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# Queensland Schools Report: Working in Partnership with The Learner First



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# THE LEARNER FIRST AUSTRALIA

February 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learner First has partnered with Queensland schools since 2019. Beginning with a small number of schools the work expanded across the region in 2020 and also included additional clusters of schools in the South East Region under the leadership of an Assistant Regional Director. 2021 has already seen a growing number of schools joining this network for learning.

Over the past two years, schools partnering with The Learner First have reported and provided evidence that they experienced tremendous shifts in culture, mindset, practice and outcomes, supporting the progression not only of students but also of teachers and other school staff. At the heart of the learning journeys of those engaged with The Learner First is a deeper understanding of who learners really are, not just as students, but as diverse individuals. By developing relationships built on trust and belonging, embedding new knowledge of their students in learning, and embracing the development of learners' wellbeing as the true and real purpose of teaching and learning, schools are successfully guiding their students to improved academic and lifelong success.

With measured successes in school, teacher and student outcomes and continued alignment with the policies and strategies of DET QLD, The Learner First network in 2021 will continue to promote Queensland schools in their mission of **every student succeeding**.

## WHO IS THE LEARNER FIRST?

The Learner First (TLF) is a holistic approach to professional learning that focusses improvement across three core areas:

- **School Culture.** Understanding and aligning the mental models that drive behaviour.
- **Learning Design.** Achieving inclusivity and differentiation through purposeful pedagogical strategies rooted in teacher and student collaboration.
- **Authentic Assessment.** Aligning the Achievement Standards with formative and summative assessments to create equitable access to evidence gathering and success for every student.

This crucial triad leads to increased competence and trust, innovative teacher practice and astonishing outcomes throughout classrooms and schools.

### School Culture

The culture of a school determines learners' experiences. Kids learn best, and experience the greatest wellbeing, in environments where they feel known, cared for and supported to succeed—not only academically, but in all aspects of life. The process of creating a positive and hopeful school narrative and establishing a culture that affirms the talents and diversity of every learner depends on the collective mindsets of everyone in your school community. By examining the values and beliefs that inform their approaches to teaching and learning and introducing new ways of working together from there, schools create inclusive and equitable learning environments rooted in the belief that every learner will succeed.

### Learning Design

*'In order to design curriculum, why wouldn't you get to know your students on that deeper level? Why wouldn't you base that curriculum design around their needs, their strengths, their deficits, and build upon that? It's just the perfect process, I believe, because it's always putting the learner first, at the centre of all our decision making and our work, and it's starting from that depth of knowledge of your children, into [then] catering for that in your curriculum design. And underpinning it the whole way through is the idea of connecting and supporting, checking in, getting all stakeholders involved. It just makes sense. It's that complete inquiry cycle for school improvement—it really is.'*

**—Head of Department, SHS**

With The Learner First, teachers design curricular learning that not only meets academic requirements, but that also advances their learners' wellbeing—the state of mental, physical and emotional health and fulfillment cultivated by self-understanding, connections, knowledge and competency, and by the contributions learners make to others' lives and to the world. Teachers need to be supported to design daily learning that's focussed on all of

the outcomes kids need. It starts with strong teacher-student relationships built on a deep understanding of who students are and what they need at a given point in time. From there, dually equipped with the (ACARA) Queensland achievement standards and the social-emotional learning goals detailed in The Learner First's Wellbeing Curriculum (see pgs. 8-9), teachers and their students can co-design learning that makes a real difference in their schools, communities and beyond.

## Learning Outcomes for Wellbeing

### Self-Understanding

- **Identity.** Who you are.
- **Place.** How you fit into the world.
- **Capacity.** Your potential for success.
- **Purpose.** How you can contribute.

### Connection

- **Interpersonal.** Connecting with those around you.
- **Environmental.** Connecting with your environments.
- **Conceptual.** Connecting with learning.
- **Universal.** Connecting with all of humanity.

### Knowledge

- **Learning areas in the Australian Curriculum:**
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Humanities and Social Sciences
  - Technologies
  - Health and Physical Education
  - The Arts
  - Languages
  - Work Studies

### Competency

- **Commitment.** Having what it takes to persevere with your learning.
- **Collaboration.** Combining learning to solve problems together.
- **Creativity.** Creating new learning, ideas or solutions.
- **Communication.** Sharing and gathering learning.
- **Critical Thinking.** Making sense of complex learning.

When these come together, we add to the world—and that leads to wellbeing, meaning and fulfillment.

## Authentic Assessment

What do you want to know about your learners? The process of discovering learners' identities, interests, goals, learning levels and more requires an authentic, mixed-method approach to assessment that helps teachers gather evidence of student learning every day and in any number of ways. With a range of tools including Learning Progressions for measuring students' social-emotional development and tools to guide teachers through the inquiry process, expectations remain high, the integrity of the standards remains intact, and students are supported to show what they know in the ways best suited to their learning styles.

Working with The Learner First develops a profound understanding of the impact of a school's culture and moral purpose on every action, decision and behaviour within the school walls. Focussing on culture first enables improvement at scale, and it ensures that the positive changes effected collaboratively will actually stick with the passing of time. Schools benefit tremendously from the opportunity to engage from the beginning of the work in honest, professional conversations that develop a shared understanding of what matters, what's needed, and ways forward as a connected community of learners. The work of The Learner First is to positively support a way forward that honours both the school system and the school itself, contextually integrating the elements of both.

Figures 1-2: Examples of schools' integration of The Learner First process into their overall vision and strategic plans.

Figure 1.

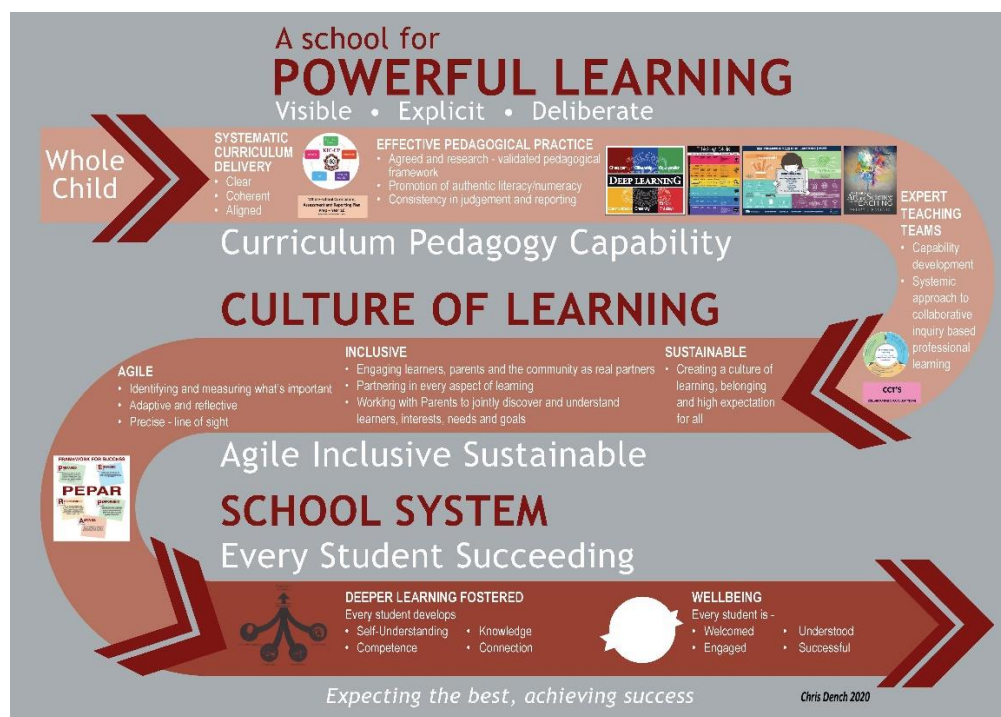


Figure 2.





## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS TO DATE

Schools that have partnered with The Learner First in Queensland have witnessed tremendous growth in a short period of time. Experienced successes are rooted primarily in specific cultural and mindset shifts that support teachers to develop a deep understanding of learners' individual identities and needs, and then to use that understanding to enhance the way learning is delivered in their classes. By designing curricular learning that builds from a holistic understanding of success and that embeds culturally responsive pedagogical practices, teachers and their students create cultures of wellbeing in which everyone—students, teachers, families—progresses toward identified goals.

### Curricular Learning + SEL = Wellbeing

It's traditional for teachers to design their teaching and learning programs by aligning the achievement standards, content descriptors and capabilities into a series of lesson plans to make up a unit of work. The fundamental element missing here is the child—the student for whom the learning is designed. The single most foundational practice for enabling learning and wellbeing is understanding and valuing who learners really are—not just as students, but as unique individuals with varying interests, passions, cultures, goals and paths to achieving success in their lives. With that missing (and most important) element in place, teachers can design curricular learning that's relevant to learners' lives, interests and needs, and that develops the social-emotional outcomes that complete the full picture of what it means to succeed.

At one State High School, strong leadership and a deep connection to the moral purpose of teaching and learning has resulted in meaningful links between school culture, the Australian curriculum, and the wider social-emotional goals that contribute to learners' health and wellbeing. The first step in purposeful and intentional learning design, the school's teachers have found, is developing an understanding of the learners in your class. Who are they? What are they interested in? Which learners are struggling, and in what ways? With that understanding in place, teachers can focus curricular learning on developing the full range of outcomes learners need.

*"By doing The Learner First process I really enjoy the fact that you get to know the kids, and then it takes it the step further—how does that [knowledge] then translate into integrating into the lesson, integrating it into their goals? Because we put a lot of emphasis and stress on academic goals, but what about their personal self—who do they want to be, what are their focusses on becoming a better person?"*

—Teacher, SHS

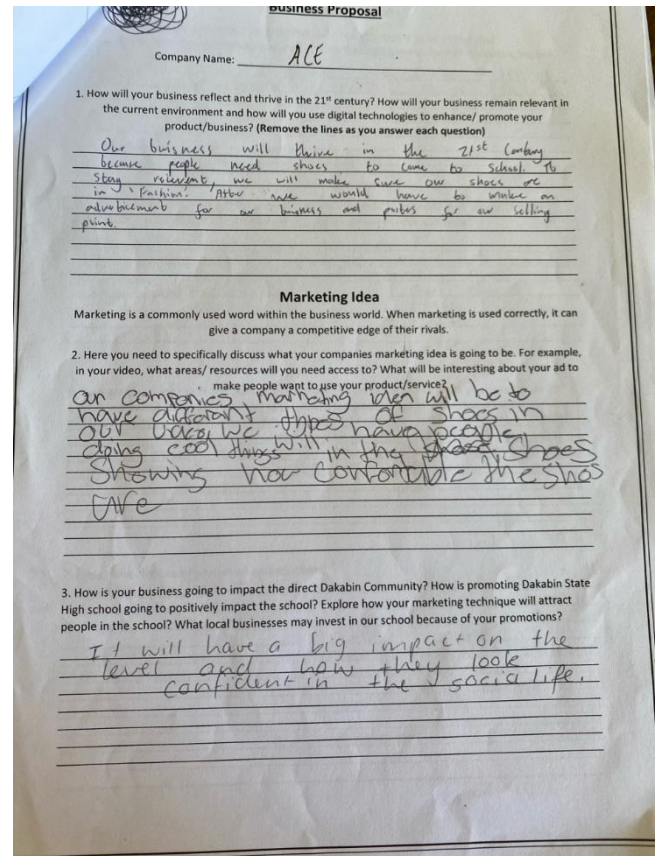
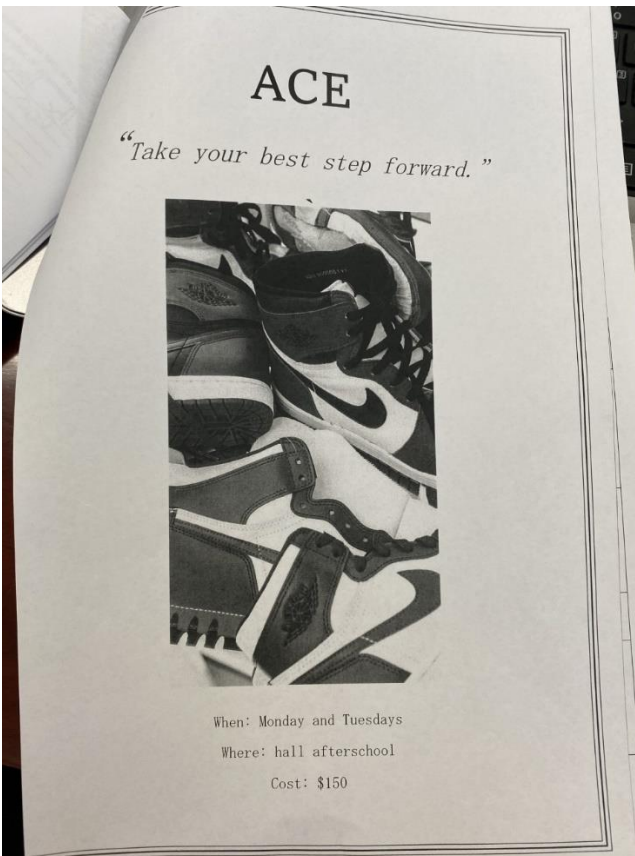
Now, when planning out learning experiences at the start of each unit, teachers are beginning to form explicit links between the curriculum standards and other holistic goals to ensure students aren't only progressing academically, but also as individuals through their learning at school (Appendix A).



'The Learner First [brings] that humanised side, that you're valuing how a person thinks and feels and acts, how they like to do things and why they like to do things. Which is what was beautiful about [forming the alignment], that's where I see it all just come together. To show that lineage, that there's a place for all of it, and that it's not just another thing sitting on top—it's actually all in.'

—Deputy Principal, SHS

Figure 3: Examples of student work completed during the unit shown in the unit plan in Appendix A.



## Wellbeing Curriculum

The Learner First's Wellbeing Curriculum helps teachers form those explicit links between the Australian curriculum and wider wellbeing goals. For the individual dimensions of the learning outcomes of self-understanding, connection and competency, it includes specific learning goals that can be mapped to the achievement standards to enhance everyday learning design in the classroom.

The following is an excerpt from the Identity dimension of Self-Understanding in the Wellbeing Curriculum.

## SELF-UNDERSTANDING

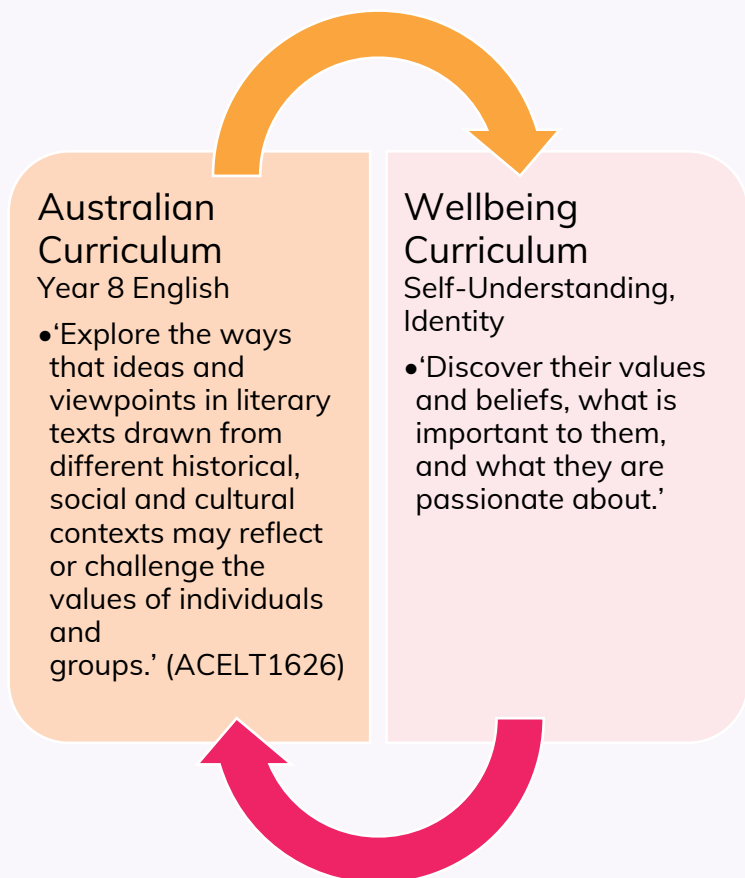
### Identity

Students will:

- Identify their interests and hobbies.
- Discover their values and beliefs, what is important to them, and what they are passionate about.
- Identify and describe different feelings and emotions and their causes and effects.
- Understand their abilities and relative strengths and challenges, including areas they would most like to improve.
- Describe their personalities, identifying traits and characteristics they value as well as those they would change or hope to develop.
- Identify their hopes, dreams and goals for the future.
- Understand who they are as a learner—what they find meaningful, interesting or stimulating, and the ways they learn best.

Every day, whatever the lesson or learning goal, teachers have the opportunity to strengthen those experiences by adding tasks, questions or other elements that incorporate goals from the Wellbeing Curriculum. Doing so ensures that this work isn't merely an add-on, but rather a lens over all their activity—a constant, integral aspect of learning that is woven into the fabric and culture of the class(room).

Through The Learner First process, wellbeing isn't something to 'do' in a set period on a certain day of the week, but an outcome nurtured through the daily learning experience.



## Other Learner First Tools to Support More Meaningful Learning Design

**Learning Design Guide** – Supports the design of individual assessments through the linking of curricular and wider wellbeing goals.

**Inquiry Guide** – Supports the design of learning experiences driven by an inquiry question and including a range of individual assessments.

## Individual Interviews

In classrooms where learners take control of and responsibility for their learning, there's no limit to the outcomes each student can achieve. It creates a contagion of positive learning that infects both the teachers and the students alike. Of course, developing this type of learning environment doesn't happen overnight. It requires an incredible amount of trust between teachers and students, with teachers trusting that their learners will respond positively to more personal relationships and to the shifts in pedagogical practice that result.

As noted earlier, the foundation of this work is teachers' understanding of the learners in front of them. One of the most effective practices for developing that understanding is sitting down for a one-on-one conversation with an individual learner, and then making simple changes to practice, lesson design or behaviour as a result. The following mini-cases from one SHS demonstrate the power of the individual interview process in (1) developing connections with learners and (2) making ensuing changes to better meet those learners' needs. And as noted by every teacher who has implemented changes to improve one learners' experience, those changes improve the experience for the rest of the class, too.

### Mini-Case 1: Teaching as Learning

During a one-on-one interview, Tamara learned that her student, Analyn, preferred hands-on learning rather than having concepts explained to her from the front of a classroom. Since English was her second language, it was sometimes hard for her to keep up with the pace of the lessons. So Tamara started inviting Analyn to work through maths problems on the whiteboard, deliberately working through the steps and offering guidance where necessary. Analyn took to the learning style so much that she asked if she could start showing her classmates how to work through certain problems. From then on, Tamara regularly invited Analyn and anyone else who was interested to work through problems on the whiteboard in front of the class, explaining to the others what they were doing as they went. At the time of their one-on-one interview, Analyn wasn't sure what she wanted to do after school. But by the end of the term, not only had Analyn achieved more progress than in any other term before it, but she also discovered a newfound purpose. After school, she told Tamara, she'd become a teacher, too.

*'This term was my 'WOW.' Student engagement throughout the term was exceptional... For the first time, not just [Analyn] but four students in my class, through the work that we did, actually achieved beyond just a C level which was amazing... And those students provided the evidence for those Bs. I do think their understanding was a lot deeper... That was really quite exciting.'*

**—Teacher, SHS**

### **Mini-Case 2: Choose Your Own Assessment**

Hannah noticed that Nathan struggled with written assessments. He was an excellent verbal communicator but, try as he might, he had a difficult time communicating his thoughts and learning in writing. When Hannah sat down to talk with him one-on-one and asked him about his preferred learning styles, Nathan expressed a lack of confidence with writing, saying that whenever he had to write something down he always felt like he was going to 'mess up.' In the past, the final assessment in Hannah's Agriculture class was always a written assessment. But this term, after learning more about Nathan, Hannah gave her students a choice about how they'd like to perform their final assessment task. For Nathan, the choice was easy. He shared a slideshow presentation with the rest of the class and achieved at a higher level than ever before. And it wasn't just Nathan who benefitted from the change—everyone loved the opportunity to choose.

### **Mini-Case 3: Show Me the Evidence**

Marshall picked up on a troubling theme with a few of the students in his maths class. Throughout the course of a unit, he saw in their classwork and the work they submitted that they understood the concepts and could complete the work assigned them. But when the time came for the end-of-unit exam and the students submitted their tests, they weren't demonstrating the same understanding on the exam that they'd demonstrated throughout the rest of the unit. He talked with them and learned that they were feeling the weight of having everything come down to how they did on one assessment. That didn't seem very fair to Marshall, either. So he presented his students with an idea. He told them that for each lesson, they were welcome to provide him with evidence that showed that they understood the concept covered that day. It could be bookwork or worksheets, pictures of work done on whiteboards, videos—anything. And the students immediately took to the challenge. They constantly submitted their 'learning evidence' to Marshall, who at the same time was gathering other evidence of his own. That little change in mindset and big shift in practice—that anything can be evidence of learning—made a huge difference for Marshall and his class, with students now approaching formal assessments more calmly, knowing it isn't their only chance to 'show what they know' and appreciating an assessment process that finally seems fair.

### **Mini-Case 4: A Connection to Learning**

Oliver wasn't shy about saying how he felt—namely, that he didn't see much point to learning. He didn't understand why he had to spend so much time learning things at school that he'd never use outside it. When Isla sat down with Oliver for an interview, she learned a great deal about Oliver that she didn't know before, including his interests in fishing, dirt bikes, race cars and boats. It turned out he loved learning—when it related to those hobbies.

They just never showed up in his learning at school. At the start of the next unit, Isla set aside time for each of her learners to brainstorm about their identities—‘What are your interests and hobbies, what makes you “you”?’ From there, the students set out constructing 3-D models, each selecting the model they wanted to construct based on interests they’d identified at the start of the unit. Oliver constructed a model of a track for his dirt bike, demonstrating full understanding of the curricular concepts and finally experiencing a unit at school that was actually relevant to his interests outside it.

*“[The interview] made that one-on-one connection with [the learner]. I think it was good for him to see... For a kid to have a one on one with somebody that’s solely focussed on them and for us to value our time with them as individuals... I don’t know if many kids get that, even from their parents.”*

**—Teacher, SHS**

*‘One thing I would like to say about the whole Learner First process, is as a teacher, I’m much more aware of the students in the classroom. I’m much more aware of listening to them, whether I’m talking to them or just listening to the class, rather than just brushing them off. And I’ve felt that that’s been a big thing for me in learning with the kids. The kids are much more interactive with me when I can have an input in what they’re talking about. It’s making me much more aware of my classroom, and therefore the needs of the kids... It’s also made me a much calmer teacher. Much more thoughtful and a much calmer person in the classroom.’*

**—Teacher, SHS**

The Learner First’s **Learning Progressions** measure individual students’ levels of progression in relation to the dimensions of self-understanding, connection and competency. At this SHS, teachers selected 1-2 focus dimensions based on areas of need identified during their individual interviews, tracking students’ progression on those dimensions between terms. They also measured changes in students’ academic achievement. For those teachers engaged in The Learner First process, along with progressing on social-emotional goals students experienced marked levels of academic progression resulting from pedagogical changes like those described in the mini-cases above.

Teachers have discovered the benefits of starting small when engaging in this work, focussing on even a single learner or on small shifts in practice that build up to big results. The focus on social-emotional learning and wellbeing introduces new and exciting learning goals to the equation, and teachers often experience successes early on. But, as teachers have noted, when it comes to students’ overall learning and wellbeing, it pays to be patient, positive and deliberate:

*‘Developing a human takes longer than delivering knowledge.’*

**—Teacher, SHS**



## Tracking Progression

The Learner First offers a range of tools to support teachers through the processes of getting to know their learners and tracking learning progression throughout the course of their time together.

**Self-Understanding Learning Progression** – Descriptions at five levels of progression to support development of the dimensions of self-understanding—identity, place, capacity and purpose.

**Connection Learning Progression** – Descriptions at five levels of progression to support development of the dimensions of connection—interpersonal, environmental, conceptual and universal.

**Competency Learning Progression** – Descriptions at five levels of progression to support development of the key learning competencies—commitment, collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking.

**Student Interview Guide** – Example questions for conducting one-on-one interviews with learners.

**Individual Profile** – A tool for building out profiles of individual learners based on information gathered throughout the learning process.

**Individual Action Plan** – A tool for building out action plans for individual learners based on data from the Individual Profile.



## Learner-Centred Whole-School Change

At another SHS, initial engagement with The Learner First stemmed from a desire to improve learners' outcomes—not just the academic outcomes they achieved, but the full range of outcomes that students really need to be successful as citizens of Australia and beyond.

*'[The Learner First] has added that layer of not just looking at A-E data or NAPLAN data, it's looking at the whole student and every aspect of the student. What is it that makes these students tick, what are their barriers, what are their strengths, and how can we use that to deliver really engaging curriculum? It's a deeper dive into the student as a whole.'*

**—Head of Department, SHS**

*'We came to the conclusion that we all want success for our students—every single student. In fact, that's written into our Queensland Department of Education's policy. "Every student succeeding" is the whole state's motto for students, every student, not just the students who want to succeed but every single kid. So we came to believe that it's not just about students succeeding in A-E... but also those affective skills of students understanding who they are, developing knowledge about the world and how it works, collaborating with each other, communicating with each other, thinking critically and creatively, and then connecting with others in their classroom, in the world.'*

*At the crux of it we really believe that students should be able to work with us to contribute back to the lives of others... connecting students to something bigger and broader and more important than just sitting a test.'*

**—Head of Department, SHS**

To get to where they wanted to be, the school made a commitment to improving the outcomes of their least-served learners—those who had been traditionally undeserved by the school system as evidenced by regular disengagement, absenteeism, low performance and other indicators. By finding a way to change those learners' experiences, they could change the very culture of the school itself—and, in turn, improve everyone's experience.

### Data Day

The first step in the process was identifying those learners who were currently least served by the academic system. Focussing on Year 7 learners for the first trial period, a team including teachers and school leaders joined together for a 'Data Day' to dive into a wide range of evidence and indicators. The team interrogated all available data about their students, including A-E data, assessment and attendance data, and even information about students' performance and experiences in primary school, such as the extracurricular activities they engaged in. From there, the team collaboratively selected three learners who they felt would most benefit from changes at school.



## Design Day

With students selected, the team came together for a ‘Learning Design Day’—a chance for a team of the selected students’ teachers to collectively uncover who these learners really are, what’s been impeding them, and where there’s most room for growth, and then to intentionally collaborate to design ways of learning better suited to the students’ needs. Prior to the Design Day, teachers interviewed their marker student and rated their position on The Learner First’s Learning Progressions. The students also used the Learning Progressions to self-measure their self-understanding, connection and competencies. Using that data, the team determined that of all the learning outcomes, the students would most benefit from an emphasis on the collaboration competency.

*‘We talked about the idea of strengthening their collaboration and building on the fact that they actually possess the confidence and the leadership capability to collaborate, but they just didn’t know how to do it effectively... And through the collaboration [focus] it was also connection as well—connection to community, connection to their class.*

*And then we dive into the most engaging collaborative day, where [teachers] get to pull apart their curriculum, we get to talk about what kind of tasks they want to do, and the whole way through the day, we always came back to, “Are we catering for these least-served learners? How will they react to this task? How will they want to present their knowledge?”’*

**—Head of Department, SHS**

## Stakeholders Meeting

As a final step before implementing the unit of learning, the school developed ‘Stakeholders Meetings’ to bring together the student, their teacher, their parents, their head of year, support staff members and guidance officers—a support team committed to the student’s success. Along with letting the student and their parents know about the changes they were making and why, the real magic in the meetings came from giving students and their parents the chance to share about their experiences and any needs or concerns. Students completed a questionnaire about their experience at school, sharing what they enjoy and don’t enjoy in the classroom. All the data collected in the Stakeholder Meetings was then given to their teachers to help shape the learning.

*‘It’s an opportunity to set goals, to be really clear, [so] that the parents understand what the goals are, the student does, the teacher does, and we move forward into the unit all on the same page.’*

**—Head of Department, SHS**

*'It says to the parent and the student that we genuinely believe in them.'*

**—Deputy Principal, SHS**

## **Units of Learning**

What resulted from the powerful process above was learning that was relevant to students' interests and needs, meaningful connections between students and teachers, and improved outcomes and experiences not only for learners, but for their families, their teachers, and the school as a whole. Here are the stories from two units of learning.

### **Trial 1 Unit**

'Previously, the unit had been a focus on megacities and some of the issues with living in a megacity. This year we've refocussed it. I said, "Let's do something they can associate with, connect with." So I changed the unit to focus our local community—what could be one way that a community group could prepare for a future pandemic? Students had all the news and they had all what was going on in society to draw upon as a resource, and they also had an ability to associate with something local and make something tangible, something real. So the [marker students] selected the local shopping centre. And we worked on presenting to the shopping centre a suite of recommendations to make it safe in a future pandemic. In doing that we had to research what were the actions being taken now within the community, what were the health statistics, and then we started developing strategies and looking at how they would work, who the stakeholders would be. In having those conversations, they started to see how not only was it directly relevant to their own lives (this is the shopping centre that they go to), but also the connection with the curriculum requirements.'

**—Teacher, SHS**

'And these were kids who would be daily in my office... leaving classrooms without permission, all kinds of things, and I'd have to calm them down. That never happened after they started this process with [their teacher]. They went from students who couldn't stay in a classroom to students who couldn't wait to get down to the shopping centre to take photographs for their assignment. And it all comes back to that relationship... You can label it what you want, but it's about getting to know a student, caring about them, and investing with them one on one.'

**—Head of Department, SHS**

## **Trial 2 Unit**

'Trial two was in English and Science. We chose our students on the lines of the phrase we came up with, "present but not present"—here at school, in the classroom, but maybe not engaged as much as they could be in the learning that was occurring in the classrooms with their teachers. Disengagement from learning, perhaps disengagement from their peers, and disengagement from the teacher.'

### **—Teacher, SHS**

One of the students selected was Patrick. During the Stakeholders Meeting, at first Patrick was hesitant to respond to the questions, giving one- or two-word responses and not actively participating in the conversation with his teacher. But it just took one question to finally break through: 'Can you talk to me about something you're proud of?'

'And immediately his face just lit up and he talked about building this cubby house, he called it a fortress, at home with his dad and his siblings... He had a passion for working with his hands and was also clearly able to collaborate with his dad and siblings, so that indicated to us that collaboration would be an interesting one, to see him work with his peers rather than just his family. That was a really nice moment in that initial stakeholders interview, to see him light up when he got to talk about something from his personal life that we had no idea about.'

'He kind of clicked and realized all this stuff is for kids like him, and his whole persona changed. He started to talk about his passions for the future, his dreams. It was kind of this special time for him, someone cares... And that's how I engaged him as well. I said, "I've chosen you, you're going to help me do this special thing not only for you but for every kid in your grade." Just being inclusive of the student and having him involved from the very beginning with planning is what's engaged him.'

'And what was interesting about our marker students when we got the collective information was that they like to do things kinaesthetically, physically, to be moving within their classroom. And so we tried to really embed that within their assessment.'

'Being able to bring skills that they might not normally use, say particularly in an English classroom, they were able to do that the way we designed their task. Instead of writing an analytical essay where they analysed poetic devices in a song to answer an inquiry question, we had them make a video blog where they could be like MTV hosts interviewing the artists, analysing the poetic techniques. And they're still doing the exact same cognitive skills, critical thinking, but they're delivering it in this different and creative way and it was accessible to every kid.'

'And bringing in other skills, like their creative skills. The other student we chose, Ria, who's quite disengaged at school, she's very much into more creative things like dance and art and music, so it was really great for her to bring those skills to the classroom and share them.'

'I've noticed a big difference in terms of participation, working with each other, even team building which was our focus. And I've seen these kids really take it on board, and it's been

great... They've just finished their assessment, and I'm just one of the proudest teachers at the moment.'

—Teachers, SHS

### Impact on Teachers

Along with the impact of this work on their students, those engaged with The Learner First have been quick to also note the work's impact on teachers. They, like their students, are learning every day, and sharing all about their new learning with others.

*'[A teacher], the whole way through this, has had this amazing buzz and passion in all her conversations. The pride she showed yesterday afternoon when she wanted to show her HoD and the whole team those students' work... That's what we want. We want our teachers to be passionate. We want our teachers to walk into the classroom and love the unit and see the outcomes, and that's happening across the board.'*

—Deputy Principal, SHS

*'The conversations in the staff room have already ignited a pathway for us for next year, because we have buy-in and everyone wants to know, "How can I get on board, and how can I do this, and how is it different, and what difference is it making for your class?" And to see the teachers really believing in these students and showing how much the students have absolutely blossomed, that's evidence in itself. "This is what's happening in my class... I'm just so excited about this." And that spreads throughout the school very fast.*

*It's been so powerful to see the change in attitude of the teachers. Seeing another side of the students has really ignited the souls of my staff... We're very proud of what we've done and how far we've come, and we're really looking forward to next year.'*

—Principal, SHS

### Collaborative Moderation Of Learning And Practice

One of the most effective processes implemented in schools through their work with The Learner First is collaborative moderation, a professional learning experience designed to engage teachers in demonstrating (1) the learning that's happening for their students and (2) the practices bringing that learning to life. By engaging with their peers in professional conversations centred on learning and practice, teachers can share best practice and learn from one another about what works for students and why.

Pedagogical practices that are developing students' self-understanding, connections, knowledge and competencies include those listed below, organized into the following categories:

1. **Partnerships** – Forming relationships for learning.
2. **Environments** – Leveraging learning spaces and strengthening culture.
3. **Tools** – Embedding technological and other learning tools.

### **Partnerships**

- Engaging parents and families as real partners in their children's education.
- Forming partnerships between classes and grade levels.
- Viewing yourself as a 'learner' alongside your students.
- Supporting students to partner in teaching, including in the design and implementation of learning.
- Developing community partnerships locally and globally.
- Taking time up front to get to know one another and develop trust and connections as a class.
- Supporting student self-assessment on academic and social-emotional learning outcomes.
- Treating learning as a partnership between and among learners, teachers, school leaders and families.

### **Environments**

- Putting students first and at the centre of all decisions and activities.
- Understanding your students for who they really are.
- Celebrating learners' individual identities, and letting them be who they are in the classroom.
- Having high expectations for every learner.
- Establishing the mindset that it's okay for anyone to fail, as long as they learn and grow from it.
- Learning in varied physical and virtual learning environments.
- Thinking about learning environments as partners in learning—how do they directly contribute to students' learning?
- Supporting student agency, voice and choice both in where to take their learning and how to evidence their success.
- Responding in real time to student needs and 'wonderings.'
- Linking learning to students' lives and interests.
- Engaging in cross-curricular learning, and linking past learning with what students are learning now.
- Promoting regular reflection on learning to influence learning direction.
- Using learning to contribute to others' lives and the world.

### **Tools**

- Intentionally using tools to enable, enhance and accelerate learning.
- Recognising the difference between technology as substitution vs. technology as enhancement—engaging in learning that would not be possible without, or that is directly enhanced by, the use of technological tools.

- Thinking about learning first and plugging in tools second—given the learning goals, what tools can help you reach them?
- Using technological tools to form partnerships locally and globally.
- Using technological tools to share or communicate learning with a range of local and global audiences.
- Developing technological and other tools through the process of learning.
- Using graphic/visual thinking prompts and aids.

For many teachers, shifting practice first requires shifts in mindset or beliefs. Collaborative moderation reveals teachers' beliefs in the same way it reveals their knowledge and practice. By taking part in the moderation process, school leaders see and hear where their teachers are at, what cultural values and assumptions are at play, and what capacity building is required to develop their skills.

Teachers need to develop confidence in their ability to deliver meaningful learning that supports each student's wellbeing needs, and they need to feel supported to make the changes and take the risks that will help them progress with their students. When given the freedom and confidence to teach in new ways, teachers are discovering who their learners really are, what they really need, and how to make it happen.

*'It helps for us to give permission to our teachers to change the way they teach. That's probably one of the great flow-on effects of this work.'*

**—Deputy Principal, SHS**

*'I really value this work because I value children's leadership skills and their individuality... Children are all capable of learning, they're all very intelligent, they just show their intelligence in different ways... What I value in this work is having children be able to show themselves, their own character, their intelligence... So I like to work with children to foster their sense of creativity, individuality, to understand their place in the world, and they can show off their intelligence in the ways that are best for them.'*

**—Teacher, SHS**

## The Contribution Kit

The 10 modules in The Learner First's Contribution Kit have helped teachers embed the pedagogical practices best suited to wellbeing. It's proven to be an ideal entry point to the work for teachers, who can use the example activities, tools, and step-by-step processes to learn about the nature of the work and introduce it to their students, diving deeper and deeper into the process as desired.

*'The turning point for us was the Contribution Kit. To me, [the modules] were perfect... Teachers went, 'Oh, we get this—this is what we have to do.'"*

**—Principal, SHS**

### **Modules 1-4: Learning Outcomes**

1. Self-Understanding
2. Connection
3. Knowledge
4. Competency

### **Modules 5-9: Pedagogical Practice**

5. Cultural Wellbeing
6. Teacher Capabilities
7. Contributive Inquiry
8. Collaborative Moderation
9. Forming a Change Team

### **Module 10: Synthesis**

10. Meaning & Fulfillment

The following are sample questions included in Module 5: Cultural Wellbeing, and that are intended to spark teachers' thinking around developing a class culture that develops and celebrates learners' self-understanding.

#### **Self-Understanding**

Do your learners feel valued for who they are in your classroom? Do they feel belonging?

Do your learners feel like they can be themselves in your classroom? Are they themselves?

Does your classroom's physical environment (arrangement, furniture, decorations, etc.) recognise and celebrate who your learners are as individuals? In what ways?

Do you make connections between curricular learning content and learners' self-understanding? How often?

Is self-understanding as integral to your classroom learning as curricular content?

Are you and your students learning about yourselves every day? How do you help ensure that you are?



Do your students feel a true sense of purpose in the classroom? Are they learning to contribute in the ways that they want to?

Do your learners understand who they are, how they fit into the world, and how they can contribute?



## WHAT QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS AND THE LEARNER FIRST ARE DISCOVERING TOGETHER

The following are additional notes and observations shared by principals engaged in the Learner First process, along with other points of learning identified through partnerships with schools.

Direct feedback from school **principals** on engagement in The Learner First process:

- The Learner First framework enabled the school to shift the narrative of learning to the whole child. The child is now at the centre of curriculum planning, delivery and assessment.
- Focusses on Knowledge and Competency have facilitated the design of learning and building of pedagogical competence to allow greater student voice and agency while also providing meaning and purpose and increasing engagement.
- Self-understanding and Connection have brought the learner clearly to the centre of all actions while also fostering the wellbeing of all learners in every classroom and subject across the school.
- The framework was easily aligned to the Department's school improvement hierarchy, ensuring 'systemness' and alignment to all key curriculum frameworks.
- This work has been recognised in recent school reviews by the school review teams acknowledging, in particular, increased student voice, agency and engagement.

- We've experience improved student outcomes across a range of areas—academic, pathways and connection. A supervisor (ARD) commented that students had become 'world beaters' and congratulated our school on the way our students moved to thinking globally.
- A culture of success, achievement and resilience has been fostered.

Noted **teacher** shifts achieved by putting the learner first and embedding wellbeing goals in everyday practice:

- Knowing every child—the relationship comes first by looking beyond the academic data.
- Knowing themselves—their assumptions/biases and the way they impact teachers' identities and behaviours in the classroom.
- Employing an inquiry question every lesson—the lesson is driven by a leading question that engages students and connects curriculum goals with wider wellbeing goals.
- Building student assessment literacy so that students take charge of their own learning outcomes.
- Allocating rotating student group roles and responsibilities, activating student voice and showing learners that they can contribute.
- Establishing purposeful and explicit learning intentions and co-created success criteria, so that learners know what's meant to be achieved in each lesson.
- Leveraging feedback as an integral part of everyday conversation—student to teacher and teacher to student.
- Recognising facilitation and activation rather than direct instruction as the key pedagogy—learning control is shared.
- Maintaining high expectations and the belief that every child can improve, and letting them know that belief using the language of positive expectation for every child.
- Creating interactive learning spaces, using the furniture to promote collaboration and connection to the learning and looking for opportunities to learn beyond the classroom walls.

Additional observations on The Learner First process:

- The role and actions of the leader and leadership team are critical to a successful cultural change process—clarity of vision, expectations and intention can bolster the energy and motivation of the teachers when energy levels are low. Permission to have a go at working with the students in a different way, as well as clarity of the

reasons for doing so, combine to create positive change momentum and to influence both climate and academic data.

- The leadership team must be champions of change, aligned with one another and consistent and persistent in their expectations, in the way they monitor and support those they lead, and in the way they systemise feedback and feedforward communication.
- Aligning the work with state systems and structures ensures it isn't seen as 'separate' or an 'add-on.' Schools that have done this have gained real traction, forming the alignment through simple visuals such as a flow chart or through a more formal policy document.
- Employing the lens of an articulated moral purpose is not negotiable—every child in every class must be supported to succeed in their way. The leadership teams who do this well undertake a process with their whole community, inside and outside the school gates, to develop a real and meaningful 'success' profile.
- The one-size-fits-all approach reflects an ongoing distortion of educational equity that's particularly damaging for disadvantaged learners. It's designed to support teacher practice—not student learning—and doesn't lend itself to inclusivity or differentiation.
- If you impact on one, you impact on many. When a teacher changes their practice to cater for a least-served learner, the impact is like a ripple in a pond—many students are, as a result, supported. Teachers undertaking this work report the 'discovery' of invisible learners who they would otherwise have missed in their traditional practice.
- Areas of improvement must be collaboratively determined from known, broad sets of data—top-down mechanisms don't create teacher engagement or long-term commitment to slow-building change.
- Consistency in the use of chosen tools (e.g., for inquiry, pedagogy, and assessment) means that the leadership team can develop a clear understanding of what teaching practices make what learning happen—they can learn what's effective and what could be improved.
- It's vital to establish a whole-school understanding that underachievement and disengagement are not symptoms of low intellect, but instead reflect a need to shift the way of working in the classroom and throughout the school.
- The Learner First helps schools develop an understanding of what an equitable assessment policy looks like. Through a shift to authentic assessment, assessments can meet the expectations of the education system while also reflecting the values of society, respect for individual differences, and individual paths to success for learners.

## WHAT'S COMING FOR 2021

The Learner First has committed to working with schools in Queensland and is fielding a growing number of enquires, both from schools in Queensland and throughout Australia. We are excited to expand and partner with additional schools who choose to engage in this work. It requires a whole-school focus on every learner succeeding and a relentless attitude of bringing every child and family along with you on the journey.

This year, The Learner First is providing a new cross-school opportunity to engage in the Collaborative Moderation of Learning and Practice—a global first. Schools are collecting and collating assessment evidence and supporting learners to show what they know in their way, reflecting authentic and equitable assessment. Learners are embracing the opportunity to meet achievement objectives using a differentiated approach all the way through from teaching and learning to assessment. Schools participating in the Collaborative Moderation process will have the opportunity to learn with other Learner First schools from around the globe.

The Learner First has also expanded to partner with Knowledgehook, a global mathematics company that supports the development of teacher knowledge and formative assessment in Maths. Rob Proffitt-White will lead this work for The Learner First across Australia and New Zealand.

The Wellbeing Curriculum is taking root across the globe through a wellbeing-centred service delivery model for Curriculum Leads in New Zealand, the work of school districts across the USA, and through models designed for networks and groups of schools around the world looking for ways to map social-emotional learning to their curriculums.

Karanga, the global alliance for social-emotional learning and life skills ([karanga.org](http://karanga.org)), continues to inform our work as we learn from countries around the world about what is important for the future of school, life and work.

From all of us at The Learner First—

'Meaning and fulfilment is the new wealth, and contribution is the only way to earn it.'

For further information or any questions please contact:

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## Appendix A - Example of a partial unit plan (one week) with explicit links between curriculum standards and additional wellbeing goals.

Curriculum Standards	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Assessment (Formative and Summative)	Differentiation
<p><b>Cognitive verbs</b></p> <p><b>Identify</b> specific features and purposes of media artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their media arts making, starting with Australian media artworks including of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media artworks (<a href="#">ACAM AR072</a>)</p>	<p>I will identify the assessment, marking criteria, and expectations for term 4.</p> <p><b>Learner First Goal:</b> I am committed to learning as much as possible so I can solve problems in school and in my life.</p> <p><b>Indicators of Success:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recall the assessment, rubric and expectations.</li> <li>2. Explain the purpose of Film and Media in the world.</li> <li>3. Explore strategies to improve focus and direction in class.</li> </ol> <p><b>Lesson Starter:</b> What are your thoughts into changing the Learners Goal into a Learners question?</p> <p>NASOT Alignment: DQ1 – Providing scales and rubrics DQ13 – Providing resources and guidance DQ15 – Previewing strategies DQ23 – DQ43 Context</p>	<p>I will identify what an advertisement is and why they are important in the 21st century.</p> <p><b>Learner First Goal:</b> I am grateful for all the different cultures and people in the world.</p> <p><b>Indicators of Success:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recall what an advertisement is and why they are important.</li> <li>2. Identify key messages in advertisements.</li> <li>3. Explain how multiculturalism is important in the Media.</li> </ol> <p><b>Lesson Starter:</b> Why is it important to me that there are different cultures and people in the world? How does this impact me?</p> <p>NASOT Alignment: DQ6 – Chunking content DQ7 – Processing content DQ8 – Recording and representing content DQ10 – Examining similarities and differences DQ13 – Providing resources and guidance DQ16 – Highlighting critical information DQ17 – Reviewing content DQ18 – Revising knowledge DQ21 – Elaborating on information DQ23 – DQ43 Context</p>	<p>I will produce and edit footage to advertise an object of my choice (practical).</p> <p><b>Learner First Goal:</b> Forming close, personal relationships is important to me, and I care about everyone's feelings.</p> <p>I listen to and learn from others, and I open up to the people I know well.</p> <p><b>Indicators of Success:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use ICT to create footage.</li> <li>2. Engage with peers respectfully and productively to create and edit a short advertisement.</li> </ol> <p><b>Lesson Starter:</b> How do I communicate with others? Why is it important to build relationships and empathy?</p> <p>NASOT Alignment: DQ4 – Using informal assessments of the whole class DQ5 – Using informal assessments of individual students DQ6 – Chunking content DQ8 – Recording and representing content DQ12 – Engaging students in cognitively complex tasks DQ13 – Providing resources and guidance DQ16 – Highlighting critical information DQ17 – Reviewing content</p> <p>Formative Assessment: - Filming experiment - Checking for understanding - PowerPoint used for a visual aid - Unpacking the assessment task - chunking it into achievable blocks - Practical work (filming in groups)</p> <p>DQ 22 – Organizing students to interact DQ23 – DQ43 - Context</p>	<p><b>Formative Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Filming experiment – examples of LS, MS, ECU, and MCU</li> <li>- Checking for understanding – able to recall key terms, classroom expectations, assessment expectations, purpose of advertisements, and importance of diversity/multiculturalism in society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PowerPoint used for a visual aid</li> <li>- Unpacking the assessment task – chunking it into achievable blocks</li> <li>- Practical work (filming in groups)</li> <li>- eLearn resources</li> </ul>

# Sample SHS Results- NAPLAN

Data below shows the transition of students from year 7 (2017) to year 9 (2019) –

- Red – below nation
- Blue – similar to nation
- Green – above nation

Items the school considered as a part of this improvement story included –

- A review of the teachers deployed to the different year levels and subjects –
  - Students at all levels had passed through classes where Deep Learning was embedded in both planning, teaching and learning including an increased level of student voice and agency. Students to varying degrees were afforded the opportunity to co-design both learning and provision of evidence while learning to think critically, problem solve, collaborate and communicate more effectively.
  - Of particular note has been the maintenance and improvement in U2B traditionally a sticking point for the school and the continued improvement and success of students at the lower end of learning.

## MEAN SCALE SCORE

		Year 7 2017		Year 9 2019	
Year 7	R	514.8	534.5	495.2	516.1
	W*	483.0	460.6	459.0	470.6
	S	523.6	530.6	513.1	517.6
	GP	507.3	525.5	512.0	501.9
	N	526.8	534.7	509.6	516.5
Year 9	R	564.1	559.7	542.2	556.0
	W*	527.5	515.5	497.2	494.9
	S	557.2	558.6	576.3	565.1
	GP	554.2	548.8	539.3	552.6
	N	553.6	562.3	565.9	562.7

## UPPER 2 BANDS

		Year 7 2017		Year 9 2019	
Year 7	R	11.1	18.9	14.5	15.9
	W*	4.5	10.7	3.9	7.1
	S	30.3	22.7	18.9	21.7
	GP	10.6	22.7	17.6	15.9
	N	14.3	22.7	10.5	16.7
Year 9	R	6.1	16.3	17.1	15.5
	W*	10.8	2.0	7.6	3.1
	S	18.2	16.0	22.4	15.4
	GP	9.1	6.0	13.4	10.8
	N	6.1	16.0	11.8	6.2

## NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARD

		Year 7 2017		Year 9 2019	
Year 7	R	95.2	86.5	80.3	92.8
	W*	78.8	72.0	73.7	75.7
	S	89.4	89.3	83.8	88.4
	GP	90.9	82.7	81.1	82.6
	N	98.4	92.0	92.1	95.5
Year 9	R	90.9	89.8	75.7	93.8
	W*	69.7	74.0	57.6	55.4
	S	83.3	80.0	88.1	84.6
	GP	87.9	86.0	70.1	84.6
	N	90.9	96.0	92.6	95.4

# SENIOR DATA

Average cohort size between 60 – 70

University entrance cohort on average 20 students

Senior data has been particularly pleasing over the last 4 to 5 years and once again the school can track students progress through the years and subjects through particular teachers classes who have embraced the Deep Learning concepts.

Sample SHS has punched well above its weight for a number of years especially over the last 3 or so years. Graduating students have provided feedback about the type of learning provided and how it had prepared them for any situation. They had developed the skills to think critically, problem solve, collaborate and communicate while gaining a sense of who they are and how they fit into the world. Outcomes have included -

## QCE/QCE

	2015	→ 2019			
All students	% QCE or QCIA	100.0%	98.6%	98.4%	100.0%

	2015	→ 2019			
Indigenous students	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## OP/QCS Results

### RESULTS 2015 →

**OP 1 (equivalent) = 6** (including 1 top 30 in state in 2019)

**OP 1 – 5 = 21** (av. OP cohort = 20)

**QCS – 8 x A's**

**QCE = 100%**





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# 2021 Designing Contributive Learning Programs

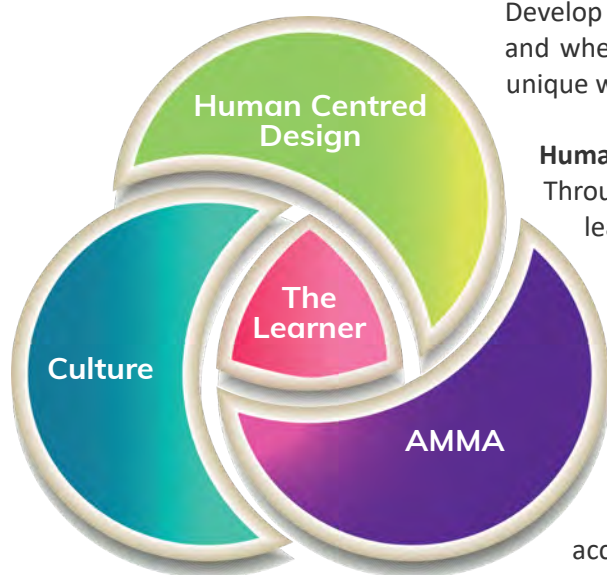
*The purpose of education is to learn who you are, how you fit into the world, and how you can contribute your unique gifts to build a safe and sustainable world.*

Outstanding classroom practice is a social and emotional enterprise. *The Learner First's* Contributive Learning Program develops equitable classrooms where every child is equipped with self-understanding, connection, knowledge, and competency. When these come together, we add to our world. And that leads to well-being, meaning, and fulfillment for all.

The Contributive Learning Program guides every learner to success and wellbeing. We achieve this through supporting the development of purposeful teaching and learning environments that focus classroom culture, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment towards the positive academic growth and development of every student.

"The Learner First has had an unbelievable impact on our teachers and students. The light is shining directly on 'who' our individual students are as human beings. The students realise that the teachers really care about who they are and the teachers can't believe how this connection really makes a difference in the classroom. This is really powerful."

**Robyn Burton-Ree**  
Principal, Wellington Point State High School



## Culture & Moral Purpose

Develop a culture where all learners feel purposeful and have a sense of belonging, and where they learn to contribute to others' lives and to the world in their own unique ways.

## Human Centred Design: Contributive Learning Curriculum

Through deep inquiry, teachers and students partner in the development of clear learning goals and powerful learning experiences. Student agency and voice take centre stage in an inclusive environment where students are architects of learning that is meaningful, engaging, and personally relevant.

## Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (AMMA)

With a range of measures and tools, teachers and students learn assessment strategies that combine formative and summative approaches, provide precision in meaningful, standards-based assessment, and build reliable and valid evidence for multi-level accountability that works for each one of your teachers and learners.

## MEET THE TEAM



### Mary Coverdale, Executive Director of The Learner First Australia

She is a passionate educator who has had experience at all levels of the system – as a teacher, a principal, a Senior Education Adviser, and an Assistant Regional Director. She has worked across the Victorian and Queensland jurisdictions and has established networks in both of these states.

### Joanne McEachen (Ngāi Tahu), CEO/Founder of The Learner First

A former teacher, principal, and regional and national Ministry of Education leader, Joanne's methodology re-focusses schools through the eyes of their least-served learners, supporting schools to embrace and celebrate students' cultural identities and individual interests and needs. She serves on the executive team of Karanga, the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills, and is co-founder of NPDL.



# 2021 Designing Contributive Learning Programs



All programs available for face-to-face, virtual, or a combination. Pricing based per school. In alignment with the Queensland State Schools Improvement Strategy 2020–2024.



## Outcomes Achieved in Queensland Schools

- Improved student agency, efficacy, and outcomes
- Increased engagement for students and teachers through a focus on school-wide wellbeing
- Greater alignment between student academic outcomes and capabilities
- Healthier, more connected school communities with a culture of inclusion and learning for all
- Strategic pedagogical shifts that build teacher confidence and enhance learning design and assessment
- Strengthened leadership strategic planning built on targeted professional dialogue and data analysis

### Whole School Intensive Change Team

\$50,000+GST

Align all three programs below into a year-long Intensive Change Team process to transform your school and the lives of your students and teachers. Includes an individualised schedule and action plan developed with you for your school. *Sample Schedule: 3 days per term face-to-face with virtual meetings and coaching between sessions or fortnightly meetings with virtual and coaching as required, etc.*

### Culture & Moral Purpose

10 Sessions

Create a unique school ecosystem by developing and aligning the moral purpose of the school through the lens of the learners. Shift mindsets and develop a shared understanding of key elements of identity, inclusion and wellbeing to create a shared language around the values and beliefs of your community.

#### Includes:

- The Five Capabilities
- Tools and Rubrics
- Action Plan to drive sustainable and ongoing improvement

### Human Centred Design

8 Days

*The Learner First's* Contributive Curriculum guides teachers and their students to Contributive learning. Learn how to assess and respond to your students' social and emotional learning needs while working within the Australian Curriculum.

#### Includes:

- The Contributive Curriculum: Self-Understanding, Connection, Knowledge, Competency
- Professional Development: Inquiry, Cultural Well-Being, Change Team
- Assessment Moderation

### Authentic Mixed Method Assessment

8 Days

Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (AMMA) gets to the heart of what each student needs by asking who they are and measuring the things that really matter to their learning, not just the things that are the easiest to measure. Learn how to measure student learning using AMMA across the curriculum.

#### Includes:

- Assessment Evidence
- Assessment Literacy
- Formative and Summative Assessment Synthesis
- Moderation of Assessment Artefacts

### 1:1 Leadership Coaching

1:1 coaching with Joanne McEachen or Mary Coverdale for aspirant and senior leaders. A year-long program to learn new and effective change management strategies and principles. Work to build capacity of the teachers across your school to drive engagement and student agency, design effective classroom practice, and build well-being and inclusion strategies into your school. *Limited spaces available.*

"The Learner First helps a school reflect on current practice and challenges the norm. By the end of this exploration our leadership team has an Action Plan to move forward to improve our whole school culture."

Deb Stewart  
Principal, Maleny State High School

For additional information,  
contact: Mary Coverdale  
Mary@thelearnerfirst.com  
+61 419 807 542



# 2021 Designing Mathematical Capability Learning Programs

*The purpose of education is to learn who you are, how you fit into the world, and how you can contribute your unique gifts to make the world a better place.*

The Learner First welcomes Rob Proffitt-White into our team to complement our suite of services by providing exemplary Maths Capability Learning Programs.

Our professional learning affords schools the choice of focus, mode and timing of their support, and is delivered by practitioners who can successfully translate evidence-based practice into the reality of classroom conditions to make great practice common practice.

## Outcomes Achieved in State Primary and High Schools

- Outstanding NAPLAN relative gains and U2B growth and L2B reduction in project schools
- Sustained increases in number of students attaining the Curriculum standards
- Increased teacher enthusiasm, confidence and autonomy with teaching and assessing mathematics
- Improved consistency with professional judgments and pre/post moderation processes
- Creator of State resources, lesson plans, and diagnostics assessments servicing over 450 schools



"Rob's practical evidence-based approach has changed so much of our mathematics program in the last 18 months. Rob has shared amazing resources that challenge and extend our students. The difference in our approach has developed a genuine and collaborative enthusiasm in my staff and students. I am immensely grateful that Rob continues to work remotely alongside our school and staff into 2021 and highly recommend him as a positive change agent for how maths and numeracy is delivered in your school."

**Chris Short**  
Principal, Berwick Chase Primary School, Victoria

## MEET THE TEAM



### Rob Proffitt-White, Maths and Numeracy Director

The Learner First Australia/New Zealand

Rob has been a teacher, lecturer, coach and State Curriculum advisor. The design and impact of his work has won two QLD School of the Year awards and been published and shared across Australia and New Zealand. In the same way students expect us to differentiate learning, Rob sets out to value and build on teachers' experiences and give them voice in ways to translate research into their conditions. Rob empowers people to become confident, creative communicators of mathematics.



### Mary Coverdale, Executive Director

The Learner First Australia

She is a passionate educator who has had experience at all levels of the system – as a teacher, a principal, a Senior Education Adviser, and an Assistant Regional Director. She has worked across the Victorian and Queensland jurisdictions and has established networks in both of these states.



### Joanne McEachen (Ngāi Tahu)

CEO/Founder of The Learner First Global

A former teacher, principal, and regional and national Ministry of Education leader, Joanne's methodology re-focusses schools through the eyes of their least-served learners, supporting schools to embrace and celebrate students' cultural identities and individual interests and needs. She serves on the executive team of Karanga, the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills, and is co-founder of NPDL.

# 2021 Designing Mathematical Capability Learning Programs

All programs available for face-to-face, virtual, or a combination. In alignment with the Queensland State Schools Improvement Strategy 2020–2024.



## Opportunities for 2021 include:

- Designing activities and routines that make the standards and capabilities accessible to all students (P-10)
- Establishing mixed method assessments to promote assessment capable teachers and learners
- Creation of contextualised numeracy tasks that integrate critical and creative thinking
- Building teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to ensure the learning of highly capable and ICP students is enhanced
- Understanding, remediating and preventing common misconceptions and associated negative dispositions of mathematics and numeracy demands in all learning areas
- Upskilling of schools to identify and build on students' prior learning & existing capabilities

"Rob has been the catalyst for change in building teachers' capacity to understand the curriculum. He is an outstanding exponent of the teaching and coaching art and, as a result, students' academic and dispositional outcomes have significantly improved alongside teacher competence in teaching. Schools today still continue his methodology of learning by knowing your students and knowing what to teach."

**Mike Hobson**  
Principal, Noosaville State School

## Designing Mathematical Capability Learning

For information, contact:  
[Rob@thelernerfirst.com](mailto:Rob@thelernerfirst.com)

The focus, timing, audience and type of sessions are at the school's discretion. See opportunities listed above.

### Session formats can include:

- One to one mentoring sessions
- Whole school presentations
- Diagnosing and moderating student samples
- Having activities/processes designed

## Optional In-Classroom Digital Support

*Pricing is a sliding scale licensing fee per classroom.*



## Knowledgehook

The Learner First is partnering with Knowledgehook, a leading educational technology company that empowers hundreds of thousands of teachers and parents to collaboratively support the mathematics learning journey of millions of students worldwide.

Knowledgehook's AI-enabled digital platform supports maths improvement by building teacher capacity, while engaging students and providing actionable insights for parents.

The technology harnesses the power of data to track where each student is on their maths journey and provides real-time insights on student learning gaps and helps teachers develop their understanding of the maths concepts relating to their students' challenges, enabling them to adjust instruction and monitor student gaps. Teachers have access to maths content aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

For more information or inquires, contact:  
**Rob Proffitt-White at [Rob@thelernerfirst.com](mailto:Rob@thelernerfirst.com)**

[www.thelernerfirst.com](http://www.thelernerfirst.com) | [@TheLearnerFirst](https://www.instagram.com/TheLearnerFirst)