Professional learning and publishing
For teachers, by teachers and with teachers

ACSA conference, Friday 2 October
10.00-11.00am
Overview

- PETAA’s history in publishing and professional learning in the context of research
- Developing a vision for evidence-based publishing and professional learning
- Key actions taking PETAA forward – a case study
- Lessons learned and future challenges
• What are the most common teacher learning experiences?
• What drives the decisions around those experiences?
PETAAC’s context

• A long history as leader in publishing on English and literacy
• A focus on connecting research and practice
Expertise external to the group of participating teachers is necessary to challenge existing assumptions and develop the kinds of new knowledge and skills associated with positive outcomes for students.

(Timperley, 2008)
PETAAs’s context

• Shift to be more nationally focused

Challenges of the national context

• Alignment with state-based variations in curriculum
• Differences in state traditions e.g. models of language
• Accreditation processes
Expert teachers have high levels of knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, can guide learning to desirable surface and deep outcomes, can successfully monitor learning and provide feedback that assists students to progress, can attend to the more attitudinal attributes of learning and can provide defensible evidence of positive impacts of the teaching on student learning.

(Hattie, 2012)

Professional development: A great way to avoid change.

(Cole, 2004)

A focus on teachers’ deep knowledge of the discipline is a worthy investment
Improving professional learning involves doing the right things in one's work, understanding that student learning depends on every teacher learning all the time, deprivatizing teaching, and adjusting teachers' working conditions to allow for a different style of learning. These ideas and their interrelationships are the future of teacher learning.  

(Fullan, 2007)

In the last two decades, research has defined a new paradigm for professional development — one that rejects the ineffective "drive-by" workshop model of the past in favor of more powerful opportunities.  

(Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009)
Research supports professional development that:

• deepens teachers' knowledge of content and how to teach it to students
• helps teachers understand how students learn specific content
• provides opportunities for active, hands-on learning
• enables teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, and reflect on the results with colleagues
• is part of a school reform effort that links curriculum, assessment, and standards to professional learning
• is collaborative and collegial
• is intensive and sustained over time.

Research does not support professional development that:

• relies on the one-shot workshop model
• focuses only on training teachers in new techniques and behaviors
• is not related to teachers' specific contexts and curriculums.
• is episodic and fragmented.
• expects teachers to make changes in isolation and without support.
• does not provide sustained teacher learning opportunities over multiple days and weeks.

(Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009)
Professional learning and publishing – what the research tells us

• Hardy (2015) describes an approach to teacher learning where teachers and their practices are treated as problems or ‘risks’ to be fixed through the application of programmes and initiatives

• This is contrasted with Lingard and Renshaw’s teaching and teacher education may become both ‘research-informed’, and ‘research informing’ (in Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2010)

National education systems have become increasingly focused on a more narrow educational discourse.

(Hardy, 2010)
Changes in governance

- Nationally representative Board
- Fewer but more intensive Board meetings
- Committees with particular focus areas
- Focus on strategic direction
A framework for developing a vision

PETAA’s work – current and future

Evidence-based approaches to teacher learning

The dominant educational discourse
The Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) is a national association that supports primary school educators to focus on the teaching and learning of English and literacies across the curriculum.

**VISION:** A national leader in the fields of English and literacies across the curriculum, connecting literacy and English as a coherent, productive topic for theory, research and educational practice.

**MISSION:** To provide leadership and expertise in English and literacies across the curriculum that will develop the professional knowledge and practice of an increasingly diverse primary school educational community.

### 1. Publications and research
- **1.1** Provide academically rigorous publications which bridge theory and classroom practice
- **1.2** Explore diverse publication modes and platforms
- **1.3** Become active in the educational research community with a focus on PETAA’s core business.

**Strategic Actions:**
1. Build relationships with authors and creators who present the relationship between current research, sound pedagogy and the complexities of classroom practice
2. Provide publications in a variety of modes for new and emerging markets, deliverable via multiple modes
3. Seek new authors to write articles as a first step/intro to PETAA

### 2. Professional learning
- **2.1** Provide academically rigorous professional learning which bridges theory and classroom practice
- **2.2** Anticipate the professional learning needs of primary educators across different career stages and contexts
- **2.3** Provide high quality, nationally recognised professional learning through a range of modes and approaches.

**Strategic Actions:**
1. Discerningly source a range of presenters who demonstrate knowledge of the application of theory and practice
2. Develop a review system for sourcing professional learning
3. Continually scan the education environment, and utilise social media avenues to identify resources

### 3. Professional communities
- **3.1** Engage with and broaden the professional community across educational sectors and the nation
- **3.2** Capitalise on, and extend PETAA’s social media presence to engage the professional community.

**Strategic Actions:**
1. Develop and implement an effective recruitment strategy and an integrated retention program
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan
3. Build opportunities to engage with the various levels of professional expertise through a focused marketing program
4. Review membership categories on an ongoing basis to ensure that benefits meet or exceed members’ expectations

### 4. Leadership and advocacy
- **4.1** Expand PETAA’s profile as the peak professional body for primary literacies to Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors and the tertiary sector
- **4.2** Provide a leadership voice to advocate powerfully for the importance of evidence-based pedagogy in English and cross-curriculum literacies.

**Strategic Actions:**
1. Establish pathways through which PETAA membership can contribute to and inform PETAA’s advocacy role
2. Seek a leadership role within AAAF to ensure the recognition of the importance of literacies across the curriculum and facilitate active collaboration in the communication
Publications and research

PETAA Research Grant

• research grant available to researchers to conduct research with teachers and students in primary schools.

• up to $75,000 will be made available annually to enable researchers to undertake research around the efficacy of different pedagogical approaches to the teaching of English in the primary school setting and will involve teachers and schools as research partners.

• The researchers will be expected to work collaboratively to report the research in a manner which is relevant to the PETAA membership and the broader education community.

Continue to focus on connecting research and practice — ‘researchly disposition’
Leadership and advocacy

Leading the conversation and setting the tone

- Position papers on key issues of interest to members, the public and the media
- Building relationships with key media organisations

NAPLAN tests tell us nothing about the art of writing

August 19, 2014
Robyn Cox

Australia leads the world in the teaching of writing, so why get hung up about the results of a NAPLAN test? Let's focus on our teachers' literacy achievements.
Professional learning

• Expanding professional learning services nationally
• Move to focus on delivering ‘bespoke’ models that align to best practice in teacher learning:

| is part of a school reform effort that links curriculum, assessment, and standards to professional learning | Working with school leadership teams and teachers to design PL based on school needs |
| is collaborative and collegial | Facilitate professional dialogue through learning teams within schools and across networks |
| is intensive and sustained over time. | Regular visits over a term or semester |
A case study

- Building credibility
- Expanding modes of professional learning
- ‘Deprivatizing’ practice
- Connecting up PL and Pubs
- Trialled with schools
- Building on existing expertise and resources
Lessons learned and future challenges

- Custodians of a delicate eco-system – people and quality
- Focus on the future by reflecting on legacy
- The strategic plan as a living document – cycle of review
- ‘Joined-up’ and personalised services

VISION:
A national leader in the fields of English and literacies across the curriculum, connecting literacy and English as a coherent, productive topic for theory, research and educational practice.
Questions and discussion
References


Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2014) *Global trends in professional learning and performance & development: Some implications and ideas for the Australian education system*


References


