support a different literacy pedagogical approach developed by a different external expert as their preferred approach. The team see, however, their pedagogical approach as very similar and compatible with the approach now preferred by the region.

Some terminology varies but the underlying concepts are consistent. It will be most important for the continued success of the project that senior staff at the school appreciate that the underlying message of these two approaches is the same.

In discussing the TPL, the Principal was supportive and said that while he was not aware in detail of their achievements, his Assistant Principal had been highly complimentary, particularly about the team's artefact. The principal said he valued the work of the TPL team in breaking down barriers to observation as a key teaching and learning practice and said that their work had set the scene for more transparent practice in the school. He also identified their learnings about the use of coaching as an effective professional learning approach as key outcome for the project. He felt that the key challenge now facing the school was the divergence between literacy and numeracy instructional practice and the need to develop an integrated approach and one consistent pedagogy across the whole of the school (i.e. the 2011 TPL). For the Principal, e<sup>5</sup> is a useful model but more important is the teaching and learning policy applying within the school.

## Case study 13

This network designed TPL involved a group of teachers from three schools; a secondary school and two primary schools. The e<sup>5</sup> focus was on using evaluation to improve the quality of instruction.

The schools involved were interested in applying for TPL and the RNL proposed that they apply for TPL as a team, rather than individually. The RNL saw it as an opportunity to build and strengthen networks across schools, including across both primary and secondary schools. Two teachers from one primary school were not successful with their TPL application.

The primary teachers worked together during the year on their TPL, but had little contact with the secondary teachers other than through PLATO and to work on the artefact. The secondary teachers tended to work as individuals. Team members felt that this may have been because the primary schools were not the feeder schools for the secondary school, so there were no “natural” linkages between the schools. Under the broad theme of using evaluation to improve teacher instruction, team members worked either in small teams or as individuals on specific issues relevant to their subject areas taught.

The team members each had thirty-five days of TPL and used most of them.

The issues which prompted the application for TPL for the primary schools related to the quality of speech at lower levels, which was having implications for literacy (and speech) at higher levels. Oral language levels in the region are some of the lowest in the state and, across both primary schools, students tend to not formulate or engage in questions. The question that the group wanted to address was “how can we, as educators, alter our practice to better engage our students?” While the primary teachers had different areas of specific focus, they worked together in small groups during the year, sharing their thinking about strategies to use, looking at team teaching and teachers using e<sup>5</sup> to communicate with each other about their practice. Teachers from one of the primary schools felt that their new building would help create the appropriate environment to facilitate shared learning and collaborative teaching (with the assumption that the required practice will follow – “if we built it, they will come”).

The primary teachers were able to choose when to take their TPL days and said that this worked for them. Having a group within the same school was felt to help in terms of support and sharing ideas and bouncing ideas off each other. The primary teacher whose colleagues had not been successful in getting TPL appreciated the support from the primary teachers from the other school, but noted that it took more planning to get together, rather than just “meet at lunch or in the staffroom for a quick comment to keep impetus up”.

Issues for the secondary teachers were more explicitly subject focused, again with the overall focus on evaluation and with using e<sup>5</sup> to focus on teacher practice and improve student outcomes. Teachers said that NAPLAN data shows that the school is significantly

below average on literacy measures. The school also has below average scores for numeracy.

The secondary teachers saw their work being clearly related to their principal's commitment to the better use of data, so were using the "evaluation" aspect of e<sup>5</sup> to look at teacher practice and improve student outcomes. These teachers were responsible for curriculum development in their specific subject areas in the school. One teacher said that they were asked to participate in TPL by the principal and did so because it was part of their job role. One said they wanted to do TPL for their own personal development. Their individual areas of investigation fitted in with the subject areas they taught.

Although the primary teachers had been willing to share their learning and resources etc, the secondary teachers felt that their circumstances were very different to those in the primary setting. They noted that the structures, methods, resources used in primary schools are not appropriate for use with secondary students noting, for instance, that texts and activities suitable for Year 3 are not interesting for Year 8 students, and that books for Year 9 and Year 8 reading at lower grades, are not suitable for primary students as they use inappropriate language, context etc for their maturity level.

The secondary teachers each had a timetabled day off fortnightly, and appreciated the regular time uninterrupted by other school commitments. However, because there was no common TPL time scheduled, and their focus areas were different, they felt there was limited opportunity for sharing between them. They had several untimetable TPL days and were able to take these "extras" when they needed additional time, although this meant they needed to prepare extras for classes missed. They generally felt that they would perhaps have benefitted more from being involved in a team with other secondary teachers with the same subject focus as themselves. This would have enabled them to split the work load, provide a sounding board for ideas and perhaps helped them achieve more in the time.

The focus for the secondary teachers was on getting their own teaching teams involved in using evaluation to improve teacher practice, through curriculum planning meetings and identification of key learning areas, rather than taking a "whole school" approach. While there had been some whole school sharing so that other teachers knew what they had been involved in, the secondary teachers were not expected to provide e<sup>5</sup> professional learning for the whole school.

All of the teachers saw their TPL as a starting point for looking at changing teacher practice and working out where students were in their learning. Teachers had clear ideas about identifying areas where the skill levels of students needed improvement and testing strategies for helping students improve. Some teachers had additional professional learning as part of their TPL which helped direct them in their specific areas of focus, such as by identifying resources or assessment tools.

Several teachers commented that student levels of engagement had improved. One noted that the children were so engaged in the process they did not even realise they were learning, but from a teacher's perspective the focus was always on "evaluate" and the 'what I am doing as a teacher?' that can help with the learning. The team spoke about e<sup>5</sup> being like a spiral, "so often as a teacher you are doing more than one thing at once". It depends on the lens you are putting on what you are doing (i.e. focusing on evaluate, although part of that will be engaging the students and getting them to elaborate, etc).

All of the teachers believed that thinking about e<sup>5</sup> had given them a greater understanding and awareness of their own teaching practice. One said that it was important for teachers to remember that teaching is a career with progression points and that looking at your own teaching practice and improving it was part of that career development, whether or not you had leadership aspirations.

There are assumptions about what children "know", what teachers think they know and what children think they know, and the importance of explicit teaching. Teachers said that they were looking at the way they were teaching, and were using more explicit teaching in subject areas. Teachers observed that students were more engaged in their learning because of the different strategies used. In some cases, teachers were beginning to see an improvement in student outcomes, although this would be difficult to attribute to the TPL in all cases, as there were a range of other strategies in place.

Some of the teachers shared data with the students and used this to encourage students to set their own goals. One of the teachers said that sharing the data with the students had changed the focus of the TPL from being about the teacher identifying the skills the students need and teaching these, to being more about working with the students and letting them choose which areas they want to work on. This teacher had a class of low readers at secondary level and said that these students had previously been afraid of testing, "but actually sharing the test results with them has really engaged them with the process." Another teacher said that their students were loving doing the self-assessment and that through setting their own goals they were also learning more about oral expression and explaining and elaborating ideas.

All of the teachers had done benchmark testing this year and believed this would be useful for measuring future outcomes. One of the teachers had been able to do pre and post testing at the prep level which would have some impact on how children are streamed or how to differentiate learning for them in the next year after prep.

The primary teachers had started to do peer observation, which was an important part of opening up teacher practice. They asked other teachers to come into their classrooms and observe what they are doing. The observation has a specific focus, which makes it professional and contained. The observer is asked by the teacher being observed to focus on an explicit thing that they are doing in their teaching. It is also about inviting someone to come and look at what you do, rather than the formal 'principal walk' which can cause some anxiety about judgement on what you are doing.

At the primary school level, teachers felt that teachers in their school were open to others looking at their teaching practice. Team teaching was part of teaching practice at the small primary school.

At the secondary school, teachers were focussing more on their own teaching practice this year, with the idea of using tools to have consistent teacher practice and expectations for students next year.

All of the teachers felt that they were making “small steps”. The team felt that it was important to keep the size of tasks manageable, as teachers have so much they need to do, larger tasks become undoable.

The secondary teachers believed their TPL was sustainable because it fitted in with their school’s focus on using data to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, and it was part of their job role to support teachers to do this. Time to do this would be part of the curriculum role and the use of the regular curriculum planning meetings to clarify the need for consistency in teaching; teaching specific skills and consistency in teacher expectations of students.

The primary teachers commented that in a recent staff meeting, someone asked what was happening with previous TPL work with boys; as if those who had initiated it were still the ones responsible for running it. There was some frustration that despite the sharing, other staff don’t always take on the responsibility to “do”. They felt that they did not have the answers to this and that while some teachers had more preparedness to take things on, others did not, and they felt they could not force them. They said that it was hard to influence colleagues and difficult to get people to change what they already had in their planner to do, or to fit new things in and to make them believe that a different approach would be worthwhile for them.

They believed the forthcoming review of the school, and renewing the school’s Strategic Plan for the next four years would be opportunities to ensure the work on oral language development and peer coaching were sustainable within the school. Including these in the school's Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan will ensure that the administrative part of the school is on board, which helps teachers with time allocation. This was one of the main issues for the team in terms of giving up time for coaching or observation as there is no time allocated for these activities outside TPL time.

The team were generally disappointed with the artefact aspect of the TPL, and said that it felt like an add-on to the work they were doing, and a minor aspect of it. The secondary teachers in particular felt that it was more important that they produced something that was useful for the immediate needs of themselves and other teachers in their teaching area. Because of the nature of the team and what they were working on, they had designed something that had many linkages to represent the individual areas of interest each person or small group had focussed on. They found out late in the process that this artefact would not work on the Ultranet. As a result, their overall score was lower than what they felt it should have been. They felt that the guidance on this had not been clear.

They also commented that the peer review process had not been well organised or satisfactory. One teacher described the review process as being “like when I, as a teacher, tell my students to do a quiz in pairs and get the other to mark it, and that's it for the accountability of it.”

Despite all of this, the team felt that it was important to recognise that they had produced something tangible which enabled them to reflect on their achievements, and which was useful to them.

## Case study 14

The TPL team aimed to improve their teaching practice and give permission to students to drive their own learning, promote a flexible, integrated approach to learning and to have the process of inquiry to run through the whole learning experience.

As the team progressed however, their focus was drawn more to e<sup>5</sup>. They realised that there were misconceptions about the nature and purpose of e<sup>5</sup> at their school, with some believing that it was about student inquiry rather than teacher practice. The team hoped that through TPL they could improve their understanding of e<sup>5</sup>, better utilize the e<sup>5</sup> framework in their own practice and then share their learnings with the rest of the staff.

The team also realized that in order to introduce e<sup>5</sup> as the primary framework for understanding and improving teaching practice, they needed to first build a culture of reflective practice. They believe that teachers, including themselves, often feel too busy to allow adequate time to reflect. Consequently, one of the aims of their project was to build the reflective capacity of the teaching body.

A leading teacher from the school had previously participated in TPL at another school, and gained much from her participation. She recommended the team and using TPL for addressing the identified need. The principal saw TPL as an opportunity to further develop pedagogy at the school and felt that TPL was a 'happy marriage' with their pre-existing focus on improving teaching practice. TPL was also viewed as the only means of gaining the time required to develop a new framework for teacher practice. Initially, the team was to be a three member-team; however one of the proposed team members went on maternity leave.

The team felt that their understanding of e<sup>5</sup> developed considerably over the course of their TPL. The team came to the conclusion that e<sup>5</sup> provides scaffolding for understanding and recognising what good teacher practice looks like. They also view e<sup>5</sup> as fundamentally a reflective tool, which assists teachers in breaking practice down and telling them where they are at, and how to improve.

Initially the team asked themselves if the e<sup>5</sup> levels they used should relate to the levels of the students they were teaching. However, as they progressed, they began to understand that teachers can bring any e<sup>5</sup> level into a teaching situation. They felt that it was unfortunate that e<sup>5</sup> was set out in 'levels' because some teachers mistakenly thought that each level equated to the 'level' at which their students were at (i.e. Level 1 might equate to prep). The team feel that it was not communicated clearly enough that e<sup>5</sup> is a framework for teaching practice which exists outside of student capacity.

As their project evolved, there was a shift away from an inquiry-focus (i.e. how students learn), to a more explicit focus on teaching instruction. This shift occurred in large part because of the team's growing knowledge of what e<sup>5</sup> was actually about. Consequently, they began to focus on teacher planning and decision making and the need to address "what we are doing and why we are doing it".

The team developed a teacher capacity self-assessment tool for each of the five areas of e<sup>5</sup> and used it to assess their own practice. Initially they found the self-assessment process very challenging. To assist them they developed a 'self-assessment through conversation' process whereby they had a trusted colleague (the other TPL team member) act as a critical friend and challenge the reasoning behind their assessments. The team found that this allowed them to delve more deeply and honestly into the self-reflection process and develop an accurate assessment of their current practice. The team then used this self-assessment process to set goals for themselves to improve the way they engage their students.

The team attended external professional learning where they learned techniques to engage students and improve their learning. The team learnt about Cognitive Load Theory, which hypothesises how information is processed and retained by the human brain. This experience was very beneficial for the team. They took what they had learned and applied it back to their instructional design and then looked at how they could give the knowledge to the rest of the staff and how they could incorporate it into their practice.

The team trialled a number of the techniques they had learned for switching the brain on in their classrooms. These included round table immersion tasks, (where students move around) mind mapping, brain gym, and 'brain waves' – using music and smells to activate the brain for learning. They asked their students to complete self-assessments and the results indicated that the classroom activities they liked the most were those that ran together (where there was a connection between what they read, wrote and calculated), and where they had the freedom to explore.

The team found that it was important to build the 'engage' activities into each task and to differentiate them for each learning goal. One teacher introduced planned interactive tasks to get her students excited about learning fractions. The team also learnt about the importance of getting students to learn from each other. The other teacher allowed her students to identify what they wanted to learn and ran mini-workshops focusing on the learning goals. Either she would run them or a student who felt confident in the area ran them.

The team does not expect to see an impact on learning outcomes in this year's student engagement and NAPLAN results as the most recent work they've done was after those tests, however they have observed a far greater level of student engagement in their classrooms. One teacher found that her students took their fractions tasks home and told their parents about them. The other said that her students actually got annoyed if they missed out on getting to do a task.

The team spent around half-an-hour with each staff member to gather data on the level of knowledge and understanding of e<sup>5</sup> within the school. The team then held their first session on the 'engage' domain of e<sup>5</sup>. They adopted an adult education approach and used the tools they developed to engage their students on the staff, applying a range of techniques designed to appeal to different learning styles.

The team reformatted and personalised the e<sup>5</sup> engage statements so that they were easier to relate to. Then they asked teachers to pair up and go through the statements with each other, nominating where they thought they were and validating their assessments with evidence. First however, they shared the results of their own self-assessments with the group to make their experience less threatening for them.

Using the results from the group self-assessments as baseline data, the team discovered that metacognition and established learning goals were the weakest areas for the school. They decided to focus on established learning goals first because it was the most important area to address. One of the professional learning sessions focused on 'elaborate'. The elaborate session was run as a planning session and the team focused on how their colleagues could stimulate students for each learning unit.

The evaluation tasks the team ran at the end of the sessions indicated that their colleagues had developed a much better understanding of the topics and why they were important. The team also found that their colleagues actually did the reading that they gave them and felt this was because they had ensured that it was purposeful.

Since then, the team has observed other teachers introducing the techniques that they picked up from the professional learning sessions into their classrooms and into the professional learning sessions that *they* ran. The team feels that this has set a precedent for teachers making changes and that, because they were able to successfully engage them, their colleagues have taken on the knowledge and applied it. The team has also encouraged their colleagues to record what they're doing in the classroom

The principal was 'amazed' by the results. He had expected a high level of resistance to e<sup>5</sup> from the rest of the staff but found that they recognised the need for it and supported the TPL team in what they were trying to do. The principal linked the success of the professional learning sessions to the team taking staff with them on their learning journey and having had the time to get the process right. He feels that the school now has a good notion of what e<sup>5</sup> is and are keen to continue the learning.

The team felt that there was a lack of communication and clarity around what the artefact should be and look like and this caused them anxiety. When they applied for TPL they were not aware that an artefact would be a requirement. The team said that they did not find out what the artefact was supposed to look like until day four of PLATO and felt that the process would have been much easier if this information had been communicated earlier and more clearly. Ultimately, the artefact that the team created was designed to be used by teachers with initiative wanting to make changes on a whole-school level rather than novices and the feedback they received indicated that it had too much text.

There was also a lack of communication regarding the time the team needed to spend on the artefact and this meant that they lost TPL days that they would have preferred to spend rounding off their year. The team said that had they had any fewer TPL days then they would not have had sufficient time to complete their artefact. The team also found that the

timing of the artefact was a negative for them as it was due around report writing time. The team felt that it would have been better to carry the artefact over to the following year.

The team were unable to engage in the artefact review process due to technical issues with the Ultranet. One team member could not log on to the Ultranet and the other was unable to access the artefact she was supposed to review; she felt that this was particularly unfortunate for that TPL team. Overall, the team had the impression that not a lot of thought had been given to the IT challenges associated with the artefact process.

The team said that they would have liked to have gone through the review process with a TPL team with whom they had shared discussions. They felt that this would have been a better experience for celebrating the learning process after working with them for so long. More broadly, the team would have enjoyed a formal process to interact with other TPL teams to share learnings and advice.

Within their school, the team has been asked to run more e<sup>5</sup> professional learning sessions. The aim is to raise the focus on e<sup>5</sup> throughout the school, which is a central component of the school plan for the next five years. The next area the team is focusing on is metacognition and they feel they are starting to get clarity on what that will look like. The team has support from their principal to take the work forward but will also have to do a lot of the work in their own time.

In addition to this, the team has been linked in with another school, and have been asked to run the e<sup>5</sup> professional learning sessions there as well. The team's principal has indicated that the time to do this will be supported by the school.

The team feel that they have learnt a lot personally from their TPL experience and have appreciated the opportunity to lead change within their school. They have learnt that you do not have to be a leading teacher in order to deliver professional learning, that anyone who is comfortable can do it.

The team has greatly appreciated how supportive everyone has been of their project; particularly that they were given permission to shift the focus of their TPL question from exploring an inquiry approach to focusing more specifically on what it means to engage. They found the TPL staff to be very helpful and friendly. The team also greatly benefited from the external professional learning their school funded and they and their principal feel that it was a significant success factor.

The most important thing the team has found has been to think about what they are doing and why they are doing it, in order to plan instruction carefully. They feel that they have been very strategic and have made sure that they have practiced what they've preached.

Their impression was that e<sup>5</sup> "runs on the smell of an oily rag" and that there is not much out there about it, so they felt that the TPL focus on e<sup>5</sup> was "brilliant".

## Case study 15

Two teachers, one a recent graduate and the other an accomplished teacher with many years at the school, were team teaching together and had previously wanted to apply for TPL. They decided to apply for 2010. A third teacher also became involved. Their professional learning was to focus on “rolling out” e<sup>5</sup> using the school’s Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) as well as through peer coaching.

The school had experienced significant building works in recent years and a previous TPL team had focused on how to use and structure the new open-learning spaces. The 2010 TPL team saw their work as building on the previous team’s work, with a focus of “how to teach” in the new spaces.

The team members were granted thirty-five days each and scheduled their days early on, finding planning in advance helpful in securing consistent CRTs making it easier to leave the classroom. The team also sent a letter to parents explaining their involvement in TPL who were generally happy, except on the rare occasion that a class had to be split into other classes because no CRT could be hired.

The team found taking two day blocks the most useful, especially offsite, as one of the team members is the school’s ICT support person and being offsite prevented other demands getting in the way. The school’s leadership were “very supportive” of the team taking their time as they wished.

Initially the team spent their first few days familiarising themselves with the e<sup>5</sup>. They knew it was more about the “how” (practice) rather than the “what” (content) but initially thought it was something “extra” on top of what they were already doing. One of the team members was funded by the school to attend an e<sup>5</sup> *Master Class* and the team found the PLATO days “fantastic”, particularly around the e<sup>5</sup> learnings provided.

Over time the team realised that e<sup>5</sup> is about what teachers “actually do in the classroom” and provides a common language for discussions about teacher practice. For this reason, and partly through conducting a site visit to another primary school, the team decided to take a more *in vivo* approach than using the PLTs, instead deciding to use a peer observation model. The team saw this as a more logical approach to “implement e<sup>5</sup>” through “making it alive for staff in a non-threatening way”.

Their focus became helping staff learn “the art of observation” through being objective and using the e<sup>5</sup> language. The team hoped to create a sustainable model of peer observation that could be built into the school’s regular schedules for future years. The team saw this as building on the pedagogy focus developed within the school during the previous three years and saw this as helping the teaching staff become more “conscious” and “reflective” of their practice.

The group started by focusing on their own practice and conducting observations amongst themselves. The team found early on that, based on their own experience, the process of

structured, “evidence-based”, observee-guided peer observation results in constructive conversations about teaching practice, which are non-judgemental.

The team also used videoing extensively as from the time of their application they were clear they would produce a video artefact. The team found videoing themselves a very useful tool for self-reflection:

**It is really good to see yourself teach ... It helps you realise in a very specific way the parts of your teaching practice you want to change, and see specific teaching opportunities you may have missed to extend a student’s learning.**

The team ran six professional learning sessions for staff, one on each of the e<sup>5</sup> domains and one dedicated to peer observation. The team were keen that the e<sup>5</sup> not be seen as “something extra”. The team utilised some of the activities they had received at the PLATO days and also showed a pro forma the team developed for self-assessment, as well as an observer pro forma, based on the e<sup>5</sup> capabilities. During the year one of the team members entered a Principal Internship Program at another school but tried to actively remain involved with the team, especially coming back for the professional learning sessions the team presented.

There was a clear expectation from leadership that every teacher would be involved in the peer observations. The team set up a roster, which proved to be time consuming, but managed to produce one which worked around school events and included each teacher. The team used about thirteen of their TPL days to release other teachers to attend, some of which came from the spare days left due to the team member undertaking the Internship Program.

The peer observation days were structured so that the TPL team could fit in multiple people on one day. The first teacher would have a briefing session, then observe one of the TPL team members, and then their reflection time would be split with the next teacher’s briefing session. These were all completed in Term 3. The observations were mainly of literacy or numeracy classes, as these were seen as the most easily transferable across the year levels, but the observations also included specialist classes such as art and science. Teachers were normally paired to a TPL team member from a different year level grouping.

In the initial briefing the team showed the teacher the observer pro forma and described the upcoming class. The teacher highlighted what capabilities they thought they would see, with the team explaining only to write down factual observations (i.e., evidence-based observations), not judgements. The reflection session after the observation allowed the observer and the observee to reflect together around the practice of observation. The team noted they themselves found the hardest part of remaining objective was entering into value judgements such as “I liked it when you...”

Some teachers had initially shown anxiety and confusion, thinking that *they* would be observed – not understanding they'd be learning *how to observe*, watching one of the TPL team members teach. The TPL team also asked the first four teachers who went through the process to share their experiences with the whole staff during the peer observation professional learning session run by the team. The team was also responsive to feedback from the teachers about the process itself. Generally the team was “surprised by how well it's been received”.

The team now feel “confident” around the e<sup>5</sup>, noting that it's “easy to use the language” and that it's a “good tool for building teacher capacity”. The team, however, are concerned that TPL teams at other schools seem to be using the e<sup>5</sup> as a task-orientated tool, such as for measuring student activities, which the team understand is not the purpose of e<sup>5</sup>. The team are concerned that the e<sup>5</sup> is being implemented inconsistently across schools as a result.

They also found that some answers they sought, especially around the appropriate use of the e<sup>5</sup> levels, were contradictory. Notably the team have refrained from using the e<sup>5</sup> levels with staff as this clearly introduces a value judgement, something the team were trying to avoid in the peer observations. Nevertheless the team are confident they're on the “right track”.

One member wondered though, rather than discovering on their own that peer observations would be ideal, whether they'd been “funnelled down an approach the Department wanted”. One team member also noted that in a Bastow program *Leaders in the Making* they had access to an expert for half an hour to ask questions and seek guidance, and that something similar could have been built into the PLATO days.

The artefact the team produced included videos of staff reflecting about their experience of the peer observations, as well as multiple observation videos including an introduction, a briefing session, the observation and reflection, some feedback and a conclusion. An example timetable and the proformas were also included. The team tried to only include the core videos due to the assessment criteria.

With one of the team members having an ICT background the team were able to edit and compress their videos, however to fit them on the Ultraset they had to break them up into sections and compress them to “lower than YouTube quality”. They ended up getting around it by uploading the videos to TeacherTube, providing links in the Ultraset.

The RNL has mentioned several times the possibility of the team presenting to the regional meeting and having the artefact produced as a DVD for use in the region.

The team hope the observations are leading to a more open culture of examining practice amongst staff in the school. The team note that the staff have been very receptive to the professional learning provided by the team, and think this may have to do with the school previously having a TPL team. The team reflected on their TPL experience as making them feel “more of a professional”:

**I didn't think [TPL] would be as much of a personal journey ... My biggest learning journey has been about my skills, my teaching capacity. It includes the professionalism of being able to discuss teaching, but also having the skills and knowledge for the classroom.**

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The team members reflected on the impact upon their teaching practice of the self-assessments and the peer observations noting improvements in their questioning techniques and feeling more in control of the lesson and being able to wait and allow students to answer.

A TPL team member taking a more proficient stream thought her refined approach has "particularly suited them ... they've just soared ... the kids are doing the higher order thinking." The teacher taking the less proficient group thought her refined approach had produced "big improvements in their strengthening of connections – realising the links between topics."

The team was ultimately hoping the school's NAPLAN results increase however realise they are working within a broader context with several other professional learning initiatives underway in the school. The team were hoping that the observations may particularly affect student engagement. This could show up in the Attitudes to School student surveys which have been conducted in Years 5 and 6, but also recently in Years 3 and 4 at the behest of one of the TPL team members, which will provide a baseline to compare against. The team noted student engagement may also show up in school attendance rates.

The team recommended to the school leadership that peer observations become part of the schools' review processes in 2011. It has also been "hinted" that the e<sup>5</sup> will be part of each staff member's Annual Improvement Plan. The team encouraged other staff to apply for TPL in 2011, highlighting that the time to reflect on your practice is "so valuable". Unfortunately no-one applied. Nevertheless, the team members hope they will have another opportunity in the future to do TPL again.

## Case study 16

The 2010 TPL application built upon a series of previous work and projects focused upon e<sup>5</sup> and its possibilities for the classroom, which was described as a 'good start' for the school, but that there was a view that more could be done to embed e<sup>5</sup> in teacher activities. The 2010 TPL team was keen to embed the e<sup>5</sup> in 'practice'.

The 2010 TPL team consisted of three members. Early in the year they participated in external professional learning which assisted with their understanding of e<sup>5</sup> as a 'language'. They then sought to create a more in depth level of e<sup>5</sup> 'consciousness' amongst teaching staff in relation to classroom practice. While the team had originally planned on following a 'triads' model, their participating in coaching training led them to believe that this was a far better model for implementing change. The team enrolled in some cognitive coaching, which became the foundation for its e<sup>5</sup> approach. In particular, one team member had experience in coaching, which was of long term benefit to the team overall. This team member emphasised the important benefits of allowing teachers to lead change in their own practice.

With their coaching training in hand, the TPL team established a teacher development program that was heavily premised on cognitive coaching and peer review. Individual participants identified areas of the e<sup>5</sup> upon which they wanted to undertake some work, and were paired with another teacher (where possible) who had the same interest. The teachers then took turns observing the practice of their partners. The TPL team worked out a set of protocols for observation, which they considered to be very important to the success of their program. Observers provided comment in relation to the aspect of practice connected with e<sup>5</sup> that was of interest to the practitioner. This evidence based approach build confidence and trust between partners. When the observations were finished, teachers discussed their feedback during a post observation review at a lunch catered for by the school. Two rounds of observations occurred – one in June, and one in August/September.

The TPL team took on a leadership role as 'primary' or originating coaches in this process. They were allocated three periods per week to spend with another teacher (the 'coachee') for up to a Term to support them in their professional learning. During the year, 15 teachers participated as coachees for different periods of time. The coaching has involved the TPL teacher assisting the coachee in class preparation and planning (in the first semester, coachees were given an extra free period by the school to facilitate this process. In the second semester planning and preparation needed to be in the coachee's free time); observing the coachee's teaching in the classroom and providing feedback; and assisting their reflection and learning following the class.

The TPL team was keen to introduce videotaping as a reflective tool for the program. They struggled to convince some staff about the merits of videotaping, however when teachers tried it, its transformative effects were clear. Teachers came to recognise the power of video as a self-learning tool. Of particular note, those involved have recognised the

enormous amount of 'in house' knowledge about teaching and learning strategies within the school itself. The team commented extensively about the degree to which knowledge contained within the school was now being recognised as a critical asset in the professional learning process. The assistant principal noted that applications to undertake professional learning outside the school had reduced, and a new enthusiasm for shared teacher knowledge in the school was emerging.

For its artefact, the TPL team developed a wiki (a webpage allowing the collaborative creation and editing of material). The wiki consisted of five key pages, focused on different elements of the coaching work and program they had undertaken. One of the team members has an ICT focus and was able to pull together the wiki with team support. Team members described the production of an artefact as a pioneering process. They worked to produce something consistent with the TPL directives, which emphasised that the artefact should provide a 'snapshot' of what had been achieved in the project. However team members felt that criteria for the artefact weren't made particularly clear until the last PLATO day. They understood that generally, the artefact should be user friendly, easily accessible, and that it should exhibit creativity. Team members commented on the introduction of the Ultranet and its challenging impact upon the 'uploading' of the artefact.

In reflecting upon aspects of their TPL experience, the team spoke positively about PLATO. Apart from comments that aspects of the artefact could have been explained in more detail earlier in the sessions, the team considered that the support and guidance provided by PLATO staff was useful. In particular, the PLATO presenters offered useful resources and insights into planning for the team's work. A further positive aspect of PLATO was the opportunity it provided for interaction with other TPL teams. Staff at the school did speculate that because of the heavily ICT dependent nature of the artefact, some teams might have struggled. They wondered whether, in the future, the PLATO days or PLATO should encompass some form of ICT training or support for individuals and teams that requested it.

The TPL team commented that it would be impossible to specify at this time any direct links between their TPL work and student outcomes in the traditional, 'data driven' sense. However they pointed to a range of noticeable 'shifts'. For example, they were noticing a different language or level of conversation amongst staff in relation to teacher practice. The TPL team also commented on changes they were observing in student behaviour, for example through the increased incidence of questioning by pupils. At the beginning of 2010 they conducted a staff survey, which they hoped to follow up on later in the year or during 2011. They also mentioned the use of On Demand testing with students. Finally, the team commented that the power of the peer feedback and reflective practice was amazing.

The team is hoping that its work on e<sup>5</sup> peer observation will flow to the network level next year. Further, they hope that others will see their work on the Ultranet. Team members made the comment that the Ultranet has potential, but it was rolled out too quickly.

The TPL team has considered what will be required for continuing with their professional learning approach into 2011 and hope to discuss these requirements with the principal and

assistant principal. The team runs professional learning in other classes. They have calculated that each set of rotational observations will require five CRT days – they will be looking for CRT support from the leadership team. They are already undertaking some peer coaching with other teachers.

The team was highly positive about support it had received from the principal and assistant principal. In particular, they noted that the assistant principal had been a fabulous sounding board for the development of their work, given his participation on the original e5 working group. The school supported the TPL applications, and made a genuine commitment to building 'institutionalisation' of the learnings from the project within the school. It had supported attendance by the TPL team at various coaching training. As mentioned, the school had also provided a catered lunch for teachers as part of a debriefing process after their peer observation work.

The TPL team was allocated forty days each and met on average one day a fortnight. They have not quite used all of their days. Further, arranging consistent CRT was not always possible, which was a difficulty. The team reported feeling that they had been out of the classroom quite a bit – which was especially difficult for those who are leading teachers.

The team also spoke about the importance of bringing school families along on the journey of change. A letter was sent out to parents at the commencement of 2010 indicating that some teachers would be absent from classrooms and why this was so. Education of families about the long term and school wide benefits of such programs is an ongoing process.

## Case study 17

This teacher-designed TPL involved a team from a metropolitan primary school using e<sup>5</sup> to help them implement a new curriculum in Years 3 and 4, building on work in previous years from Prep to Year 2. They had initially identified three areas of e<sup>5</sup> to work on but were encouraged at the PLATO sessions to focus on one. They focussed on “engage” but found that all domains came around in the course of their work.

Team members had twenty-five days each, which they thought was a lot of time when they asked for it and quickly realised that it was not. Their days were not timetabled but the team had a comprehensive plan and timeline for the year. One of the team members had some CRT which rotated between two replacement teachers, and the other was in a team teaching situation. Time out of class was difficult not only because of being away from their students, but also because they needed to do preparatory work for the class first.

They were inspired to be involved in implementing a negotiated curriculum in Years 3 and 4 of their school by hearing of the success using a negotiated curriculum at other schools and seeing the success in the junior levels of their school. They said they have had their fair share of behavioural problems at the school, but this has changed in junior years with the introduction of developmental curriculum in the junior school. The 2011 Year 3s will have used developmental curriculum or development learning since Prep, so are not boxed in and have a sense of empowerment and ownership about their learning.

Their goal was to have children continue to be engaged in school and in learning. The school plans to roll out the negotiated curriculum to Years 5 and 6 in 2012. Planning for this includes the possibility of one of the team members moving to teach at this level.

The school principal and assistant principal were very supportive and provided them with additional resources for professional learning. The principal was seconded to another position during the year but continued to support the team until it became clear that they would not be returning to the school, and needed to let go of this project. The principal said that one of the spin offs from TPL is not just what is happening in the classroom, with the students, it is also in leadership skills. They had really noticed a growth in team members confidence with peers, as well as in their own classroom. Developing more leadership skills meant that team members will be able to have an impact on staff and therefore on other classrooms.

The team’s work involved getting their own heads around the e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model before giving professional learning to other staff on this. They found scheduling time to do professional learning with other staff was more difficult now that they have been told by the Government that all schools have their training day at the start of the year. Organising forty-five minutes after school for professional learning is hard.

It also included investigating the negotiated curriculum through visiting other schools and having professional learning and coaching in the developmental curriculum approach with

an external expert. The team trailed and implemented the approach for Years 3 and 4 at their school.

The team had their students working on negotiated projects on a set topic and had spent a lot of time developing shared norms and agreeing on expectations with students. They said that the students are definitely more engaged in their learning and many of them were studying the topic of their own free will at home. Children who often need a lot of encouragement to work at home were researching for their projects with their parents. They had particularly observed more interest in learning from the boys who were less engaged previously. They had the anecdotal evidence pre and post the introduction of the negotiated curriculum, but felt they needed to do more work on assessments, which the mentoring with the external expert provided. They said the children are talking about what they learnt and write down their learning goals. They can also see children being able to set up their next learning; using the experience to lead into the next goal.

The team have observed changes in numeracy and literacy, which is what they expected, consistent with the evidence from the developmental curriculum approach.

They also said that children who previously did not get organised and who had low independence skills at the beginning of the year are now able to say what they did and how they did it. They also noted that helping children be independent in their learning will be a lot of work for a while.

One of the team members had one male student with literacy and learning problems. His oral communication skills were low, with speaking difficult. He had low morale. This year, through being involved in the negotiated curriculum, he is much more engaged in his work, including his homework. He has worked out a way to get through using his strengths. His literacy has also improved.

The team said they will really know they are making a difference in the school when they are seeing the change in the senior years. Year 6 especially is where they will expect to see a difference in student outcomes in several years. The current cohort of Year 6 has been a "difficult group" from the beginning. They thought it would be interesting to see if they had been able to have that same group again from prep and put them through this new curriculum approach to see whether that made a difference for them.

The team were pleased with the progress they had made in implementing the negotiated curriculum approach but felt that the professional learning from the external experts on their approach to negotiated curriculum had made it much clearer for them. Having mentoring sessions with the external expert had been their biggest support during the year. The external expert had reinforced the importance of student learning being linked to VELs outcomes. As a result, the team had shifted their approach from looking at outcomes linked with topics to looking closely at outcomes linked with VELs.

The team looked at all the levels in e<sup>5</sup> and made the links between these and the approach to negotiated curriculum. It also reinforced the fact that teachers can use traditional

delivery approaches and still do e<sup>5</sup>. The e<sup>5</sup> was interrelated with implementing the negotiated curriculum and that provided a foundation to work from.

The team indicated that learning about e<sup>5</sup>, implementing the negotiated curriculum and all the time out of class had meant that there had been a lot of work that year. Staff were supportive, but different concerns needed to be worked through with teams. One of the team members was finding it difficult trying to change the practice of a teacher with many years experience. Having been involved in the TPL was great, and it was something they wanted to do as a team and as individuals, but it has also put more expectations on them personally.

Term 3 had been a difficult term for them. The team had a TPL day every week and had felt guilty leaving their students. The principal and assistant principal were both out of the school. In the teaching team of four, there had been people off on sick leave and on long service leave. They managed to get through it all but it had been hard.

In terms of the sustainability of the team's TPL work, the negotiated curriculum in Years 3 and 4 is expected to continue. The school wants to move to open classrooms and is expecting the new classroom to be completed for next year. They are not 100% there with the open classrooms, but have learnt that the negotiated curriculum can also be taught in traditional classrooms. It is working well in one team member's room, and so they are not allowing themselves to be limited by the physical structure.

The acting school leadership team are not from the school, but have been interested in the work the TPL team were doing. They were continuing with the planned roll out of the negotiated curriculum in 2011 at this stage although there will be a change of principal, and they will need the new leadership on board to do this.

The team said that the artefact turned into a "big thing." At the PLATO days they had been told that the artefact didn't have to have much in it, but felt that the examples provided with suggested it did. They also felt pressure as others were going to be looking at it and judging it. They recognised the artefact had to be something useful for other people, but felt that it wouldn't be particularly useful to another group wanting to implement a negotiated learning approach unless they had the external expert as well.

They used quite a bit of their own time to work on the artefact, and also had some outside assistance. The artefact felt like an additional workload to what they were already doing, and was not what they would make to present to staff. It was like doing a project: about what you have learnt, rather than the journey. For them, implementing the curriculum approach is more like an ongoing journey.

The Ultranet had also been frustrating as it was not equipped to handle the type of file they had. Following the initial confusion about who to contact for technical assistance, they were offered follow up assistance which did not happen. They had to send the artefact on disc to each of the team members for review. Despite the amount of work they put in and the innovative approaches taken, the artefact 'failed' as it did not focus solely on e<sup>5</sup>.

## Case study 18

Staffing changes in the course of the year has meant the TPL team, originally a team of three, in reality has been a team of two teachers with a third teacher (recently appointed as acting principal) acting as a sounding board/support person. The team describe themselves as having different but very complementary styles.

Both team members used the TPL one day per week (around twenty-five TPL days each) and have taken most of their TPL, missing only four or five days.

The original plan was for the TPL to focus on a writing program based on a particular pedagogical approach which is a program that has been used at this school for many years, and by other schools in the region.

The teams' TPL has evolved during the year, following input from PLATO days, feedback from e<sup>5</sup> specialists, advice from teachers, input from the assistant principal, as well as their own learning and reflection.

After their attendance at the first PLATO day, the team felt their idea was too big and needed to be refined and made more compact. The team thought that TPL would be a perfect way to focus on embedding common language on e<sup>5</sup> as the school was starting with a clean slate in relation to e<sup>5</sup>.

In the first two Terms, the TPL focussed on learning about e<sup>5</sup> in general and how to apply it. This included collecting books of sample lessons and running short professional learning sessions with staff.

In Term 2, the team provided fifteen to twenty minute professional learning sessions during staff meetings. However the staff meeting agenda soon had too many items agenda to accommodate what the team was trying to achieve, and the principal suggested to take the professional learning out of the staff meetings and move it to Fridays.

At the assistant principal's suggestion the team decided to try putting e<sup>5</sup> into practice via lesson plans. The lesson plan became the catalyst for the next evolution of TPL.

At first the lesson plans were developed around all five e<sup>5</sup> statements. The team then added an evaluation component - how would teachers know they were doing it?

By the end of Term 2, the team refined the TPL further, so rather than focus on the whole of e<sup>5</sup>, they decided to focus on one e<sup>5</sup> domain: *engage*. The team felt that most teachers were comfortable with two of the e<sup>5</sup> domains: *engage* and *evaluate*. They felt the TPL was a good way to gently introduce e<sup>5</sup>, to pick the least confronting of the domains, and to provide an opportunity to think more deeply and to focus on process and methodology.

Starting in Term 3, the team introduced informal coaching for teachers at the school. CRT was used on Fridays to release the teachers for the coaching sessions. The team see CRT release as vital, and believe this contributes to school support for TPL and not making it seem elitist. The team meet with teachers in pairs for around an hour in an informal coaching session.

Both the team and teachers were tentative about coaching at first. However the informal nature of the coaching let them explore ideas and the things they could try and gradually the teachers became more "chatty". Some teachers told the team that it was a luxury to have time out and talk about their teaching and develop a common language around e<sup>5</sup>. The team said the teachers valued this time to talk and share.

The team designed a survey, related to the levels in the *engage* statements, for teachers to rate themselves between 10-90% ("not 100% as all people have room for improvement"). Teachers were then asked to set goals based on the survey results, focussing on those that rated around 50-70%. Once the goals were selected teachers would implement them over the course of the next week, check back and rate themselves again. The survey results and goal setting provided a basis for discussion in the coaching sessions.

The team has done everything they have asked other teachers to do, and shared their learnings with other teachers.

The team reflected that one group did not work as well. This group included a Year 1 and a Year 3/4 teacher. These two teachers did not have as much peer support as two teachers for the same grade level have as they do not plan together, or observe each other's teaching (like teachers of same grade level).

By the end of 2010, the team will have provided seven coaching sessions (in pairs) for all teachers at the school including specialist teachers. The teachers focus on how they are making a difference and documenting the changes they see. It is not seen as an add on but what they do.

In Term 4 the TPL was further refined, and continuing to focus on writing, an ideas grid and activities were incorporated.

The team came up the idea for their artefact early on in the year, and this helped to keep them focussed and to refine the TPL as the year progressed. The team began working on the artefact in Term 1 after the second PLATO day. They showed the artefact to teachers at another primary school in the region and to an e<sup>5</sup> specialist, who gave good critical feedback which helped to frame the artefact incorporating e<sup>5</sup> and the original pedagogical approach focus.

The PLATO days guided the development and refinement of the artefact. At a PLATO day, an e<sup>5</sup> specialist provided some useful feedback resulting in a cut down evaluation section and highlighting the capability the teacher is focussing on. The artefact was designed as a template, however, at a PLATO day the team was encouraged to make the artefact interactive. They didn't change the artefact, just how it was presented. Fine tuning the artefact to its current final form took another month or so. As one of the team is a lead user for the Ultranet, the team did not experience problems in putting their artefact on the Ultranet.

The artefact covers more than TPL as it includes *engage* plus the other four domains of  $e^5$ . Ideally the artefact will be used next year as the school works its way through all of  $e^5$  using the artefact. The artefact includes what the teacher will do, and what student outcome the teacher expects to see based on the pedagogical approach. The team has incorporated professional learning resources from the pedagogical approach into the artefact, and has mapped the pedagogical approach against  $e^5$ .

The artefact is a practical resource grounded in  $e^5$ ,  $e^5$  is the how. They will use the artefact as a planning tool, slot it in where it fits and apply it in the classroom next year. There are three components to the artefact: resources, a pedagogical approach/ $e^5$  planning grid, and evaluation. The feedback received to date has been very positive about all three components.

The team has received encouraging feedback on the artefact, and was invited to do professional learning at another school in the region. The professional learning, with a group of twelve teachers from a regional school, ran for a half day. The team took the teachers through the process they use at their school. They used a TPL day to plan the professional learning but found it quite straight forward as they used the same techniques they use at their school. In planning the professional learning, the team were able to reflect on their own learning throughout the year. The team has been invited to go back and do the next phase with a group of regional schools next year. The regional office had also said they would like them to run professional learning sessions for other schools next year.

One of the team was on a review panel for a secondary school artefact and found it a bit difficult to engage with as she felt less familiar with the needs of secondary teachers and students. She thought it would be better for secondary teachers to review secondary school artefacts and primary teachers to review primary school artefacts.

In relation to student outcomes, the team encourages the use of self reflective rubrics. They reported that teachers are now using rubrics with prep students, where as previously they would not have used this with preps. The team sees that student outcomes, as a direct result of this TPL, will not be evident until 2012, by which time they will have gone through all five domains of  $e^5$ .

In considering peer observation, the team did not think this was important to do, as year level teachers already plan, implement and evaluate their teaching every day together. They do not think peer observation fits with the spirit of  $e^5$  which is about trying it out. The team is concerned that videoing would make teachers reluctant to try it out. The team consider informal coaching is more sustainable and more comfortable for their teachers.

The team plans to use the same steps next year, doing the survey, identifying goals, sharing ideas by filing in the ideas grid. The team has identified *evaluate* as a good domain to commence within Term One next year. The team suggests that other staff apply for TPL in 2011 to undertake a review of the TPL in 2012 as a way of keeping it going.

At a personal level, one team member felt this was one of her most beneficial years both in her own teaching and in furthering her leadership aspirations. The other member described the TPL as providing a framework for reflection of her own teaching, as she tries to be the best teacher she possibly can.

## 9. Glossary

artefact	A documentation of the TPL learning journey required to be produced and uploaded to the Ultranet as part of TPL in 2010
CRT	Casual Relief Teacher
e <sup>5</sup>	<i>e<sup>5</sup> Instructional Model</i> (DEECD)
ESL	English as a Second Language
FUSE	A digital repository and sharing space provided by DEECD
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
PLATO	Professional Leave and Teacher Outcome program; four individual days of guided professional learning provided as part of TPL
PLT	Professional Learning Team
PoLT	<i>Principles of Learning and Teaching</i> (DEECD)
RNL	Regional Network Leader
TPL	Teacher Professional Leave
Ultranet	An online learning system provided by DEECD
VELS	<i>Victorian Essential Learning Standards</i> (DEECD)