Transforming Education through the Arts: Stories of success in challenging settings

Professor Brian Caldwell
Dr Tanya Vaughan
QSA conference, Brisbane, 26 April 2012

educational transformations

the song room

Why not the best schools?

Expectations have been raised in Australia and comparable countries for an 'education revolution' that will secure success for all students in all settings. Such a revolution must ensure the alignment of educational outcomes, the skills required for a strong economy, and the needs of a harmonious society. *Why Not the Best Schools?* offers a ten-point, ten-year strategy that will ensure that, when all is said and done, people will look back and say a revolution has occurred and all schools can be fairly described as 'best schools'.

This book draws on a five-year study culminating in The International Project to Frame the Transformation of Schools conducted in Australia, China, England, Finland, the United States and Wales. The findings are consistent with the McKinsey & Company report on the world's best performing school systems and those arising from OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). It goes beyond system characteristics to provide an in-depth account of how transformation occurs in schools. Fifty indicators are provided to help shape strategies for policymakers and practitioners in schools and school systems. Guidelines for leadership and governance ensure a future-focus for those who are determined to ensure that all students will succeed in the 21st century.

Brian J. Caldwell is managing director of Educational Transformations and professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne where he served as dean of education from 1998 to 2004. He has undertaken more than 450 professional assignments of one kind or another in or for 38 countries. His previous book for ACER Press was *Re-imagining Educational Leadership* (2006).

Jessica Harris is director of research at Educational Transformations and research fellow in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. She conducted a comparative study of schools in Australia and Finland before serving as manager of the International Project to Frame the Transformation of Schools.

Australian Council for Educational Research

ACER

Why not the best schools?

Caldwell and Harris

What we have learned from outstanding schools around the world

Why not the best schools?

Brian J. Caldwell and Jessica Harris

PREFERRED SCENARIO 2015

In April 2012 a State Minister for Education launched a book that described in detail how schools in the most disadvantaged settings can add up to a year in NAPLAN scores in reading, reduce absenteeism by up to 20 percent, and ensure most students can attain the highest levels of social and emotional well-being. The foundation lay in research on The Song Room program in some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia. The findings of this research and the strategies outlined in the book confounded policy makers and practitioners who had pursued apparently well-designed approaches to achieving the same outcomes only to see little if any impact.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS
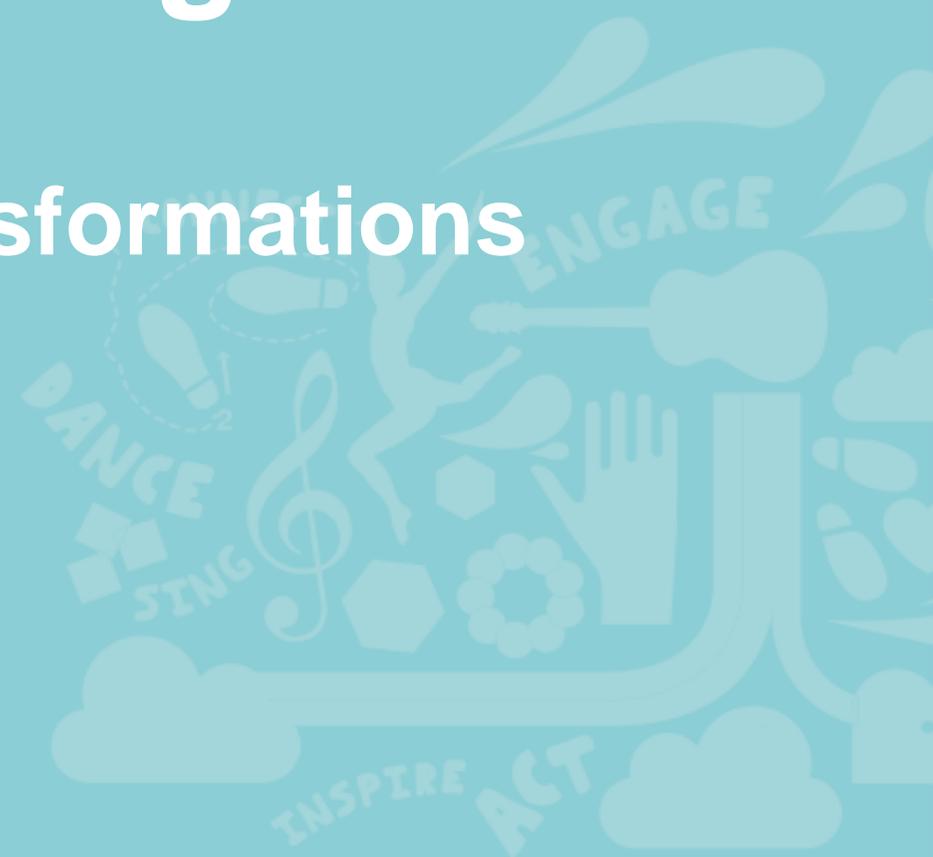
BRIAN CALDWELL AND TANYA VAUGHAN

Dr Tanya Vaughan

Educational Transformations

The Song Room (TSR) Communities

Engaging Young People Through Creativity

Programs are targeted to schools in need of student re-engagement strategies, in the most marginalized communities in Australia, from the 700,000 children in schools without specialist teachers in the arts.

- ♫ Socio-economically Disadvantaged
- ♫ Indigenous Communities
- ♫ Learning, Health & Disability Challenges
- ♫ New Arrivals & English as a second Language
- ♫ Disengaged & Juvenile Crime
- ♫ Early Intervention
- ♫ Geographically Isolated

45,000 Children Reached per year, each for a min 6 month program, which is over 20,000 children every week.

Methodology

The evidence presented is drawn from two studies:

1) Bridging the Gap in School Achievement through the Arts
- Involved 370 students in grades 5 and 6 from ten schools in disadvantaged settings in NSW with The Song Room program
- Students outcomes in attendance, academic grades, NAPLAN results and Social-Emotional Wellbeing were investigated

2) Bridging the Gap in Indigenous Achievement through Creative Arts and Parental Engagement
- Involved over 1000 students including 155 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students from grades 3, 4 and 5 from eight schools in urban, regional & remote settings in Queensland with The Song Room program
- Students outcomes in attendance, English grades and NAPLAN literacy results and parental engagement (numbers of parents involved and engagement survey) were investigated.

Methodology

1) Bridging the Gap in School Achievement through the Arts
   - Quantitative and qualitative methodologies, with statistical analysis and case studies.
   - Quasi-experimental methodology with control group of schools that did not participate in The Song Room program involved.
   - Data gathered from each individual school

2) Bridging the Gap in Indigenous Achievement through Creative Arts and Parental Engagement
   - Quantitative and qualitative methodologies, with statistical analysis and case studies.
   - Pre and post measurements
   - Queensland ACARA data employed as control data from NAPLAN analysis
   - Data gathered on students by the Department of Education and Training
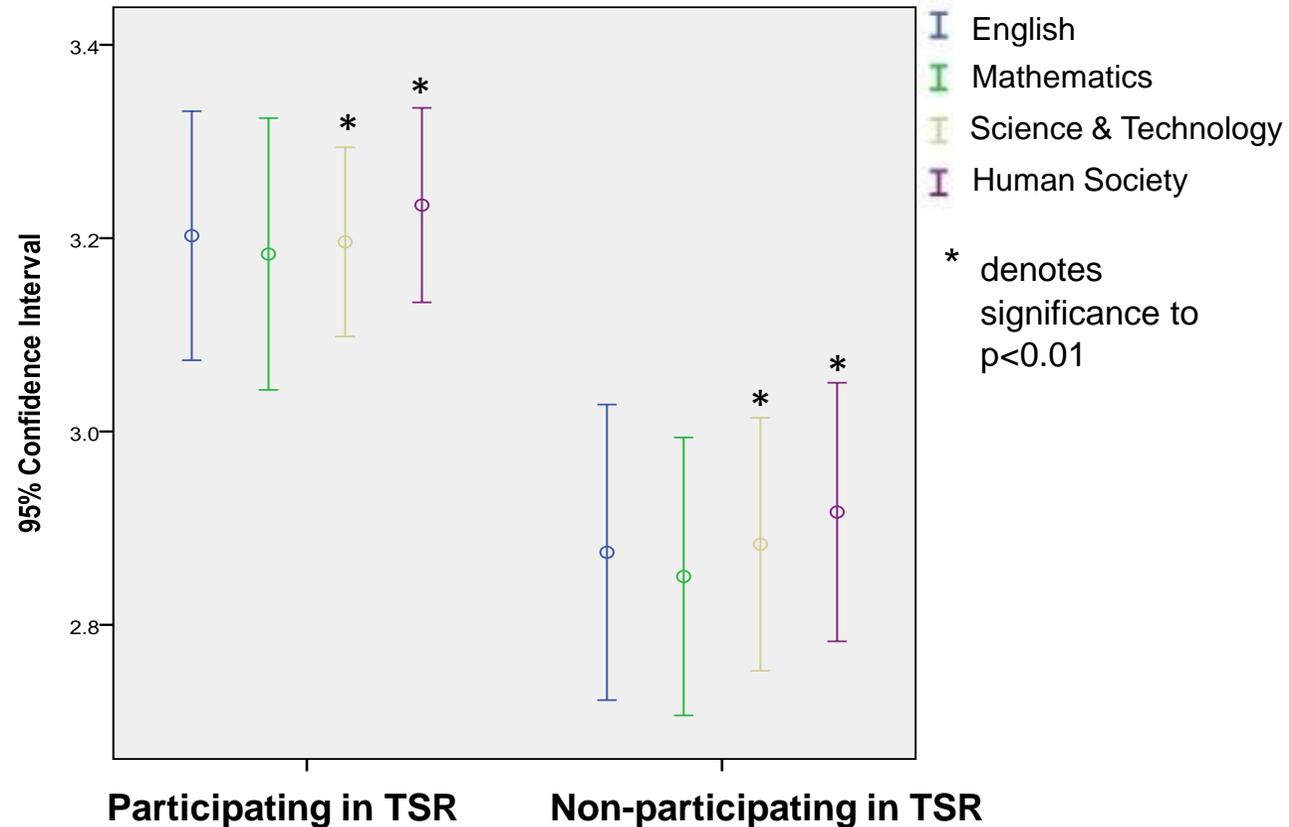
Summary of research findings
Demographics

Category	School (pseudonym)	Date of TSR commencement	Enrolment	ICSEA 1	ICSEA 2
Longer-term (n=109)	Cooper Stone Public School	2009 Semester 1	296	918	937
	Willow Brook Public School	2009 Semester 1	493	907	886
	Margaret Park Public School	2009 Semester 2	289	929	973
		Weighted mean	439	910	903
Initial (n=140)	Curraburra Public School	2010 Semester 1	340	819	827
	Alfield Public School	2010 Semester 1	204	1100	1058
	Bonvilla Public School	2010 Semester 1	330	992	990
		Weighted mean	359	905	903
Non-participating (n=121)	Banksia Public School		479	955	959
	Docks Creek Public School		332	862	915
	Shornville Public School		477	813	867
	Pinlowe Public School		387	948	942
		Weighted mean	444	883	913

The Schools were a well matched set

Summary of research findings
Academic Grades

educational transformations

the song Room

Engaging Young People Through Creativity

- Higher grades in Science & Technology (significance of p=0.0001)

- Higher grades in Human Society (significance of p=0.002)

95% Confidence Interval

- English
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Human Society

* denotes significance to p<0.01

Participating in TSR   **Non-participating in TSR**

Higher academic grades for those that participated in The Song Room

Literacy levels (NAPLAN 2009)

educational
transformations

Percentage of students above national minimum for literacy

- Longer-term TSR
- Non-participating in TSR
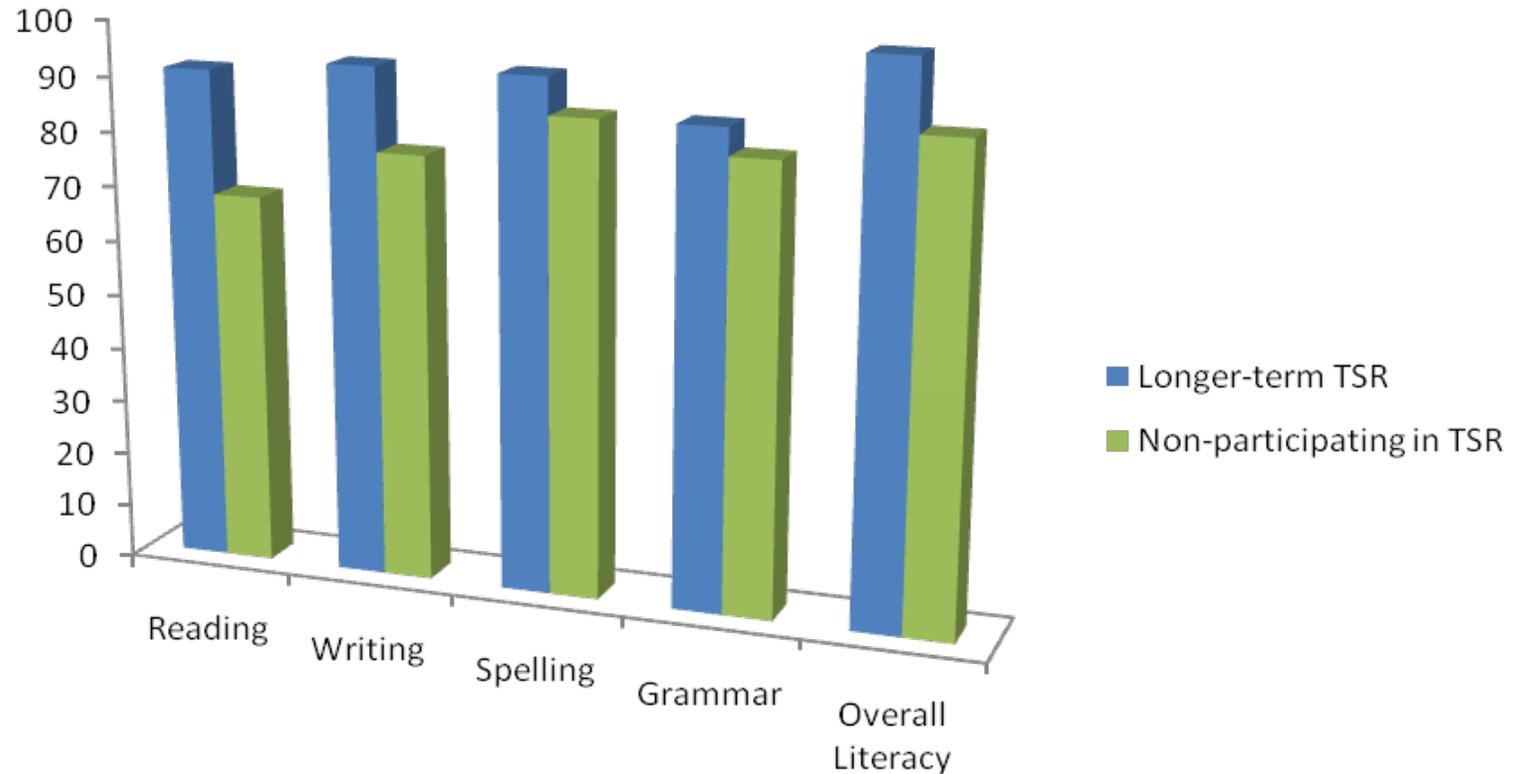
Equivalent of a 1 year gain in literacy and reading in TSR program

Summary of research findings
Literacy levels (NAPLAN 2010)
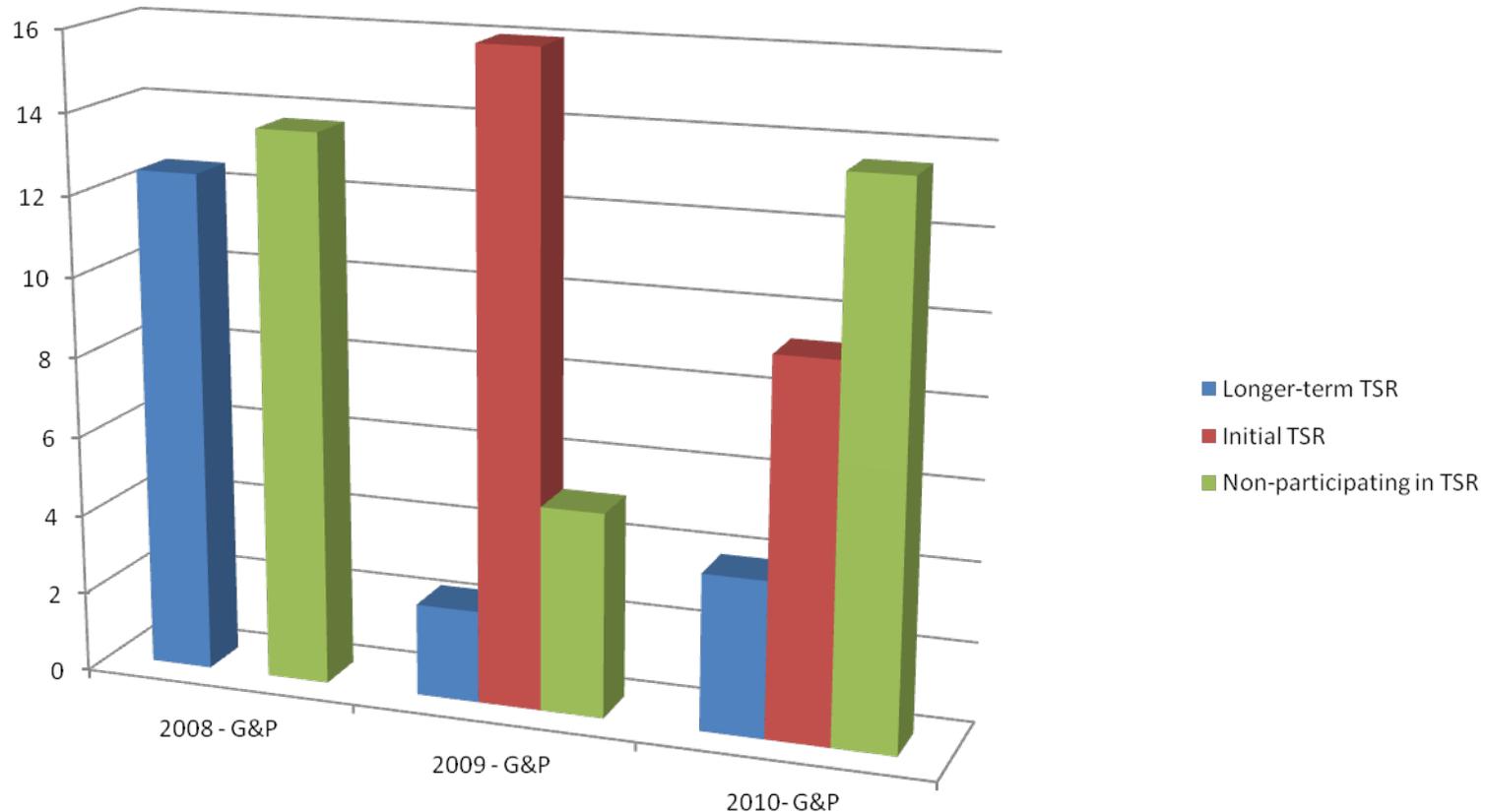
Percentage of students below national minimum for literacy

Consistently lower percentage of students below the minimum national level across all areas of literacy with participation in TSR program

Percentage of students below national minimum for Grammar and Punctuation

Legend:
- Longer-term TSR
- Initial TSR
- Non-participating in TSR

Categories: 2008 - G&P, 2009 - G&P, 2010 - G&P

Decreased percentage of students below the national minimum for Grammar and Punctuation with participation in TSR

Summary of research findings
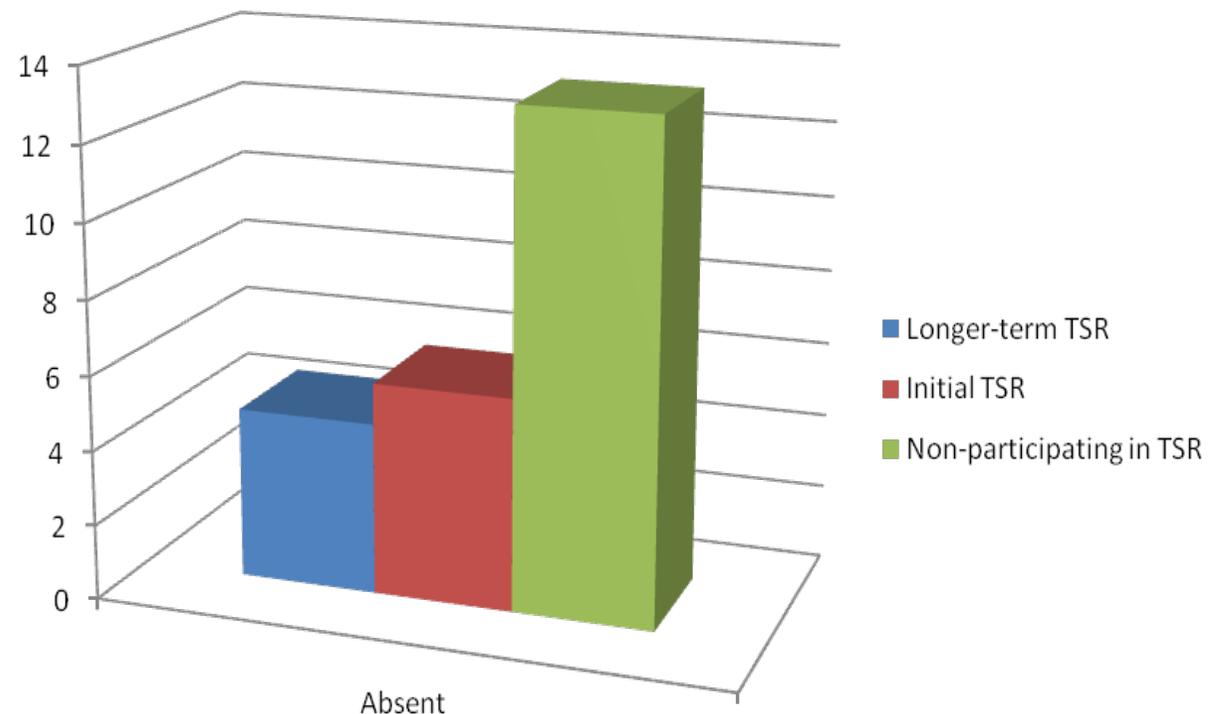# School Attendance

Percentage of student absences

Attendance at school significantly higher in initial and longer-term program (p = 0.003)

Highest level of attendance for TSR students also observed on non-program days

Legend:
- Longer-term TSR
- Initial TSR
- Non-participating in TSR

Absent

65% less absenteeism with participation in the longer-term TSR in comparison to those that have not participated

Social-Emotional Wellbeing
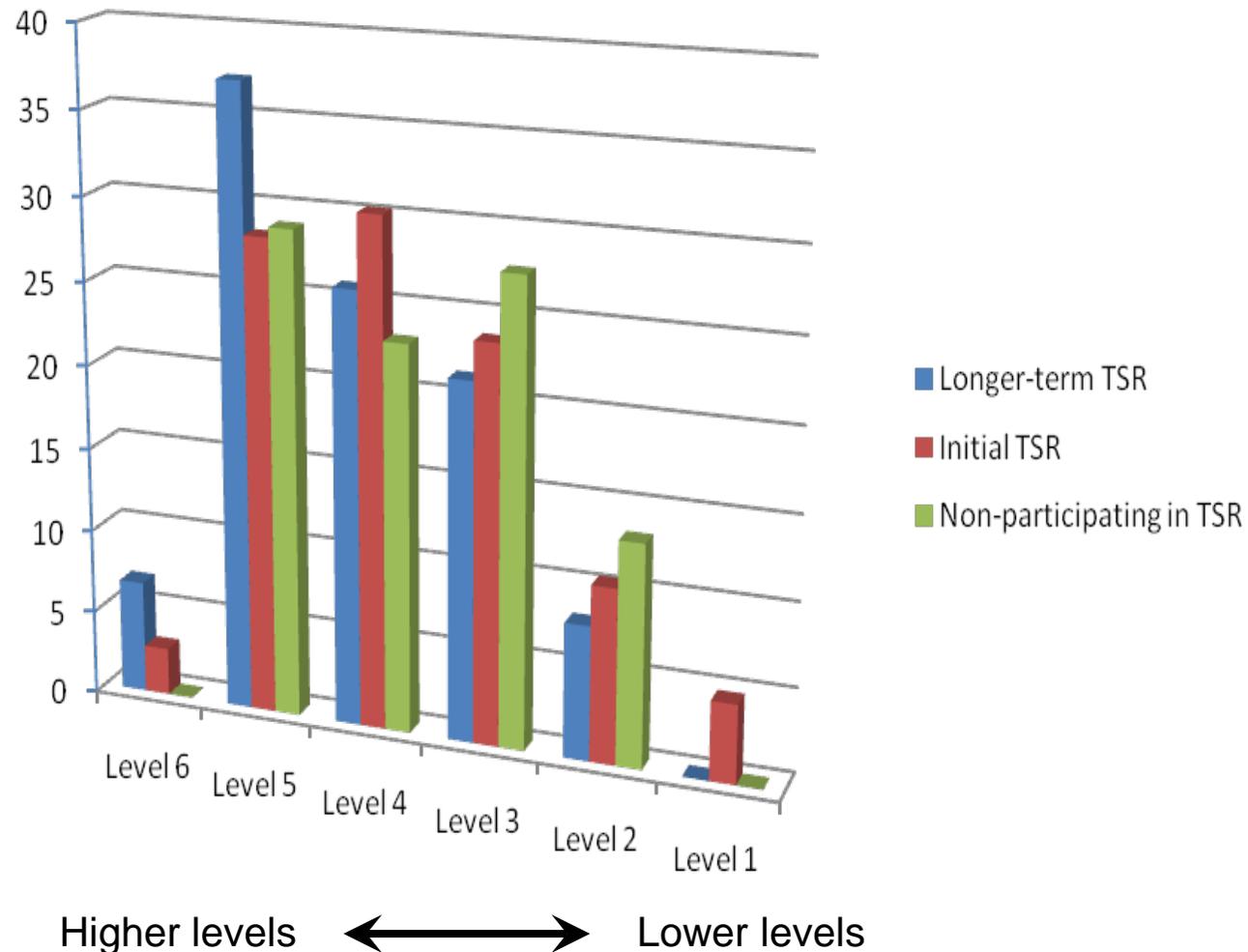
Percentage of students at the highest levels of overall wellbeing (level 5 & 6) highest for longer-term TSR participation and lowest for those who had not participated in The Song Room

Legend: Longer-term TSR, Initial TSR, Non-participating in TSR

Chart axis labels: Level 6, Level 5, Level 4, Level 3, Level 2, Level 1

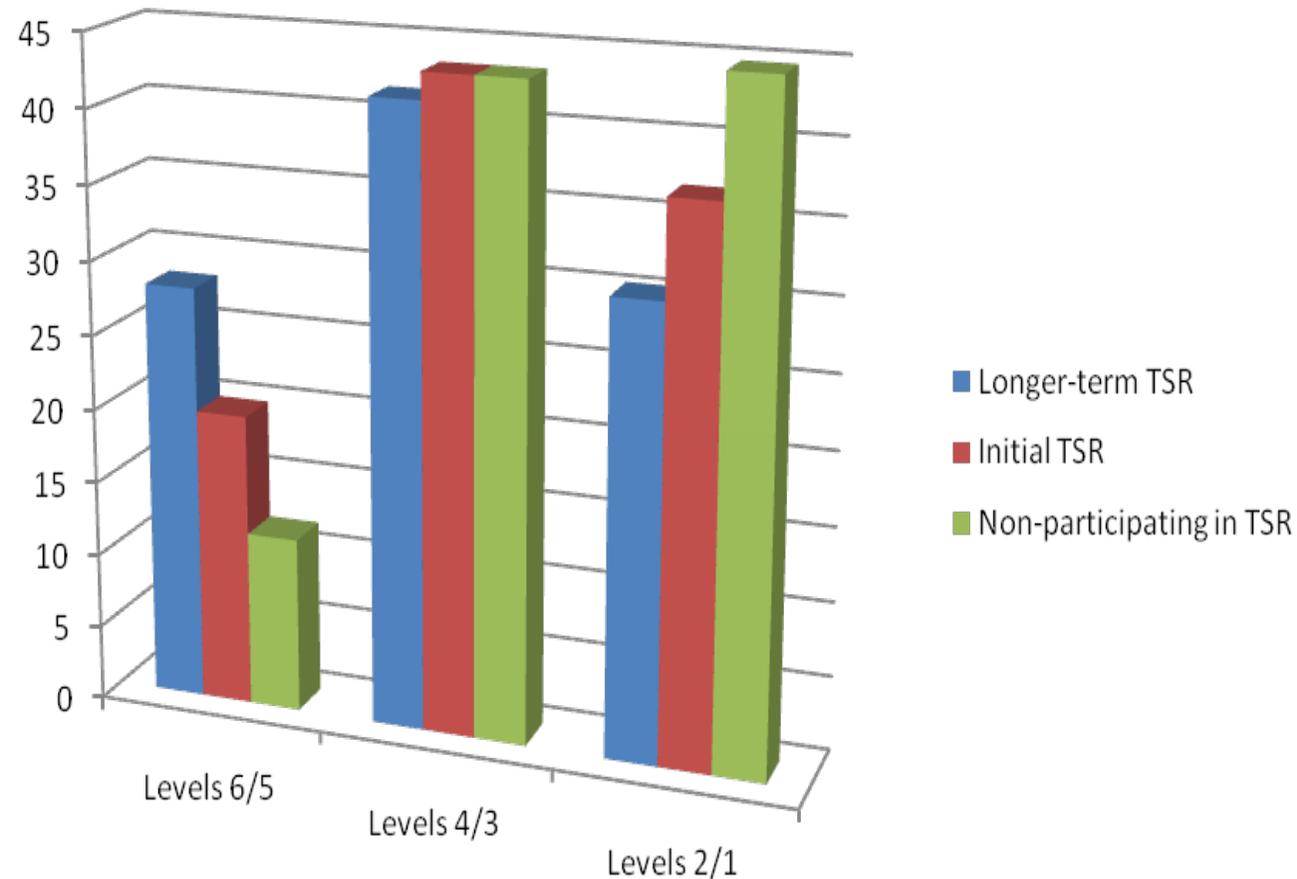Higher levels ⟷ Lower levels

Summary of research findings
Resilience

Higher % of students from longer-term TSR program had higher levels of resilience (levels 6/5)

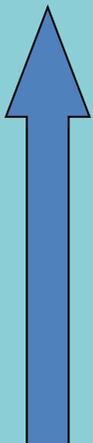Higher % of students from non-participating had lower levels of resilience (levels 2/1)

Resilience key to protecting against risk factors for marginalised students

Social-Emotional Wellbeing

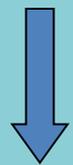The analysis of student responses to the various statements in the SEWB survey indicated how the TSR had apparently influenced SEWB through:

increased:

- **self esteem** and **confidence**,
- **positive teacher-student relationships**,
- **social skills**,
- **self expression**,
- **love of learning**,
- **confidence towards school work**

decreased:

- lack of control in **anger**, and
- **stress** and worry.
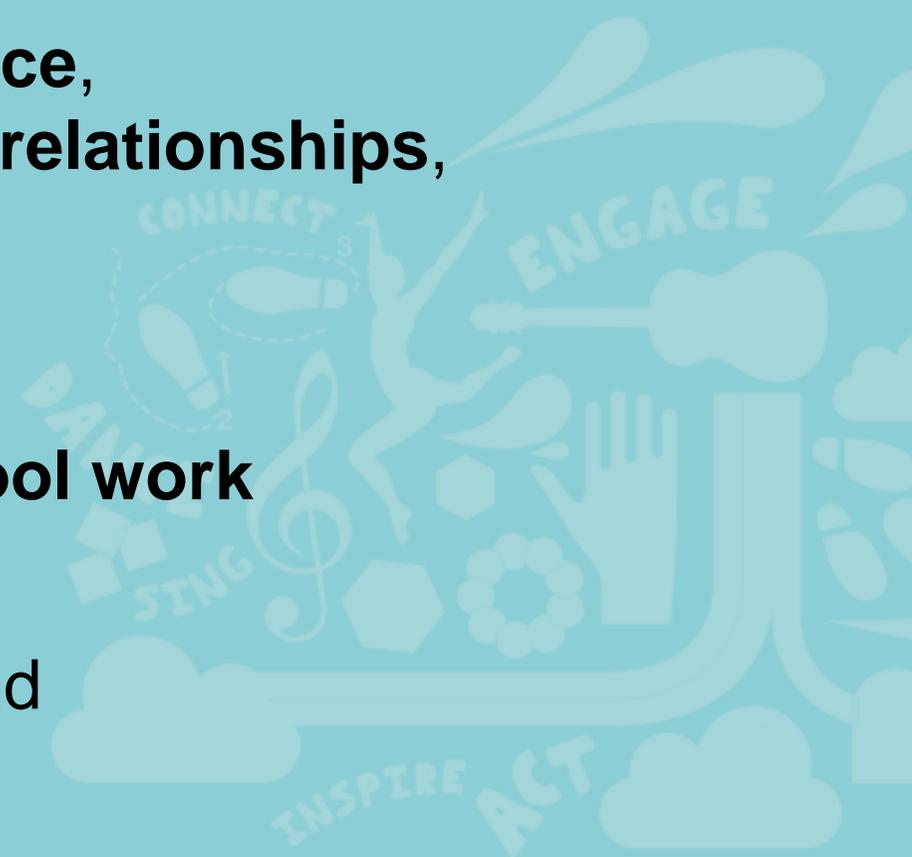
Stress

Male students that participated in TSR showed

significantly lower agreement with the statement 'I feel very stressed' (p=0.002)

in comparison to male students who had not participated

Percentage of boys who agreed with the statement 'I feel very stressed'

Legend:
- Longer-term TSR
- Initial TSR
- Non-participating in TSR

Boys

Summary of research findings
Depression

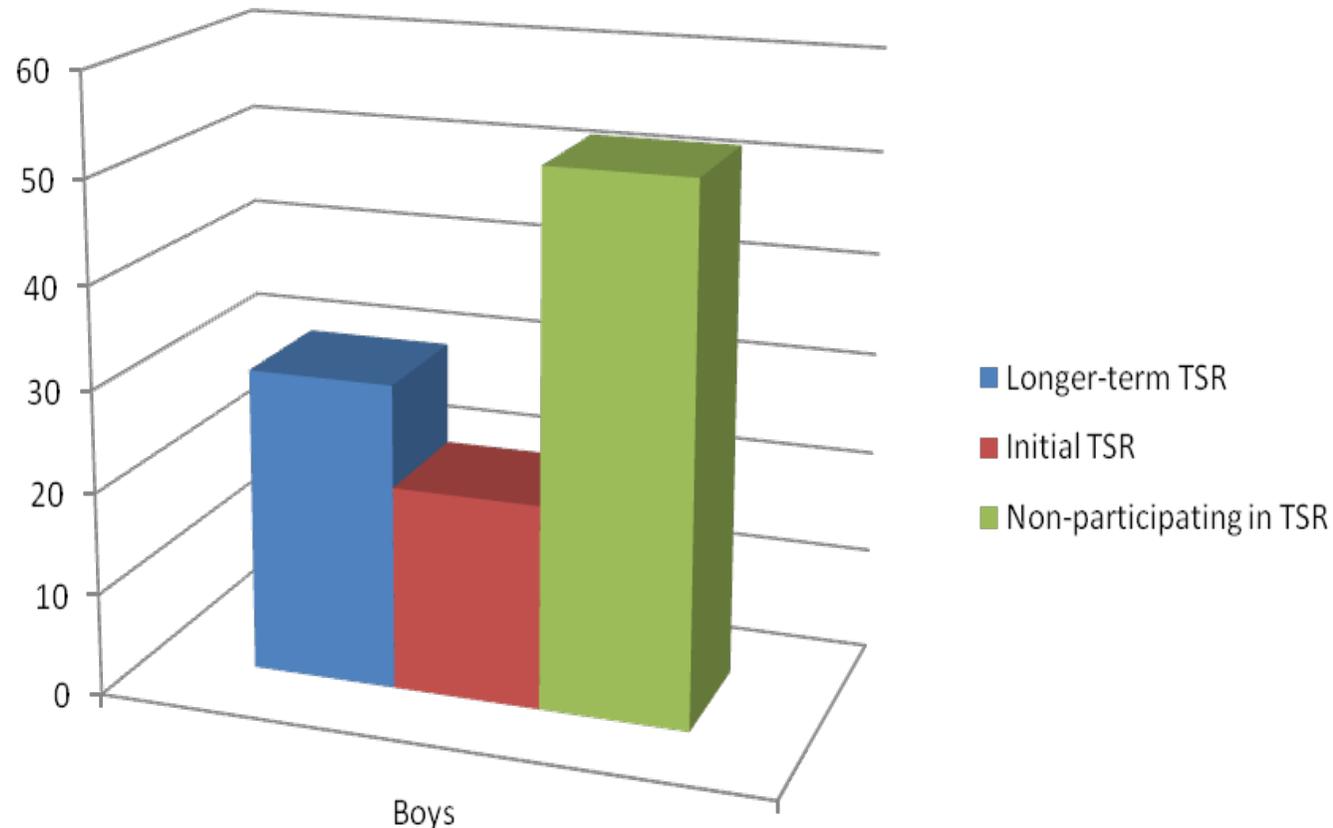Percentage of students who agreed with the statement 'During the past six months, I have felt so hopeless and down almost every day for one week that I have stopped doing my usual activities' according to TSR participation category

Findings suggest that increased length of time in TSR has an association with reduced depression in boys and that the longer-term TSR program is associated with a significantly reduced depression in girls (p=0.048).
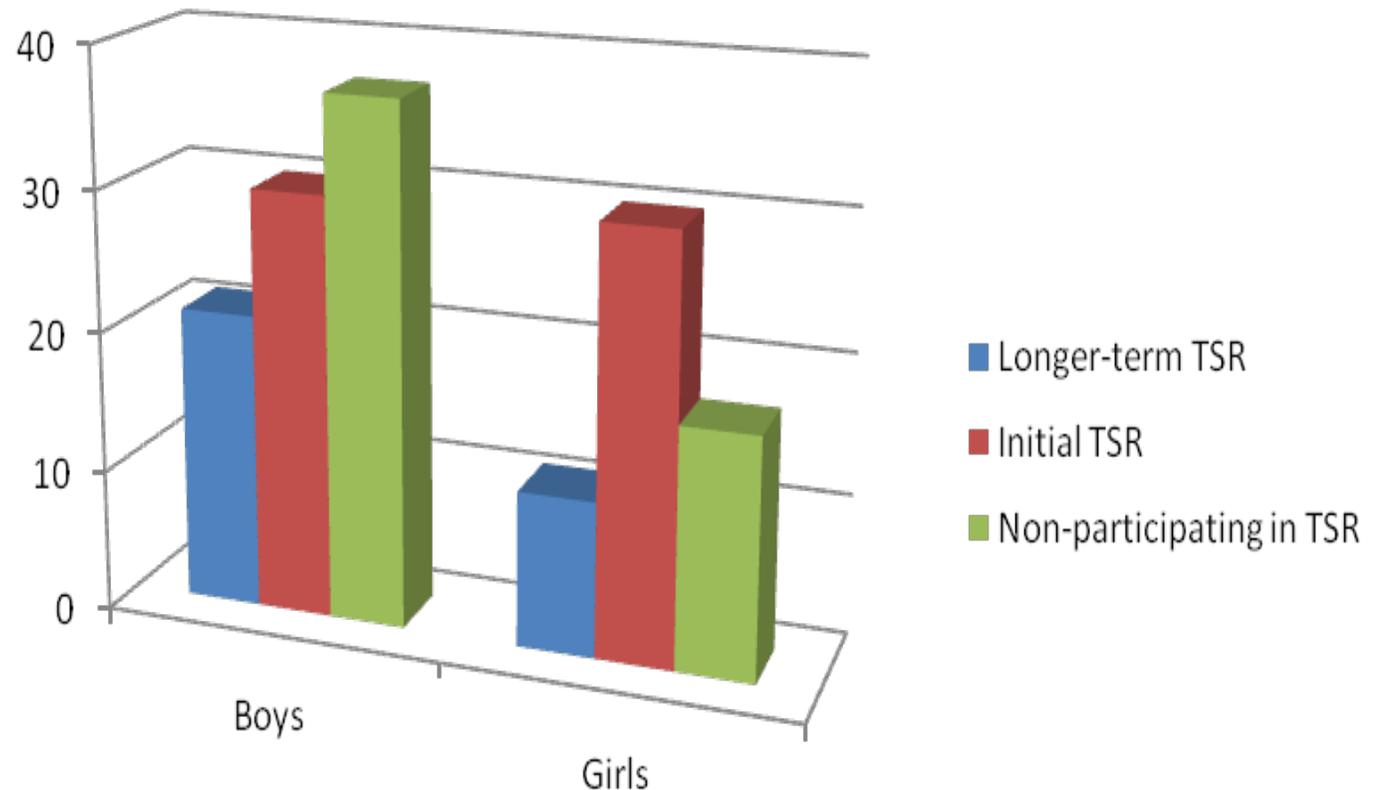
Legend:
- Longer-term TSR
- Initial TSR
- Non-participating in TSR

Categories: Boys, Girls

Bridging the gap in Indigenous Achievement through Creative Arts and Parental Engagement

educational transformations

Dr Tanya Vaughan

Honorary Fellow, Melbourne University
Director of Impact Studies, Educational Transformations

the song Room
Engaging Young People
Through Creativity

Overview of The Song Room's CAIPE Program

There are three program elements in the Creative Arts for Indigenous Parental Engagement CAIPE project (CAIPE, 2010a, p. 6):

1) The Song Room School Workshop Program will be themed around local Indigenous culture and music and will be run in each of the schools for all identified students;

2) Story Telling Early Literacy Program sessions will operate at the school premises (and in outreach locations in the community) to encourage Indigenous parents/carers of current and future students to regularly visit the school;

3) A Creative Community Project will engage local Indigenous parents/carers and community members to make a positive contribution to the school and The Song Room School Workshop program.

These three Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) program elements will each culminate in a creative community event which could involve activities such as school arts installations; school murals; production of CDs/DVDs of music and dance; and school exhibition/performance.

* Australia has two broad cultural groups of original inhabitants – Aboriginal peoples who are the original inhabitants of mainland Australia, Tasmania, and some of the other adjacent islands and the Torres Strait Islander peoples who are the original inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands. Within these two groups, are found many diverse languages and cultures. The term 'Indigenous' refers to people who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We acknowledge the distinctiveness of each cultural group.

Demographics

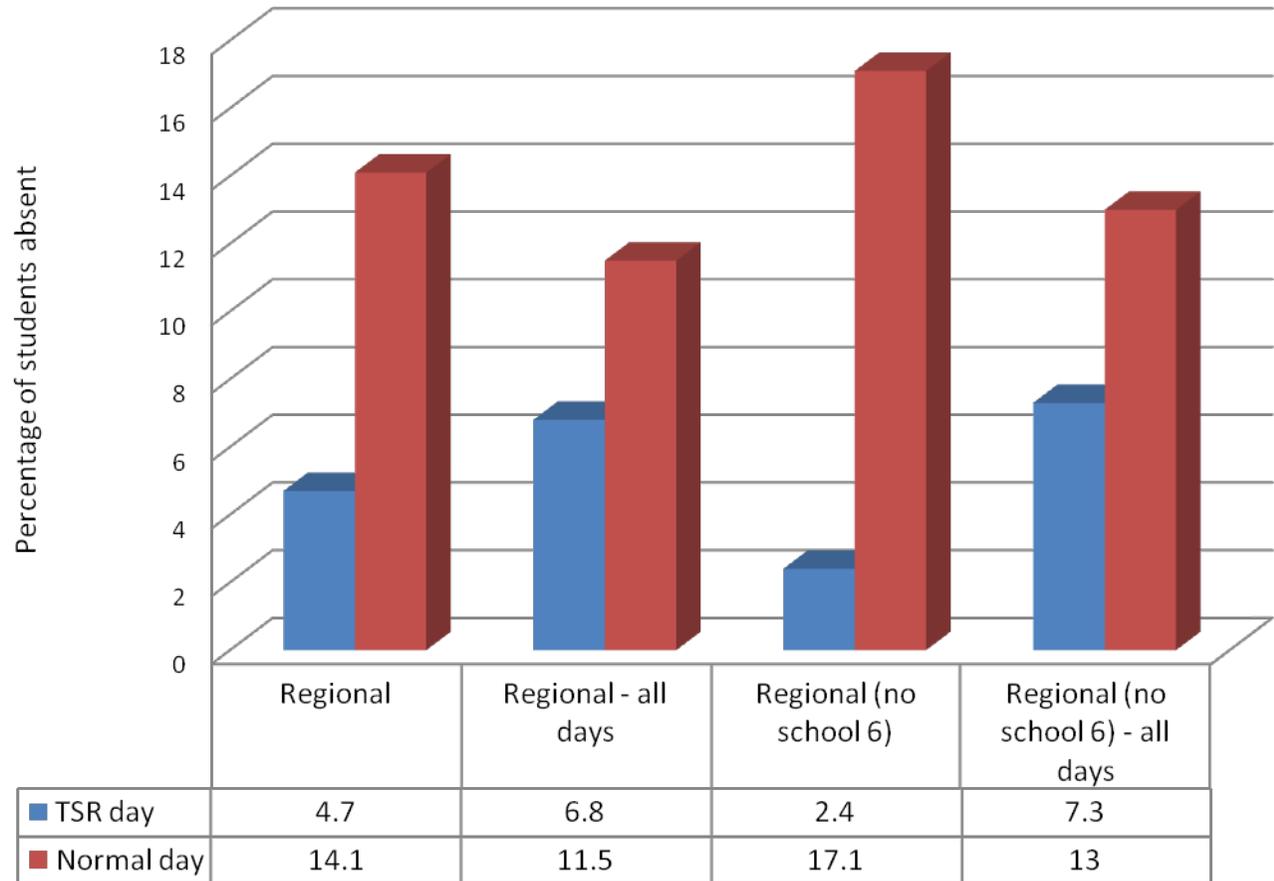| CAIPE trial site	School	Enrolments	ICSEA 1	ICSEA 2	Number of participating students	Percent of participation in cohort
Urban	School 1	248	786	786	109	38.8
	School 2	434	874	896	83	29.5
	School 3	221	881	924	89	31.7
	Total participants for cohort				281	
	Weighted mean	294		862		
Regional	School 4	731	881	977	342	45.4
	School 5	198	881	894	98	13.1
	School 6	645	915	946	313	41.6
	Total participants for cohort				753	
	Weighted mean	625		953		
	Weighted mean (no School 6)	612		958		
Rural	School 7	133	621	638	28	66.7
	School 8	87	742	830	14	33.3
	Total participants for cohort				42	
	Weighted mean	117		702		
Total participants in study					1076	

Demographics

Trial site location	School	Level of involvement*	Enrolment number	Day of School Workshop	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander enrolment (%)	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants	Non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants	Total number of participants
Urban (n=281)	School 1	A + B + C	248	Tuesday	21	25	84	109
	School 2	A+B	434	Tuesday	14	14	69	83
	School 3	A+B	221	Wednesday	12	8	81	89
Regional (n =753)	School 4	A + B	731	Friday	9	32	310	342
	School 5	A+B+C	198	Wednesday	30	26	72	98
	School 6	A+B	645	Thursday	11	31	282	313
Remote (n =42)	School 7	A + B +C	133	Thur & Fri*	84	5	23	28
	School 8	A + B +C	87	Tuesday*	38	14		14
	Total							1076

Note: A denotes central collection of data (with the exception of school 8), B denotes Active Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Parental Engagement Survey and C denotes a case study school
*denotes TA in school community for three weeks in the community followed by two weeks off on a rotational basis

Attendance

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the regional trial site had significantly increased attendance on a TSR day in comparison to a 'normal day' in the same week and significantly increased attendance when all three TSR days were compared to three 'normal days'.

	Regional	Regional - all days	Regional (no school 6)	Regional (no school 6) - all days
■ TSR day	4.7	6.8	2.4	7.3
■ Normal day	14.1	11.5	17.1	13

(Y-axis: Percentage of students absent; scale 0–18)

The difference in absenteeism on a TSR day in comparison to the same students on a normal day represents 66 percent less absenteeism.

Attendance

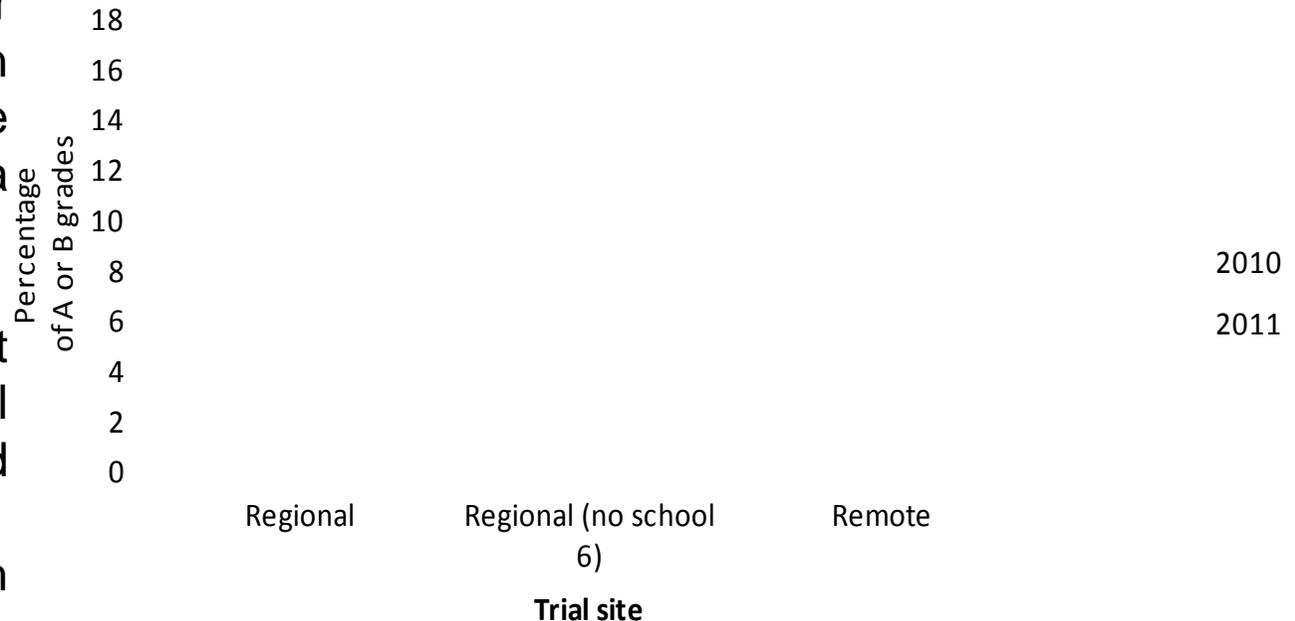Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students showed the highest increase in percentage of students with zero days absent with 8.1 percent in semester 1 2011 in comparison to semester 1 2010, with all trial sites and urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students showing an increase of 5.7.
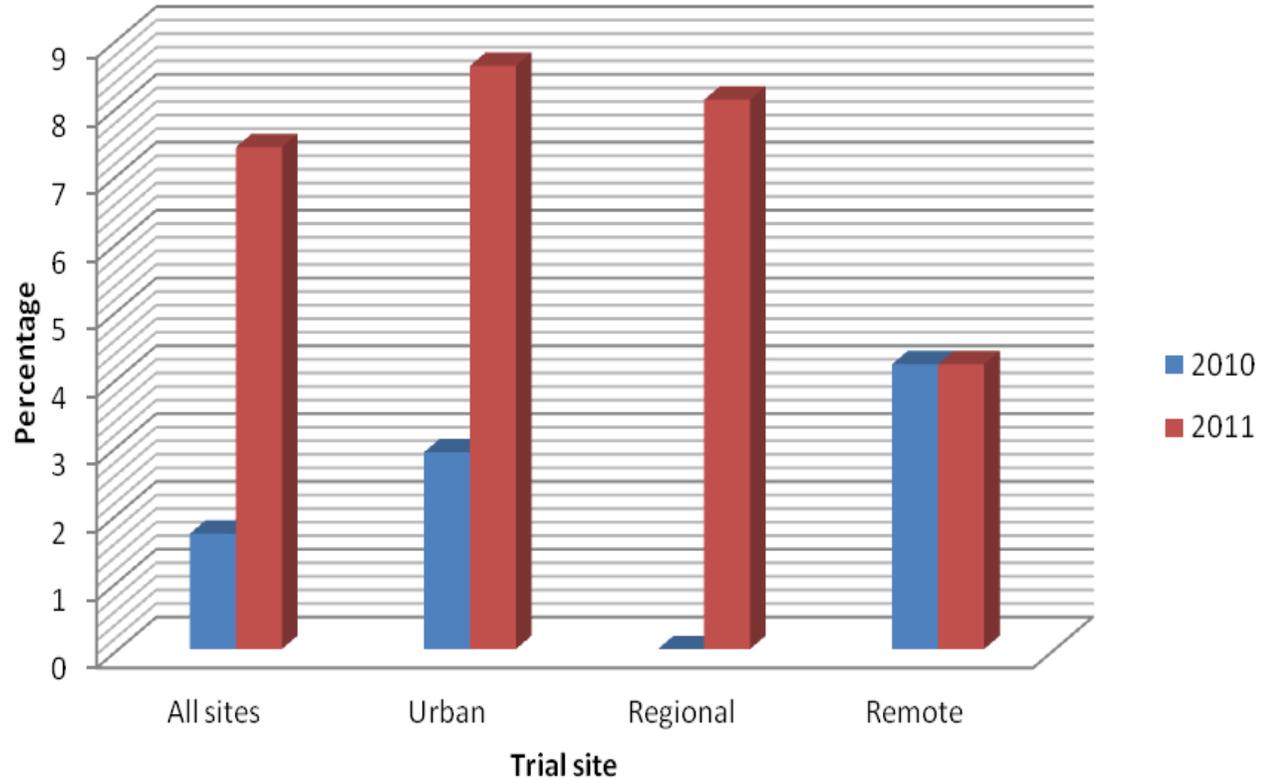
English grades

The regional students in Schools 4 and 5 showed significantly higher English grades in 2011 (after involvement with TSR) in comparison to the same students' grades in 2010, with a p value of 0.040.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote trial sties showed higher grades in English in 2011 in comparison to 2010, which were significantly higher for the remote students with a p value of 0.042

18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0

Percentage of A or B grades

2010

2011

Regional   Regional (no school 6)   Remote

Trial site

NAPLAN - reading

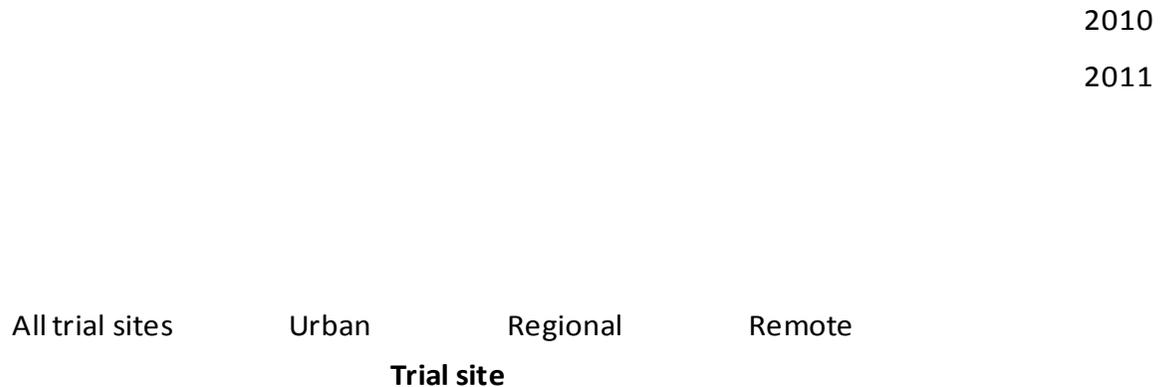Lower percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students below the national minimum in reading for all trial sites.

Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students showed 26 percent less students below the national minimum in 2011 in comparison to 2010.


Percentage below the national minium

90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

All trial sites   Urban   Regional   Remote

Trial site

2010

2011

NAPLAN – gap for reading

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students showed a decreased gap with participation with CAIPE .

The gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was closed by more than 20 percent in reading in comparison to 1.6 percent the rest of Queensland.
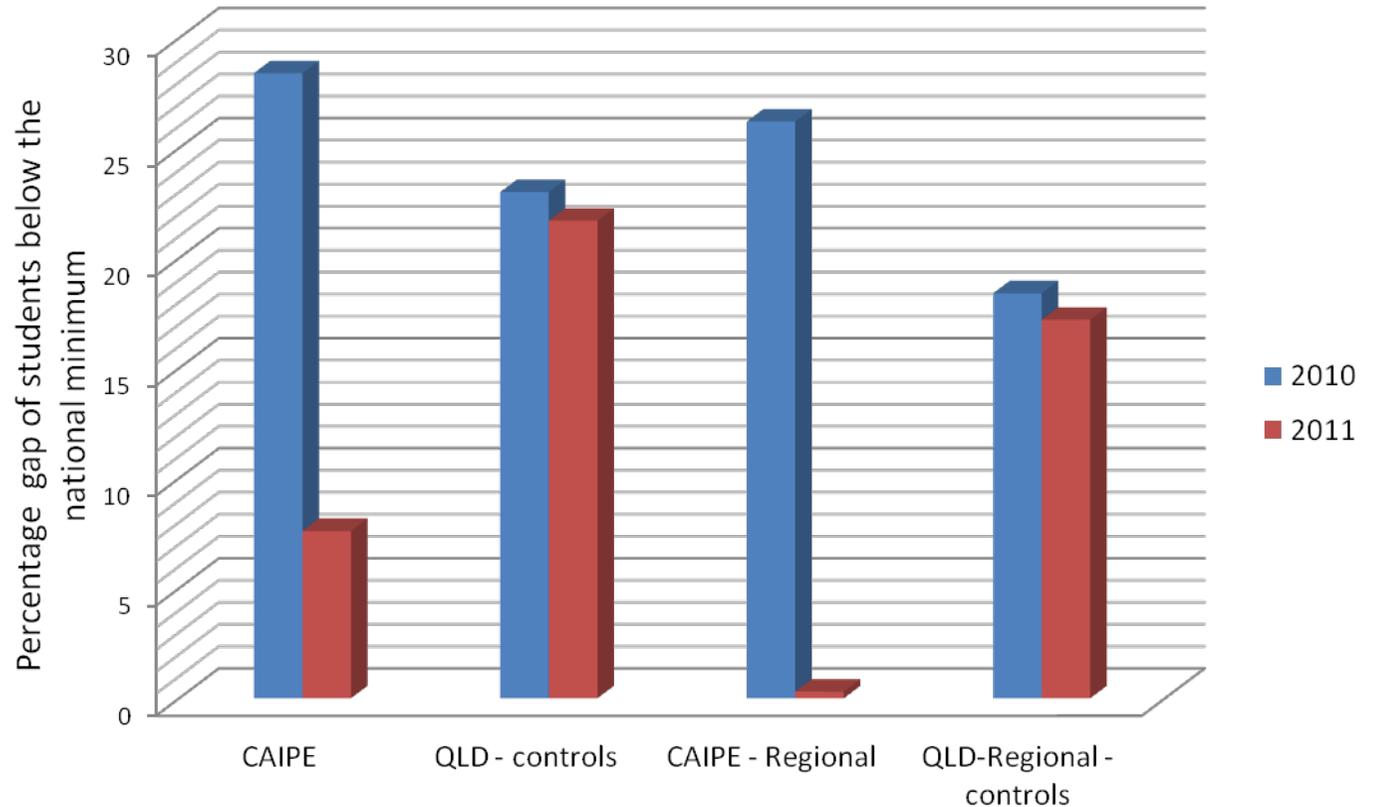
Note: QLD and QLD regional (provincial) scores were calculated from ACARA (2010, 2011)

ACARA (2010) *NAPLAN - Summary Report: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy.* Sydney: Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. Online. Available HTTP: <http://naplan.edu.au/verve/_resources/NAPLAN_2010_Summary_Report.pdf>, (accessed 5 May 2011).
ACARA (2011) *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011.* Sydney: ACARA. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.nap.edu.au/_Documents/National%20Report/NAPLAN_2011_National_Report.pdf>, (accessed 16 February 2012).

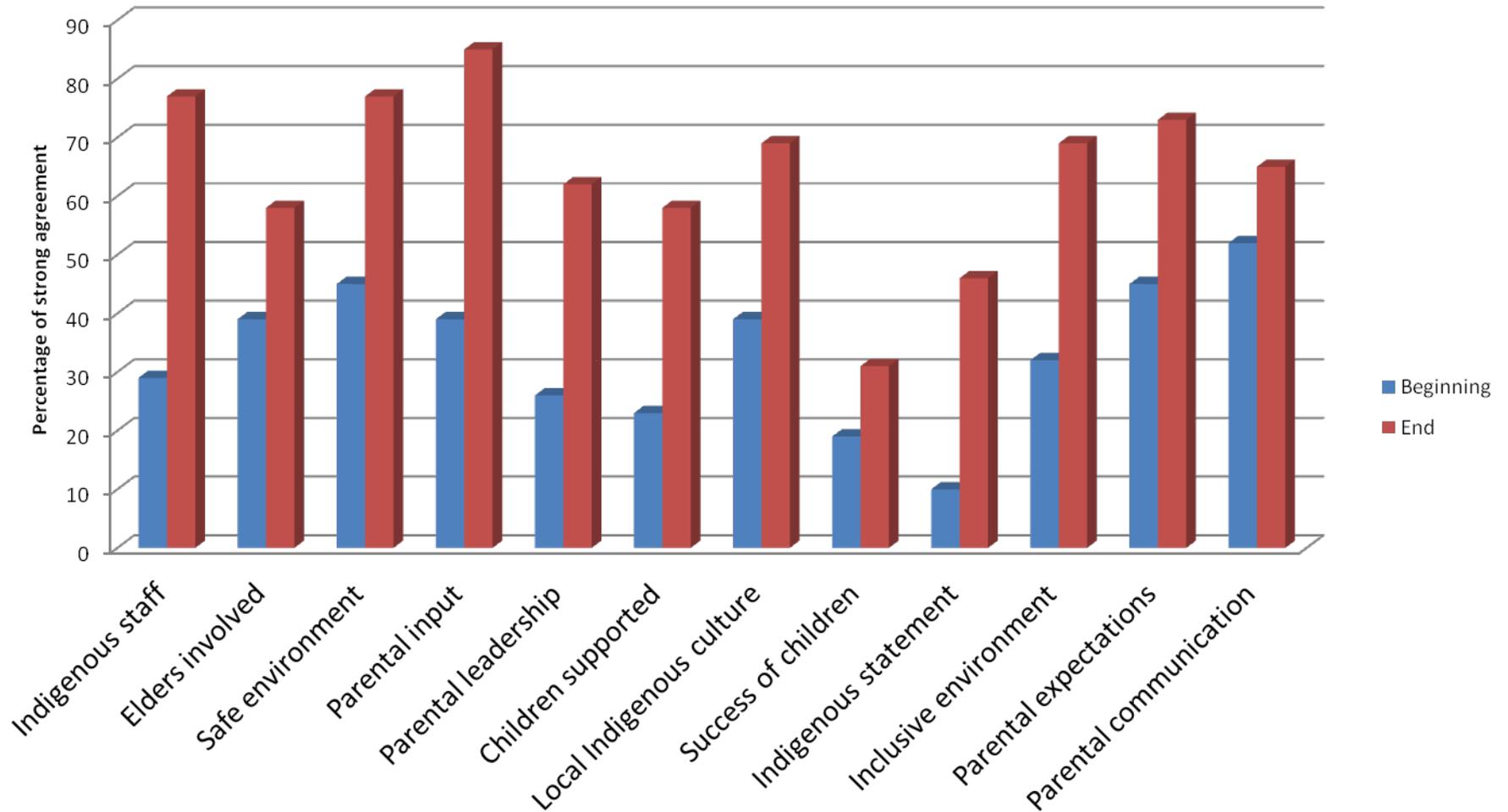# Active Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Parental engagement Survey

Statements in the active Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parental engagement survey	Increased agreement in responses in end survey in comparison to beginning survey			
	All trial sites	Urban	Regional	Remote
The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members involved in the program are dedicated and highly visible.	**Yes*****	**Yes***	Yes	**Yes***
Elders of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community are involved and respected within the program	**Yes***	Yes	Yes	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents/caregivers and children feel safe when participating in the programs	**Yes***	Yes	Yes	**Yes***
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents/caregivers and families are encouraged to provide input into the programs.	**Yes*****	Yes	Yes	**Yes***
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents/caregivers are supported and encouraged to play leadership or management roles within the programs.	**Yes****	Yes	Yes	**Yes***
The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children involved have been supported and extended by the specific programs.	**Yes***	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture has been highlighted through the program.	**Yes***	Yes	Yes	Yes
All Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children have experienced success through the program	**Yes***	Yes	**Yes***	Yes
The program has at least one formal written statement or formal policy related to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.	**Yes*****	Yes	**Yes****	Yes
The environment is visibly welcoming and inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students and parents/caregivers.	**Yes****	**Yes***	Yes	**Yes****
I have high expectations for the success of my child/children at school	**Yes***	Yes	Yes	Yes
I regularly communicate with my child/children about their school work	Yes	Yes	Yes	

*and bold denotes significance to p<0.05, ** and bold denotes significance to p<0.01,
*** and bold denotes significance to p<0.001

Active Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Parental engagement Survey
All trial sites

Case studies of Workshop program

Themes	School			
	Urban	Regional	Remote	
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Arts involved in program	Drumming, rap phonics and visual arts.	Storytelling and self publishing	Dance, beat-boxing	Dance and rap
Student Engagement	All students engaged. Program fun and creative within a safe and supportive environment.	All students actively engaged. Program fun, creative and challenging. Increased engagement of 'high risk' students	Majority of students engaged. Program provided outlet for physical energy	Majority of students engaged. Program fun and creative.
TSR and students academic engagement	Increased student confidence. Increased attendance on TSR day reported by some stakeholders	Increased empathy and self identity Increased attendance on TSR days. Increased academic achievement in literacy	Increased student confidence. Increased attendance on TSR days.	Some contribution to students' academic outcomes reported by some stakeholders. Student reported increased confidence. Student reported increased attendance on TSR days.
Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture	Program drew on some Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture	Program provided in-depth exploration of local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture. Students' individual cultural identity employed as a resource.	Program did not involve local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture. Program reflected Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity. Program encouraged a creative culture	Program did not involve local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture.

Elements important for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parental engagement

The elements important to the engagement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents were identified through the case studies of the School Workshop Program, Creative Community Project and Story Telling Early Literacy Program, as listed below:

- Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Teaching Artist
- Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Parental Liaison Officer actively involved
- Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Officer actively involved
- Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture within the program
- Provision of transport
- Activity for parents/children directly proceeding or after engagement with TSR
- Creative Community program located within the school grounds

# Summary of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Indicator of student performance	All trial sites	Urban	Regional	Remote
Attendance 1 (increased mean for TSR day) Reduction in absenteeism	**Yes***		**Yes*** **86%**	Yes
Attendance 2 (increased mean for TSR day)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Attendance 3 (increased mean for TSR day)			Yes	
Attendance all days (increased mean for TSR days) Reduction in absenteeism	Yes		**Yes*** **44%**	
English Grades (increased mean for 2011)			Yes	**Yes***
Increased percentage of students with zero days absent in semester 1 2011 in comparison to semester 1 2010	5.7	5.7	8.1	0
Decreased percentage of students below the national minimum 2011 results (compare 2010 to 2011) for: • Reading • Writing • Spelling • Grammar and Punctuation	 19.7 7.3 7 9.1	 3 3 13.9 8	 26.2 7.4 7.4 16.7	 16.1 1.8 5.4

* and bold denotes significant difference p<0.05

Summary of key findings

|	Longer-term TSR	Initial-TSR	Non-participating in TSR	Gain in time
NAPLAN 2009 Reading Overall Literacy	d=0.79* (p=0.0002) d=0.77* (p=0.0001)			At least one year in reading and literacy achievement
Grades Science and Technology	d=0.13* (p=0.022) d=0.46* (p=0.0001)			Lift achievement by about ½ a year in Science and Technology
Attendance % absent	4.6	5.7	13.2	
SEWB % in top level	6.7	2.8	0	
Resilience % in top levels	28.1	19.9	11.8	

References
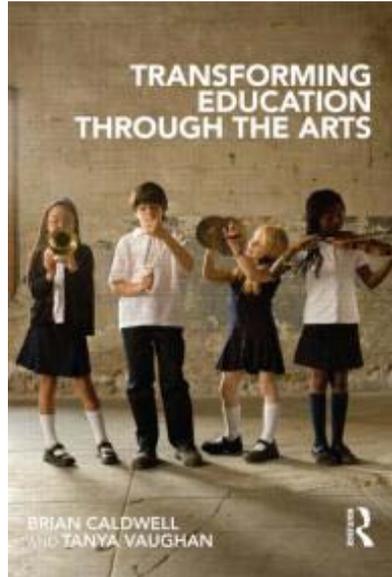
Caldwell, B.J. & Vaughan ,T. (2012). Transforming education through the Arts. London and New York: Routledge.
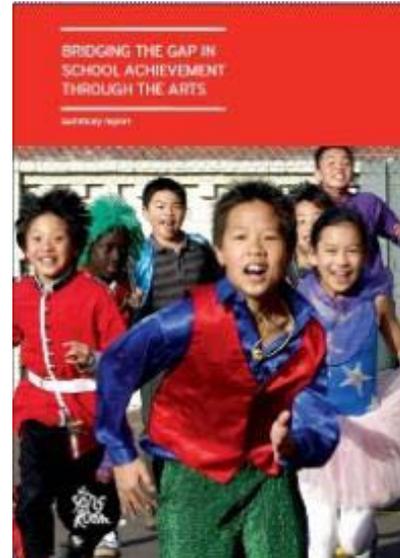
Vaughan, T., Harris, J. & Caldwell, B.J. (2011). Bridging the Gap in School Achievement through the Arts. Abbotsford: The Song Room
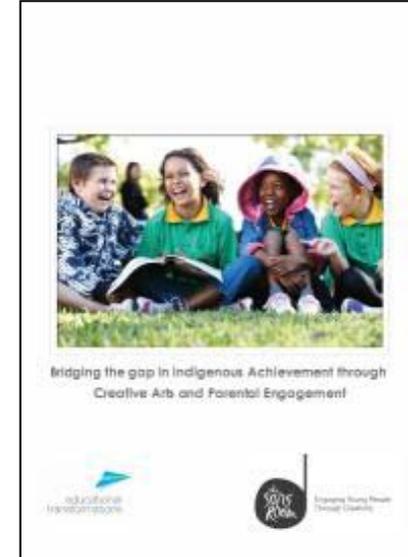
Vaughan, T., (2011). Bridging the Gap in Indigenous Achievement through Creative Arts and Parental Engagement. Abbotsford: The Song Room

Prof Brian Caldwell

Educational Transformations

FORCE FIELD OF STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOLS ILLUSTRATED IN MISALIGNMENTS THAT MAY ARISE FROM NARROWLY-FOCUSED HIGH-STAKES TESTING (X)

Strategy	National curriculum	Teacher education	Program diversity	National testing	Community engagement	Transparent funding	Innovative governance	School ownership	School autonomy	School design
National curriculum	___									
Teacher education		___								
Program diversity			___							
National Testing	x	x	x	___			x		x	x
Community engagement					___					
Transparent funding						___				
Innovative governance							___			
School ownership								___		
School autonomy									___	
School design										___

Two features

- Aptitude
- Passion

Two conditions:

- Attitude
- Opportunity

From One of the World's Leading Thinkers
On Creativity and Innovation

KEN ROBINSON, Ph.D.

WITH LOU ARONICA

the
Element

HOW FINDING YOUR PASSION
CHANGES EVERYTHING
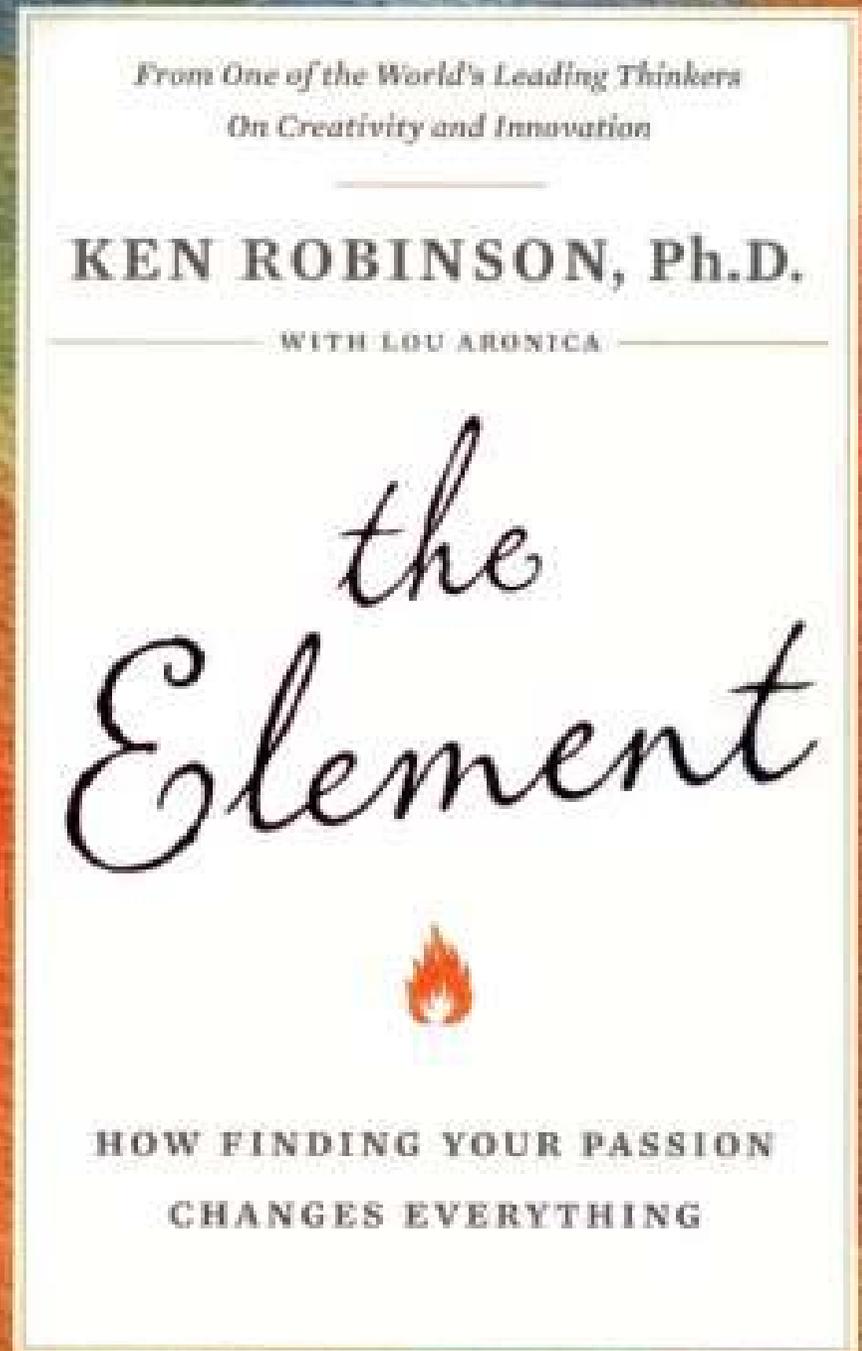
INTEGRATING THEME

- In an eloquent statement at the launch of the NAB ACER Schools First initiative in 2008, Julia Gillard declared that 'All children have some gift and even some potential greatness within them. Finding that gift, nurturing it and bringing it to life is the responsibility of every single one of us'. Her words echo those of Sir Ken Robinson, who is a powerful advocate of an intensely personal approach to learning.

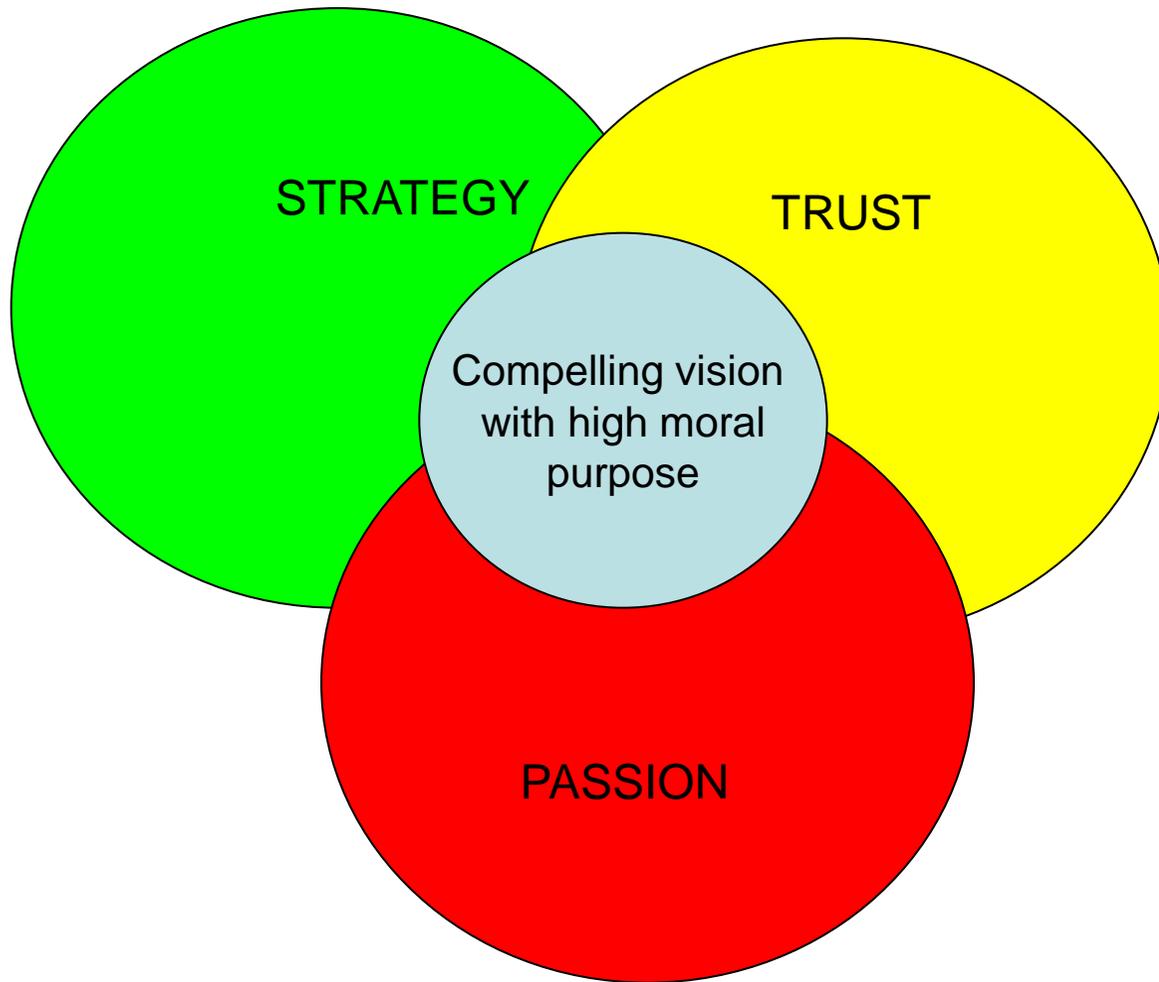- Writing in *The Element* (Robinson, 2009) stated that:

  Education doesn't need to be reformed – it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardise education but to personalise it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions.

PREFERRED SCENARIO 2020

Teaching to the test and the narrowing of the curriculum are dysfunctions of the past. The curriculum has been broadened to address the range of knowledge and skills demanded in the 21st century. Schools have far more autonomy than in the past, with many opting for an international rather than national curriculum, but they operate within robust frameworks of accountability. Innovation and creativity flourish and there has been a resurgence in the arts and science. New world-class facilities have been an important factor in attracting able people to the profession. There is a passion that has not been evident for several decades.

Passion, Trust & Strategy

STRATEGY

TRUST

Compelling vision with high moral purpose

PASSION