Targeted Teaching – Brisbane State of Affairs event

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A huge spread of achievement in the typical Australian classroom makes it hard for teachers to target their teaching to the needs of every individual student. Our most advanced students are not adequately stretched while our least advanced are not properly supported, despite heroic efforts by many teachers and principals.

Students learn best when they are taught material that is targeted to what each individual is ready to learn next, rather than the standard year level material that may well be too easy or too hard. We have known this for decades. It is part of our national professional standards, and our expectations of schools. Yet it is easier said than done.

Grattan Institute's latest school education report, *Targeted teaching: how better use of data can improve student learning*, explores the gap between the theory, policy and practice of targeted teaching.

Dr Pete Goss, Grattan Institute School Education Program Director, hosted a panel of senior leaders covering all three school education sectors in this State of Affairs event in Brisbane to explore:

- What is targeted teaching, and why is it worth doing?
- Is teaching being targeted effectively in practice? What are the challenges and barriers?
- What is the role of governments and education systems, schools and teachers, and parents in ensuring targeted teaching is embedded in every classroom?

> **Speakers:** **Pete Goss,** School Education Program Director, Grattan Institute
> **Patrea Walton,** Deputy Director-General of State Schools for the Queensland Department of Education.
> **Peter Britton,** Principal and CEO of Ipswich Girls' Grammar School.
> **David Greig,** Principal Education Officer with the Brisbane Catholic Education Office.

PETER GOSS: Welcome everybody, my name's Peter Goss and I'll be the host for the evening. Thank you very much first of all to the State Library of Queensland for hosting this *State of Affairs* event. We've been working as the Grattan Institute for most of this year with the State Library to bring together some interesting topics and some great panels to explore some of the policy issues that really are important for Australia and for this state. Grattan Institute, for those that don't know, is an independent public policy think tank. We aim to do work that is practical, that is focused on what will provide the most value to the broad population of Australia, and that is robust, that is evidence-based. My name's Peter Goss, I've been the Program Director of the School Education Program for just over a year now, that's one of the seven programs that we run, and it's a real privilege to be working in an area such as school education which we know can really make a difference.

I recently published a report with one of my colleagues, Jordana Hunter, called *Targeted Teaching: How better use of data can improve student learning* and that's what we're here to talk about tonight. We'll talk some policy, we might talk some systems stuff, but in the end it's about how do we improve learning for every child? So just before I introduce my panellists here I'd like to get us thinking in that mode. There's a great inefficiency at the heart of education in Australia today, but it's largely hidden and for the students who it affects they might even call it a great injustice. Every school day, every

lesson a substantial proportion of the 3.5 million Australian students that there are will not be learning as well as they need to be. Sometimes that's going to be because of factors beyond the classroom and that is hard, not impossible but hard for schools to influence and they have to deal with that and support that, but too often it's because teaching is pitched at a level that is too easy for the individual student, they already know the material and doing it again they're not necessarily going to learn it more, but they may well get bored and disruptive, or the material will be too hard for the individual student and they're going to be lost and not learning. So these students are not learning at their best.

There's a better way. We know in theory that the answer is to teach at a level that is right for each child and we've known this for a long time. I forgot the prop that I wanted to bring along here which is a little booked called *Individual Learning in Infant Schools* which talked about a lot of this language from 1923. The concepts are not new, it's putting them into practice that is challenging and it's written into our professional standards, although it's hard, there are pockets of great practice around and the challenge I think that we face is how to move from pockets of great practice to a system where every student is taught material at the right level for them, what we call targeted teaching, as much of the time as possible.

Since I released this report I've had a range of responses and I'd like to maybe call out three of them. I've had responses from schools and teachers who say, "This is just impossible. Nice pipe dream, not going to happen, there's too big of a spread". I've had responses from schools that say, "Uh-huh, know that, doing that already" and yet when you look behind the curtain and see what they're actually doing it's not always as rosy as it sounds. Then I've had the responses from people who are having a red hot crack at trying to do this either in one school or in many who say, "Yes, it's achievable but it's challenging", it's often a change and they're recognising the real hard work. That's why I brought together this wonderful panel for you tonight, because each three in their own way are working to implement targeted teaching or the core ideas, let's not get hung up on the name, in their own schools. On my immediate left I have Dr Peter Britton. He's a Principal and CEO of Ipswich Girls' Grammar School and the Junior Grammar School, but you've done a range of things I understand Peter including starting out from high school becoming an electrical fitter and mechanic, studying a Bachelor of Science majoring mathematics and statistical analysis, so data is nothing unfamiliar, and then working your way through to the role that you hold now. So could you please welcome Peter Britton?

Next we have Patrea Walton who is the Deputy Director-General of State Schools for the Queensland Department of Education. So your job is to look after 1,234 state schools across Queensland including, for example, as they implemented the move of Year 7 from primary to secondary school. Patrea has also seen the frontline in tough circumstances starting her career as a secondary teacher in the town of Surat 450km west of Brisbane, has been a Principal and then, through a belief in the capability of each and every student, has taken on a range of roles to where you're now leading that part of the system. So could we please welcome Patrea? Our representative from the third of the Australian sectors is David Greig. He's the Principal Education Officer with the Brisbane Catholic Education Office working on policy strategy and providing professional support to the 136 schools and the 7,150 students across Queensland South East I believe, I learnt today, the second-largest of the Catholic systems in Australia, and has also been a teacher and a Principal. So all of our panellists have a system perspective but have the frontline experience. So could you please welcome David?

The way that tonight is going to run is we've got an hour-and-a-half to spend together. I'm going to spend about 45 minutes with some prepared questions with the panel just working through some of the issues and then throw it open for an audience discussion, so please do start to get those questions ready. The first question that we're going to touch on to make sure that we're all thinking about the same thig is what is targeted teaching and why is it important? I'm going to continue talking, I beg your forgiveness for a few more minutes, and then I'll step back into more of a moderator role. What we did in the report was to take evidence about some of the most effective educational interventions and by looking at case studies that were doing it well try and describe what a system is that is using evidence of learning, data as a simple shorthand for that, to really help teachers target their teaching. That has four steps.

The first one is you have to know where your students are starting from. You have to actually understand and explicitly say what is the range of student ability in my class and not just one kid's learning at a Year 2 level and another kid's learning at a Year 5 level, but also what does that mean in terms of the skills that they're working on in the various different subjects because that's what's going to enable you to know to teach next. And this raises the first of the challenges which is that although we have known for a long time we need to teach at the right level, in any given classroom there is a five or six year spread of current achievement and on some tests up to an eight year spread in the ability to understand mathematical concepts. That's going to make it really tough for a teacher. So first of all you have to assess that, secondly you have to address the teaching in a way that captures as much of that spread as is reasonably possible. Some students may need additional individual support, but the more that the teacher can cover the range of current abilities within the classroom the more time every kid is going to be spending learning at the right level and that's going to maximise their progress.

The third step is going to be to track that progress and to do it explicitly. This is important for an individual teacher and doing it frequently enough that you know if a student has stalled in their learning. That's a frustrating thing, but if they've stalled in their learning and you've identified it then you've got the opportunity to do something about it, and if we don't find out for another six months then that kid is likely to be stuck and not necessarily progressing, particularly in areas where concepts build on one another. Tracking the progress also means that teachers can say which things worked best. So there's a large literature in education now about what works best, whether it's John Haddie or Marzano or Lyn Sharrett or others, but what we need in classrooms is those tools, whether that's feedback, whether that's formative assessment, being used and being used effectively in a way that is integrated into the teaching. So the last bit is to then adapt to say which bits are working best in our class in the way that we're doing it?

That's the cycle that we envisage and we hope to be happening in every class in Australia. I think there are some challenges as to where we're at, we'll get more to that, but that is going to do two things. It's going to maximise the learning of each student, but in the process of learning and focusing on what next and then achieving that next step that also builds some of the other characteristics that we want in students, including resilience and confidence and learning how to learn. So this is not the case that if we drill the kids hard enough into the particular things we need them to learn then they'll learn whether they like it or not. This is tapping into kids when they see something that is at the appropriate level of challenge and help to get there, that's a pleasurable feeling and that builds the ability to love learning for the longer term. That's how I use the term "targeted teaching".

So now we're going to throw over here, I'll give a brief opportunity, anything that you want to add, comment, challenge around what is targeted teaching and why it's important, and then I'll get to why is it important for your organisations at this time.

PETER BRITTON: Happy to start, I'll answer the second part of the question first about the why. We have a fundamental belief in my school that parents want their children to be known and what I mean by that is as individuals. So we try and put structures in place where every student in the school is known and valued for who they are. We develop a strategic plan and it's based on the balance scorecard where it's cause/effect related and in the centre, at the very centre of that strategic plan is what we call personalised learning and it's shaped in such a way, it's a big red button or a big red heart or whatever you like to say, because when you look at the strategic plan that is the absolute centre of what we are trying to achieve at our school, which is personalised learning. So we believe that when parents send their children to our school they want us to know who they are, what they're capable of, what their strengths are, what their areas for improvement are, not only in academic learning but across the whole spectrum of sports and the arts and community service, personal and social development etc. and we have structures in place to try and personalise the learning as much as possible, because that's what we believe our parents want and we also believe that that's good learning, good teaching.

PETER GOSS: Fantastic. Patrea?

PATREA WALTON: The heart of targeted teaching, whatever term you want to use, whether it be targeted teaching, quality teaching, there have been many definitions and terms over the years, but the absolute core, the essential part of quality teaching is a strong belief, an absolute belief that every student can succeed, every student in the classroom for that teacher can succeed. Targeted teaching does not occur in isolation. Someone far wiser than me said teaching is a team sport and in order for targeted teaching to occur in schools you need a team and that team starts from the leadership in the school, the leadership to support the targeted teaching. It also is about professional communities and your colleagues working with you in a professional community discussing the steps that you referred to, Peter, in targeted teaching and you went through those steps and we will elaborate on those steps I'm sure throughout this discussion with somewhat more clarity. But absolutely essential I think to target teaching in any schooling system is a fundamental belief that every student can succeed and does succeed and that is a high expectation that parents have of their students in the state schooling system.

PETER GOSS: I totally agree with that as a Principal, can you talk about the evidence behind the importance of that belief?

PATREA WALTON: The importance of every student succeeding?

PETER GOSS: The importance of the belief and the attitude and the approach towards that?

PATREA WALTON: Well it's fundamental I believe in every schooling system. We have the absolute privilege in Queensland to work with our colleagues in the Catholic sector and the independent sector and we do that around a range of areas to the extent that resources that were developed for state schooling teachers, which was the "what" around the implementation of the Australian curriculum, was

shared with the Catholic sector and independent sector. The development of the "what" enabled teachers and communities of teachers to focus on the "how" which is targeted teaching.

PETER GOSS: So in some ways then these are "our" kids. Then can you talk briefly on why are these concepts a priority for the Department at this time?

PATREA WALTON: Well, if looking at national performance measures from 2008 to 2015 we have been on a sustained trajectory of improvement. It comes as no surprise to people in the audience here that back in 2008 when NAPLAN testing first occurred that the performance in Queensland was not as we had expected. So there was a state level of expectation, there was a system level of expectation, there was a school level of expectation, and also a community level of expectation around improvement, so how will we improve school performance? And I would say that in the early days of that journey we may have made one step forward, two steps back, but certainly we have refined processes using research-based evidence to inform strategy and to ensure that the enabling conditions are in place for schools to implement that strategy.

PETER GOSS: Right, so the need to have improvement and then the elements or the evidence have come together that this is now fairly central?

PATREA WALTON: Absolutely, it is a high priority in the state schooling system, but it cannot be a high priority in isolation.

PETER GOSS: Right. David, any general comments, why is targeted teaching a priority for the Brisbane Catholic Diocese?

DAVID GREIG: It certainly is a priority for us. I feel that our motivation at this stage has really been brought about because we've been reflecting on the stories of our learners and you've alluded to the fact that across Australia we've got students in schools, in pockets of schools who are moving forward, but in each and every one of our schools we know that we've got students who are not. Some are, some are not, and we recognise that that's a fact but we don't feel that that's good enough. As Patrea has indicated, we want each of our students to be progressing with their learning. So we were charged with actually going and looking at what's happening in other parts of the world, looking at the research behind effective teaching, and actually putting forward a proposal to strategically develop the skillset of our teachers and, in turn, the success of our students.

I suppose the other thing that I'd like to say there is that that hasn't happened in a vacuum. That's happened because there's been leadership from the system to say we need to strategize around how we're going to bring about change, and that's been an extremely important element to where we have come to over these past couple of years.

PETER GOSS: That I think is a great place to move on to the next part of what does targeted teaching look like in practice, but I think it's fantastic to hear a consistent theme across all sectors of the importance of it, the evidence base behind it, and then the need to think carefully about how to implement in practice. The fact that we've known about these ideas for a long time but they're not uniform suggests that they're not easy. So I'm going to hand back to Peter and ask how is Ipswich Girls' Grammar turning its vision of personalised learning from a plan into practice?

PETER BRITTON: We've got two major planks to our personalised learning objective. The first plank deals with one-to-one, so getting to know the students on a one-to-one basis.

So what we have is a system in place in the school where every student from Grade 7 through to 12 has a one-to-one interview with a senior staff member at least three times a year and discussions that occur in that 20-25 minute interview are focused on learning outcomes data, which I'll talk to you about in a second, it's focused on involvement in sports, the arts, community service, personal and social development. The outcomes of that discussion with the senior staff member are then written up into two or three objectives that are agreed to by the student and the staff member, and the parents are welcome to attend the interviews as well, and then those objectives form the goals for the next quarter, for the next term. Those objectives are also distributed to the wider staff so that they now that Mary Smith's objectives are whatever they might be and then there are discussions held at various department levels about how the staff can help Mary Smith achieve those objectives.

On the data side of things, when students come into the school we administer a suite of tests so that we develop a personal academic profile for every student and that personal academic profile has data that we use from a couple of tests from the Australian Council of Educational Research, it has their NAPLAN data, it has any sort of subject performances like internal assessment. We use those three sources to triangulate the data to try and draw conclusions based on literacy or numeracy or whatever we're looking at in terms of the academic profile of that student there. So those things all come together and then what happens is that student is monitored over the course of the quarter and then they come back and we do it all again. So we try and track their progress throughout the course of the time that they're at Ipswich Girls' Grammar or in the junior school. But it's not solely related to that, the other part of the coin at our school is about quality teaching and that's the second plank to our personal learning program.

The way that we aim to achieve quality teaching at the school is that we have established what's called Quality Teaching Teams. There are four teams in the school and each team consists of a combination of teachers from Prep to Year 12 across different subject areas and there is a set of teachers, what we call our Leading Teachers, and they are our experts in pedagogy within the school, there are eight of those, there are two allocated to each team. And every fortnight the Teaching Teams meet and they discuss an element of effective pedagogy within these teams and talk about how it operates at different year levels across different subject areas. Then what we do from there is the teachers take it away to either their academic disciplines or down into the junior school and then they're expected to implement it to try and try out those principles with that. The second part of that is we have a performance review process in the school where classroom observations feed into performance review, we also have student surveys, and teachers bring to performance review meetings evidence of how they're using the data to improve learning. We've found that that process there has been productive in improving learning outcomes.

PETER GOSS: So what's the feedback and the impact from the students and the teachers?

PETER BRITTON: I'm very, very fortunate that at my school I have a wonderful set of teachers. I've never met a teacher that wants to be a bad teacher. I've always met teachers that want to be good teachers and what they want to know is, "Tell me how I'm going. Give me some feedback, tell me what I'm doing well and tell me what sort of areas I want to improve". Now whether that comes from

the Principal or the Deputy Principal or their peers, we encourage peers to do what's called walk-throughs or VOTS - the Deputy Principal came up with the acronym and it means Visiting Other Teachers in classrooms or something like that. The thing is we encourage the essence of professional community to encourage professional discussion. Back in the mid '90s the school embraced Dimensions of Learning through Mazarno and then we've evolved now into the Art & Science of Teaching, and that's the framework along with Madeline Hunter's model that we're trying to put in place in the school. So that forms the centre of our professional discussions.

Common language that we talk. So if we talk about complex reasoning or we talk about proficiency scales or we talk about anything like that, they're the enablers that help us move through. I'll never forget the time when I had an opportunity with a group of people to go back and do some research on what would be a school-wide effective learning and teaching model that we could put across Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. We had a team of teachers and we researched something like 30, 35 different learning and teaching theories and we set up a set of criteria that we were going to evaluate each one of these theories against and we eventually came to a model. I remember we were all very proud of our work and those sorts of things and the Principal asked us to present our findings to the staff. We went into the meeting and we spoke about particular principles, we were talking about constructivism and we said, "How many people do constructivism?" As soon as we asked that question every hand in the room went up and as soon as we saw that we knew we had a problem and the problem was the understanding of it. What does that actually mean and how do we interpret that and how do we put that into place within the classroom?

That became our objective then it was how do we operationalise these theories, how do we turn this theory into practice so that when the teacher stands in front of the students on a daily basis they could actually put in process some techniques.

PETER GOSS: Right, because it's not having the data. You talked about having the data that gives you a broad, rich and deep picture of each student, but if that sits on the shelf or in a spreadsheet nothing changes. It's about happening in the classroom. David, maybe I could toss to you on that, anything that you want to add to keeping at the level of what does this look like in the classroom and then go to the more challenging question maybe of how to do this at scale?

DAVID GREIG: Sure. There are a couple of points there. One, and just started to touch on it, around the teachers collaborating around the practice, but I think also collaborating around the student data. One of the strategies that we've been trying to do this year is to actually encourage conversations around student data. So rather than having it hidden in spreadsheets or having it hidden in someone's laptop, to actually make it visible and encourage those corridor conversations. So schools across the board have been finding interesting places to actually put up data walls that are identifying the achievement of students but also tracking the progress of those same students. And the stories we continually hear are that there are energising conversations amongst teachers who are starting to actually take that responsibility for a range of students, not just the ones that they're focusing on, but they're actually starting to look more broadly across whole cohorts and across the school community picking patterns. What's happening for this group of students? What's happened with this individual student? What do we do about moving everyone forward at a faster rate, because we don't feel as though we're necessarily moving at the rate that we want to? So that's one area at the teacher level.

I think at the student level the thing that is really giving a lot of energy in schools is this increasing level of conversation by students about their learning. We've been working with John Hattie and the Cognition team for the past three years and trying to really develop a strong sense of the language of learning shared across our schools and what we're finding is increasing levels of sophistication. Students themselves right down to Prep are talking about what their learning intentions and success criteria are; what they're going to do when they get stuck, who they can go to; and what their next learning goal is going to be and how they're going to get there. The energy that's coming from both students and teachers is something that's actually driving a greater level of engagement. As a system that's nine months into this strategy, we're finding that it's actually lifting the engagement across the board and it's giving us heart to keep doing what we're doing.

That's a little bit contrary to – and I was talking to Peter before this and I just want to sneak this one in here, formal external reviews for our schools each five years as non-government schools have got, and one of the observations that a few of us who've been involved in those have had is that when it comes to that portion of the review where schools are expected to demonstrate how they view student data to actually inform their future planning and teaching practice what we get invariably is a large list of test instruments that have been used and demonstrations of how it's been stored and how it's available. However, when we push a little further and ask, "How did you use that?" we get very little conversation that actually translates what's been collected into practical changes and adaptations of the teaching program in response to the needs of the students that could be identified from that. We don't think that's good enough and so that practical activity we've got of trying to get that data out in front of the teachers and encourage those corridor conversations at least, and they're pretty powerful, they're often a lot more powerful than the formal conversations that we have in a staff meeting. We feel as though that's a way where we can just lift the conversation, lift the thinking that's going on and also the analysis that's going on around the students.

It's low tech, that's fine, but if we've got high tech repositories of data and we're not using it we might as well not have them. Our view at the moment is it's fine to go with low tech. If it's being used and it's being used in a practical way to actually move these students forward tomorrow in the classroom it's really worthwhile.

PETER GOSS: I caught a wry smile Patrea with that idea I think that schools are awash with data but what's happening, anything that you wanted to add at this classroom level? We're hearing bits about the magic and what happens tomorrow and it's really a very live thing isn't it?

PATREA WALTON: Schools have available in the state schooling system a wealth of data as well as the data that schools generate themselves and what we know from our review process, and we've recently introduced a new school review process, what we've learnt from that already is that schools that aren't performing at the highest level often have a million and one priorities and a million and one data sources and having that targeted focus on the priorities around improvement. They're trying to do many things instead of mastering a few.

PETER GOSS: Last comment on the classroom level, and I suspect we may have some more questions on this, but when we hear it talked about we hear some very consistent themes. I'm hearing consistent themes here and I've seen it in practice and it's easy to say that teachers understand there's a spread and they understand that they need to deal with it. But when the information is put in

a way that's really visible – so I saw another Catholic school in Sydney using the same data walls that David was talking about and actually putting up on the wall starting from who are the kids at Prep level, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, every year level had their own colour code. Every teacher knew that there was a spread of achievement, of course they did, every teacher's known that forever. When they put that up and they looked at the Year 3 children they realised that there was a Year 3 child who was still operating at a Prep level in mathematics, in counting; there were two Year 3 children who were operating at a Year 6 level, which is doing relatively advanced fractions; and they got shocked. They said, "We knew that we had a spread, but we never knew that it was this big" and they then have a moral imperative to respond to it.

So I add that in to give the impression that although there is much that we do know, to really bring the pieces together and to make that data used is not happening in every place. So that then I think leads onto the question of how do we embed these ideas into every classroom in Australia so that every student is learning at the right level and each year when they go to school they get picked up from where they are and moved as far forward by the end of the year in that broad sense? Patrea, how far do we have to go to embed this in every school across Australia and in your system? Where are we at?

PATREA WALTON: Well, I think there are four elements to that. I think you need to have the policy around that, you need to have the tools, you need to have the tools for schools to develop the schools, you need to actually have appropriate resourcing at the school level, and you also need the review, so is it happening?

Can I take that to another level, there needs to be a clear line of sight. So when I talked about policy, we've all seen great policies over the years that have filled up bottom drawers of desks or gathered a lot of dust on shelving in Principals' offices. So it's about the policy which is the direction that is taken, and the policy that we have in the state schooling in Queensland is the State Schooling Strategy, that's the policy leader. The tools, so we have developed for use in schools a suite of materials, a suite of tools and some of those are the early start tools that were developed with ACER (Australian Council of Educational Research) which allows schools to determine at what level students are on entry into Prep around literacy and numeracy, at the end of Year 1, at the end of Year 2. We also don't create everything ourselves as a system, we're also good shoppers so we look to see what is working well, what tools are working well in other jurisdictions and negotiate to get those tools. So from a system level it's around what we make clear as a priority and improving the quality of instruction, improving the precision of teaching in each and every classroom in state schools is an extraordinarily high priority, but there has to be actions under that.

So the centre also develops tools, part of that policy is about having a pedagogical framework, but we don't mandate the framework. What we've learnt and I would say to my colleagues from the other systems, mandating something is death. It's not about mandating because when you mandate something you simply get compliance. So it's around I think going to Daniel Pink's work about that intrinsic motivation that teachers have that they want to develop that absolute mastery. So you ensure that you have the enabling conditions and support for teachers to do that, so the centre provides resources, they provide master teachers, they provide additional supports for Principals around school improvement, and they provide induction support for first year teachers. So from a systemic point of view we have policy, we have tools and then there's the resourcing. Something which has just

gone out, every state school Principal has received their additional Investing for Success funding to the tune of $240 million additional funding going into state schools for 2016 and that is all focused on school improvement. But schools have to say what's the problem, how are we going to improve it, how are we going to fund it, what's the research evidence around the strategy that the school is going to employ, and how will we know if we've been successful?

There's also the accountability and review aspect of all of that from a systems perspective and that comes from not only the reviews, similar to what you were referring to in the Catholic system, but also we have regional directors that visit schools regularly as well as I visit schools. So what I look for when I visit schools, I look to see is there a clear line of sight from the policy of improving the quality of instruction to what is occurring in the schools in classrooms?

PETER GOSS: Thank you. I'm going to throw to David to get a perspective of how a Catholic system is going through this and then come back to you Peter, because from the outside it's easy to believe that you might be having to do this alone, maybe that's not true, but to hear some of the system level thoughts. David, what are you seeing as the barriers and then what are you trying to do to overcome them and get a more consistent system approach to this teaching?

DAVID GREIG: There are five areas that I'd like to address. Apologies to my colleagues in the room, but in my office one day I picked up a permanent marker and went to a wall which we use as a massive whiteboard and I used the permanent marker to actually write down four headings. It was taken from our literacy position that we'd developed a few years ago and it was only some weeks later when I realised that it hadn't been rubbed out, no-one had bothered to rub that out and that it was actually there in permanent ink. But we kept coming back to it and it proved to be quite prophetic because as the year has progressed we've looked at that, it's been staring at us from the wall in our shared office, and we've realised that there's something about it that we must keep in mind with all of this work that we're doing with the implementation of our strategy.

Patrea and I have not colluded prior to this, but I'd like you to actively listen and look for the connection between what she has just proposed and what I'm proposing. My belief is that without these being present we're doomed to face significant challenges. So we do see that they're important for success and that when we don't have them the conditions are there such that things start to fall apart. In fact, as we've reflected on our schools' stories this year we've started to use these as a bit of a test to say do these give us an indication as to what's missing within the dynamics of a particular school or the circumstances of a particular school or the support that that school is getting from our central office personnel? So the first one is ineffective leadership at any level, whether it be leadership at the system level or at the school level, and the ineffectiveness is particularly around the ineffectiveness to focus direction and effort. We really feel that, for our schools in particular but at a system level, if we don't have that focused direction and effort we'll all be left floundering.

The second one is the failure to build capacity and the use of effective teaching practices. There are two parts to this, that if we don't have systemic professional learning and coaching or if we actually don't choose effective practices in the first place, that we go with practices which we know don't work. Why do we keep rehashing practices which don't work? So it's really important that we know what practices work or have the best chance of succeeding and we make sure that we provide the professional learning and the coaching so that they can be embedded into the teaching practice. The

third area is inadequate tools, both low tech and high tech, that allow us to monitor progress of students or the lack of skills in the use of those tools to monitor progress against the appropriate benchmarks. I add another one in there, it's not just progress of students, but I think it's also our progress in actually building the professional capacity of our office personnel who support our schools and, in turn, our teaching staff within our schools who are delivering the programs. We need to be monitoring both levels: student progress and the progress of us as adult learners who are passing this on for the benefit of the students.

That's three and the fourth one is inadequate resourcing which impacts negatively on professional learning which we believe really needs to be delivered locally as much as possible. That's the feedback we're getting, we're seeing that it's the professional learning that's getting the most bang for our buck and the most heightened levels of engagement from our schools. Also inadequate resourcing that means that we don't have the appropriate data systems, monitoring tools and curriculum resources which detail learning progressions. This is something that hasn't come up so far, but as a system we've looked at what's available to us from the Australian curriculum and our teachers are continually providing feedback to suggest that the progressions from year to year that occur within the Australian curriculum are not fine-tuned enough to actually provide the practical assistance to a class teacher with a class in front of them through a year. So we're investing in trying to look at what are the more detailed progressions that students work their way through over the course of a year, in actual fact over the course of their schooling?

We've moved then from not just providing that to the teachers, but a number of the trial schools where we're using these we're placing them in the hands of the students themselves and we're finding extraordinary take-up by the students right down into the lower school who are actually identifying, "I know that I have mastered this". That forms the focus of conversations with teachers and they can gradually see the various concepts that they need to develop over the year and they start to monitor their own progress. The last point which isn't on the wall – those four were on the wall, so leadership, building capacity and practice, monitoring progress and resourcing, they're the four we keep coming back to. We're now at the point nine months in where we've got three groups of schools across the 136/137 who are working on a program. We're now saying how do we actually move this out into every classroom? So we're now at the point of realising we need additional support around effective change process to accelerate the rollout from those that we've moved into slowly this year to ensure for the sake of every student that next year as many as possible have the benefit of improved teaching that we can provide.

PETER GOSS: Thank you. The underlying learning progressions was a very strong theme of our report to help teachers understand where is a student now and what do they need to learn next, but these are complicated to develop. One of the stories that horrifies me is a school that felt that it was working on its own and realised, going down this pathway, that it needed to understand the fine grain steps of learning. It's a very small primary school in my home state of Victoria who decided they would spend two years building a learning progression which is both awesome and also I find horrifying because it's a big thing as opposed to taking something off the shelf and saying, "Can we tailor it, can we adapt it, and then can we spend two years' worth of time actually putting it into practice?" So what I think I've heard and in previous discussions from both Patrea and David is that having a clear view about what excellence in teaching looks like, having mechanisms to help support that into the classroom, but, from you Patrea, not mandating so that you get compliance but enabling,

means that neither of your systems are taking the approach of letting a thousand flowers bloom. Fair comment?

PATREA WALTON: Correct.

PETER GOSS: Peter, in the independent sector are a thousand flowers blooming? How do you work as a school that is an independent school but doesn't necessarily have the same resources as a system? How do you deal in this environment and make the most effective and efficient use of what's out there?

PETER BRITTON: Well I can't speak on behalf of all the independent schools, but I'll speak on behalf of my school, through partnerships. One of the greatest things I think that exists in Queensland to help independent schools is Independent Schools Queensland, through the leadership of David Robertson, Mark Newham and others. To be able to go to people when you have a problem and say, "I'm stuck" or "We're going down a particular path and we'd like a critical friend to come and work with us". We're involved in the Self-Improving Schools initiative here through Independent Schools Queensland where we have access to a very highly regarded educator and that person comes in and we're able to sit there and rollout everything that we've done in terms of our policies and procedures and say, "Well this is what we're feeling, we're feeling that the staff are feeling anxious or they're trying to grapple with these things, what do you think?" and that person there is able to reflect on our policies and procedures etc. So to have a body like Independent Schools Queensland available to support independent schools is just wonderful as far as I'm concerned.

Another partnership is through the Grattan Institute, a couple of years ago when we were partway through our process, and still are a long way from our endpoint, so my stories are here are not to say that we are an exemplar but certainly to share our experiences, was time. How do we give our teachers time in order to be able to meet to analyse data, to have those professional discussions? We were selected as part of a study and the Grattan Institute came up and sent a team of people up and worked in our school and they interviewed a whole stack of people across the staff and then wrote a report and was able to say, "If you do this and you do this and you do this and you do this, then the thing is that you can find time in your daily operations, annual operations of the school to give back periods to your teachers where they can focus on data analysis to achieve targeted teaching or personalised learning or quality teaching". So we draw on those sorts of partnerships there.

We also draw very heavily on the research because, as my colleagues have said, it's very, very important for a Principal or a leadership team to be able to describe to the staff what's the school's goals, to have that vision, to have that mission in terms of how we're going to achieve the goals, but not make motherhood statements. To be able to take those words and every one of those words in the vision and mission statement, to be able to cascade those words down from a high level vision and mission so that every staff member knows how they can contribute to the vision and the mission of the school, right from the Deputy Principal to the Facilities Manager to the person who cleans the classrooms and all those, so that they know what their role is in order to achieve the vision and the mission. We make mistakes, we go along the lines and we write these policy documents and these procedural documents about how we're going to do performance reviews and when we put them in place we think wow, this is bigger than Ben Hur. So we try and refine them as we go along.

We're about four, four and a half years through the process at the moment and we've still got a way to go. We're not the beacon, we're certainly just on the journey and we're on the journey with independent schools, we're on the journey with the Grattan Institute and, by the sounds of it, we're on the journey with the state school system, Education Queensland, and also too the Cath Ed and everybody else and probably every teacher that's trying to do their very best to provide the best learning for every student in their classroom.

PETER GOSS: Patrea?

PATREA WALTON: Peter, could I suggest that one thing terrific about schooling in Queensland is the great relationship that the Catholic sector, the state sector and the independent sector have here in Queensland. So we don't operate as silos in this state, we share resources, we share strategy and we do work together to ensure schooling in Queensland enables every young Queenslander, whether you're in the Catholic system, whether you're in the state schooling system, whether you're in the independent system, for every student in Queensland to progress and succeed and to become an active and responsible citizens. So there is a great deal at the system level and at the regional level and at the school level around collegiality and sharing. Resources we develop in state schooling we provide to the Catholic and independent sectors and we get advice from the Catholic and independent sectors around those resources, and I think that's a terrific attitude and feel in schooling in Queensland that I'm not aware is at the same level across the country.

PETER GOSS: That's tremendous and it seems as though you share some of the same battle scars of some of these challenges as well, because they're not easy. Change is not easy for teachers. I'm getting ready to go to the audience, I'd like just a quick snapshot because I've heard a lot about some of the policies and some of the conditions that you need to have and the use of evidence, but to give a feel for does this really look different when it's working? Is this just doing the same thing a little bit better or is this something actually when it's really working a little different? Have you each got maybe just a brief anecdote that captures the essence of what happens when all the pieces come together, that data is there but is just being used for teaching, that the teachers are working together? Anything to share?

DAVID GREIG: We put on a two-day workshop for our schools who came together with Lyn Sharratt back in February. At the end of the two pretty intense days at a quarter to four on a Friday afternoon a school team that had to drive 300km back to their community that afternoon approached Lyn and said, "We'd like to talk through a few things we're still struggling with". And she looked at me and she looked at the clock and she thought, "How much time do these people have, how much time do I have at the end of two full days?" She kept some contact up and one of our consultants has really nailed the support for that school. When she came back in August and worked with the same cohort and had seen some of the work that they'd done during the intervening period. It's a school that services a really needy community and it's a school that's not had high levels of focus in the work that they've done, but they were able to articulate so clearly what it was that they have started to do for the first time and they could articulate the impact it was having on individual students and the fact that it was bringing a group of teachers who were wondering which way do we go, it started to bring them together in knowing this is the direction we need to be moving in together. So rather than operating individually or in pairs or something, as a whole staff they just seem to have transformed.

It's still tough work, there's still a long way to go to make up the educational disadvantage that the students in that school have been in, but it really reinforced for us that for a school that appeared to be unsure as to where to go after two pretty intense days they put the appropriate level of support and goodwill and resolve on behalf of that school community that extraordinary changes can take place in even a short time.

PATREA WALTON: You know it's working in a school, you feel the electricity when you walk into the school, and colleagues that have been to a lot of schools you know it. You can feel that passion and electricity and you know when teachers are really focused on targeted teaching when the Principal's there with them, all the support staff are there with them, and they don't talk about "my class". They talk about the individual students improving and when you go to a school they want information from you about how can they do this better. They draw you to the data wall and they expect that you will be provide some guidance and assistance to go that next step. The enthusiasm, the passion is there and I go back to my opening comments. It's that absolute belief that every student can succeed and their job is to make it happen.

PETER BRITTON: I suppose for me it's showing the teachers the fruits of their labours. Like when we analyse our results at the end of the year, to see or sense the happiness or the sense of reward when we're showing continuous improvement in academic outcomes and the teachers and myself get buoyed by that because what it's doing is affirming that all of this hard work that they've put in over the course of the previous 12 months is actually improving learning outcomes. So they're actually seeing it, they're seeing the results of their labours and that in itself is a self-motivating tool to say, "You know, actually what we're doing here is actually working". And when we see that, when we see the data track in the direction that we want it to go, that motivates you to try and do a little bit more and you might make another two or three decisions around that. And who knows, one or two of those might be right, the other one might be wrong, but that's what we get paid for in my view.

We are professional people. We can get anybody – and I say this very generally – to put together a graph, but in my view it's the teachers' job, it's my job as a Principal, my school leadership's job is to analyse that data. But even one step further than that, it's to make professional decisions about intervention programs that are going to lead to change for Mary-Jane and Billie-Jo and all of those sorts of things. And when the students come into the one-to-one interviews and they say, "Well I tried this thing and it really, really worked, it's fabulous, thank you very much and how do I do all that?" and you get the other ones where they come and it hasn't worked, so what we try and do there is, "Okay, well we know that that particular strategy didn't work". And on the teaching side of it there's an anecdote that a maths teacher shared to me where one of the first things we tried to do in these Quality Teaching Teams was talk about setting objectives. Now, we said that okay, our first goal is we want to be able to go into a classroom and we want to be able to know where the lesson is going and we said that okay, what we're going to do at my school is on a board or a slide or whatever you have is going to be at the beginning of the lesson the objectives in the lesson. I'm going to evaluate this or this, whatever it might be, analyse that.

We tried that and it was happening across the school and one of the maths teachers came back with an anecdote and said that one of her Grade 11 or 12 students said to her, "What's this thing going on where everybody's putting these objectives on the board? What's that, that's never happened before?" They had a discussion about the reasons why we were doing this because you were talking

before about students understanding learning, and that's certainly the case. It involves the students in the language of learning. Anyway, they talked about that and then the teacher said, "Would you like me to stop putting the objectives on the board?" and they said, "Oh yeah, it's just a fad, it's just a thing, we'll forget about that". So the teacher stopped doing it for a couple of lessons and then almost to the person, "No, no, no, no, put the objectives back, we've got to know where we're going in terms of the lesson". So just that little anecdote there, just that professional development that we had in these Quality Teaching Teams about the importance of stating objectives at the front end of a lesson has made a difference in terms of the students understanding the direction of the lesson, it helps the teacher shape the lesson and those sorts of things. So something that I thought was pretty small turned out to be a big win in relation to improving learning and teaching.

PETER GOSS: Thank you and I ask for those because having written this report some of the response that I get is this is about turning teachers into robots and using data and trying to get more precise. The responses I just heard are anything but. I think this is freeing up and raising the professionalism. Audience, you've been very patient, thank you for your time, now it is over to you. There will be more questions always than there is time for, so whoever gets in first guarantees that their question will be answered. We have a wonderful panel here, we have another 25 minutes and please, who would like to start?

AUDIENCE: Like many lower CS complex schools we have students with a huge range of ability levels, right from children who really struggle to children who are very bright. In the course of reading the report a few days ago I noticed there were some comments that were fairly vociferous in criticism around any class groupings which would move to reduce the amount of differentiation required by engineering the groups so that brighter kids were grouped together, struggling kids were grouped together. Could you comment further on that because I'm interested in that?

PETER GOSS: Yes, so the language here is really important. By way of illustration, I come from a British educational system where from the age of ten there were five classes and there was the bright class and there was the dumb class and never the twain shall meet. So the language that I used in the report is about that type of streaming where it's across the board and where there is little opportunity to change. Almost everything in education works to the extent that kids know more afterwards than they do before on average. That form of streaming is one of the few things that actually has a negative impact on average. If you ask John Hattie, it's marginally positive. The Australian Teaching & Learning Toolkit says it's negative. It may help the more advanced students, but it really stigmatises the less advanced. So that is a real challenge. We're left with the reality that there is a very, very wide range. Flexible grouping around what's the particular task today can really help and I think the evidence around that is very positive and it's also very practical.

What we saw in a secondary school that is dealing with this, they had a lot of refugee kids who'd never been to primary school so they had a massive range in mathematics. They dealt with this in two ways, one was by pre-preparing materials. As an illustration, the task we saw was on the surface area of three-dimensional objects but they would have a box which when you fold it out is squares and rectangles and you put gridlines on - that's a Year 3 task – and a cylinder folded out you get a rectangle and two circles not drawn to scale – that's about a Year 8/Year 9 task. That whole class was doing the same task, but kids on that day got to choose which one of these do I want to do and the teachers would nudge them up and down. So they had pre-prepared materials and then they

chose how to deal with the students. The second thing that they did and a number of other schools that we've seen is that they grouped classes together for some of those differentiated lessons so that instead of one adult head having eight year levels worth of grouping in there, they had three adult heads with 50 kids and still eight year levels worth of grouping. So each adult head could be dealing with a more moderate range, but then the next day when you're doing a counting task rather than a shape task then a kid might be stronger in that and they would move up that way. So it's not stigmatising, it's getting in on the right level and it's constantly focusing each child on can I actually do this task, am I learning from it?

They did a fascinating thing as well to help reinforce that. They cross-checked their learning using a test called On Demand and they did that twice a year. After the second of those they put up a named league table on the wall of all the students, a bit horrifying. Their named league table was which students had made the most progress from six months before. It wasn't at all about where they were at. Yes, that's important, achievement matters, there is no doubt, but they had suddenly students who felt, "I've never been a good maths learner" actually, if they work hard, can suddenly feel that, "I'm at the top". So there's a mindset thing but then some very practical pieces. Does anyone want to add setting or streaming versus grouping? These are the real practicalities of having to deal with it.

AUDIENCE: One question that's in my mind is the extent to which what's been said tonight is actually code for NAPLAN scores. Can I just background that with two points, one is, for example, you might construct a data wall that says that a kid is at this level or that level. That doesn't mean that that kid is at this level or that level, it just means that the test that you happened to have run puts them at that point and there are many bad tests out there. The other thing I would say is I think maths and English is problematic anyway, but if you go anywhere else in the curriculum, science, music, physical education, there is nobody in the world who can answer the question how do we place a child, how do we know where they are at now and how do we measure or know what resources they bring and what will be the next thing that moves that child forward?

I think a lot of the things that are said about mathematics and English are problematic anyway, but outside of those areas of the curriculum I have never heard of anybody proposing a model that says we can know where a child is, for example, in science and we know what the next thing is. What makes a child good at science is a very mysterious and complicated thing and if we go down the path that we can sort of categorise them and say, "Here's where they are and this is what they need to do" then we have already started to pigeonhole kids.

PETER GOSS: Thank you for the question. There are two quite distinct questions in there, so let's hold that second one, which is a deeply important one, and deal with the first one, is this code for NAPLAN and the quite right observation that all tests are flawed. Panel members, who would like to reply?

PATREA WALTON: The conversations that I've had today haven't been code for NAPLAN, although I think I'm probably the only one that mentioned NAPLAN. But when those 2008 results came in in Queensland and when we saw that I think just about in all the test areas we all heaved a sigh of relief for another territory in Australia otherwise we would have been eighth. So that was a wakeup call for educators in Queensland, there's no doubt about that. Is it the driver for improvement? The driver for improvement in schools is around individual student performance. School performance is what is

discussed with Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Principals and colleagues around how can we improve school performance, but you can't just improve school performance using a quick fix or using NAPLAN. NAPLAN doesn't do that for you.

What schools do do was look at where the student is at and what can be done to support that improvement. So they will look at that there's a stable and viable curriculum in the school so that teachers know what and how and students need to know what to know and what to do. So a stable and viable curriculum is essentially. Then it goes to the next phase about implementing that curriculum, so where are students at? So that can be the pre-test phase or going back to if the students progress from Year 2 to Year 3, looking at – and we have a terrific tool in state schooling, the One School Tool, which provides information to teachers for the next years' cohort. So there's pre-unit information, then teachers teach, they will provide feedback, they do post-testing, they will then moderate, which is an absolute essential around student reporting and levels, and then that adapting teaching based on that cohort and then needs of students in that school. So you can take away literacy and numeracy, it applies to the subject areas that exist in school land.

So I'm saying to you no, it's not code for NAPLAN. NAPLAN is around providing advice to systems, it provides advice to schools on test instruments that are provided, a point in time test, and there are also reports that go to individual students. But NAPLAN does not run state schooling.

PETER BRITTON: I would endorse that, it's certainly not code for NAPLAN from my point of view. We rely on researchers to develop tests that can help us understand where students are. So that's not our domain, in our domain we use the tests that are developed for us. We need tests, we need the researchers to give us tests that can help us define where the students are and at the moment there are a variety of tests around so we use that. We just don't say, "Well, we're not going to use any tests". We use a specific test from the ACER or whatever else, whether it's the NAPLAN data. It's the NAPLAN data that helps us work out where students are in literacy and numeracy along with other tests that we use in order to do that. So it's all about where the students are at and we use the tests, whatever tests they are, as a tool to try and help describe that.

PETER GOSS: Is it just a test? Is it always a test, because there is a risk of over-testing?

PETER BRITTON: No, absolutely not.

PATREA WALTON: No, it's observations.

PETER BRITTON: Like in our junior school you've got all the observations that take place there, so it's not just about tests.

PETER GOSS: So we talk about the right information in the right hands at the right time, and the right hands are the hands of a teacher and it has to be information that the teacher trusts. I'm going to pick up David - and we'll close off the NAPLAN bit and get to your other point, which is very useful and important - what would you say to a school that said, "We're doing targeted teaching and then we got our NAPLAN results and we were shocked and surprised"? What would that mean to you?

DAVID GREIG: I think that there'd be a number of reasons why that would be the case. The school could quite easily have undertaken targeted teaching but, given the nature of the NAPLAN test itself,

given the preparation that went into it, that the results didn't really reflect the nature of the curriculum that the students had been exposed to through that period.

PETER GOSS: Right. Which one would you take if you had a school that was doing this really well? I would take the internal one. The schools that I've seen that are doing this best, NAPLAN rolls around and it's like, "Oh, okay, NAPLAN time. One practice test, get familiar with it. Of course we'll analyse it, but if it tells us anything particularly new that suggests to us and the teachers that I've seen that we don't understand our students well enough". So I would strongly push - I got myself in trouble with this in the report, there's a nice little header in there saying, "NAPLAN alone is not the answer". The original version of that heading was "NAPLAN is not the answer" because I don't think it is. No, it does a different function. Patrea, you described it beautifully, it does this function. Information in the hands of teachers is different.

The second part, how broadly can this be done? So I'll throw on the table that in Victoria they are working now to develop longitudinal progression tests for creative and critical thinking. Patrick Griffin at the University of Melbourne has done that for collaborative problem solving and that's going to be used in PISA testing. These are skills-based things, it's different for content, but I challenge the notion that people are not thinking about what are the learning progressions in other areas around skills, but I'd be interested to hear also from other panel members. It's not applicable for everything right, I'm not trying to pretend that it is, but where there are skills then it's valuable to progress them. How broadly can we push that because we don't want to narrow the curriculum down I think would be partly behind your question, how broadly can we push these?

PATREA WALTON: Well the Australian curriculum has an achievement standard for starters for content areas which provides a great guide for schools and I think one of the elements that I think you touched on before was around knowing what good looks like, whether it's in a mathematics class, an English class, a history class or whatever. Knowing what good looks like and then having the appropriate supports in the school to assist teachers to become great in that particular subject area. So that's the coaching that I think either we provide systemically or schools are providing coaching support for teachers around making sure that teachers are able to provide the best support they can for individual students in that particular class to achieve appropriately.

PETER GOSS: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: My question relates to how you plan for and accommodate when you need to put in interventions when the data tells you that the student isn't progressing at the rate they should or isn't meeting the standard. You have a curriculum and you need to keep on going, what do you do to help those students that need that intervention? How do you accommodate that in your timetabling, planning etc.?

PETER GOSS: As the teachers in the room think about their answers, our argument would be let's have as many of the students covered by the targeted teaching as possible and then were we need additional intervention support let's take the scarce and valuable resources there and use that when needed. How to deal with those practicalities, David?

DAVID GREIG: The first step is once it's identified that a student's not progressing is to question why isn't the student progressing? The major thing that's occurring for that student is that we're actually

teaching that student, so the question needs to be back to the teacher is my teaching effective? And perhaps the teacher on reflection continues to look at different ways of addressing the needs of that student and it comes to the point where they realise that I don't have the answers. So before we actually say that the blockage or the issue for the student warrants some formal intervention elsewhere, the teacher in the first place, just go and check out from their knowledgeable peers is there something about my teaching that may be holding this student back? We're attempting to set up a process across our system where we ask our teachers to first of all reflect on their own practice and then to work with peers and to try the advice of peers as they work with that student to move them along.

If at the end of that fairly intensive investigation that goes on over a reasonable period of time the student is still not learning despite the group feeling as though the nature of the teaching it should be having the impact, that's when we need to look at an intervention that's appropriate to the diagnosed needs of that student, whatever they might be. So at that point we'd be looking at bringing in others who may be able to assist with diagnosing the specific learning needs of that student at the time.

PATREA WALTON: Can I take that up to a system level, because I think it's a terrific question. In years gone by we distributed resources to schools based on formulas, "You will get this, you will get this, you'll get half an FTE in this and 0.1 of an FTE in this, you'll get 50c here, you'll get a couple of dollars here, but you must spend it on here, you must do it, you must do it". Then to make matters worse we made them report on every one of those single things and we also didn't give it directly to schools, we said to Regional Directors, "You know better than anybody else, you distribute it to schools as whatever methodology you want". So from a systems point of view we've turned that on its head and provided the resourcing directly to schools and we've bundled up the resourcing and provided that directly to schools and said to schools, "You use these resources, these FTEs, these dollars the way you see fit to ensure every student's succeeding".

So in the example that you gave there, I described a process earlier about pre-test, teach, post-test, moderation, feedback. The adapting part of it is one where if additional resources were required maybe it's another teacher in that classroom. We freed up from a system level that absolute mandating around how you must use that resource. We've increased local decision making to make the best decisions at the local level for schools on how to support student improvement. So in that case that would be a decision, the teacher would speak to either the head of department, the head of curriculum, the Deputy Principal, that community of learners as to how to best support that student that is still not meeting the targets or the goals or what is expected of that student in the classroom. So from a system perspective that's been a significant change in state schooling, to put the local decision making around meeting the needs of individual students at the school level.

PETER GOSS: So have a view on good ways of doing it and then the resources and trust in the hands of the people closest. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: I come from a BCE perspective and I know we're doing some great things with Delta and with Visible Learning and the resourcing and the tools, from my perspective, are quite good at the moment, especially the resourcing for leaders and for those who are initiating programs back in schools. You might have so many teachers in a high school and they teach 160 to 180 students, how do we resource well those teachers who are, at the end of the day, the ones who are implementing it

all properly, how do we resource them well to be able to have that time to talk to each other, sit down and target individual students?

PETER GOSS: It's one we could spend a long time on. Peter? It's at the heart of it.

PETER BRITTON: Yes. This is the work that the Grattan Institute was able to help us with. They came into the school and had a look at the way we were doing it and they said the way that we were using our teaching staff to do particular duties, the way that we were using them to supervise particular events around the school, whether it was the staffing of sporting events or whatever it might be, and also too they said very clearly that if you value this you need to be able to give the teachers back the time in order to do it. And we do value it, so in our timetable we have given one period per week that is not timetabled out of their actual load to give back and that period there is intended for the teachers to have a little bit of extra time in order to meet, to sit down and discuss all those sorts of things.

The way we staff our assemblies, the way we do our duties, the way that we do our staffing at particular events, whether it's an athletics carnival or something like that, we've tried to then use that time or use the human resource in order to do those things, that supervision or the running of events, a lot more efficiently in order to give the teachers back the time. We used to have briefing in the morning, so we've cut back on the number of briefings that we've had in the morning and that's 15 minutes, but 15 minutes each week for 38, 40 weeks of the year adds up. The Grattan Institute did a calculation for us on the number of periods that we would need to give back to the staff in order to give them the time to do that work. So certainly looking very, very hard and I think if a school is committed to this, if a school says, "This is what we've got to do" then the school has got to resource the teachers in order to do that, absolutely.

PETER GOSS: And I think likewise with the system, what we saw in schools that were some years down the journey is that yes, we need all of those things, absolutely, and consistent time to discuss the data. But as they got used to it having a common language saved some time; knowing which tests you're going to use saved some time; having to create fewer materials anew because you're building up a bank based on a common agreed progression of learning saved some time. Then there were some interesting ones. The teachers in Year 1 said, "We used to take six or seven weeks at the start of every year to figure out where our kids were. Now we know by week two. We're using the same way of assessing in classroom as our predecessors and we know by week two and those kids have got an extra five or six weeks exactly on the right tasks". And the last one was behaviour issues started to melt away in many of these classes because some behaviour issues go well beyond anything to do with instruction and schools always have to deal with those and have specialised resources and we should use them. But some behaviour issues arise from kids who are not engaged on the learning and the schools doing this well melt away. So over time the nature of the teachers' role and the teachers' time resource shifted, there needs to be enough upfront investment to get over that hurdle.

A last comment on time and then I should wrap up because the audience has been very generous with theirs.

PATRA WALTON: Great question coming from a secondary teacher. I was a secondary teacher so I get it, it's a large number of students and you have typically five classes, you have them three periods a week, so that's a lot of students that you've got to deal with and then you've got playground duty, after school, you've got bus duty. I get it.

So in state schooling we provided the resourcing to schools for schools to make decisions about how to best support teachers to improve their capability and that's a key priority of the state schooling strategy. So what we see in state schools is teachers are released, so teachers maybe on Year 8 English are released together to plan, to determine what the assessment will be, what the curriculum will be, what the pre- and post-testing will be, moderate together. So the time is provided for teachers to engage in that critical and essential professional dialogue rather than trying to grab an hour after school or two hours after school or whatever. So it's creating the time for professional dialogue through that resourcing directly to school level in the state schooling system.

DAVID GREIG: This issue has come up in a number of our schools and I know that there were discussions taking place around timetabling for next year, particularly to try to get timetables to allow teachers who've got common areas of teaching to come together to collaborate. Some schools have done that already and others are starting to see that's what they need to move to in order to actually get those in at virtually no cost. I suppose you've acknowledged the funding that's gone out and I must admit that we've put all of our Great Teachers, Great Results funds into this within Catholic schools within the archdiocese. It's all gone out to schools and the Principals have received advice of those funds for next year just this week. So I'd go knocking and say how are we going to actually use this in a way so that the teachers in the classrooms are actually seeing the benefit of that?

PETER GOSS: I think that sounds like a great place to wrap up. Our panel may be kind enough to stick around for a few minutes for additional questions, my apologies for not getting to all of you. We summarise this as time, tools, training, you need trust and this needs to be done in an environment of teamwork. I think it's a really exciting time, these ideas have been around for a long time, having learning progressions, having some of the use of data available, recognising that this is still a very human activity. I am seeing in a number of places learning how to do this at scale and I think we've explored some of those issues tonight. That is important because every child in Australia irrespective of what school they go to deserves teaching that is supporting them in the very best way.

Thank you very much for spending an hour-and-a-half of your Wednesday evening listening to us talk about teaching. Thank you to the State Library, thank you to Grattan's other funders, and if you could give a final round of applause to our wonderful panel, to Peter, Patrea and David.

END OF RECORDING