

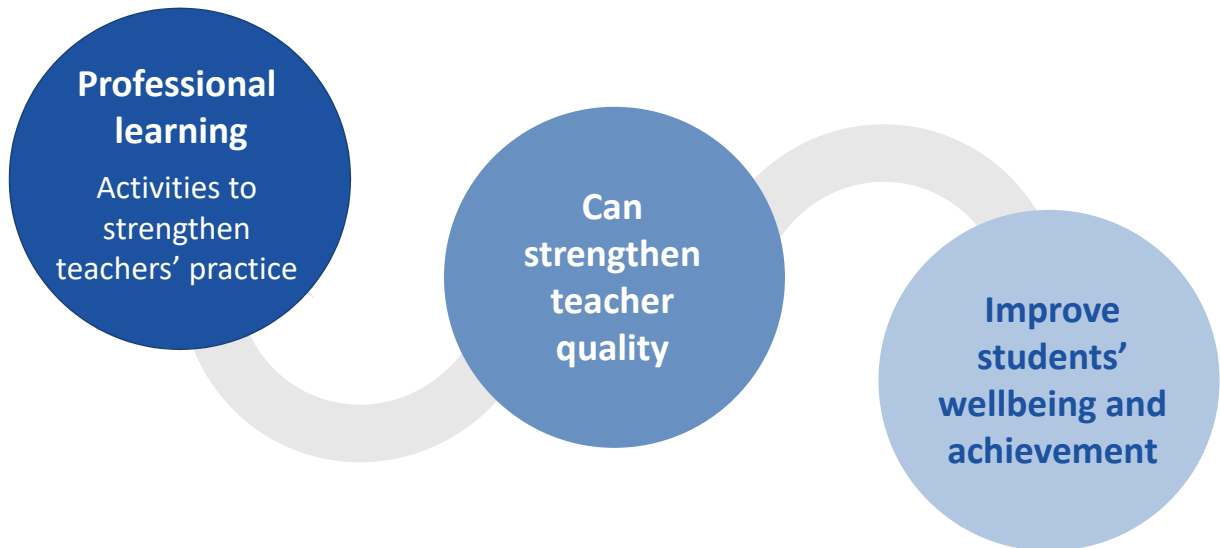
Professional Learning for School Teachers

Tabled 20 February 2019

VAGO

This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report, *Professional Learning for School Teachers*.

Overview



Throughout their careers, teachers undertake various formal and informal learning activities to strengthen their practice, known as professional learning. Research shows that teacher quality has a significant influence on student outcomes.

Helping teachers to continually refine, adapt, and grow their skillsets, therefore, has the potential to improve Victorian students' wellbeing, achievement, and engagement levels.

Overview



- Commitment to enhancing students' learning outcomes
- Professional learning critical in improving the knowledge and skills of teachers

In 2015, the Victorian Government launched its Education State reform agenda, which committed to enhancing all student's learning outcomes. This agenda frames professional learning as a critical lever in improving the knowledge and skills of teachers.

Who we looked at

The Victorian Institute of Learning (VIT)

- Independent authority
- Regulator
- Registration requires at least 20 hours of professional learning per year

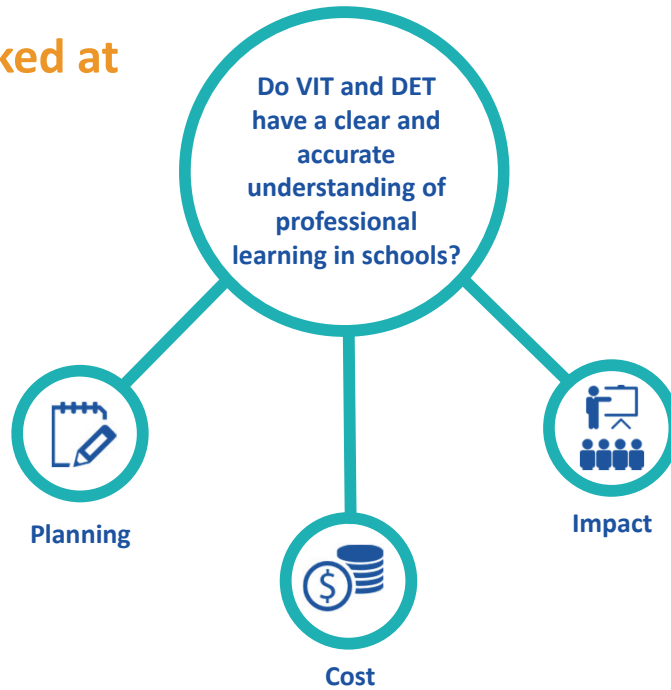
The Department of Education and Training (DET)

- Oversees primary and secondary schooling
- Delivers some professional learning
- Aims to create strong learning cultures

Two major entities oversee professional learning in Victorian government schools:

- The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority responsible for regulating the teaching profession. VIT requires teachers to renew their registration each year to demonstrate their continued competence and attest they have completed 20 hours of professional learning in the previous 12 months.
- The Department of Education and Training (DET) oversees the provision of primary and secondary schooling in Victoria. DET delivers some professional learning to teachers, but it is neither the major nor the sole provider. Instead, it aims to support schools to create and sustain strong professional learning cultures that encourage collaborative and reflective practices.

What we looked at



This audit examined whether VIT and DET have a clear and accurate understanding of the professional learning that occurs in Victorian government schools, including its planning, cost, and impact.

What we found



Agenda conforms to best practice principles.



Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) encourages focus on areas known to have greatest impact.



Opportunities for VIT and DET to enhance support through improved data analysis.

We found that DET’s professional learning agenda conforms to best practice principles, as it recognises the importance of student-centred, classroom-based, and teacher-led activities.

DET’s flagship strategy—the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)—encourages principals and teachers to focus their efforts on the areas known to have the greatest impact on school performance.

We also found that there are opportunities for VIT and DET to enhance their support for professional learning through improved data analysis.

DET – system support



Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT) improves oversight of school's four-year and annual planning cycles



DET's evaluation of its Professional Learning Communities (PLC) program
→informed program improvements



Potential for DET to better use feedback from surveys and performance and development processes

DET has significantly improved its oversight of schools' four-year and annual planning cycles through the development of the Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT).

SPOT enables principals to document their improvement plans in an interactive, centralised repository that facilitates systemwide analysis. These plans include a professional learning and development component, which assists DET to monitor how principals plan for the collective growth of their teachers. DET, however, has minimal insight into how teachers' individual goals align with their schools' improvement priorities.

DET has commissioned an extensive evaluation of its Professional Learning Communities (PLC) program and made alterations to the program in response to its findings.

There is also potential for DET to better use its feedback from school staff surveys and teachers' performance and development processes to develop a broader and better understanding of teachers' practices, perceptions, and priorities.

DET – unclear about costs incurred



DET lacks clarity on costs to develop and deliver professional learning

DET needs to ensure schools have sufficient funds for learning activities

We also found that DET lacks a clear understanding of the costs schools incur to develop and deliver professional learning programs for teachers. DET needs to increase its oversight of this area to ensure schools have sufficient funds to budget for professional learning activities.

VIT – limited analysis and research



VIT can enhance support for professional learning through improved data analysis

VIT rarely scrutinises collected information to gain insights into learning needs and priorities

Limited ability to inform the Minister for Education about teachers' developmental needs

VIT could enhance support for professional learning through improved data analysis. While VIT collects information about professional learning activities from a sample of the workforce each year, it rarely scrutinises this information to gain insight into teachers' professional learning needs and priorities.

This lack of insight limits VIT's ability to inform the Minister for Education about teachers' developmental needs—which it is required to do under the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006*.

Next steps



DET has acknowledged that an enhanced understanding of costs will strengthen support for the Education State reforms

VIT plans to implement various actions in response to our findings, including redeveloping its business systems and analysing data to better understand teachers' professional learning needs



As a result of this audit, DET has acknowledged that an enhanced understanding of the costs that schools incur to develop and deliver professional learning programs will strengthen support for the Education State reforms.

VIT plans to implement various actions in response to our findings, including redeveloping its business systems, reviewing its renewal of registration audit, and analysing data to understand teachers' professional learning needs, which it will report onto the Minister for Education and key stakeholders, such as DET, which help drive better targeting of professional learning for teachers.

For further information, please view the full report on our website:
www.audit.vic.gov.au

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