Early Action for Success
Information for schools
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Introduction

A Ministerial Advisory Group, led by Dr Boston AO, was established in June 2011 to provide the Minister for Education with expert advice on the steps to be taken to support the delivery of the state government’s Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.

During 2011 the Advisory Group gathered information on how the literacy and numeracy needs of students in NSW were being addressed and submitted its report to the Minister for Education on the outcomes of consultation in March 2012.

On 15 March 2012, the Minister announced that the NSW Government had accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Group. The NSW Department of Education and Communities’ strategy to implement the recommendations of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan is Early Action for Success.

Purpose

These guidelines have been developed to support the implementation of the Early Action for Success initiative in schools.

Structure

The guidelines contain:

- background on the Early Action for Success initiative
- advice on the roles and expectations of those involved in implementing the strategy
- information for schools participating in the Early Action for Success initiative
- detail on the evaluation of the initiative.
The evidence is clear that well developed literacy and numeracy skills are essential to students’ success at school and fundamental to improving their life chances in a diverse and ever changing world.

Using the Early Action for Success strategy, the Department aims to improve students’ performance through a targeted approach in primary schools in the lowest quartile of NAPLAN performance in literacy and numeracy.

The strategy relies on high quality leadership combined with a focus on the needs of each student, early intervention and ongoing monitoring of progress in literacy and numeracy. In this way, every student at risk of not achieving expected outcomes in literacy and numeracy is identified and receives appropriate support.

A key feature of the strategy is the appointment of instructional leaders of literacy and numeracy to participating schools for a period of three years.

How does this relate to what we are doing already?

We have in place a program to identify the knowledge students bring to school. The Best Start Kindergarten assessment provides teachers with information on students’ understanding of aspects of literacy and numeracy when they start school. This information assists teachers in locating students’ understanding on the literacy and numeracy continuums and enables teachers to develop early learning programs that build on the knowledge students bring with them when they start school.

We now have a good understanding of the diversity of knowledge with which students’ commence school and a capacity to determine which aspects of that knowledge are the strongest predictors of later success. However, we need a clearer insight into the planned interventions that are provided in our schools with the highest levels of need as identified by Year 3 NAPLAN.

Identification of schools

Schools in Early Action for Success were identified using a method that included:

- an analysis of school’s performance data including Year 3 NAPLAN results and Best Start Kindergarten assessment
- an analysis of the school’s contextual characteristics including the degree of disadvantage of the schools or groups of schools, enrolment size and student demographic data
- consideration of the schools participation in national partnerships.

Targeting resources

Fifty Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy have been appointed in 2012 to schools identified as having the greatest need of additional support in the early years. The Instructional Leaders work with the school executive to determine the professional learning needs of staff to strengthen literacy and numeracy in Kindergarten to Year 2.

Use of the Literacy and Numeracy continuums will underpin the diagnostic assessment of the literacy and numeracy needs of students in Kindergarten to Year 2 and assist in identifying those students at greatest risk of not reaching minimum standards in Year 3.

Schools are provided with an additional resource in the form of an intervention allocation, equivalent to an additional full time teacher or part allocation. The intervention allocation is to support tier 2 (small groups) and tier 3 (individual) interventions in literacy and numeracy. It is designed to provide access to specific programs to meet the identified literacy and numeracy needs of the students in Kindergarten to Year 2. This allocation can be used to access specialised services such as speech pathology, or to fund personnel to deliver literacy and numeracy intervention programs.
Links to other Department strategies

*Early Action for Success* is being implemented in schools concurrently with a range of programs and initiatives aimed at improving the educational outcomes of all students. These include:

- **Local Schools, Local Decisions**: reforms to improve teaching and learning in NSW public schools by increasing the authority and flexibility of local schools to make decisions about how they deliver education to students.

- **Connected Communities**: a new approach to addressing the educational and social disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal children and young people living in a number of complex and disadvantaged communities throughout NSW. The strategy positions schools as community hubs. It broadens the influence of the community and school leadership, to play a role in the delivery of key services and in supporting children and young people from birth through schools into further training study and employment.

- **Every Student, Every School**: an initiative providing better learning and support for the 90,000 students with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs in public schools through a strong focus on professional learning and support for teachers and support staff.

- **National Partnerships on low SES School Communities and National Partnerships on Literacy and Numeracy**: these strategies are part of a joint initiative between the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments to achieve system wide innovation focused on improving the education experiences and outcomes of the State’s students, particularly those most in need of additional support.
## The Early Action for Success Strategy

### Overview of implementation

<table>
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<th><strong>Identify schools to receive additional support</strong></th>
<th>• The <em>Early Action for Success</em> strategy is designed to support schools that consistently achieve lower levels of literacy and numeracy performance.</th>
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| **Tailor support for specific school contexts**   | • A context-specific model will be developed for each targeted school to boost hands-on instructional leadership to improve literacy and numeracy learning in the K-2 years.  
• Incentives will be available to attract high quality Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy in areas of need. |
| **Increase instructional leadership capacity**    | • Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy will provide high quality professional learning to build staff capacity and drive improvement in students’ literacy and numeracy performance.  
• Resources, including additional personnel, will be coordinated and strategically targeted to achieve outcomes through a ‘multiplier effect’ – creating a more holistic approach to literacy and numeracy learning in the K-2 years. |
| **Provide high quality professional learning**    | • High quality evidence-based classroom practice will be implemented that incorporates assessment for learning and differentiation to meet varied learning needs.  
• High expectations will be held for the learning of all students to meet specific individual needs. |
| **Implement personalised learning** | • Ongoing monitoring of progress against the *Literacy and Numeracy continuaums* will focus teaching and identify areas of need.  
• Additional learning support and intervention will be specifically tailored to students’ learning needs. |
| **Ongoing strategy review and evaluation**       | • The strategy will be the subject of a planned evaluation that will include the identification and collection of baseline data, the ongoing monitoring and review of implementation and the evaluation of the strategy’s effectiveness. |
Key elements of Early Action for Success

The Early Action for Success strategy has implications for all members of the school community: students, families, teachers and school leaders. Successful implementation of the strategy is dependent on four key features that need to be integrated into all levels of school and classroom action: instructional leadership; personalisation; assessment for learning; and high quality professional learning.

Instructional leadership

The development of instructional leadership capacity within a cohesive framework of school improvement is the key feature underpinning the Early Action for Success strategy.

Almost 60% of a school’s impact on student achievement is a result of school leader and teacher effectiveness. It is also estimated that students with highly effective teachers can learn at twice the pace of students with less effective teachers and that the variance of student learning outcomes within schools is approximately four times the variance between schools. It is further noted that there is an interdependent link between student and school improvement and teacher and school leader professional learning (Elmore 2006; Hattie 2009; Leithwood, Harris & Strauss 2010; Moursched, Chijioke & Barber 2010; Robinson 2007; Rowe 2005; McIntyre 2011).

Effective Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy are teachers of teachers and have a strong understanding of effective classroom practice and strategies to improve student learning through teacher professional learning. Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy develop teacher capacity through the collaborative evaluation of teaching and its effect on student learning. They develop shared expectations and targets for student learning and align strategies and resources for the achievement of these outcomes.

Personalisation

Personalisation is teaching and learning “that ‘puts the learner at the centre’ (Leadbeater 2002, p.1) or more accurately puts each and every child at the centre and provides an education that is tailored to the students’ learning and motivational needs at any given moment” (Fullan, Hill & Crevola 2006, p.4).

In the Early Action for Success strategy, while personalisation is first and foremost about the student, it is also about the coherence of the learning relationship between the student and the school, teachers, families and the broader school community. High quality, targeted professional learning will support participating schools and teachers to become more skilled at putting the learner “at the centre of teaching, learning and assessment rather than imposing uniform resolutions on all students” (Jones & McLean 2012, p.75).

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning (using school, classroom and individual student data as a tool for improving teaching and learning) is essential for high quality teaching that is personalised to individual student learning needs.

Key to the effective implementation of the Early Action for Success strategy in schools will be the use of the Best Start Kindergarten assessment.

On entry to school, students exhibit a range of abilities, understandings and maturity levels. Teachers will be most effective in supporting their students when they identify and build on the knowledge, skills and understandings that students bring to school.

Finding out what students already know and can do in areas that are critical to early literacy and numeracy development is an important focus of entry to school assessment.
The Best Start Kindergarten assessment makes it possible to place individual student achievement into a broader context and assists teachers in gathering consistent, accurate and reliable information about each student’s knowledge, skills and understandings. One of the key factors of the Best Start Kindergarten assessment is that it enables teachers to plot all students’ starting points for literacy and numeracy learning on the Literacy and Numeracy continuums.

Once these starting points are established, teachers throughout the K-2 years use the Literacy and Numeracy continuums in an ongoing way as a framework for literacy and numeracy assessment, teaching and intervention that is targeted to the learning needs of students.

**Key elements**

- strengthens leadership capacity and teaching expertise at the local level by providing targeted schools with the support of high quality Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy to work directly with school leaders and classroom teachers
- encourages a confident start to learning for all students by strengthening the links between students’ prior to school settings and their schools
- engages all students in a comprehensive, personalised, one-on-one assessment on entry to school to find out what they know and can do in the areas of literacy and numeracy
- ensures all students in all classrooms have access to high quality, personalised classroom-based assessment and teaching in literacy and numeracy
- tailors small group and one-on-one literacy and numeracy support that is personalised to each student’s needs, with intensive support for the students who need it most
- ensures that the literacy and numeracy progress of all young learners remains on track throughout the K-2 years of schooling through ongoing assessment, monitoring, tracking and support for each student’s learning against the Literacy and Numeracy continuums
- provides targeted schools with the resources and flexibility needed to take action on literacy and numeracy under-achievement that is responsive to their local school context
- reinforces that high quality professional learning that builds on teachers’ and school leaders’ professional knowledge, skills and confidence is fundamental to achieving improvement in teaching and learning.

**High quality professional learning**

High quality professional learning is an essential tool for school and system level reform and is intrinsically linked to all school and classroom implementation in this strategy. Participating teachers will need to engage in daily learning that is both individual and collective, that is school and classroom based and is embedded in their practice.

“Cohen and Hill (2001) show that new policies and resources provide the potential for ‘new opportunities to learn that are rooted either in improved student curriculum or in examples of students’ work on assessments or both’ (p.9).” (Fullan, Hill & Crevola 2006, p.8).

Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy will provide sustained professional learning to support school leaders and teachers in the development of expert knowledge in areas including: school data management, planning and target setting; high quality classroom practice and assessment for learning; and individual and small group instruction.

The Early Action for Success model will promote professional learning that is about continuous and sustained learning in the schools and classrooms in which leaders and teachers work; observing and being observed in their own classrooms and the classrooms of others; and ensuring that actions and interactions are targeted at classroom and individual student instruction.
Early Action for Success
An integrated model to ensure early learning success in literacy and numeracy through support that is tailored to specific school contexts

Instructional leadership
- Personalised learning
- Assessment for learning
- Professional learning

SCHOOL LEADERS
Focused coherent alignment of school plans, expectations and professional learning

TEACHERS
High quality assessment and differentiated teaching in all classrooms for all students

STUDENTS
Assessment and responsive intervention for students most in need
The Early Action for Success strategy

Fundamental to the successful implementation of the Early Action for Success model is the need for school leaders and teachers to maintain a clear line of sight to the students they serve, ensuring that students are front and centre of all school level action and intervention.

The model’s three central circles represent the strategy’s three layers of interrelated action and support.

Four factors essential to the effectiveness of implementation

The model identifies four key factors essential to the effectiveness of Early Action for Success. These key factors need to be embedded at all three layers of school and classroom action:

- hands-on instructional leadership
- personalisation that puts students at the centre of all classroom and school level action
- an emphasis on assessment for learning where teachers know precisely where students are and where they need to go
- high quality professional learning.

In the model, Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy support school leaders and teachers through onsite professional learning designed to fast track the development of their expertise in delivering quality programs and interventions at the school, classroom and student level.
2.1 School leaders

School leaders, in collaboration with Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy, will:

- use tools such as the NSW Department of Education and Communities’ analytical framework for effective leadership and school improvement in literacy and numeracy to support the identification of school priorities and the planning of appropriate actions to bring about literacy and numeracy improvement
- realign the school plan, targets and resources to achieve increased growth in literacy and numeracy in the early years
- coordinate school level resources and select or tailor intervention programs to accelerate literacy and numeracy progress in the early years
- establish systems for the collaborative development of consistent approaches to classroom practices including: design of learning sequences, assessment for learning, classroom observation and teacher feedback
- ensure all stakeholders are informed of the Early Action for Success strategy, the role of the Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy and what the changes will mean for students
- lead the provision of professional learning in literacy and numeracy, with a focus on classroom-based professional development to teachers in personalised learning and diagnostic assessment
- lead the evaluation processes, including the identification and collection of data, monitoring and tracking of student progress at regular intervals
- participate in the evaluation of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.

2.2 Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy

The role of the Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy is to work with school leaders and teachers to:

- clearly describe the shared expectations and targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in the early years. This will include the realignment of school resources to focus on evidence-based strategies that build teacher capacity to achieve improved learning outcomes for students.
- lead the professional learning of teachers through an analysis of the impact of instructional techniques and the improvement that can be achieved through the use of explicit strategies for both assessment and teaching
- provide an explicit and iterative focus on the assessment of student learning and the impact of quality teaching on students
- identify effective literacy and numeracy intervention strategies based on the analysis of student learning needs
- provide leadership and direct literacy and numeracy support within the participating school or group of schools
- coordinate the resources available to the school into a single strategy to meet the needs of the students, teachers and leaders
- facilitate the formation of a collegial network between participating schools, where appropriate.
2.3 Teachers

Teachers, in collaboration with Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy, will:

- deliver high quality assessment and teaching in the K-2 years that is personalised to each student’s literacy and numeracy needs, and that challenges and supports all students at a whole class and individual student level
- use Best Start Kindergarten assessment and the Literacy and Numeracy continuums for the ongoing tracking and monitoring of students’ progress and achievement at regular intervals
- use the NSW Quality Teaching model of pedagogy as a framework for improving and strengthening the quality of classroom assessment and instruction
- assess and monitor students’ progress at key points in the K-2 years using the Literacy and Numeracy continuums to plan focused teaching and learning sequences
- engage in ongoing professional learning that is responsive to school, teacher and student learning needs in the area of literacy and numeracy
- develop differentiated class learning programs and design personalised learning plans for individual students as required.

2.4 Regions

Each region is responsible for working with the Office of Schools and schools to:

- identify and prioritise the schools to receive an Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy from 2012
- determine the most appropriate implementation option for allocating Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy
- select Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy and negotiate the employment package for each Instructional Leader, with particular responsibility lying with the Regional Director.

2.5 State Office

State Office will:

- coordinate and manage the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan in public schools
- approve the selection of Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy
- provide support for Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy
- implement a common evaluation framework across participating schools to support a consistent and coordinated approach to the evaluation of Early Action for Success.
Models of support

Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy provide expert leadership and direct support within their nominated school or cluster of schools. The Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy:

- build teacher capacity and expertise in the identification of student literacy and numeracy learning needs
- assist colleagues to plan for the improvement of student outcomes in literacy and numeracy
- support the use of explicit and inclusive teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy to improve student learning
- regions determine the most appropriate implementation option for allocating Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy.

The following models are provided to show how Instructional Leaders may work within regions:

An in-school Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy works to build the capacity of a school to improve student learning outcomes.

An Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy works in a targeted school to build the capacity of that school to improve student learning outcomes. In this instance the target school is part of an existing community of schools. Actions undertaken in the community of schools through sharing of high expectations and more effective practices will improve the learning of all students.

Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy work with two schools jointly developing the capacity of both schools to improve student learning outcomes.
Instructional Leaders, Literacy and Numeracy work across and between schools building connections and collaborating as a new learning community to develop capacity to improve student learning outcomes.

An Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy works in up to three schools through an in-school instructional leader (deputy/assistant principal level). The Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy focuses on the development of the leadership capacity of school leadership teams and the in-school instructional leaders to implement school improvement strategies. The Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy also facilitates the formation of a collegial network between schools.

An Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy works within their own school and with two other target schools. The Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy is relieved from their substantive duties through funding support provided by the target schools and works as an Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy in these schools. For each of the schools involved an in-school instructional leader is identified (deputy/assistant principal level) to lead school improvement in literacy and numeracy at that school.

A successful instructional leader from a high performing school is released from some responsibilities in their own school to work as an Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy with the leadership team and staff in a target school. Onsite exchange and connection via interactive technology will support shared opportunities for reflective practice and collaborative professional learning.
Accountability

Schools participating in the Early Action for Success strategy are accountable in particular ways:

- School leaders will realign the School Plan to clearly describe the school’s targets, expectations and resources aimed at ensuring improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy in the early years.
- Schools will be required to monitor and track student progress (K-2) against the Literacy and Numeracy continua.
- Each school will report to parents on their children’s ongoing literacy and numeracy performance.
- Schools will report to their communities on the school’s literacy and numeracy performance through the Annual School Report.
- Schools will also participate in the Department of Education and Communities’ evaluation of the Early Action for Success strategy which will include the identification and collection of baseline data.

4.1 Data collection, monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Central to Early Action for Success is the identification of students who may be at risk of not achieving at or above the minimum expected standard in Year 3 NAPLAN and the provision of appropriate interventions. This requires that the progress against grade expectations for literacy and numeracy of all students in Kindergarten to Year 2 in the Early Action for Success schools be identified before the end of 2012. Identifying those students at risk of falling behind in literacy and numeracy within each school not only assists with planning interventions, but provides a baseline of the proportion of each grade identified for close monitoring and support over 2013 and into 2014.

Additional information on data types and collection periods will be provided in the evaluation framework for participating schools. The common evaluation framework has been developed within the broader context of the evaluation of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan to allow ongoing monitoring and review of implementation processes.

To understand the impact of any intervention it is necessary to first establish a baseline of student performance, then implement the intervention and continue ongoing assessment to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Jimerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden, 2007).

Key components of the Early Action for Success strategy’s evaluation include:

- collection of baseline data against which improvements in student achievement, teacher learning and school leadership practices can be measured
- ongoing monitoring and reporting against key milestones
- development of common performance measures against which student progress is judged.

The progressive targets for improvement in Early Action for Success are specifically directed towards measurably reducing the risk of students of being at or below the minimum standard in Year 3 NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy. Within the context of Early Action for Success, ‘reducing risk’ means reducing the probability that a student starting school will be in the bottom performance bands in NAPLAN when they are in Year 3.

Quantifying the level of a student’s risk at different times during the early years of school assists in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions and making decisions about how to allocate finite resources of time and money.

4.2 Management and coordination

A small central management and coordination team manages the Early Action for Success strategy. In addition to coordinating the induction of Instructional Leaders, the management and coordination team oversees the delivery of the strategy and its resources and provides advice on analysis, planning, interventions and monitoring the impact of the strategy.


Rowe, K. and National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (Australia) (2005) *Teaching Reading*, ACER, Camberwell, VIC.

Appendix I

Key frameworks to support implementation of *Early Action for Success*

### The Literacy and Numeracy continuums

*The Literacy and Numeracy continuums* identify the literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understandings critical to literacy and numeracy success and map how these critical aspects develop through the years of schooling by describing key markers of expected student literacy and numeracy progress. The continuums focus on capturing the literacy and numeracy connections that are critical and cannot be left to chance.

The *Literacy and Numeracy continuums* support literacy and numeracy teaching and learning by:

- strengthening teacher knowledge about critical aspects of literacy and numeracy
- developing in teachers a more systematic understanding of student literacy and numeracy development and learning across the critical aspects
- providing teachers with the capacity to build class and individual student learning plans to ensure successful learning in the critical aspects of literacy and numeracy
- providing teachers with a framework for ongoing assessment and teaching of critical aspects of literacy and numeracy.

### The NSW Quality Teaching model

The *NSW Quality Teaching model* provides the framework for the development of high quality teaching and learning in NSW public schools. It is based on the premise that all students can learn substantial concepts and skills.

Building on research the *NSW Quality Teaching model* identifies three dimensions of pedagogy that have been linked to improved student outcomes:

- teaching that is fundamentally based on promoting high levels of intellectual quality
- teaching that is soundly based on promoting a quality learning environment
- teaching that develops and makes explicit to students the significance of their learning.

While intellectual quality is central, all three dimensions are essential for improved student outcomes.
Appendix II
A three-tiered approach to literacy and numeracy intervention

Tiered intervention presents a means of delivering tailored learning support for students. Research has shown that a tiered approach to the provision of learning support that involves quality evidence-based learning, regular monitoring and assessment of student learning and the implementation of targeted learning support and/or interventions has a positive impact on learning outcomes for those at risk of not meeting literacy and numeracy standards (O’Connor, Harty & Fulmer 2005; Dexter & Hughes 2011).

With tiered intervention, teachers can clearly identify students’ current levels of achievement, monitor their progress, provide evidence-based targeted support and/or programs and adjust the intensity and nature of support depending on the students’ needs.

Tier 1
Tier 1 intervention provides support through high quality, personalised assessment and classroom teaching that is designed to engage, challenge and support all learners to achieve or exceed expected levels.

Tier 2
Tier 2 intervention provides timely support through high quality, personalised assessment and instruction that is specific to identified need for individual and small groups of students. This intervention can be provided by the class teacher or a specialist teacher.

Tier 3
Tier 3 intervention provides more intensive, longer term support through high quality, personalised, specialist assessment and teaching for individual students with more complex literacy and numeracy needs.
Appendix III
Early Action for Success model – the evidence base for action

For school leaders this means ensuring focused, coherent alignment of school plans, targets, professional learning and resources.

Current research highlights the importance of instructional leadership and teacher quality. It acknowledges that the impact of school leaders on student learning is second only to the impact of teachers (Elmore 2006; Hattie 2009; Leithwood, Harris & Straus 2010; Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber 2010; Robinson 2007; Rowe 2005; McIntyre 2011). Research has provided significant insight and clarity into what school leaders do that directly impacts both teacher quality and student learning outcomes. It highlights the need for a strong focus on instructional leadership within a coherent framework of school improvement. High performing school leaders focus directly on instructional leadership, clearly articulate evidence-based school improvement targets and use evidence to guide teacher professional learning and feedback on the quality of classroom instruction.

For teachers this means ensuring high quality, personalised assessment and classroom teaching that is differentiated to meet the needs of all K-2 students.

Based on a synthesis of over 500,000 studies, Hattie concluded that teachers “account for about 30% of the variance” (Hattie 2003, p.1) in student achievement and that focusing on developing expertise in what teachers know and do can have a significant impact on achievement. “We need to ensure that this greatest influence is optimised to have powerful and sensationaly positive effects on the learner.” (Hattie 2003, p.3). This view is further supported by Rowe who argued that “the quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students’ cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes – regardless of gender or backgrounds. Indeed, findings from the related local and international evidence-based research indicate that what matters most is quality teachers and teaching, supported by strategic teacher professional development.” (Rowe 2003, p.1).

For students this means receiving high quality, personalised assessment and instruction that is responsive to specifically identified needs.

High quality teachers use authentic assessment in an ongoing way to understand the needs and strengths of individual students in their care. They know that real gains will only be realised when assessment data is used to design learning experiences that really challenge each student. These teachers personalise learning and “use diagnostic assessment practices to inform teaching” (Jones & McLean 2012, p.75). As well, these teachers design learning experiences to “fit” the student, rather than taking students and forcing them into existing school and classroom structures.