

What is the impact and sustainability of action learning and action research for professional learning in schools?

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Aims

- ▶ To investigate the building of a professional learning culture in schools through special programs and funding.
- ▶ Investigate schools that received Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP) Quality Teacher Action Learning (QTAL) government funding to support an action learning professional learning approach from 2003 to 2008.
- ▶ Determine the degree to which this mode of inquiry is sustained over the medium or longer term.

What is AGQTP? QTAL?

- ▶ The AGQTP was a large scale national project that spanned ten years and “provided funding to strengthen the skills and understanding of the teaching profession” (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2009a).
- ▶ QTAL project funding began in 2003, and schools applied for funding to carry out school based projects that incorporated the New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework and other national education priorities.

Why was QTAL unique?

- ▶ Teams of teachers (usually 6– 8 teachers) worked in an action learning model to address a local workplace issue and national education agenda.
- ▶ Learning was project based, and the team set the direction and pace of the learning.
- ▶ School based QTAL teams were supported in their learning by state coordinators and academic partners from Universities.

Other examples of government funded professional learning programs in Australian schools

- ▶ Disadvantaged Schools Program/ Priority Schools Program
- ▶ National Professional Development Program (1993– 1996)
- ▶ Innovative Links Program (1994– 1996)
- ▶ AGQTP (2000– 2010)
 - Quality Teacher Program (2000– 2003) (QTP)
 - Quality Teaching Action Learning Indigenous Project (2003– 2010) (QTIP)
 - Quality Teaching Action Learning Project (2003– 2010) (QTAL)
- ▶ National Partnerships Program (2010–) (NPS)
- ▶ Teacher Competencies/ National Accreditation (2010–)

Factors that contribute to sustained teacher professional learning cultures

- ▶ Teachers need to be up skilled in using the process of action learning.
- ▶ Time for action learning needs to be incorporated into professional learning components of school management plans.
- ▶ There needs to be continuity in the content focus for school based change projects.
- ▶ **The sustainability of projects needs to be monitored over time in order to evaluate their effectiveness.**
- ▶ A collaborative work culture exists that promotes school based teacher research.
- ▶ Enabling conditions for action learning need to be in place in schools.

(Hoban et. al. 2005)


