



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR QUALITY TEACHING IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS VICTORIAN PILOT STUDY FINAL REPORT

LAUREATE PROFESSOR JENNY GORE ◦ DR DREW MILLER
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JESS HARRIS ◦ DR SALLY PATFIELD
MS TERINA VALE ◦ DR KRISTINA SINCOCK ◦ MR MATTHEW HARPER
MRS ROBYN PRESS ◦ DR FELICIA JAREMUS
MS SKYE GIBSON ◦ MS MICHELLE WARE

ISBN: 978-0-7259-1079-2

For more information about this report, please contact:

Teachers and Teaching Research Centre
School of Education
University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308
Email: gtr@newcastle.edu.au

Table of Contents

List of Figures	ii
List of Tables	ii
Executive summary	iii
Introduction	1
The intervention: Quality Teaching Rounds	2
Methodology.....	4
Pilot study sample	5
QTR workshop: Overview	7
QTR workshop.....	8
Post-workshop survey.....	8
Perceptions of the workshop.....	9
QTR professional development	11
Experiences of QTR	11
Comparisons to other programs.....	12
Immediate impact of QTR.....	13
Perceived alignment with school and Department priorities.....	15
Ongoing implementation	16
QTR evaluation.....	18
Overall evaluation	18
Changes in morale, appraisal, self-efficacy, engagement and stress	19
Implementation fidelity	21
Stakeholder perspectives.....	23
Conclusion.....	25
References	26
Appendix	28

List of Figures

Figure 1. QTR process	2
Figure 2. School locations	5
Figure 3. Post-workshop survey results	8
Figure 4. Overall evaluation of QTR	18
Figure 5. Endorsement and traction	19

List of Tables

Table 1. Research design.....	4
Table 2. Sample by Region	5
Table 3. Sample by school type.....	5
Table 4. School demographics	6
Table 5. QTR workshop schedule.....	7
Table 6. Changes in morale, appraisal, self-efficacy, engagement and stress.....	20
Table 7. QTR fidelity criteria	21
Table 8. Fidelity of implementation.....	22

Executive summary

This project, *Building Capacity for Quality Teaching in Australian Schools: Victorian Pilot Study*, examined the translatability of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) in a new jurisdiction. More specifically, the study examined the implementation of QTR in Victorian government schools where, unlike in New South Wales, there has been minimal direct prior engagement with the Quality Teaching Model and the Quality Teaching Rounds approach to teacher professional development. Ten government schools from Victoria (four primary and six secondary) were recruited to participate in QTR, involving a two-day workshop and four days of in-school teacher-led activity. Insights from participating teachers and principals were gleaned through a mixed-methods research design consisting of surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Although a relatively small-scale study, the results presented in this report establish the potential for QTR to be implemented with high fidelity in Victorian government schools. Such translatability is critical if QTR is to be implemented more widely within Victoria.

Major findings of the project were:

- The vast majority of participants reported QTR to be a powerful form of professional development and believed that their teaching practice changed as a result of participating in QTR;
- The vast majority of participants believed that their students benefited from their participation in QTR;
- Implementation fidelity was high when conducting QTR, with a similar fidelity score recorded for both researcher-observed and self-reported measures;
- Across the board, participants spoke very positively about their experiences of QTR, which was seen as generating rich, evidence-based conversations about practice and as a mechanism for creating new kinds of professional relationships with colleagues;
- Participation in QTR engendered many immediate benefits for participating teachers, including a shift in their thinking about practice, opportunities for meaningful analysis of their own and others' practice, deprivatisation of classrooms, affirmation and validation of current practice, and the establishment of shared concepts and language for understanding and discussing what constitutes quality teaching; and
- Participants identified clear alignment between QTR and both school- and state-level initiatives. Teachers and principals commented that QTR could be used either as a form of PD in its own right or as a mechanism to strengthen and support what is already happening in their schools. More broadly, teachers and principals felt that QTR would complement the Department of Education and Training's existing priorities and frameworks, adding value to what is currently being implemented in Victoria.

These positive findings provide a solid foundation for the large-scale randomised controlled trial of QTR in Victorian government schools in 2022. This larger study will focus on the effect of QTR on student outcomes.

Introduction

Internationally, teacher professional development (PD) is considered crucial to, even inseparable from, systemic efforts to strengthen outcomes for students, teachers, and schools. Across the OECD, 94% of teachers, on average, engage in at least some form of ongoing PD (OECD, 2019). In Australia, this figure is even higher, with approximately 99% of teachers reporting that they had participated in PD in 2018 (OECD, 2019).

With education systems around the world investing heavily in PD programs, effective forms of PD are generally understood to be those that lead to positive changes in teacher knowledge and practice and, by extension, students' academic outcomes. However, because PD is often locally developed and research tends to be small-scale (Borko, 2004; Hill, 2009; Kennedy, 2016; Wayne et al., 2008), little is known about delivering impactful forms of PD successfully at scale. Indeed, even when studies have shown an effect on student outcomes (Yoon et al., 2007), they frequently gloss over the fact that such 'local success' might not translate into effectiveness in other contexts. Borko (2004) describes this kind of research as establishing an 'existence proof' – providing evidence of 'what works' in a single context – but often failing to go further by showing how a PD program can be enacted in diverse settings, with due consideration given to both fidelity and adaptation.

Addressing the translation of PD to new contexts is a crucial component of ensuring that scaling initiatives are effective (Morel et al., 2019). Translation refers to the uptake of research and its transfer to practice (Morel et al., 2019). To scale teacher PD, it must be high-quality (Borko, 2004) and productive consultation among stakeholders is essential (Smolin & Lawless, 2011). Programs must remain relevant to participants when delivered across diverse settings (Hoyles et al., 2013; Seely Flint et al., 2018) and take into account the nature of different education systems within countries or regions (Goos et al., 2018; Ovenden-Hope & la Velle, 2015).

Against this backdrop, our pilot study of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) in Victorian government schools represents an important opportunity to understand the translation of high-impact PD across education systems in Australia. More specifically, the study examines the potential for QTR to be of value in Victorian schools where, unlike in New South Wales, there has been minimal prior engagement with the Quality Teaching Model and the Quality Teaching Rounds approach to teacher professional development. The plan is to follow the pilot study with a large-scale randomised controlled trial (RCT) of QTR in Victorian government schools in 2022 to rigorously investigate the effects of QTR on student outcomes.

The intervention: Quality Teaching Rounds

Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) is a collaborative form of teacher professional development that involves four teachers working in a professional learning community (PLC)¹ to observe, analyse and refine their teaching practice across a set of 'Rounds'. A 'Round' is comprised of four components enacted over a single day, as shown in Figure 1. A Round begins with discussion of a reading selected by one member of the PLC (approximately 1 hour). Next, one PLC member teaches a whole lesson observed by the other PLC members (full lesson length). All participants then code the observed lesson using the Quality Teaching Model (usually 30 minutes). This is followed by an extended discussion of the lesson and of teaching more broadly (approximately 2 hours).

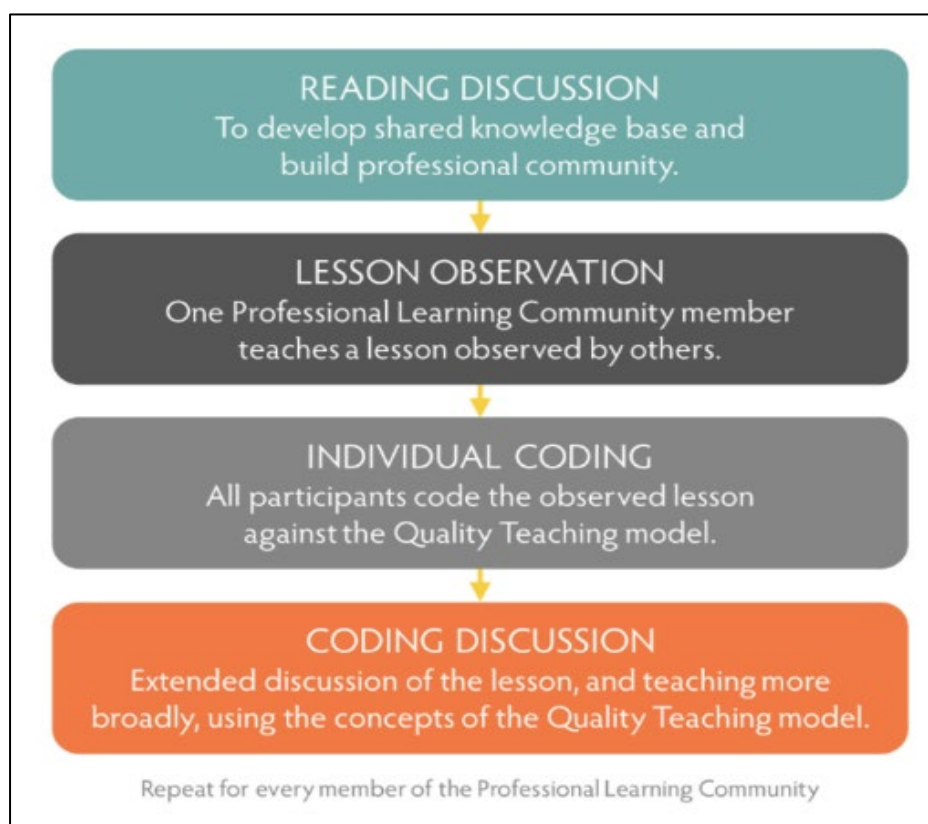


Figure 1. QTR process

At the core of QTR is the substantive pedagogical framework, the Quality Teaching Model. The Model highlights three key dimensions of pedagogy: Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance. Teaching that aligns with this model has consistently been linked to improved outcomes for teachers and students (see, for example, Gore, 2014;

¹ 'Professional Learning Community' (PLC) is a term first foregrounded for the education community in the 1990s by a number of scholars, including Charles Myers, Lynn Myers, Shirley Hord and Richard DuFour. The term has since been used for multiple purposes, including within our work on QTR to describe the groups of teachers who come together to participate in Rounds. We note the Victorian Department of Education and Training is currently implementing a PLC community of practice initiative which utilises this same term.

Gore et al., 2017; Gore et al., 2021; Ladwig and King, 2003; Newmann, 1996). The model offers a coherent vision of pedagogy relevant to all educational contexts, subject areas and year levels. It honours the complexity of teaching and respects what educators already know and do.

Participation in QTR usually begins with two teachers from each school completing a two-day workshop designed to prepare them to implement QTR without additional external input. Upon returning to their schools, the teachers form a PLC with colleagues to participate in QTR, typically undertaken over four single days during a period of between four and ten weeks.

Methodology

The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate the translatability of QTR to a new jurisdiction. Ten government schools were recruited to participate in QTR, with insights from teachers and principals gleaned through a mixed-methods research design consisting of surveys, focus groups and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were analysed using standard protocols for inductive coding to identify key themes derived from the perspectives of participants. An overview of the research design is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Research design

Activity
Baseline Data Collection – Term 2, 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher survey
QTR Workshop – Term 2, 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 teachers from each school attend the QTR workshop• Post-workshop survey
QTR Implementation – Terms 2-3, 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 teachers from each school participate in QTR• Implementation fidelity check by a member of the research team (observed fidelity), conducted both face-to-face and online due to COVID-19• PLC focus group• 1 teacher per school completes an implementation fidelity check for each Round (self-reported fidelity)
Post-Intervention Data Collection – Terms 2-3, 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher survey• Interview – 1 participating teacher per school• Interview – Principal or nominated contact per school• Interview – Relevant stakeholders

Pilot study sample

The Department of Education and Training Victoria is divided into four regions. Schools in the pilot study were located in each of the four regions (refer to Table 2). The location of the schools is illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 2. Sample by Region

Region	<i>n</i>
North Eastern Victoria	3
North Western Victoria	1
South Eastern Victoria	4
South Western Victoria	2

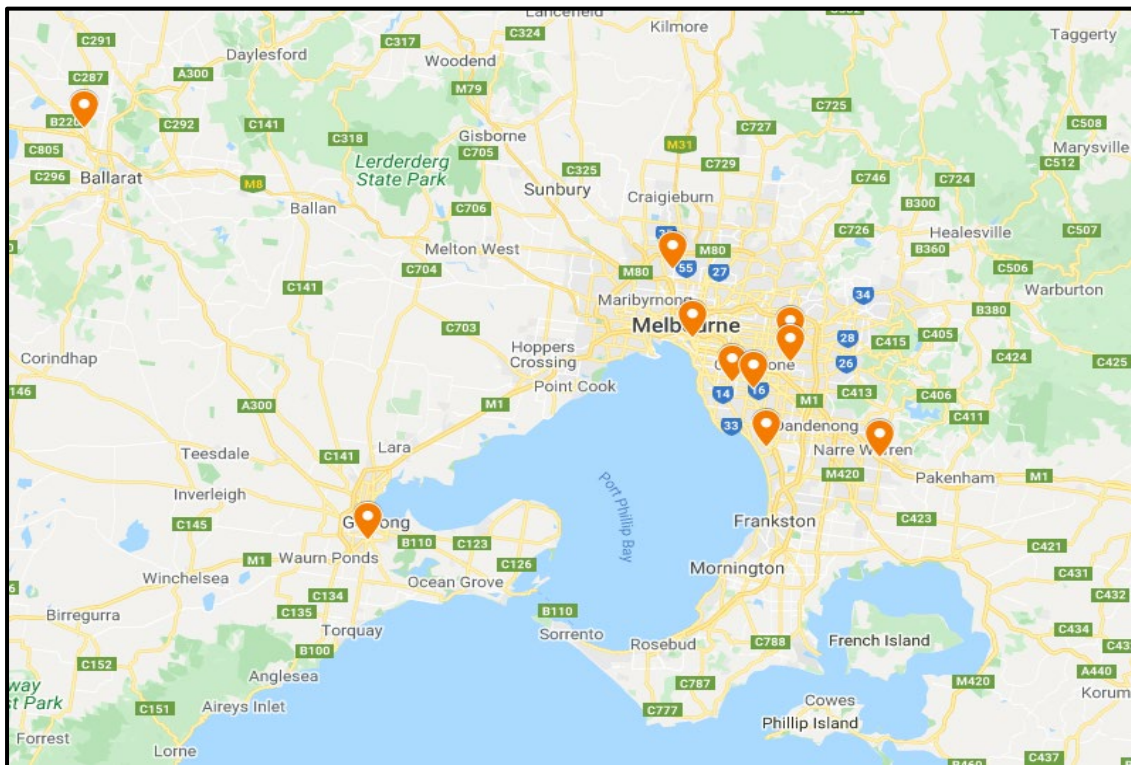


Figure 2. School locations

Of the ten participating schools, four were primary schools and six were secondary with grades 7-12 ($n = 4$) or 9-12 ($n = 2$).

Table 3. Sample by school type

School Type	<i>n</i>
Primary: Prep–Year 6	4
Secondary: Year 7–12	4
Secondary: Year 9–12	2

An overview of the ten participating school is provided in Table 4. Please note that throughout this report, school and participant pseudonyms are used to ensure confidentiality for individuals.

Table 4. School demographics

School	School Type	Geographic Location	ICSEA
Acel Place Secondary College	Secondary (7-12)	Major City	>1000
Bridgley Primary School	Primary (P-6)	Inner Regional	<1000
Brightsville Girls' College	Secondary (7-12)	Major City	<1000
Cape Creek College	Secondary (7-12)	Major City	>1000
Fountain View Secondary College	Secondary (7-12)	Major City	>1000
Goatsville Primary School	Primary (P-6)	Major City	>1000
Jefferson Primary School	Primary (P-6)	Major City	>1000
Keys Point Primary School	Primary (P-6)	Major City	>1000
Little Rock Girls' High School	Secondary (9-12)	Major City	>1000
Sparkle Bay High School	Secondary (9-12)	Major City	>1000

QTR workshop: Overview

The two-day QTR workshop was led by Laureate Professor Jenny Gore in May 2021, held face-to-face with participants in Melbourne. Two teachers and the principal (or a nominated member of the school leadership team) from each pilot study school were invited to participate. In total 20 teachers and 5 principals attended the workshop. An overview of the workshop program is provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5. QTR workshop schedule

DAY 1	
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00– 10:00	The Quality Teaching Model – Challenging Assumptions <i>Dimensions and elements of the model</i>
10:00 – 11:00	Diagnosing Classroom Practice 1 <i>Practising the observation and individual coding</i>
11:00 – 11:20	Morning Tea
11:20 – 12:45	<i>Discussion processes of Quality Teaching Rounds</i>
12:45 – 1:15	Lunch
1:15 – 3:00	Introducing Quality Teaching Rounds <i>Essential features of Quality Teaching Rounds and negotiating professional learning community norms</i> <i>Exploring the evidence: Impact on students, teachers and teaching</i>
DAY 2	
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:20	Reflections
9:20 – 10:15	Diagnosing Classroom Practice 2
10:15 – 10:35	Morning Tea
10:35 – 12:30	Diagnosing Classroom Practice 2 cont. <i>Practising Quality Teaching Rounds</i>
12:30 – 1:00	Analysing practice
1:00 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:00	Reviewing QTR Implementing QTR Research information

After the workshop, the two teachers formed PLCs with two other teachers at their school. Participants could be working across any Year level/s or specialisation/s.

QTR workshop

Post-workshop survey

Overall, participant satisfaction with the workshop was high, evident in a Net Promoter Score² of 65%. This excellent score indicates that the vast majority of participants are ‘promoters’ of QTR, enthusiastic to recommend QTR to others.

At the conclusion of the workshop, all participants completed a short online survey. As shown in Figure 3, the vast majority of participants either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the workshop was a valuable professional learning experience. Similarly, the vast majority of participants either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that: the workshop prepared them for implementing QTR in their school; the resources in the workshop were useful; and, the presentation of the QT Model was clear and comprehensive. While one participant appeared to be dissatisfied with the workshop, this same individual indicated he/she would recommend QTR to his/her colleagues.

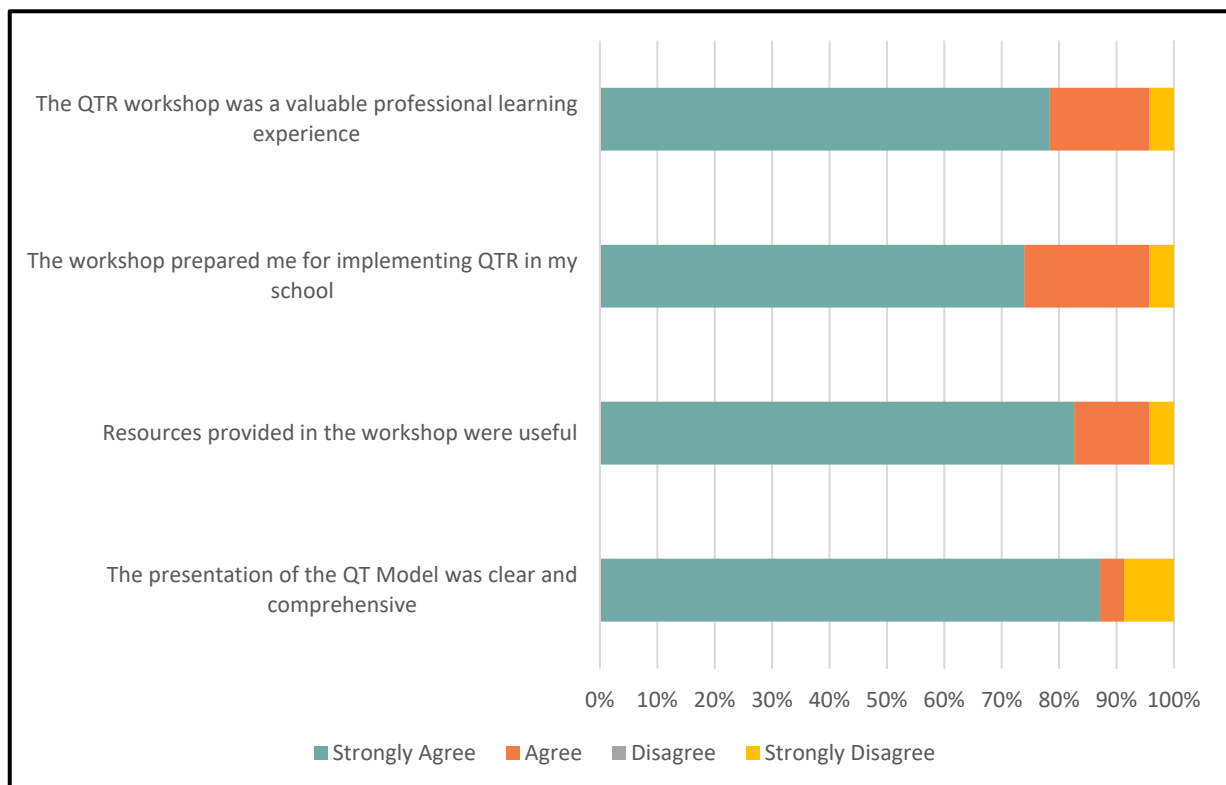


Figure 3. Post-workshop survey results

² Please refer to the following article in the Harvard Business Review for further information about the Net Promoter Score: <https://hbr.org/2003/12/the-one-number-you-need-to-grow>

Perceptions of the workshop

Teachers who attended the QTR workshop were asked to share their opinions of the workshop during focus groups which were held (face-to-face or online) after the first or second QT Round. Overall, attendees spoke very positively about the workshop, enjoying the structure and composition of the two days:

It was a good use of time. Everything was done in detail. (Macey, Teacher, Goatsville Primary School)

I really enjoyed it. I think as hard as it was to get the two days out of the classroom, it was beneficial because it is a lot of information coming from two people that haven't heard of the program before. So that was really nice to have it over two days and not be bombarded with information. It worked really well. (Peyton, Teacher, Bridgley Primary School)

In particular, attendees appreciated the size of the group and enjoyed the opportunity to work with teachers from different school contexts and subject backgrounds:

I think there was about 20 of us there in total. I thought that was good because of timing and everything, and you also got familiarised with all the faces that were there and I think that worked. Any bigger than that I thought it would have been too much going on in the one room. (Van, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

What I loved about it was the draw of participants from very different teaching environments. (Charli, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

The most interesting thing that I found is that I was able to have discussions with teachers that teach other subjects and primary school teachers. I had an intense discussion about metalanguage with a music teacher... We all here teach different subjects but we can have an objective discussion on the teaching and learning that is happening in that specific lesson. (Lilliana, Teacher, Brightsville Girls' College)

Workshop attendees also valued learning about the rigorous evidence-base behind QTR and its associated benefits, which provided a solid foundation for engaging in this form of PD:

The justification of the evidence really helps support why we're doing this. (Veronica, Teacher, Brightsville Girls' College)

It was definitely a good reminder in terms of the elements, but also all the discussion that we did on the first day was very interesting. I have two pages worth of notes in here. All the data, all that type of information, how it improves literacy and how the results improve in time the more teachers get involved. That's what was really interesting in my opinion. (Lilliana, Teacher, Brightsville Girls' College)

Many attendees compared the QTR workshop to other forms of PD they had encountered, acknowledging that the interactive, hands-on nature of the workshop offered an experience that was relatively unique:

A lot of the PD that we do is, I found, quite often lecture based. We'll have someone come in and sort of present to us and be like, 'here is stuff that you can do'. And that's something I really appreciate about this program [QTR] in particular is that, even the PD that we did last week, it was a workshop and we came in and actually had to watch the video and have a go at coding and it was quite interactive. I found that quite a change from a lot of the stuff that we normally do here which tends to be people say stuff then you can do [it] but we don't actually get a chance to try to do it in that session. (Hugo, Teacher, Acel Place Secondary College)

I think that it was good that we didn't spend a lot of time at the start of the PD, sometimes at a PD it's like 'can we do something?' Whereas Jenny gave us a 45-minute overview and then she was like, 'let's just get stuck into this, you're going to figure it out as we go'. So I thought the way the PD was structured was really good. (Van, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

Ultimately, attendees felt confident to implement QTR in their schools after attending the workshop, and walked away feeling that they had a new lens to support observation and meaningful analysis of practice:

I went in knowing nothing and I came out feeling pretty confident that I could code a lesson and engage in meaningful discussion afterwards with purpose and context... These criteria now that we have to guide the discussion and to be thinking about, I didn't know how to do any of that before and now I feel a lot more confident. (Marley, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

At the start [Jenny] gave us that survey looking at what we know about QTR from 1 to 5. And we're like a 1 and she said by the end of this you'll probably be a 4 or a 5 and Keiko and I we were like 'oh'. Literally we forgot she asked us that and at the end we were like, 'yes, we would be confident to [rate ourselves a] 4 or 5 easily, to go and do this'. (Van, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

For me, it's given me that lightbulb about how purposeful observation can be and how much the ensuing conversations really, really benefit your growth as a teacher. (Sabine, Teacher, Sparkle Bay High School)

QTR professional development

Qualitative data in the form of focus groups and interviews were used to gather insight into participants' perceptions of QTR after engaging in QTR at their schools. In this section, we highlight the major points raised by participants, specifically their overall experiences of QTR, comparisons to other programs, impacts of QTR, perceived alignment with school and Department priorities, and the ongoing implementation of QTR beyond the pilot study.

Experiences of QTR

Across the board, participants spoke very positively about their experiences of QTR. They found the PD to be well-structured, with the key components of QTR working together to underpin rich, evidence-based conversations about practice:

I think that this is a really, really positive program. I really enjoy the discussions that we get to have and I think that the coding system facilitates them really well... We're basically giving all these things a score from one to five and that's sort of what we're focusing on during the coding process. Then we move on to the discussion and [the Quality Teaching Model] just generates this really, really organic conversation. (Hugo, Teacher, Acel Place Secondary College)

I think the layout of how it is over a day and also the overall layout is extremely clever. I think the way you get to sit down with your peers and have a good conversation about something important, it gets the juices flowing. You get to have a chat and everyone feels comfortable with each other. (Van, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

Participants particularly valued the time for professional discussions about practice with colleagues:

We were just chatting before and all sharing what backgrounds we've kind of come from and our journey to becoming a teacher. It's amazing, as much as we're all teachers we're also different and learnt from different mentors along the way. It's great to actually share that with each other because quite often we don't really get a chance to actually speak about teaching which is actually not something I realised until Jenny spoke to us at the PD. She's like, 'when do you really get a chance to actually talk about your teaching?' And I'm like, 'yes we kind of don't!' So that's what I've loved most. Even doing the reading at the start was fantastic, just having a professional discussion about that and just being able to collect feedback off each other has been the best part. (Parker, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

Having time to engage in conversations about practice also created an opportunity for participants to forge new kinds of professional relationships with members of their PLC. QTR helped to deprivatise classrooms and provided a mechanism for teachers to see their colleagues in a new light:

My personal reflection is what a powerful opportunity it is to talk about teaching and learning with some pretty amazing teachers. What an amazing group of individuals. (Hester, Teacher, Acel Place Secondary College)

I think it really opens up the opportunity to realise and understand that as teachers we're not standing by ourselves and that we really do have people around us. So, the more that we see each other teach and talk about our teaching the more student outcomes are going to go up because we're more likely to seek help. We're more likely to improve our teaching strategy. We're more likely to see what others are doing and try new things. (Suzie, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

Overall, it was felt that QTR is a beneficial form of PD for all teachers, regardless of their years of teaching experience and specialisation. As such, it was felt that QTR can play a valuable role in enhancing practice and the profession more broadly:

I can only see it adding value to the profession of teaching across the board to be perfectly honest. Whether you're a beginning teacher or a very well versed, experienced teacher. I can't see it doing anything but that to be honest. (Jordan, Teacher, Little Rock Girls' High School)

Comparisons to other programs

In discussing their experiences of QTR, participants identified many advantages compared to other forms of peer observation. The vast majority of participants had previously engaged in peer observation in their schools and felt that QTR offered a much more holistic and effective approach to analysing practice:

The biggest difference between QTR and what we were doing previously I found is that [in peer observation] you had to have only one focus and the observer was just looking for that one area... It was like, 'don't look away from that area!' It was, like, just focus on questioning, for example, like that's the only thing that's important. I think that's been the biggest difference between QTR and peer obs. (Van, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

This model feels more like a PD day, in the sense that it's really wholesome, it's really learning dense. Whereas I think in other peer obs, they're really good and you get lots of good things out of them, but it doesn't seem to have the same impact. (Kamai, Principal, Fountain View Secondary College)

There was also a view that QTR provided a much-needed structure to guide observations and discussions, helping teachers to see and articulate what was happening in the classroom:

In peer obs you really just more so talk about what you saw... So in the peer obs you could get into a little bit of like, 'where's your this?' and 'I didn't see

that'. Whereas QTR points you in a direction of what was evident. (Yolanda, Teacher, Jefferson Primary School)

What also made QTR different was its underlying focus on building trust through reciprocity (everyone taking turns to be observed and to contribute to discussions), which ultimately created a safe space for participants to feel that the PD was non-threatening and free of personal judgement. The focus on *teaching* – rather than the *teacher* – also proved to be highly beneficial in removing any stigma usually attached to observation:

There's no judgement which I think is the concern that people have, that you feel a bit awkward or it can be a bit overwhelming thinking people are watching you and possibly judging you. I think the language [emphasised in the workshop] that we use as well when we say, 'I'm coding this as...' is very removed from the person and more focused on the lesson. (Gracelyn, Teacher, Goatsville Primary School)

What I really appreciate about [QTR] is that you're not judging a person. You're coding a lesson. Although to start with you sort of go, 'oh gosh these people are coming to watch me teach'. But then after a while you just go, 'yes' and then the conversations that ensue are really settling. There's no judgement there. It becomes a really good environment. (Charli, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

The underlying principles of QTR also played a major role in ensuring that participants felt comfortable working with colleagues in leadership or supervisory roles. Here, Billie talks about working in a PLC with Hester, one of the Assistant Principals at her school:

I feel like we just had a really great opportunity to talk about teaching. I feel like it's not something you might not understand until you actually do it, and I think we're very fortunate that [it created] a really lovely, professional space and also very trusting – I feel a lot of trust. I mean otherwise I wouldn't be doing it with all of you. Even Hester, you mentioned that you are an Assistant Principal but you are very much a learner yourself and I don't feel ever that you would be judging me from that perspective. So I feel very comfortable. (Billie, Teacher, Acel Place Secondary College)

Immediate impact of QTR

Participation in QTR engendered many immediate benefits for participants. Many teachers spoke about a shift in their thinking, with the dimensions and elements of the Quality Teaching Model providing a new lens through which to view practice:

I found for me personally that it's really made me consider so many more aspects of my planning and how very small, tiny tweaks can actually have a huge impact. I think that that realisation and that in the back of my mind having the criteria there and becoming more and more familiar with it has

really changed the way I think about what I do and how I deliver my lessons to my students. (Charli, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

Participants also spoke of becoming much more reflective practitioners, with the elements of the Model now firmly embedded in their thoughts even when they weren't participating in QTR:

I reflect on things in my classroom a lot more. Like I think, 'oh, if this was being coded, I would have got that, or I didn't meet this element but the lesson was really strong on that one'. I think it's something that I'm thinking of and more aware of as I'm teaching. (Macey, Teacher, Goatsville Primary School)

Indeed, as one teacher, Ava, commented, this new kind of thinking was not simply a short-term impact of the PD, but something that would stay with her for years to come:

Long after the QTR process is done, I don't think I'll ever not think about these 18 elements to some level, as I go through my practice. Even now, when I start thinking about planning the next area or planning the next unit, I will run through the things in my head being like, 'how am I going to make sure that I'm inclusive? How am I going to make sure that I look at different cultural knowledge? Where can I draw on the kids' background knowledge?' I just find it's going to be beneficial and helpful long-term. (Ava, Teacher, Little Rock Girls' High School)

In terms of the structure of QTR, the unique combination of self-analysis and the deprivatisation of classrooms proved to be a powerful combination in producing such deep, meaningful reflection on practice:

Being able to reflect on our own lessons but also to see, I mean, I don't often get to see other teachers teach at the same time. Seeing what other people do and then reflecting on your own practice, it's like, 'oh yes...' (Gracelyn, Teacher, Goatsville Primary School)

In this light, QTR was affirming for many participants, giving them assurance about parts of their practice they are already doing well. This was particularly the case for those teachers who had been teaching for a number of years, subsequently bolstering their sense of self:

Because you're by yourself in your classroom, you forget what you're actually doing. So it's really good to be like, 'oh, I actually am ticking that box. I did do that. I am catering for this'. So, it's nice to just give yourself that affirmation of, 'oh, I know what I'm doing' because you sometimes forget that as the days go by. (Naomi, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

I like the validation that you're doing things right. After you've been teaching for a while it kind of gets the same and then you kind of really look at something you're doing and it's like, 'oh actually, no, the things we're doing are really good'. (Marley, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

Ultimately, the concepts and language of the Quality Teaching Model and the collaborative nature of QTR were highly regarded by participants, helping them to move forward with a shared understanding of what constitutes quality teaching:

I see it as being a really wonderful way of enabling growth in professional practice, in actually how to become an even better teacher. I see it as helping people work together to embed their practice and understand and speak the same language. People just use different words for different things. [QTR] gives you the language to be able to compare notes and share observations. It's a really big enabler. (Kamai, Principal, Fountain View Secondary College)

In this vein, it was felt that QTR respected what teachers already know and do but offered a comprehensive approach to practice that has a direct impact on student outcomes. Dorathea's analogy of a toolbox speaks to this stance; she feels that teachers like her already have the 'tools' to be great teachers but QTR provides the means to focus on particular aspects of practice and consequently improve outcomes:

I think one of the things that really rang through to me when we were doing [QTR] and doing the training was about respecting the complexity of teaching. This isn't something new. It is something new but it's not – I don't have to go through and do all this reading and learn a different approach to teaching. I actually already know how to do all these things. It's just integrating them all into a lesson that's going to impact student outcomes. So, I've got the tools already in my toolbox to be a great teacher. I just need to know where to focus those things to be able to deliver better lessons. (Dorathea, Teacher, Keys Point Primary School)

Perceived alignment with school and Department priorities

In terms of how well QTR aligns with the Victorian context and individual school contexts, participants overwhelmingly had no hesitation in adopting QTR. For some schools, the focus on pedagogy was important in order to support ongoing implementation, a critical feature of QTR that could underpin whole-school, cross-curricular professional learning:

I went to the first QTR professional learning [workshop] in my role as a Learning Specialist in 2019 towards the end of the year with our Assistant Principal, and we thought it was a good model that would suit our school context and how we operate. And during 2019, we were rolling out peer observation with the other Learning Specialist and just kind of responding to that data. And we thought that [QTR] might be the better way forward to be a bit more cross-curricular. And I think that's the way it's modelled, the non-judgmental aspect and more kind of comprehensive generic-ish picture of teaching is probably the impetus to keep going with it, to get people involved. (Owen, Teacher, Sparkle Bay High School)

For schools that already have their own internal pedagogical model, it was also felt that there was strong alignment with QTR. In this way, some principals recognised that QTR could be used to strengthen and support what was already happening in a school, rather than necessarily replace existing frameworks:

Before the Department developed a pedagogical model that every school should use, we'd already gone through that sort of analysis two years ago. What does good practice look like at Fountain View? And we actually grew our own model. QTR can actually help us to embed our own pedagogical model significantly. It has a very good balance to it. It's not seen as something different from the core business and I think that that's the beauty of this program... QTR actually has the evidence and the structure behind it and paces [the learning] out, but it supports our pedagogical model. It supports what we originally came up with in terms of what a good lesson, or series of lessons, actually look like. (Kamai, Principal, Fountain View Secondary College)

More broadly, teachers and principals felt that QTR would complement the Department of Education and Training's existing priorities and frameworks, adding additional value to what was already in place within Victoria:

I know QTR is a different framework than the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model but I don't see a problem. I feel like they are all pretty similar and [QTR] can fit in here... We have our own internal learning model which we follow but we focus on the high-impact teaching strategies [HITs] as well because there is a lot of support materials and so on around them. I feel like they [HITs] link to the things that are in QTR... because it's just basic teaching. In terms of a framework for a lesson, it is just, you know, you introduce, you gauge students' prior knowledge, you give them the purpose of what they are doing, the learning intention et cetera, you look at what success looks like – so, modelling and so on – that sort of stuff. Then, providing time for reflection at the end. So, I feel like there is no competition between the two. I just think they marry well next to each other. (Helene, Assistant Principal, Brightsville Girls' College)

Ongoing implementation

While the response to QTR was overall very positive, participants raised possible challenges for ongoing implementation. These challenges were not reflective of the PD itself, but of the existing system and the teaching profession more broadly. In particular, scheduling and the amount of time needed off class to conduct Rounds were perceived by some as posing potential challenges, particularly in relation to the participation of teachers with senior (VCE) classes. Nevertheless, schools were committed to finding a way forward:

It's just the seriousness about how much we value our VCE loads and how much the kids value our presence in the room. That creates considerable angst for us and for them when we disappear for considerable periods. (Otto, Teacher, Sparkle Bay High School)

I think, to be honest, sometimes people's reluctance to be involved is because they feel like – particularly if they have got senior classes – that it is hard to miss that ... I think we have decided just to do one [set of Rounds] each term because, in terms of disruption to people's timetables and the school in general, that seems more manageable that way... [I think] some people who might want to be involved will say, 'oh, yeah, can I do it next term when my Year 12s are finished?' and that sort of stuff. (Helene, Assistant Principal, Brightsville Girls' College)

The other main challenge perceived by participants was adding QTR into an overcrowded system, with many competing demands. However, it was felt that once teachers were exposed to QTR and aware of its benefits and structure, any initial concerns would be allayed. Indeed, as Kamai notes, it is important not to lose sight of the investment in teachers, which lies at the heart of QTR:

That will be the biggest challenge. How we will fit it in. And you know, it sounds really daunting when you try and sell it to people and the amount of time it requires. But once they are doing it, I think they are okay. But it's overcoming that initial fear about the appraisal and the concern about the amount of time it's going to take out of their real work. (Max, Principal, Sparkle Bay High School)

We're okay to make that investment because we see the gains at the other end but I think it is a very big commitment and they're all trying to, sort of, fit it into their week and observe all the classes and come together. But I just keep saying to them it's worth the investment because you're going to be a better teacher at the end of this, than you were at the beginning. It's really important to invest in your people. (Kamai, Principal, Fountain View Secondary College)

QTR evaluation

Overall evaluation

The post-intervention survey included a series of questions asking participants to evaluate QTR based on their overall experience. In particular, participants indicated their level of agreement with three statements about QTR, as shown in Figure 4.

A high proportion of teachers (96.4%) strongly agreed or agreed that QTR is powerful professional development. Similarly, most participants either strongly agreed or agreed (89.3%) that their teaching practice changed as a result of QTR.

In relation to their students, a high proportion of participants (96.4%) strongly agreed or agreed that their students benefited from their participation in QTR.

These can be interpreted as extremely positive results given the short duration of the intervention (two-day workshop and up to four days of Rounds), the short duration of the study (approximately 12 weeks since the workshop) and the interruptions to schooling caused by COVID-19 (three lockdowns since the workshop).

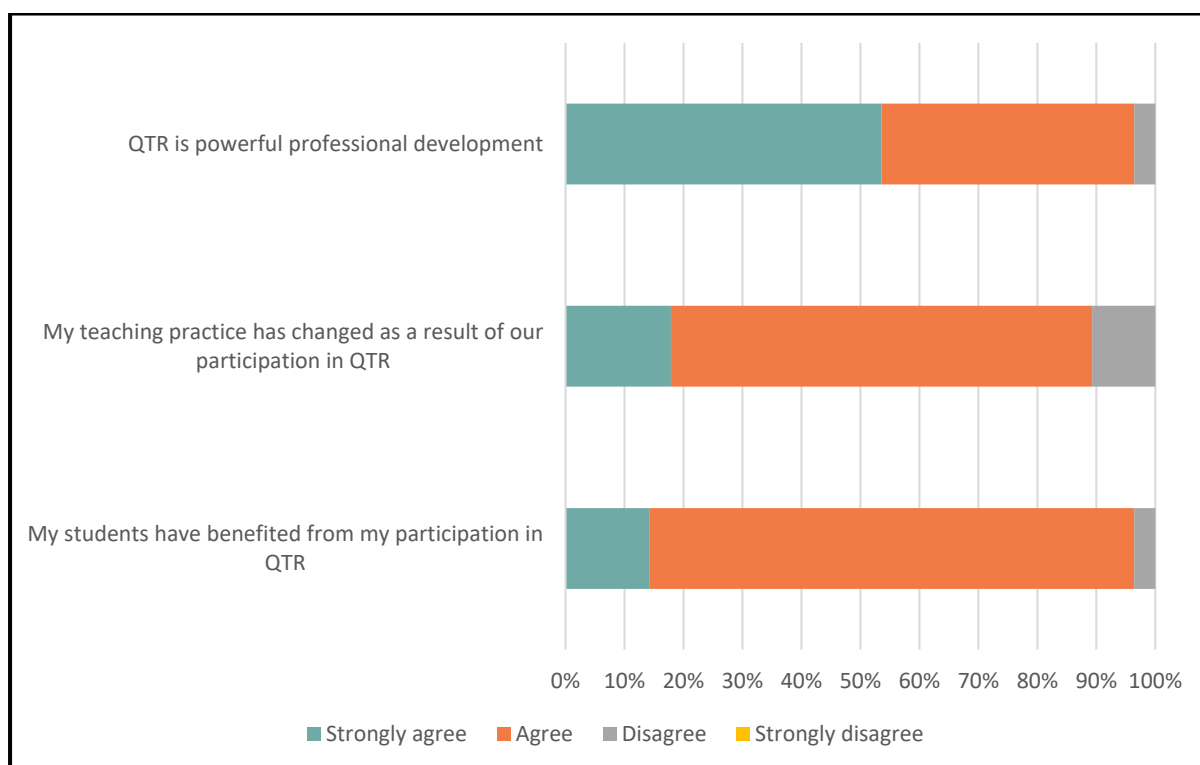


Figure 4. Overall evaluation of QTR

Participants were also asked to report on how likely they would be to recommend QTR to their colleagues and whether QTR was likely to gain traction at their school. As shown in Figure 5, participants were highly likely to recommend QTR to their colleagues ($M = 8.64$, $SD = 1.47$) and moderately sure that QTR would gain traction at their school ($M = 6.96$, $SD = 2.05$). The result regarding traction is explained, in large part, by some of the challenges to ongoing implementation identified by participants, such as the required time off class and competing demands on teachers' time, as detailed in the qualitative analysis.

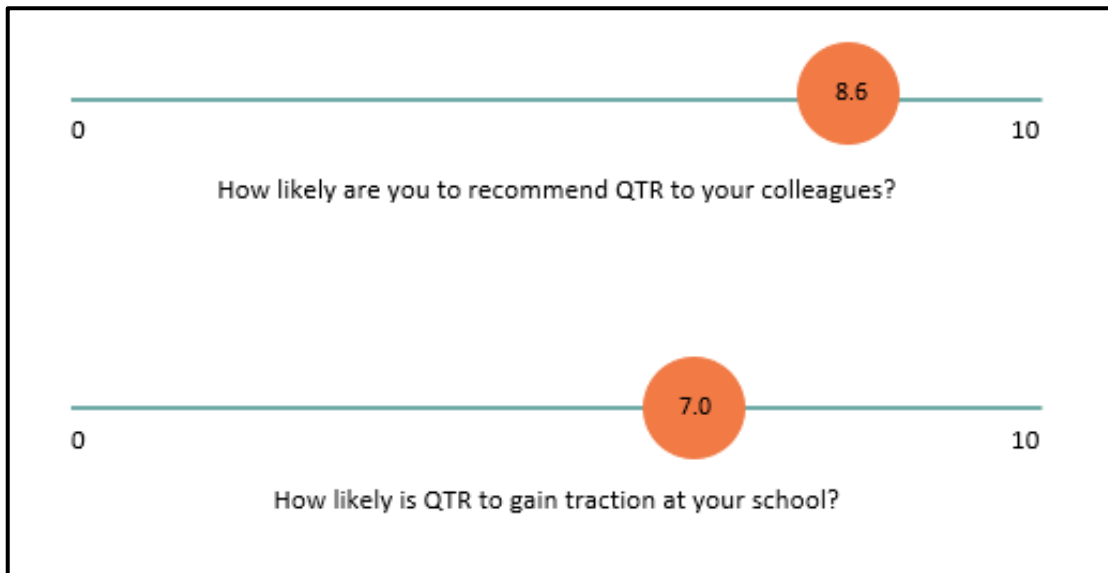


Figure 5. Endorsement and traction

Changes in morale, appraisal, self-efficacy, engagement and stress

Baseline and post-intervention surveys were designed to identify any changes in participants' morale, sense of appraisal, self-efficacy, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and level of work-related stress (refer to the Appendix for survey items). Given the short intervention period, substantial changes were not anticipated.

As can be seen in Table 6, there was a notable increase, on average, in relation to participants' morale between baseline ($M = 8.72$, $SD = 1.36$) and post-intervention ($M = 9.02$, $SD = 1.32$). Increases were also observed in relation to participants' self-efficacy, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement.

There was a slight decrease, on average, in relation to participants' sense of appraisal between baseline ($M = 7.14$, $SD = 1.65$) and post-intervention ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 2.03$). This result could be explained by the fact that many teachers completed the post-intervention survey during a period of home learning caused by COVID-19.

Notably, however, participants' level of work-related stress decreased during this same period, between baseline ($M = 7.04$, $SD = 1.75$) and post-intervention ($M = 6.77$, $SD = 2.08$).

Table 6. Changes in morale, appraisal, self-efficacy, engagement and stress

Category	Baseline Mean (SD)	Post-intervention Mean (SD)	Difference
Morale	8.72 (1.36)	9.02 (1.32)	0.3
Appraisal	7.14 (1.65)	7.00 (2.03)	-0.14
Self-efficacy	8.22 (1.21)	8.32 (1.30)	0.1
Emotional engagement	9.04 (1.09)	9.22 (0.70)	0.18
Cognitive engagement	9.18 (0.79)	9.23 (0.87)	0.05
Stress	7.04 (1.75)	6.77 (2.08)	-0.27

Implementation fidelity

Implementation fidelity refers to the extent to which the teachers in each PLC adhered to the protocols for implementing QTR as described in the workshop. When implementing QTR in their schools, a nominated teacher from each PLC completed a survey to provide details about the activities they engaged in as part of each Round. The survey data were then assessed using the fidelity checklist (Table 7).

In addition to these self-reported data, a research assistant observed all PLC activities during either Round 1 or Round 2 of QTR in each school. Observations took place either face-to-face or online via Zoom conferencing facilities (when COVID-19 prevented travel from NSW and/or visiting school sites). These researchers recorded the activities undertaken against the set of fidelity criteria but did not provide any assistance or advice with implementation.

Table 7. QTR fidelity criteria

Implementation fidelity criteria
1. Was a professional reading session conducted?
2. Was a full lesson observed?
3. Were all PLC members in attendance throughout the lesson?
4. Did all PLC members individually code prior to discussion for this Round?
5. Did all PLC members provide their codes and justification (using lesson evidence) for each QT element?
6. Did PLC members take turns leading the discussion of elements during this Round?
7. Was the QT Classroom Practice Guide a consistent point of reference throughout the discussion?
8. Were PLC members (including the observed teacher) present throughout the discussion?
9. How long was the post lesson discussion? (> 60 minutes required for fidelity)

As can be seen in Table 8, the pilot study schools implemented QTR with high levels of fidelity. The mean score was similar for both observed fidelity ($M = 8.7$, $SD = 0.5$) and self-reported fidelity ($M = 8.8$, $SD = 0.4$).

When observed, a small number of schools did not achieve 100% fidelity (in terms of scoring 9/9 on the criteria listed above). This was due to the post-lesson discussion occurring for 60 minutes or less and one PLC not taking turns leading the post-lesson discussion. These schools met eight of the nine fidelity criteria, still demonstrating high levels of implementation fidelity.

Overall, schools appear to have no difficulty in enacting QTR as intended, which is important if the approach is to have the same kinds of effects in Victorian schools as found in our previous studies in NSW.

Table 8. Fidelity of implementation

Outcome	QTR
Fidelity score	
Observed, mean (SD)	8.7 (0.5)
Self-reported, mean (SD)	8.8 (0.4)
Fidelity 9/9 (100% fidelity)	
Observed %	66.7%
Self-reported %	82.1%

Stakeholder perspectives

In addition to teacher and principal interviews, stakeholder interviews were conducted with a representative from the Victorian Department of Education and Training and a representative from the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP). These interviews were conducted to further explore the alignment between QTR and state-based priorities and frameworks.

Overall, it was felt that QTR has much to offer in the Victorian context, providing a much-needed focus on classroom practice which has largely been absent from system-level and school-level discussions. In this way, QTR was seen as establishing a shared language around teaching that would provide consistency across the state and ultimately make a difference for both teachers and students:

I just think this is the granular classroom work that even as a system, we haven't delved into enough. We've talked about learning walks and we've talked about peer reviews and peer appraisals and all of that sort of stuff, but it's not consistent enough across the state. Whereas I can see [QTR] as building a language and a consistency. So that's my view on it. I'm not the final decision maker, but that's my view around the work... I am trying to keep my excitement down, but I can see this being a key part of improving classroom practice and raising awareness of what looks good in the classroom and building that... In that granular classroom level, I can see that making a difference for our students. (VIC DET Representative)

In researching QTR and the Quality Teaching Model, I was incredibly impressed with the level of rigour that was inherent in the model which, in my mind, has been missing in a lot of the models that have been looked at, developed, and played with in Victoria and other states. So the model impresses me enormously... We've had various models of lesson observations but we haven't had anything that provides the level of rigour that I thought was necessary to help teachers really improve their practice... I think the Quality Teaching Model becomes – the elements of the Quality Teaching Model form the lexicon of teaching. It teaches you to talk around pedagogy and student learning and so that I think is enormously powerful. (VASSP Representative)

In a similar fashion to teachers and principals, stakeholders also perceived clear alignment between QTR and existing frameworks used in Victoria. With the right kind of implementation support from the Department, it was felt that QTR would be a valuable addition in Victoria to work alongside the Department's existing reform initiatives, such as the PLC initiative and the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO):

I think that with the right leaders, with the right communications, with the right supports and bringing those things together, I think ultimately it could work. I think the risk environment we're in at the moment is COVID and the roller coaster of remote learning and then back to face-to-face and the impact that has on wellbeing in school leadership and energy. So that's a risk

that we have at the moment. But I think longer term, if we build it into the architecture of our PLCs, our response to the underperforming schools, and literacy and numeracy strategies, and then align it... And we're currently redesigning FISO [Framework for Improving Student Outcomes] to make it simpler and clearer. So there's a clear line of sight to the five elements we're asking people to work on. And a key element is teaching and learning, of course. So I can see Quality Teaching Rounds fitting into that line of sight around how to build the best possible teaching practice. (VIC DET Representative)

The Department has mandated that all schools, all government schools, will do the Professional Learning Community (PLC) training... It provides a framework for how to go about the work of improving practice in the classroom, that's its goal. So it talks about teachers working in PLCs or small teams and actually interrogating the work that they do in the classroom using evidence-based strategies to make improvements to student outcomes.... And what the PLC framework does, it's aim is to teach people how to use evidence and to implement an action research model in their teams, find a strategy to improve a problem of practice, gather data and evidence around success or around impact, and then iterate to the next model.... What is not mandated however is the work that the PLC team will do. That is where I see there's an opportunity for QTR, because the PLC framework gives you the model. It doesn't tell you the 'what'. And so there's an opportunity for PLCs within a school to engage in Quality Teaching Rounds as the actual 'what' of what the team does to improve their practice. So the PLCs can be the form and the QTR is the function... [QTR] is another tool or another vehicle for the PLCs within a school to use, to improve their practice. So it's a complementary tool, if you like. (VASSP Representative)

However, given the Department is already using the terminology of 'PLC' in its reform initiative, it was also felt that this term would need to be modified in QTR to support implementation. Working within the context of the Department's initiatives was also perceived to be of the utmost importance to ensure QTR's success:

There's some issues around terminology because we have PLCs and I know that the QTR teams are called PLCs – that will lead to massive confusion. So terminology is one. And I think that recognition that there is a Victorian Teaching and Learning Model already and that there is a FISO too, so building the architectural language that the profession is familiar with, into how we roll out QTR will give it more chance of success. Whereas if we just rolled it out, as it's rolled out in New South Wales, for instance, then I think we're putting up barriers that we don't need to. (VIC DET Representative)

Conclusion

The results of this pilot study clearly establish the translatability of QTR, with high fidelity, in Victorian government schools.

These positive findings provide a solid foundation for a large-scale randomised controlled trial of QTR in Victoria to be conducted in 2022. This larger study will focus on the effects of teachers' participation in QTR on student outcomes.

References

- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, 33, 3–15. doi:10.3102/0013189x033008003
- Hill, H.C. (2009). Fixing Teacher Professional Development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, March, 470–476. doi:10.1177/003172170909000705
- Hoyles, C., Noss, R., Vahey, P., & Roschelle, J. (2013). Cornerstone mathematics: Designing digital technology. *ZDM Mathematics Education*, 45, 1057–1070. doi:10.1007/s11858-013-0540-4
- Goos, M., & Bennison, A. (2018). Sustaining and scaling up research-informed professional development for mathematics teachers. *Mathematics Teacher Education and Development*, 20, 133–150. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov>
- Gore, J. (2014). *Towards quality and equity: The case for Quality Teaching Rounds*. Proceedings of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) Conference. Melbourne, Australia: ACER.
- Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., & Ellis, H. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 99-113. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007
- Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., Harris, J., & Prieto, E. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*.
- Kennedy, M. M. (2016). How does professional development improve teaching? *Review of Educational Research*, 86, 945-980. doi:10.3102/0034654315626800
- Ladwig, J.G., & King, M.B. (2003). *Quality Teaching in NSW public Schools: An annotated bibliography*. Sydney, Australia: NSW Department of Education and Training.
- Morel, R., Coburn, C., Koehler Catterson, A., & Higgs, J. (2019). The multiple meanings of scale: Implications for researchers and practitioners. *Educational Researcher*, 48, 369–377. doi:10.3102/0013189x19860531
- Newmann, F.M. (1996). *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality*. New York, NY: Jossey-Bass.
- OECD (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (volume 1): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
- Ovenden-Hope, T., & la Velle, L. (2015). Translational research in education for knowledge mobilisation: A study of use and teacher perception in primary schools in England, UK. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 41, 574–585. doi:10.1080/02607476.2015.1105541
- Seely Flint, A., Albers, P., & Mathews, M. (2018). Interrupting situated practices: Critical incidents in international partnerships. *Teacher Development*, 22, 281–302. doi:10.1080/13664530.2017.1363082
- Smolin, L. & Lawless, K.A. (2011). Evaluation across contexts: Evaluating the impact of

technology integration professional development partnerships. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 27, 92–98. doi:10.1080/21532974.2011.10784663

Wayne, A. J., Yoon, K. S., Zhu, P., Cronen, S., and Garet, M. S. (2008). Experimenting with teacher professional development: Motives and methods. *Educational Researcher*, 37, 469–479. doi:10.3102/0013189x08327154

Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Wen-Yu Lee, S., Scarloss, B., and Shapley, K. L (2007). *Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement*. Washington D.C: Institute for Education Sciences, US Department of Education, Southwest Regional Laboratory at Edvance Research Inc.

Appendix

The following items were included in the pre- and post-intervention surveys.

Category	Survey items	Reference
Morale	<p>There is good team spirit in this school</p> <p>The morale in this school is high</p> <p>Teachers go about their work with enthusiasm</p> <p>Teachers take pride in this school</p> <p>There is a lot of energy in this school</p>	<p>Hart, P. M., Wearing, A. J., Conn, M., Carter, N. L., & Dingle, R. K. (2000). Development of the School Organisational Health questionnaire: A measure for assessing teacher morale and school organisational climate. <i>The British Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, 70(2), 211–228. doi:10.1348/000709900158065.</p>
Appraisal	<p>I am encouraged in my work by praise, thanks or other recognition</p> <p>I have the opportunity to discuss and receive feedback on my work performance</p> <p>I am regularly given feedback on how I am performing my role</p> <p>There is a structure and process that provides feedback on my work performance</p> <p>I receive regular feedback from a range of sources about my performance in this school</p> <p>I am happy with the quality of feedback I receive on my work performance</p> <p>Staff receive recognition for good work</p>	<p>Hart, P. M., Wearing, A. J., Conn, M., Carter, N. L., & Dingle, R. K. (2000). Development of the School Organisational Health questionnaire: A measure for assessing teacher morale and school organisational climate. <i>The British Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, 70(2), 211–228. doi:10.1348/000709900158065.</p>
Self-efficacy	<p>I am a successful teacher</p> <p>I am good at helping students learn new things</p> <p>I have accomplished a lot as a teacher</p> <p>I feel like my teaching is effective and helpful</p>	<p>Mankin, A., von der Embse, N., Renshaw, T. L., & Ryan, S. (2017). Assessing teacher wellness: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and measurement invariance of the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire. <i>Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment</i>, 36(3), 219-232. doi:10.1177/0734282917707142</p>
Emotional engagement	<p>I am excited about teaching</p> <p>I feel happy while teaching</p> <p>I love teaching</p> <p>I find teaching fun</p>	<p>Klassen, R. M., Yerdelen, S., & Durksen, T. L. (2013). Measuring teacher engagement: Development of the engaged teachers Scale (ETS). <i>Frontline</i></p>

		<i>Learning Research</i> , 1(2), 33-52. doi:10.14786/flr.v1i2.44
Cognitive engagement	While teaching I pay a lot of attention to my work While teaching, I really throw myself into my work While teaching, I work with intensity I try my hardest to perform well while teaching	Klassen, R. M., Yerdelen, S., & Durksen, T. L. (2013). Measuring teacher engagement: Development of the engaged teachers Scale (ETS). <i>Frontline Learning Research</i> , 1(2), 33-52. doi:10.14786/flr.v1i2.44
Stress	How stressful is your job?	Eddy, C. L., Herman, K. C., & Reinke, W. M. (2019). Single-item teacher stress and coping measures: Concurrent and predictive validity and sensitivity to change. <i>Journal of School Psychology</i> , 76, 17-32. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2019.05.001

ISBN: 978-0-7259-1079-2