

Example of practice

Professional learning at a system-level

This resource provides examples of professional learning at a system-level to support evidence use.

Professional learning supports teachers to use evidence well ([AERO 2022](#)).
Professional learning can take many forms and it can be done at an individual-level, school-level or whole-system-level.
It can be offered widely, for example to all schools within a system or targeted to a specific audience.

On-site coaching programs

On-site coaching is a common way to support evidence use in schools. For example, the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA) supports the use of evidence-based practice at a system-level through the High Impact Practices coaching program.

The program:

- focuses on the use of evidence-based practices
- adds to teachers' existing skills, strengths and strategies to meet students' learning needs
- runs over 6 months
- is for all teachers in all stages of their practice.

The program is offered on-site within schools by an AISWA facilitator. It combines elements of Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and the Victorian Department of Education and Training's High-Impact Teaching Strategies.

Schools nominate up to 6 teachers to work through the program together and support each other. The program involves 3 full-day workshops, professional reading, an online course on cognitive load theory, one-to-one coaching and classroom observations. Teachers have professional conversations to unpack theory and evidence, observe examples, self-reflect on current practice, and translate learning into practical actions for the classroom. They also have a workbook to record learning.

Boosting exceptional teachers

Boosting exceptional teachers through system-level professional learning is another way to support evidence use in schools. One example is the [Teaching Excellence Program](#) delivered by the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership for the Department of Education and Training Victoria.

This program is for teachers who have demonstrated exceptional teaching in their discipline. It aims to advance professional knowledge and practice by supporting participants to:

- access and unpack research
- explore the science behind how students learn
- upskill in discipline-based content knowledge
- use a process of inquiry to improve practice.

The year-long program includes 4 days of conferences, 16 hours of masterclasses and participation in Teaching Excellence Learning Communities. Conferences involve collaboration and professional discussion to further advance the teaching profession. Masterclasses, designed and led by master teachers and experts, enable participants to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary knowledge in their discipline, and make connections between theory and practice. Optional responsive pedagogy electives can be taken as online workshops to further build participants' knowledge and skills.

Targeting all schools and teachers within the system

Other professional learning programs target all schools and teachers within a system. One example is the [Catalyst approach](#), introduced by Catholic Education Canberra and Goulburn in all schools in the Archdiocese. The system-wide school improvement initiative has 2 goals:

- “Every student is a competent reader”
- “High Impact Teaching Practice is visible in every classroom”.

To realise these goals, Catalyst delivers a suite of evidence-based professional learning programs and resources for principals, leadership teams and teachers to improve teaching practice and student learning. The High Impact Teaching Practice (HITP) program is a comprehensive professional learning program delivered within the initiative. Catalyst is informed by the science behind how students learn, and the foundation of HITP is based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.

The HITP program involves:

- 45-minute online units that equip teachers with foundational research, knowledge and theory. They can be completed individually, in a small group or as a whole school.
- longer format professional learning sessions offered online with leading education experts.
- practical professional learning and coaching completed in small groups over 4 to 5 days with a specialist.

Summary

These 3 examples show how systems can support the use of evidence and evidence-based practices through professional learning. The programs were designed based on the most up to date science of what works in professional learning ([Education Endowment Foundation 2021](#)). They aim to enhance the skills and capabilities of teachers, leaders and principals to improve teaching practice and student outcomes. Evaluating such programs will offer insights into what elements are most successful at achieving intended outcomes. Evaluation can also shed light on what support can be further developed to achieve outstanding practice, and better outcomes for students.