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Making time for great teaching

Dr Ben Jensen



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Overview

School education in Australia is slipping. We are falling down the international rankings and our students are performing at a lower level in some subjects than they were a decade ago, according to the OECD. How we respond is vital for our students' future.

High-performing systems around the world know that improving the effectiveness of teaching is the way to lift school performance. They seek to increase the quality – not the quantity – of teaching. They know teaching improves when teachers learn from each other. So they ensure teachers are mentored and teach classes in front of skilled observers, who provide constructive feedback. They make time for teachers to undertake practical research in their schools on how to lift student learning.

Governments and many schools have tried to implement similar professional learning programs. But success has been limited. A major stumbling block is finding the resources and time in the school week. Each year we ask schools and teachers to do more. In fact, we need to get them to do *less*, so they have more time to improve their teaching. This report shows how.

We worked extensively with six diverse schools across the country that are striving to give teachers more time. We talked to their teachers and school leaders to develop, fully cost and find time for intensive programs such as intensive mentoring, observation of teachers and feedback on their work, active collaboration and school-based research.

Ideally, teachers would have at least three extra school periods a

week for these programs. Most of the time can be found by reducing the time teachers spend on ineffective professional development, staff meetings, school assemblies, extra subjects and extra-curricular activities. Schools must make difficult but crucial trade-offs in how teachers and school leaders spend their time. We must be explicit that every time we ask teachers to perform extra activities we are decreasing the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Education strategy must change. Governments must lead the way and prioritise how money is spent at all levels of education. They are still funding ineffective professional learning that lacks accountability. Government regulations restrict schools. Enterprise bargaining agreements restrict changes to work schedules, and duty of care requirements restrain schools that want to free their teachers from child minding to focus on improving teaching. We cannot expect teachers to lift our students to the world's best while also insisting they spend time on yard duty, pastoral care, and supervising extra-curricular activities.

Similarly, we should not follow low-performing systems around the world that have tried to improve schools by decreasing class sizes and increasing the time teachers spend in the classroom. Instead, we must make time for programs that develop teacher skills and deliver great teaching. Some Australian schools, even those with scarce resources and high levels of disadvantage, are making hard choices right now. For the sake of our students all schools and school systems should follow their lead.

Table of contents

Overview	3
1. Why teaching and learning is not improving in schools	5
2. Improving teaching and learning: professional learning programs that work	7
3. Allocating resources to professional learning: what are the trade-offs?	10
4. Putting teaching and learning first across the school system	18
Appendix A: Professional learning programs	21
Appendix B: Case study methodology	24
Appendix C: Case studies	25
References	40

1. Why teaching and learning is not improving in schools

More effective teaching is the key to improving school education.¹ The best way to do this is through professional learning programs that seek to continually improve classroom learning and teaching.² But over its history Australian school education has struggled to provide professional learning that actually produces better outcomes for students.³

Too often, professional development is poorly delivered. Teachers regularly say it is not suited to their needs and fails to improve their capacity to teach.⁴ Courses and workshops are often unable to focus on real education problems a teacher will face in class. Professional development days in schools are too often spent updating teachers on changes to regulations and school policy instead of improving teaching and learning.

In summary, teacher development regularly ignores one of the great truths of schooling: the best professional development teachers can receive is to directly help them teach their students.⁵ Australian school systems know this and, more recently, have tried to implement good programs in schools.⁶ But the results have generally not been good. A big stumbling block is the failure

to provide the necessary time for effective professional learning programs.⁷

Not allocating enough time makes any professional learning program – however well intentioned – a poor one. Too often, schools want to make the changes but can't find the time or resources. This report shows them – and governments – how it can be done.

Box 1.1 The importance of teacher effectiveness

Improving teacher effectiveness outweighs the impact of any other school education program or policy in improving student performance.⁸

A student with a great teacher can achieve in half a year what a student with a poor teacher can achieve in a full year.⁹ And because the impact of highly effective teaching is cumulative, relatively modest increases in effectiveness can make a big difference to student learning.¹⁰

¹Hanushek, *et al.* (1998); Rockoff (2004); Hanushek, *et al.* (2005)

²Hattie (2009)

³OECD (2009)

⁴Ibid.

⁵AITSL (2014a)

⁶Cole (2012)

⁷Elmore (2004)

⁸Hanushek, *et al.* (2005); Hanushek, *et al.* (1998); Aaronson, *et al.* (2007); Rockoff (2004); Leigh and Ryan (2010)

⁹Leigh (2010). Great and poor teachers are defined as those in, respectively, the top and bottom 10% of the distribution of effective teachers.

¹⁰Sanders and Rivers (1996); Jordan, *et al.* (1997)

1.1 Our work in case study schools

We worked with six diverse schools across the country (shown in Table 1). The Grattan team interviewed staff to discuss the school's priorities and professional learning needs, as well as how time-savings could be made in the school. From this, a new five-year professional learning plan was developed for each school, as well as trade-off options to help create time to implement the plan.

The key findings across the case-study schools form the basis of this report.

Table 1: The six case study schools

School	Description	Enrollments	ICSEA ¹¹	Fees
A	An established independent outer metro school	800-1000 students	Well above average	Mid range fees
B	An outer metro government school with many recent arrivals	400-600 students	Below average	No/low fees
C	A suburban, faith-based independent school	400-600 students	Above average	Low-mid range fees
D	A small provincial independent school established in the 2000s	< 200 students	Above average	Low-mid range fees
E	An established, independent metro school	1000-1200 students	Well above average	High fees
F	A new, outer metropolitan government school	1000-1200 students	Well below average	No/low fees

¹¹ The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) provides a measure of the level of educational advantage that students bring to learning. A school's ICSEA value reflects parents' occupations and levels of education, the proportion of Indigenous students and school location, among other factors. See ACARA (2013)

2. Improving teaching and learning: professional learning programs that work

High performing education systems around the world have intensive professional learning programs in schools.¹² These programs enable teachers to receive and act on continual feedback on how to better teach students.¹³ These programs include:¹⁴

- *Teacher mentoring and coaching* that is intensive and involves regular classroom observation and feedback.¹⁵ Effective mentoring and coaching helps teachers diagnose their students' learning needs, and develop classroom management skills and pedagogy specific to their subjects.¹⁶
- *Lesson and grade groups*, in which teachers work together to plan lessons, examine student progress, and discuss alternative approaches. Teachers improve by observing each other's classrooms, identifying and solving problems as they arise, and jointly improving each student's learning.¹⁷ Working and learning together also helps to develop leadership skills and prevent stress and burnout.¹⁸

- *Research groups* of teachers identify a research topic (how to introduce a new pedagogy, for example) and analyse the evidence of what works and what doesn't. Teachers then trial the practices that are shown to work and evaluate their impact on students. If their impact is positive, they become part of learning and teaching across the school.¹⁹ The process helps teachers to evaluate their own teaching, and to discover how they should change their teaching to benefit students.²⁰

Box 2.1: Effective and ineffective professional collaboration

It is a mistake to assume that all collaboration among teachers is good. Active collaboration, in which teachers learn from each other through team teaching, joint research projects and classroom observation and feedback has a positive impact on students. Collaboration that concentrates on administrative issues does not.²¹

Unfortunately, most teachers spend too little time on active collaboration and too much time on administration and coordination.²² Good professional learning programs flip this around so that teachers spend much more of their time in active professional collaboration that has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

¹² OECD (2010)

¹³ Fuchs and Fuchs (1985); Fuchs and Fuchs (1986); Hattie (2009); Jacob and Lefgren (2008); Gates Foundation (2010); Rockoff and Speroni (2010); OECD (2013b)

¹⁴ See Annex A for further details. Jensen, *et al.* (2012);

¹⁵ Smith and Ingersoll (2004); *ibid.*; Rockoff (2008),

¹⁶ Barber and Mourshed (2007); OECD (2010)

¹⁷ Bolam, *et al.* (2005); Elmore (2004)

¹⁸ Sargent and Hannum (2009), Phillips (2003); OECD (2009); *ibid.*

¹⁹ Jensen, *et al.* (2012)

²⁰ Christianakis (2010)

²¹ Rosenholtz (1989); Clement and Vandenberghe (2000)

²² OECD (2009)

- *Teacher appraisal and feedback.* When teachers receive meaningful feedback on how they can improve classroom learning and teaching it has a remarkable impact on student learning. Feedback should be based on a comprehensive appraisal of how to improve teachers' work.²³ When this happens, there is a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy.²⁴
- *Classroom observation and feedback* provides constructive and immediate feedback for teachers and has a significant impact on student learning.²⁵ It is a prominent feature of all of the above programs.

2.1 Putting the programs together

We worked with six schools to see how these programs could be implemented.²⁶ The programs had to have a level of intensity to be effective. For practical reasons, this involves roughly 5 to 10 per cent of a teacher's time. The goal is for all teachers entering a school to have:

- an individual development plan, with personal objectives linked to school objectives, and regular support from their development manager (8 to 10 sessions a year).

- regular active professional collaboration in lesson or grade groups, in which teachers learn from each other about how to improve student learning (at least 12 group meetings a year).
- a classroom peer observation and feedback group of three teachers that have 24 observations per year with additional time for constructive feedback on how to improve classroom teaching.
- intensive mentoring particularly for teachers who are in their first two years of teaching or who would otherwise benefit from regular support. At least four times a term, mentoring should include observation and discussion of the classroom practice of both mentor and mentee.
- a comprehensive appraisal process that identifies and provides constructive feedback on a teacher's strengths and weaknesses.
- the opportunity to participate in research groups that bring together teachers to work on school-based research.

Implementation of these programs requires around 135 extra school periods of professional learning a year (around three school periods per week) for each teacher, as Figure 1 shows.²⁷

²³ Jacob and Lefgren (2008); Gates Foundation (2010); Rockoff and Speroni (2010); Jensen (2010); OECD (2009); Gates Foundation (2013)

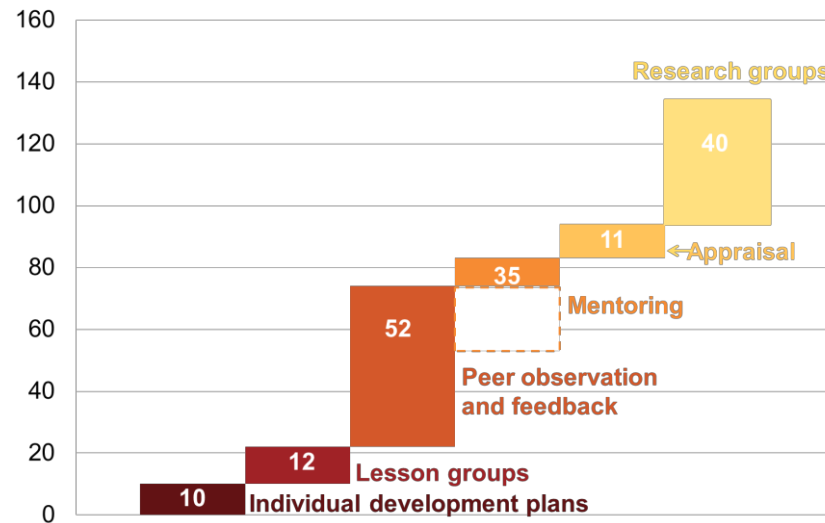
²⁴ OECD (2009); Jensen (2010)

²⁵ Hattie (2009)

²⁶ See Appendix B for further details of the methodology for this report.

²⁷ 135 periods includes participation in all programs. For this analysis, periods are assumed to be approximately 50 minutes long.

Figure 1: Time for effective professional learning programs
Number of periods per teacher per year



Note: One period is equal to 45-55 minutes. As the mentoring program also includes observation, participants only do 26 periods of peer observation and feedback.

2.2 How much effective professional learning is best?

Australian teachers spend considerably less time on professional learning than do teachers in the world's best systems.²⁸ But there is relatively little research on the optimal amount of different types of professional learning. We know some is better than none. And we know that effective professional learning programs are

intensive. But we don't yet know precisely what the optimal amount is.

The amount of professional learning discussed above does not come close to world's best practice. But the shift outlined is a giant step forward and is attainable in the short term if we prioritise improving teaching.

²⁸ Jensen, *et al.* (2012)

3. Allocating resources to professional learning: what are the trade-offs?

The leaders of the six schools we studied all want to find more time for teachers to develop their skills through effective professional learning programs. They have begun to make difficult trade-offs and want to consider all the options available. One school – School F - has already made significant progress, despite challenges it faces.

It is a large government school in a socially and economically disadvantaged outer suburban area. It was established in the last decade after other schools in the area were closed down. Student results were poor. By the time students entered secondary school, many were several years behind where they should have been. Many dropped out early.

The leadership team knew that the only way to improve student results was to significantly lift the quality of teaching. Small improvements were not enough; students were too far behind. Radical changes were required.

The school has worked hard to establish a culture of coaching and improvement. Through rigorous setting of priorities, the school freed up enough time in the school day to enable every teacher to participate in peer observation and feedback each fortnight. Eight teaching coaches – teachers who provide practical guidance to other teachers – spend a total of more than 2200 hours a year to work one-on-one with individual teachers in their classrooms during the teaching day.

And it's working. School F has impressive achievements to date in attendance, behaviour and academic outcomes. It also knows exactly where further work is needed.

Getting professional learning to this level has required trade-offs and sacrifices. There are fewer opportunities to attend external conferences or training courses. There are few small classes. Hard choices have been made about the subjects offered. Extra-curricular activities are relatively modest, as is the extra time teachers are given in order to run them. Resources are aligned to the school's key priorities, and the results are clear (see Box 3.1 for further details).

School F is a new school that combined three former schools. The Principal had a mandate to set clear priorities from the beginning. This is an important factor in School F's success. Still, changing the way things were normally done in the former schools has been challenging. Changing practices in established schools that have been run the same way for decades will be even harder.

But School F shows that time and resources can be found. As difficult as it is to do, all schools can make time for intensive professional learning programs. They can save time in their teachers' working days and free up resources in other parts of their budget. Trade-offs are possible in all schools, regardless of their sector or the wealth of the community in which they are located.

Box 3.1: Putting teaching and learning first

School F already has an extensive professional learning program. Each teacher has:

- regular meetings with their development manager to consider their individual development plans (eight periods a year)
- fortnightly lesson group meetings (24 periods a year)
- fortnightly peer observation and feedback (25 periods a year)
- eight teaching and learning coaches (available for 15 periods a year of in-class coaching per teacher, on average).

To extend professional learning, more time for feedback with coaches and peers, research groups and a strengthened system of teacher appraisal and feedback would be valuable additions.

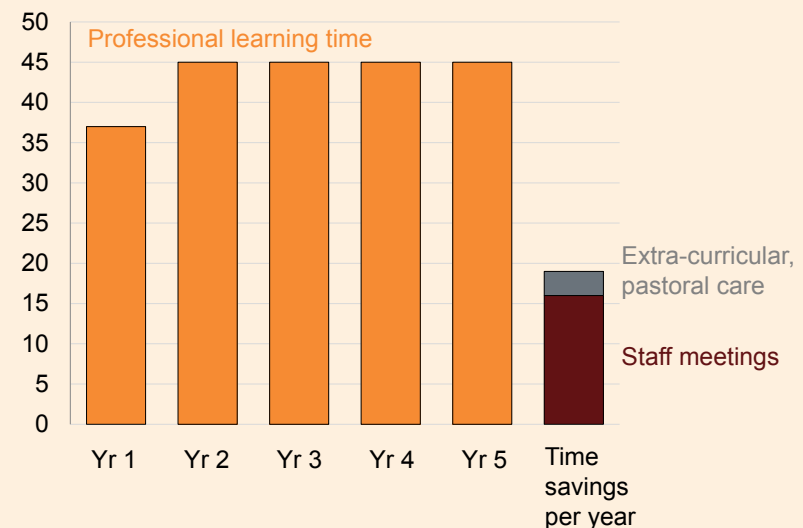
Substantial trade-offs have already been made to focus on professional learning, making it hard to find more time. Already:

- teachers spend less time in assemblies or on extra-curricular activities compared to teachers at many other schools
- funding for external courses or conferences is limited
- the curriculum is streamlined, with few very small classes
- administrative matters are mostly dealt with through email
- other spending has been cut to ensure that school finances are aligned with teaching and learning priorities

Some options for additional time savings include, as seen in the figure below.

- streamlining regular meetings (saves 16 periods per teacher)
- rotating teachers off sports days (saves 3 periods per teacher)

New professional learning plan and time savings, School F
Number of periods per teacher



3.1 Finding the time for great teaching

As shown in Chapter 2, about 135 periods (equivalent to about three school periods per week) is required for the new professional learning programs. For the programs to be effective, they must be timetabled for each teacher each week. To find the time for this, schools can broadly do three things:

1. Cut back on things teachers do that don't directly improve teaching and learning
2. Get teachers to do the same things they currently do more efficiently
3. 'Buy' the time for teachers, by finding enough resources within their broader school budgets to employ more teachers.

This project focused on the first of these – on how schools can prioritise teaching and learning by reducing the amount of time teachers spend on non-essential activities. To prioritise, the time spent on all activities must be measured so the 'trade-offs' for effective professional learning can be identified.

We find that three periods per week can be found through the following trade-offs (common in our case study schools):

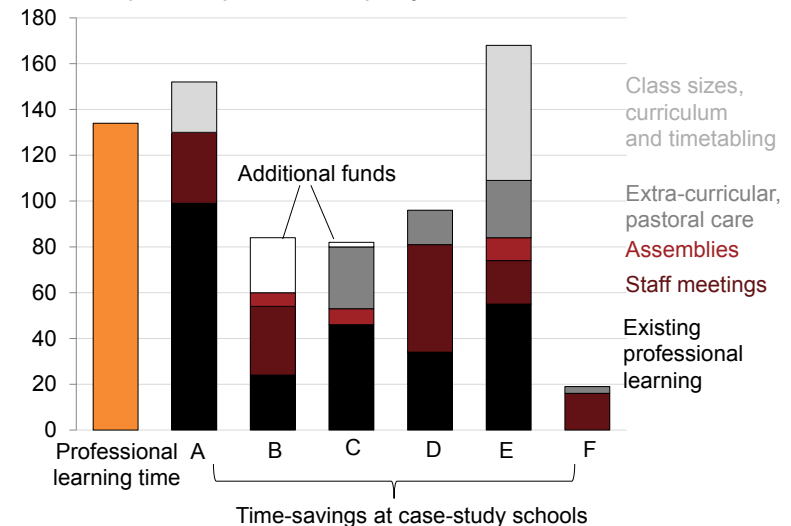
- existing professional learning
- the number and length of staff meetings
- attendance at school assemblies

- small changes to class sizes, curriculum breadth and timetabling
- attending extra-curricular activities and pastoral care
- the allocation of additional funds.²⁹

Figure 2 shows the how trade-offs vary across schools. Each trade-off is discussed in detail below.

Figure 2: Potential time savings at each school

Number of periods per teacher per year



²⁹ Appendix C presents analysis of how six different schools can reallocate resources to effectively implement professional learning programs that continually improve learning and teaching in their school.

Existing professional learning: 43 per cent of total time savings³⁰

Low-value professional learning activities should be stopped. Teachers in our case study schools consistently said that many professional learning activities held are of limited value. Staff development days commonly set aside at the beginning and end of each year often involve a lot of time covering administrative or ad hoc issues that could be more efficiently communicated or streamlined (for example, by email). Information sessions or abstract discussions on teaching and learning were also considered of little value.

Some system regulations mandate that certain kinds of information must be provided on these days, preventing schools from making some changes. Chapter Four discusses this issue further.

Teachers also reported that some external workshops and conferences did not adequately address their individual development needs, and had little impact on teaching and learning in the classroom. While schools had processes for teachers to share what they had learnt on their return, many teachers did not regard these processes as effective in changing what happens in classrooms.

³⁰ These are aggregate time savings across the six case study schools.

Staff meetings: 24 per cent of total time savings

Meetings take up a large amount of teachers' time, as they do in most other organisations. Some meetings are efficiently run and are essential to how schools operate. But many others:

- transfer information that would be better delivered by email
- repeat information from other meetings
- are longer or more frequent than necessary.

At all case study schools, feedback from teachers and the leadership team suggested that revising the meeting schedule would free up time. Some meetings could be cut altogether. More often, the meeting could be held less frequently. For example, one of our case study schools could free up the equivalent of 19 periods a year for each teacher if the 15-minute staff briefings it holds twice a week are reduced to once a fortnight.

Complex organisational structures can also create extra meetings and administration requirements. In some schools, year-level or house structures overlay a faculty-based structure. A simplified structure can be more effective and free up considerable time for professional learning.

Small changes to class sizes, curriculum breadth and timetabling: 13 per cent of total time savings

Combining classes – across year levels in smaller schools, for example – or reducing the number of subjects taught saves considerable time. At one school, rearranging the timetable to

combine a number of very small classes could potentially free up about 50 periods per teacher each year on average, without cutting any subjects. Sharing classes across schools can also provide opportunities for time savings.

Larger increases in class sizes would produce significant time savings for professional learning. But schools are largely prevented from making these changes as maximum class sizes are normally mandated at the system-level through enterprise bargaining agreements. In so doing, the agreements restrict the amount of professional learning available to teachers.

Extra-curricular activities and pastoral care: 12 per cent of total time savings

Reducing teacher participation in extra-curricular activities creates considerable time to improve teaching and learning. Teachers are often highly involved in after-school sport, sporting events, school camps, and so on. This doesn't mean extra-curricular activities should be dropped, but that teachers' involvement is reduced.

In many schools, almost all teachers attend school sports and swimming days. Some could be rostered off on these days, with the time saved dedicated to professional learning. Depending on the student-staff ratio and the relevant state's supervision requirements, up to half of a school's teaching staff could be released on these days. Even more modest reductions in teacher attendance can free up a worthwhile amount of time.

It is often very hard for leaders to refuse additional investments in pastoral care. Parents, the media and the community will always push for more to be done and leaders will be pressured to put

more resources into these areas. Yet the cost of extra investment in pastoral care needs to be set against the cost of not investing in improving teaching and learning. For example, at one school, all secondary teachers attend four school excursions that are concerned with pastoral care. Reducing the number of teachers that attend each excursion would give each secondary teacher at least 15 more periods a year for professional learning.

Allocating additional funds: four per cent of total time savings

Schools can occasionally access extra funds such as from changes in funding arrangements and untied grants, from philanthropic groups or from accessing their savings. These funds can provide teacher time for professional learning.

School assemblies: four per cent of total time savings

Teacher time at assemblies can also be reduced. In one school, for example, rostering some teachers off weekly assemblies would free up 13 periods for each teacher.

3.2 Finding even more time

The trade-offs above are cost neutral. But much more time can be allocated to professional learning programs that continually improve teaching and learning with some extra money.

Currently, teachers spend too much time on activities other than improving teaching and learning in their main subjects.

For example, in some of our case-study schools some teachers spent:

- one to two periods per week on physical education
- one period per week teaching religious education
- one period per week teaching research skills
- one period per week on pastoral care.

In addition, teachers have numerous additional duties such as supervising students in playgrounds and on their way home from school.³¹ For a typical classroom teacher this can mean they have to spend:

- almost 60 hours a year supervising extra-curricular sport activities on a Friday afternoon
- 47 hours a year at school assembly
- 27 hours a year taking students to swimming and gymnastics
- 29 hours a year on yard and bus duty
- time supervising student detention and exams

Assigning other people to these tasks has costs. But it goes a long way to finding the time for teachers to improve their teaching.

³¹ This can be a result of duty of requirements imposed by systems. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

These work requirements for teachers also highlight the lack of prioritisation in school education. We are continually asking teachers to improve their effectiveness – to become true professionals.³² But we also insist they spend significant time on activities that we would never expect of any other professional.³³

Box 3.2: Capital and operational expenditure

Our analysis has not closely examined schools' capital and operating expenditure. Around 30 per cent of school education expenditure is on capital costs.³⁴ This is an important area for cost-savings, given these funds can be re-distributed to free up teacher time (government schools may have less flexibility here).

Many capital expenditures that were supposed to improve teaching in classrooms have had little or no impact. The main levers to improve teaching and learning are professional learning programs described in this report.³⁵

School F rearranged IT, bus and canteen services, maintenance and cleaning and school uniform supplies, and used the savings to create extra time for professional learning. Many schools could do the same, in combination with some of the other options outlined above.

³² OECD (2010)

³³ This is further discussed in Chapter 4.

³⁴ OECD (2013a)

³⁵ Hattie (2009)

3.3 Flexible use of time

Some potential trade-offs, such as cancelling a regular after-school staff meeting, free up a small amount of time each week. Others, such as cutting back on low-value professional learning on student-free days at the start of the year, free up a large amount of time in a single block.

As a result, the time saved from trade-offs is ‘lumpy’. In some weeks, more time will be freed up than is needed. In others, less is saved than teachers need.

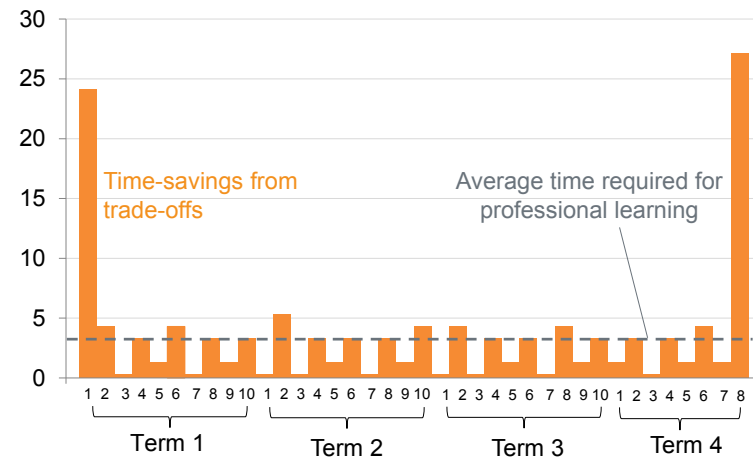
Figure 3 shows that at School A, the professional learning plan for a typical classroom teacher in Year 5 requires an average of 3.3 periods a week. The trade-offs we have identified save on average 3.4 periods a week – just enough to cover this teacher’s requirements over the course of the year. Yet in practice the amount of time saved each week varies a lot.

For example, the time saved from streamlining professional development days at the start and end of the year needs to be reallocated across the entire year. One way to do this is for teachers to use large blocks of time that are freed up to get ahead with their regular classroom planning so that they can use an equivalent amount of spares during the year for professional learning activities when they need to. Freeing up a large block of time at the end of the year also allows sufficient time to finalise professional learning activities, such as complete teacher appraisal and feedback, discuss mentoring outcomes and agree research group findings and write up the final report.

Flexibility is crucial. Teachers should be empowered to decide

how to manage their time. The ability to manage time effectively is a feature of a trusted and professional workforce.

Figure 3: Matching time saved to time needed, School A
Number of periods per teacher weekly



Box 3.3: Time for classroom preparation and lesson planning

Our analysis does not reduce the time allocated to most teachers, especially in secondary schools, for marking and preparing lessons. Change is possible without digging into this time. Yet this time will be far more productive if teachers use it to collaborate with peers in the same subject and year level. The timetable needs to allow for this productive collaboration.

3.4 Making the change

Professional learning programs that continually improve learning and teaching are time-intensive and require considerable resources. There is no point pretending otherwise. Our case studies show that the time for professional learning during a teacher's day can largely be found. But making the change is very difficult.

Set the right priorities

Schools first need to detail their new professional learning programs. This report has provided a framework of these programs (see Section 2 and Annex C) but more work is needed to fully detail the programs at a system and school level. The programs must be fully costed and the time required for their effective implementation established.

There also needs to be full costing of how current teachers and school leaders spend their work time to measure the resources devoted to each activity in the school. Prioritisation can only occur with explicit and transparent information on the costs of different activities.

Lastly, trade-offs need to be made. Leaders should compare the resource and time requirements of professional learning programs to existing resource allocations and produce a set of options for trade-offs. These can usefully be divided into short- and medium- to long-term changes. Quick changes to free up time for professional learning can provide the impetus for structural changes in later years.

Box 3.4: Education strategy

Setting the right priorities is a huge behavioural change process for both schools and systems. To improve learning is to change students' behaviour, study habits and the way they learn in class and the home. To improve teaching is to change the behaviour and practice of leaders and teachers in every school and classroom. In short a change strategy should:

1. Detail desired changes in learning and teaching.³⁶ All teachers must be involved in the discussion of what teaching and learning should be in their school.
2. Describe how system and school leaders will be role models; their budgets and practices should be the first to change.³⁷
3. Strengthen the capacity of leaders and teachers so they can make the required changes.
4. Introduce evaluation and accountability mechanisms that continually reinforce behavioural change.³⁸ Systems should monitor how professional learning is conducted in schools, and whether enough time is being provided. Schools must be held to account for the effectiveness of their professional learning programs.³⁹ Monitoring student outcomes is essential. The programs should be continually improved based on data collected from evaluations of their impact.

³⁶ Barber, *et al.* (2011)

³⁷ Fullan (2009)

³⁸ Lawson and Price (2003)

³⁹ Jensen and Farmer (2013)

4. Putting teaching and learning first across the school system

System leaders should not ask schools to make hard choices about priorities if they do not do the same. All Australian school systems have policies, programs or regulations that take teachers and leaders away from improving teaching and learning to some degree.

Chapter 3 of this report showed how schools can undertake a prioritisation process that frees up about 5-8 per cent of teacher time for professional learning. Yet beyond this process governments must lead reform.

4.1 Regulatory changes

Government policies that require teachers to complete tasks that other responsible adults could perform actively detract from teaching and learning. Teachers spend considerable time monitoring student behaviour, taking school detentions, yard duty, bus duty, supervising extra-curricular sport and exams, and attending assembly.

Many schools also have to spend time fulfilling government requirements to provide information on regulations and policies such as occupational health and safety and child protection. One case-study school spent about a quarter of its non-teaching days updating staff on government regulations and policies. This information could be better provided more efficiently (e.g. online).

Regulatory reform can reduce some of these duties immediately. Regulatory changes must then result in change in schools if they

are to be effective. It is clear that previous regulatory reforms in some systems have not led to changes in schools. Practices may persist because of ignorance of the changes to regulations or because of tradition.

4.2 Targeted support and guidance to schools

All organisations find it hard to devise an effective strategy and allocate resources accordingly. The history and context of education may make the task for schools even harder. They must embark on a difficult change process that brings staff, students and parents on board. But school leaders receive little or no training in these areas.

New thinking on school leadership is needed. School leaders are constantly told they must be 'instructional leaders'.⁴⁰ But this has narrowed the understanding of effective school leadership and resulted in a severe neglect of crucial areas. As a result, school leaders do not receive the necessary training in the strategic, financial, and change management skills they need.

Training needs to reflect the new understanding of school leadership. It should build on the push for greater school autonomy as in key areas of school leadership, principals do not exercise the autonomy they are granted.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Pont, *et al.* (2008)

⁴¹ Jensen (2013)

While long-term leadership capacity building is needed, specialised support can help in the short-term. Review teams and leaders from exemplary schools can help other schools to set priorities. However, trade-offs are not only difficult to identify but to implement and take forward. There is a dearth of research on 'what works' in the field.⁴²

4.3 System reform: strategies and priorities

Education system leaders also need to prioritise their resources. They need to begin by identifying the true cost of policy settings and programs, including the cost of teachers' time. Trade-offs and decisions on resource allocations – from information technology to infrastructure to changes to curriculum and assessment – should be transparent and explicit. Over the years schools have been encouraged, and in some cases required, to continually broaden their scope rather than concentrate on the core school activity of teaching and learning.

System-level agreements can restrict changes to how much time teachers spend teaching and how much they can spend improving the quality of their teaching. A trade-off is essential. Policies that make teachers teach more can in fact reduce the quality of teaching and learning.

For example, policies that reduce class sizes reduce the money and time available for professional learning. Increasing the

⁴² While there is a lot of work on the need for teacher professional learning and a number of trials and innovation analyses of various programs, there is relatively little evidence on strategy, prioritisation, and resource allocations in schools (see Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011) and AITSL (2014b))

number of subjects taught and encouraging extra-curricular activities can have a similar effect. We must be more explicit about the cost of these programs and how much they reduce the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

Shanghai is widely considered as having some of the best professional development of teachers in the world.⁴³ Classroom observation and feedback is high, and collaboration is frequent. Teachers are able to focus on continually improving teaching and learning because they only have to teach 10 to 12 hours a week.

Shanghai can afford this because class sizes of 35 to 40 children are not uncommon. This doesn't mean Australia should have class sizes of 40, but we should be explicit about the costs and impact of policies on the quality of teaching and learning.

On teacher professional learning, virtually every Australian school system encourages teachers to collaborate and schools to develop systems of observation and feedback. But resource allocations do not match the rhetoric. There is considerable funding for external courses and seminars even when the evidence is clear that they do not improve teaching and learning in classrooms.

A school's size and structure can also determine its effectiveness. Small schools find it much harder to obtain the resources and time for teachers and leaders to engage in appropriate professional learning. Small schools have fewer resources to spread across teachers and are less able to reallocate resources to different activities.

⁴³ OECD (2010); Tucker (2011)

Many government policies support both the higher establishment and on-going costs of running small schools. Again, we need to be honest about these costs and the trade-offs made across the system.

Appendix A: Professional learning programs

Teacher mentoring

OECD research shows that while many countries have mentoring programs, many are not done well.⁴⁴ But the highest performing schools and school systems heavily invest in mentoring programs.⁴⁵ Teaching and learning significantly improve when mentoring is intensive, with regular interactions over sustained periods of time.⁴⁶ As an example, Shanghai has intensive mentoring programs for all teachers, not just beginning teachers. Mentoring focuses squarely on the basics of teaching and learning, not just administrative and emotional support. It concentrates on diagnosing learning needs, subject-specific pedagogy, research and classroom management skills.

While world-class mentoring approaches vary across schools, a number of elements are common:

- Intensive support for beginning teachers: new teachers typically have two mentors, one for classroom management and one for subject-specific guidance.
- Diagnosis of mentee needs: mentoring relationships begin with a comprehensive diagnosis of mentee strengths and weaknesses. The diagnosis includes specific development directions for the mentee. These become central to the

mentoring relationship and are used to produce the mentee's development plan. In some schools, these plans last for up to three years.

- Classroom observation and feedback: mentor and mentee observe each other's lessons, as well as public demonstration lessons. Mentees frequently observe mentor lessons then write up reflections. Mentors observe mentees teaching and give immediate feedback on areas for improvement.
- Demonstration classes: mentees occasionally deliver demonstration classes at the school or local level, depending on their level of seniority and capabilities. Mentors provide constructive feedback and mentees submit a class profile. This profile includes a record of the teaching design, comments from mentors and other experts, as well as a self-evaluation of their performance.
- Lesson planning: mentors guide mentees in preparing lessons, developing teaching plans and discussing how to make improvements.
- Record of learning: mentees usually record what they have learnt through the mentoring program, detailing case-studies of student learning and articulating their own personal teaching style.

⁴⁴ OECD (2009)

⁴⁵ OECD (2010)

⁴⁶ Smith and Ingersoll (2004); *ibid.*; Rockoff (2008); Barber and Mourshed (2007)

Classroom observation and feedback

Classroom observation has a substantial impact on learning through its fundamental role in directly improving teaching.⁴⁷

These activities recognise the complexity of teaching processes, and the need for teachers to continuously develop to be effective in their roles.⁴⁸

The literature shows the following elements are important for effective observation:

- Observation is a tool for teacher development
 - Student learning (not only teaching) should be the focus of classroom observation.⁴⁹ Improving learning is the core objective, so observation should focus on the impact of teaching on students. Observers should understand the effectiveness of teaching via students' in-class behaviour. Observers are also advised to engage in the class activities, so as to maintain the accuracy of the observation.
 - On occasion, a group of observers can focus on specific students, studying their learning and classroom experiences. This enables collaboration on the learning of individual students and how to best teach to their learning needs. If a student starts to fall behind, multiple teachers analyse why and how it can be addressed.
- Teachers can work together in small teams and take turns to observe and be observed.⁵⁰ Effective observation can benefit from pre- and post-observation meetings.⁵¹ The pre-meeting should focus on the objectives of the teacher, the class being observed, the observation itself, and how these fit in with the school's objectives. The post-observation meeting should focus on what went well and what could be improved, while encouraging self-reflection.
 - Observation can focus on various aspects of teachers' work, aligned to the relevant teaching and learning objectives. It can include various aspects of instruction including interaction with students through encouragement and recognition, criticism and non-verbal attention to students. This includes student involvement – extent of active answering, questioning, and so on.
 - Following feedback, the teacher delivering the lesson is expected to modify their teaching approach and improve. Subsequent lessons can be observed by research group members to deepen their understanding of pedagogy and continuously improve teaching practices. Observation is a core element of effective continuous professional learning.
 - Demonstration lessons can also provide a vehicle for professional learning and collaboration and facilitate a culture of observation and feedback.

⁴⁷ Hattie (2009)

⁴⁸ Zwart, *et al.* (2007)

⁴⁹ MacBeath and McGlynn (2002)

⁵⁰ Stillwell (2009)

⁵¹ Richards and Lockhart (1992)

Research and lesson groups

Both research and lesson groups should be viewed as formal professional learning communities. Both involve classroom observations, constructive feedback to teachers, strong professional collaboration and school-based research – all shown to have significant impacts on student learning.⁵²

Research groups generally comprise teachers from the same subjects across a school (e.g. maths teachers). This group conducts school-based research to improve student learning through improved and often innovative teaching.⁵³ It explores teaching and pedagogical theory and applies it in the classroom. Teachers support each other in trialling new ways of working to improve student learning. More advanced teachers guide less experienced teachers through the process. Research groups could produce a formal research paper to share with new teachers and other schools.⁵⁴

Lesson Groups involve teachers of the same subject and same year level. They are typically smaller versions of research groups. Group members work together to plan lessons, examine student progress, and devise upcoming teaching content. Teachers discuss alternative teaching approaches, observe each other's classes, re-examine content, and identify and solve problems in teaching the content. Groups can pool resources in lesson planning to reduce individual teacher workload and free up time for reflection and discussion on learning.

⁵² Hattie (2009)

⁵³ Tucker (2011)

⁵⁴ Jensen and Reichl (2011)

Teacher appraisal and feedback

Meaningful feedback to teachers should be based on a comprehensive appraisal of how to improve their work.⁵⁵ Eight mechanisms could be used to appraise teachers' work:

- Student performance and assessments;
- Peer observation and collaboration;
- Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning;
- Student surveys and feedback;
- 360-degree assessment and feedback;
- Self-assessment;
- Parent surveys and feedback; and
- External observation

Schools should choose the mix of these methods they consider to be most effective and aligned with their objectives. This should provide a comprehensive picture of the strengths and weakness of teachers that are then linked to individual development programs.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Jacob and Lefgren (2008); Gates Foundation (2010); Rockoff and Speroni (2010); Jensen (2010); OECD (2009)

⁵⁶ Gates Foundation (2010); Rockoff and Speroni (2010)

Appendix B: Case study methodology

Research for the project involved six extended case studies in different schools. Grattan staff spent three – five days at each school meeting regularly with the school principal and leadership team and many teachers.

Grattan staff sought to collect enough information at each school to be able to:

- analyse the school's current priorities, strategy and operations
- provide a tailored set of options for best practice professional learning programs for that school, and
- an implementation plan with specific options for freeing up a significant amount of teacher time to help the school incorporate the professional learning plan.

To target the professional learning plan to the needs of each school, Grattan staff had separate meetings with:

- the Principal and school leadership team (multiple times) including heads of the Primary and Secondary school (where applicable)
- the business manager (where applicable)

- academic Heads of Department
- leading teachers
- classroom teachers (in focus groups), and
- IT, library and support staff.

The meetings were used to gather information and different perspectives on each school's:

- broad strategic objectives
- specific objectives for improving teaching and learning
- the extent to which active collaboration already occurs in the school and existing professional learning activities
- the types of challenges the school may face in implementing new professional learning programs, and
- how the school operates on a day-to-day basis.

Meeting staff at different levels and in different roles provided a range of views regarding what is working well in each school and what the priorities and needs are for future professional learning.

Appendix C: Case studies

School A

School A is a well-established, independent school in an outer suburb.

Sector:	Independent	Enrolments:	800-1000
Location:	Metropolitan	Teachers:	60-80
Type:	Primary and secondary	Fees:	Mid-range fees
ICSEA:	Well above average		

Source: MySchools 2013, information provided by school

Professional learning context and plan

The school has a strong emphasis on academic, co-curricular and student support programs.

It has recently started to develop and trial new professional learning programs to help lift its academic results. The programs include a schedule for peer observation and feedback, cross-faculty teaching meetings, greater analysis of student surveys and performance data and increased teacher appraisal and feedback mechanisms.

Having decided to place a higher priority on professional learning, the school can now focus on finalising the new programs and developing an implementation schedule to manage change.

Table A-1 sets out a five-year professional learning plan that both refines and builds on existing programs. In year five, the plan

requires an additional 125 periods a year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals just over three additional periods a week.

Table A-1: New professional learning plan

		# periods per teacher	
		weekly	p.a.
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define great teaching and learning; prioritise 2-3 aspects, demonstration Establish individual development plans Lesson groups Peer observation and feedback 	0.7	28
Year 2	+ Strengthen teacher appraisal	1.5	57
Year 3	+ Increase peer observation and feedback + Mentoring for beginning teachers + Research groups	3.2 (2.2)	123 (83)
Year 4	Consolidation year	3.2 (2.2)	123 (83)
Year 5	+ Add 360 degree feedback to teacher appraisal	3.3 (2.2)	125 (85)

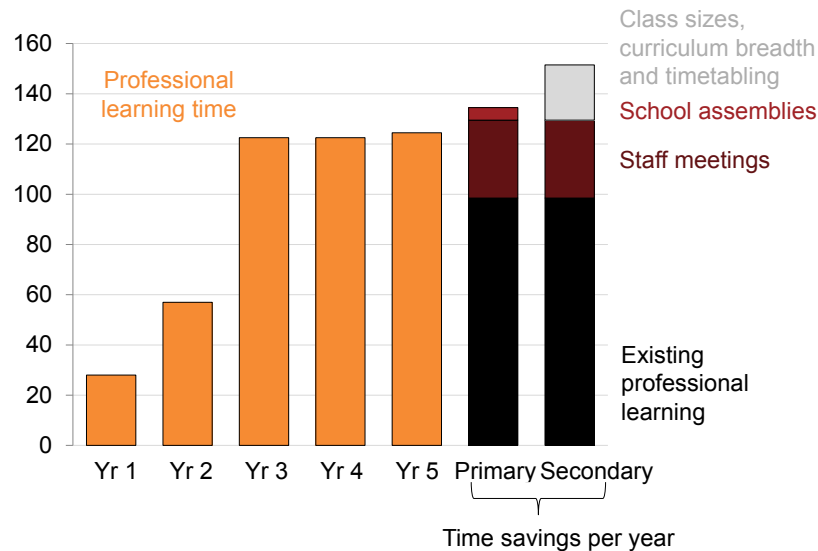
Note: The time required is for a typical classroom teacher. It does not include time for mentoring as this will likely involve a small number of teachers only. Figures in brackets indicate the time required if a classroom teacher does not participate in a research group.

Finding the time – potential trade-offs

Figure A-1 shows the time required for a typical classroom teacher for the proposed professional learning plan, and the amount of time savings that could be made through potential trade-offs identified in the case study investigation. The trade-offs

would be enough to cover the proposed professional learning activities.

Figure A-1: Time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



To make trade-offs this school could:

- Review existing in-house professional learning activities and refine and/or streamline these where appropriate.
- Use time currently set aside for large cross-faculty teaching team meetings for more small-group, collaborative forms of professional learning such as research groups (saves 50 periods a year per teacher).
- Reduce all staff administrative briefings (currently 15 minutes twice a week) to once a fortnight (saves 19 periods a year per teacher).
- Reduce the meeting load on teachers (saves 12 periods a year per teacher).
- Set aside five of the eight non-teaching days each year for professional learning by dropping or streamlining lower value activities on these days (saves 47 periods a year per teacher).
- Roster off teachers at junior school assemblies (saves 5 periods a year per teacher).
- Consolidate smaller classes across the secondary curriculum (our example saves 22 periods a year per teacher).

School B

School B is a medium size government secondary school with a large low socio-economic school community.

Sector:	Government	Enrolments	400 - 600
Location:	Metropolitan	Teachers	60 – 80
Type:	Secondary	Fees	Low / no fees
ICSEA:	Below average		

Source: MySchools 2012, information provided by school.

Professional learning context and plan

The student population has complex social and learning needs, with many migrant and refugee students from low socio-economic backgrounds. It has adopted a structured teaching approach with an explicit focus on numeracy and literacy.

Despite the challenges it faces, the school is already starting to implement some high-quality professional learning. Collaborative planning takes place within some faculties, and classroom observation is done once or twice throughout the year by some head teachers. There is also numeracy coaching across the school.

While progress has been made, the school wants to scale up collaboration and feedback in priority areas. Our case-study analysis identified a five-year professional learning plan, outlined in Table B-1. By year five, the plan requires 123 additional periods a year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals about three extra periods a week of professional learning.

Table B-1: New professional learning plan

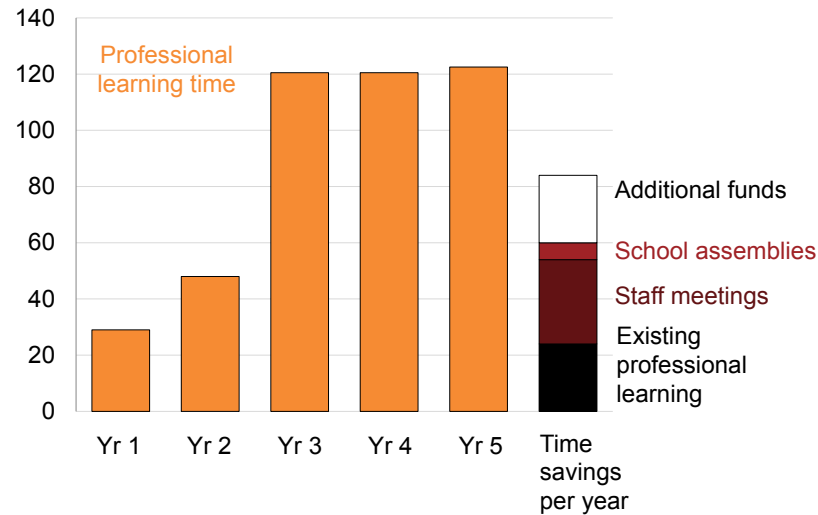
		# periods per teacher	
		weekly	per year
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is great teaching and learning, prioritise 2-3 aspects, demonstration lessons Individual development plans Mentoring beginning teachers Lesson groups 	0.7	29
Year 2	+ Peer observation and feedback	1.2	48
Year 3	+ Teacher appraisal: direct observation, student outcomes, self-assessment, student surveys + Research groups	3.0 (2.0)	121 (81)
Year 4	Consolidation year	3.0 (2.0)	121 (81)
Year 5	+ Teacher appraisal; add in 360 feedback	3.1 (2.1)	123 (83)

Note: The time required is for a typical classroom teacher. It does not include time for beginning teacher mentoring as this will likely involve a small number of teachers only. Figures in brackets indicate the total time required if a classroom teacher does not participate in a research group. If the school would like to implement mentoring for all teachers, this will be an additional 35 periods per teacher per year.

Finding the time – making trade-offs

Figure B-1 below shows the time required for the professional learning plan in Table B-1, as well as the time saved by suggested trade-off options. The trade-off options free up a significant amount of time for professional learning, although not enough to implement the plan in full.

Figure B-1: Time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



activities (saves 30 periods a year per teacher).

- Allocate additional funding under the new school resource allocation model to create more release time (creates 24 periods per teacher each year). This will be a flexible pool of time release that all teachers can use for effective professional learning during the working day.
- Roster off 40 per cent of teachers from one whole-school assembly each week (saves 6 periods a year per teacher).

The school is exploring greater use of teacher aides to improve teacher effectiveness and efficiency. Teacher aides will be expanded this year to help with science and home economics, which should help save on teacher time.

As shown in Figure B-1, trade-offs the school could make include:

- Review existing professional learning activities and refine and/or streamline these where appropriate.
- Allocate three non-teaching days each year for the new professional learning plan (saves 24 periods a year per teacher).
- Reorder faculty meetings to include new professional learning

School C

School C is an independent, medium-sized school in the suburbs of an Australian city.

Sector:	Independent, faith based	Enrolments:	400-600
Location:	Metropolitan	Teachers:	20-40
Type:	Primary and secondary	Fees:	Low-mid range fees
ICSEA:	Above average		

Source: MySchools 2013, information provided by school

Professional learning context and plan

After a period of increasing enrolments, School C's leaders are focusing on raising the quality of teaching and learning in the school. A school improvement plan, now under development, will articulate new strategic directions and priorities over the next year.

Some teachers are collaborating and undertaking peer observation, but school leaders would like to intensify these activities more broadly. A key challenge is finding the time for collaboration during the working day.

Table C-1 sets out a five-year professional learning plan based on discussions with school staff. It also refines and builds on existing professional learning activities. In Year 5, the plan requires an additional 121 periods a year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals just over three extra periods a week per teacher.

Table C-1: New professional learning plan

		# periods per teacher	
		weekly	p.a.
Year 1	• Demonstration lessons • Establish individual development plans • Lesson groups	0.6	24
Year 2	+ Peer observation and feedback	1.2	48
Year 3	Consolidation year + Increase peer observation and feedback	1.9	74
Year 4	+ Teacher appraisal	2.1	81
Year 5	+ Research groups	3.1 (2.1)	121 (81)

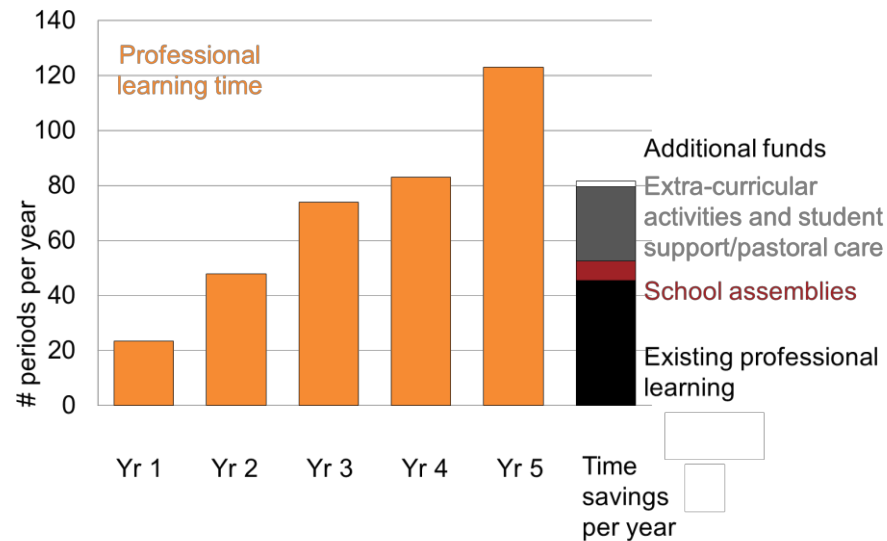
Note: The time required is for a typical classroom teacher. It does not include time for mentoring as this will likely involve a small number of teachers only. Figures in brackets indicate the time required for a teacher who does not participate in a research group.

Making the time – potential trade-offs

Figure C-1 shows the time required for the proposed professional learning plan outlined in Table C-1 above, as well as the amount of time savings that could be made through trade-offs. The trade-off options, identified during our case-study investigation, equal a total 81 periods a year per teacher. This frees up a significant amount of time for professional learning, although not enough to

implement the plan in full.

Figure C-1: Time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



activities on these days (saves 46 periods a year per teacher).

- Roster off half of teachers from school assembly and chapel (saves 13 periods a year per teacher).
- Reduce frequency of pastoral care subjects from weekly to fortnightly (saves 12 periods a year per secondary teacher).
- Reduce frequency of study skills sessions from weekly to fortnightly (saves eight periods a year per secondary teacher).
- Use additional funding to create a flexible pool of time release for professional learning (creates two periods a year per teacher). Alternatively, use additional funding to employ specific or expert teachers to deliver non-academic subjects such as tutor groups, study and research groups and religious education. The regular teachers that currently teach these subjects will have their workloads freed up for professional learning.

To make the trade-offs displayed in Figure C-1, this school could:

- First, review existing in-house professional learning activities and refine and/or streamline these where appropriate.
- Set aside five of the eight non-teaching days each year for professional learning by dropping or streamlining lower value

School D

School D is a small, non-faith-based, independent school in a regional area. It was established in the early 2000s as a primary school but now provides secondary education as well.

Sector:	Independent	Enrolments:	<200
Location:	Provincial	Teachers:	<25
Type:	Primary and secondary	Fee:	Mid-range fees
ICSEA	Above average		

Source: MySchools 2013, information provided by school.

Professional learning context and plan

Since 2009, the school leadership team has introduced a number of reforms to improve the school's organisation. The priority is now shifting to improving teacher practice, teacher collaboration, feedback, and critical self-reflection. Teachers are particularly eager to teach different kinds of students – especially those with special learning needs – in ways appropriate to those students.

Table D-1 sets out a five-year professional learning plan to address the school's priorities. In year five, the plan requires an additional 120 periods per year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals about three extra periods a week of professional learning.

Table D-1: New professional learning plan

		# periods per teacher	
		weekly	p.a.
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define great teaching and learning; prioritise two to three aspects, demonstrate Establish individual development plans Mentor beginning teachers Introduce subject specific external mentors and collaboration for secondary teachers Introduce lesson groups in primary; in secondary if feasible 	0.8	33
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin peer observation and feedback 	1.2	46
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase frequency of peer observation and feedback Establish research groups 	2.8 (1.8)	111 (72)
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation year 	2.8 (1.8)	111 (72)
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a teacher appraisal program 	3.1 (2.1)	120 (81)

Note: This plan is for a typical classroom teacher. It does not include time for mentoring beginning teachers as not all typical teachers will be involved in this. Figures in brackets show the number of periods for those not participating in the opt-in research group pilot.

This school has a challenge to create more opportunities for teacher collaboration, especially at the secondary level. Options include building collaborative networks with teachers in other schools and introducing more composite classes (see Box D).

Box D: Opportunities for collaboration in a small school

Opportunities for active professional collaboration are more limited in small schools. In this case study, many teachers have no colleagues teaching the same year level (in the primary school) or the same subject (in the secondary school). This limits their ability to collaborate on lesson planning, observe peers teaching similar subjects or get feedback on content or pedagogy issues. To implement the professional learning plan effectively these constraints need to be addressed. The school could:

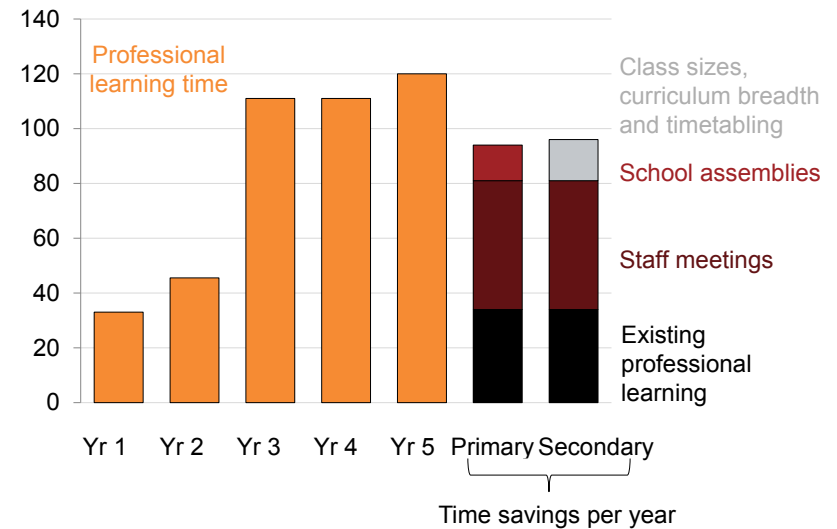
- Work with teachers from similar schools in surrounding areas or join online teacher networks
- Use composite classes in the primary school so that each teacher has at least one other colleague teaching the same year level (for example, the Year 1 and Year 2 classes could be split into two Year 1&2 classes)
- Use individual private coaches to help very isolated teachers to improve their practice.

Even in schools with no overlap between teachers' subject areas, internal collaboration is still valuable. Many dimensions of effective teaching are common across all areas -- structuring a lesson or classroom management practices, for example. Education system leaders, including governments, need to consider how to ensure all teachers can gain access to best practice professional learning in all schools.

Making the time – potential trade-offs

Figure D-1 shows the time required for the professional learning plan outlined in Table D-1 above, as well as time savings from possible trade-offs. The trade-off options free up a significant amount of time for professional learning, although not enough to implement the plan in full.

Figure D-1: Time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



To make the trade-offs shown in Figure D-1 this school could:

- Roster off teachers at extra-curricular pastoral care days (saves 15 periods a year per teacher).
- Roster off teachers at weekly junior school assemblies (saves 13 periods a year per teacher).
- Set aside 4 of the 7 non-teaching days each year for professional learning by dropping or streamlining lower value professional development activities on these days (saves 33 periods a year per teacher).
- Cut back existing weekly all-staff meetings, which are used to discuss administration matters and for professional development (often lecture-style). Administrative matters can be shifted to a new 15 minute weekly or fortnightly briefing and to email (saves 46 periods a year per teacher).

School E

School E is a large and long established, independent school in a big city.

Sector:	Independent	Enrolments:	1000 - 1200
Location:	Metropolitan	Teachers:	100-120
Type:	Secondary	Fees:	High fees
ICSEA:	Well above average		

Source: MySchools 2013; information provided by school

Professional learning context and plan

Students generally achieve high academic results, compared to national averages. The school has a strong academic focus and a wide offering of extra-curricular activities across sports, the arts, community service and student clubs. It has extensive student welfare and support arrangements. Many teachers are given time release to coordinate these non-teaching activities, although they generally take up additional teacher time.

Professional learning has largely focused on leadership skills and deepening content knowledge. Many teachers take part in external workshops and conferences. External experts and 'big thinkers' are also brought into the school. To date there has been relatively less emphasis on professional learning programs that strengthen collaboration and feedback among teachers.

Teacher observation and feedback, by peers or supervisors, occurs infrequently although some faculties have informal

arrangements. The degree of collaboration among teachers varies among faculties and departments. The school is considering ways to increase this.

Table E-1 sets out a five-year professional learning plan. When fully implemented, the plan requires approximately 113 periods a year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals about three periods a week of professional learning. Beginning and senior teachers will require more time: for the first group to be mentored, and for the second to appraise others.

Table E-1: New professional learning plan

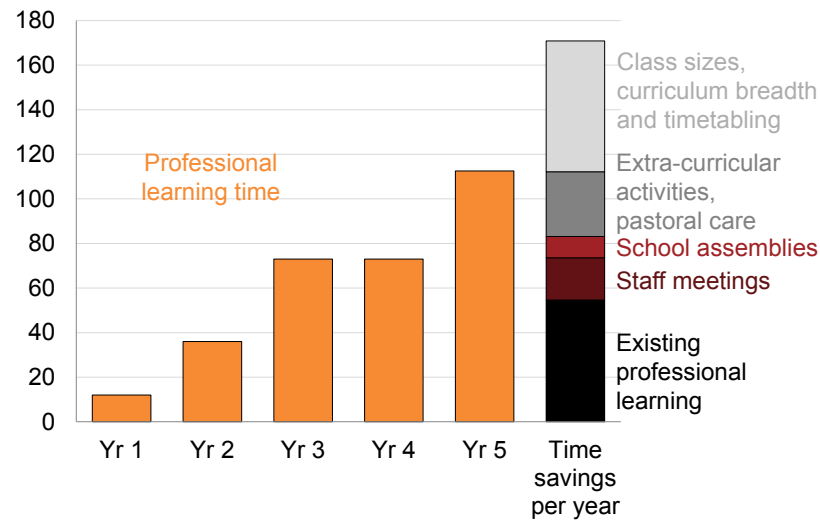
		# periods per teacher	
		weekly	p.a.
Year 1	• Identify great teaching and learning; prioritise two to three aspects	0.3	12
Year 2	+ Individual development plans + Mentoring for beginning teachers + Peer observation and feedback	0.9	36
Year 3	+ Strengthen teacher appraisal and feedback + Increase peer observation and feedback	1.9	73
Year 4	Consolidation year	1.9	73
Year 5	+ Research groups	3 (1.9)	113 (73)

Note: The time required is for a typical classroom teacher. It does not include time for mentoring as this will likely involve a small number of teachers only. Figures in brackets indicate the time required if a classroom teacher does not participate in a research group.

Making the time – potential trade-offs

Figure E-1 shows the time required for the proposed professional learning plan as well as the time savings that could be made through potential trade-offs. As can be seen, the trade-offs would be enough to implement the plan.

Figure E-1: Time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



To make trade-offs this school could:

- Review existing in-house professional learning activities and refine and/or streamline these where appropriate.
- Set aside five of the eight non-teaching days each year for professional learning by dropping or streamlining lower value activities on these days (saves 42 periods a year per teacher).
- Roster off half of teachers at inter-house sports and athletics days (saves six periods a year per teacher).
- Roster off teachers at fortnightly whole-school assemblies (saves nine periods a year per teacher).
- Streamline home-room teacher arrangements (saves 13 periods a year per teacher).
- Dedicate 75 per cent of the external professional development budget to time release for internal professional learning (releases additional 12 periods a year per teacher).
- Reduce each teacher's meetings by one a fortnight (saves 19 periods a year per teacher).
- Improve the allocation of teaching load across existing staff (releases an additional four periods a year per teacher).
- Improve timetabling to reduce the number of very small classes across Years 8 to 12, with no reduction in subject

offerings (saves 50 or more periods a year per teacher).

- Streamline co-curricular activities to free up teachers' time (cost neutral) or shift associated administrative duties to non-teaching staff (save 10 or more periods a year per teacher).

School F

School F is a large, government school in an outer metropolitan area serving a disadvantaged student community.

Sector:	Government	Enrolments:	1000-1200
Location:	Metropolitan	Teachers:	100-120
Type:	Secondary	Fees:	Low/no fees
ICSEA	Well below average		

Source: MySchools 2013, information provided by school

Professional learning context

School F was established less than a decade ago by amalgamating three former schools in an area previously characterised by poor educational outcomes. From day one the principal has had a mandate to set clear priorities. The leadership team has established a strong vision for teaching and learning and high expectations for teachers and students. It has put a priority on creating a safe and orderly learning environment. School attendance and results, particularly in literacy, have improved considerably since it was established.

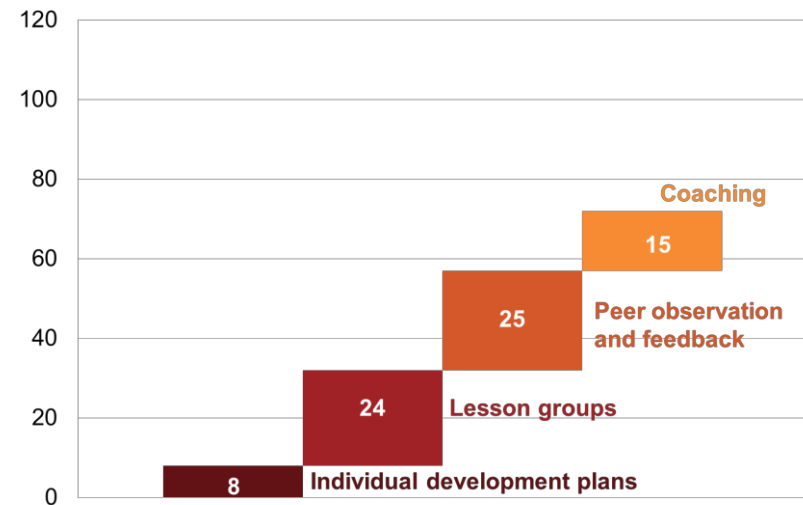
Of all our case study schools, School F has the most extensive professional learning program, shown in Figure F-1. It has worked very hard to create a culture of coaching and improvement. Each teacher has:

- regular meetings with their development manager on their

individual development plans (at least eight periods a year)

- fortnightly lesson group meetings in place of department meetings (24 periods a year)
- peer observation and feedback conducted fortnightly, including time release for all teachers (25 periods a year)
- access to individual support from eight specialist teaching and learning coaches (15 periods a year of coaching on average).

Figure F-1: Existing professional learning at this school



As Figure F-1 shows, together this represents about 72 periods of professional learning for each teacher.

Periods at this school are long: 75 minutes each. If they were the average length of periods in the other case study schools (about 50 minutes), the amount of time devoted to these programs would be equivalent to about 108 periods a year for each teacher.

A key priority for this school is to evaluate and refine its existing programs. In addition, teachers said they needed more time for feedback from peers and coaches. Research groups and a strengthened teacher appraisal and feedback system would also increase professional learning opportunities.

In line with these priorities, Table F-1 sets out a plan for additional professional learning at School F.

Table F-1: New professional learning time for a typical teacher

		# periods per teacher	
		Weekly	p.a.
Year 1	• Refine existing programs + Increase feedback with coaches and peers + Research groups	0.9 (0.2)	37 (10)
Year 2	Consolidation year	0.9 (0.2)	37 (10)
Year 3	Consolidation year	0.9 (0.2)	37 (10)
Year 4	+ Teacher appraisal and feedback	1.1 (0.4)	45 (18)
Year 5	Consolidation year	1.1 (0.4)	45 (18)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate the time required if a classroom teacher does not participate in a research group.

Making the time– potential trade-offs

The school has already made substantial trade-offs to produce its professional learning program. At this school:

- teachers spend less time in school assemblies or on extra-curricular activities compared to teachers at other schools.
- the professional learning budget mostly funds in-house collaboration rather than external courses or conferences.
- teachers’ classroom teaching time is managed efficiently, with a streamlined curriculum and few very small classes.
- many meetings have an explicit professional learning focus, with administrative information mostly sent through email.
- school finances are aligned with the priority placed on teaching and learning. The school has rearranged IT, bus and canteen services, maintenance and cleaning and school uniform supplies, and used the savings to fund additional professional learning.

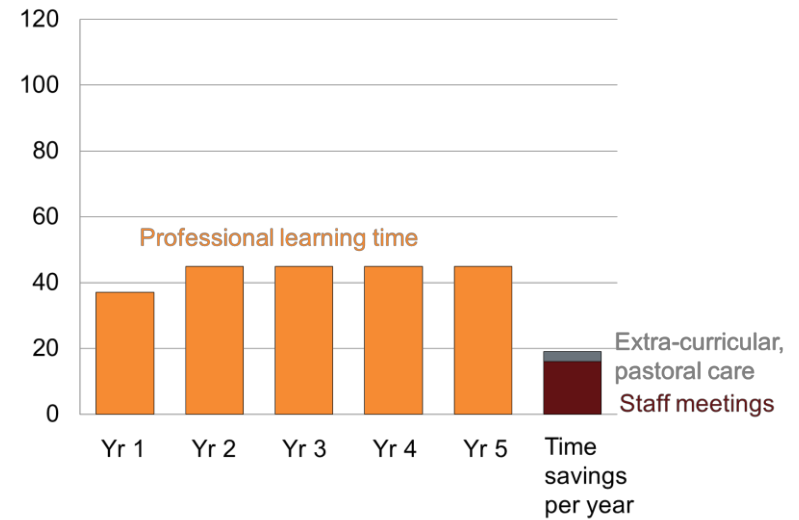
Compared to other schools we studied, School F has fewer options to shift additional resources to professional learning. That said, some additional teacher time could be created by:

- Eliminating four regular meetings each term (saves 16 periods a year per teacher).
- Rotating some teachers off all-school athletics and swimming

days (saves three periods a year per teacher).

The trade-off options free up a significant amount of time for professional learning, although not enough to implement the plan in full. Figure F-2 shows the time required for a typical classroom teacher for the additional professional learning plan. When fully implemented, the plan requires an additional 45 periods a year for a typical classroom teacher. This equals just over one extra period a week of professional learning, in addition to the professional learning plan already in place at School F.

Figure F-2: Additional time required and possible time-savings
Number of periods for a typical classroom teacher



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