



A Performance and Development Culture:

Advancing professional
practice in schools



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Foreword

In November 2003 the Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky MP, released the *Blueprint for Government Schools*, which outlined the Government's approach to transforming the quality of outcomes for all students in government schools.

This reform identifies the importance of the organisational culture of a school in improving the outcomes for students. Successful schools create and sustain a culture that has a consistent set of values, beliefs and actions that explicitly support improvement in the quality of teaching. The *Blueprint* calls this a Performance and Development Culture.

The Performance and Development Culture initiative represents a significant breakthrough for Victorian schools. It:

- introduces evidence-based performance improvement through multiple forms of feedback
- ties development plans clearly to performance needs
- shifts the focus of professional development from one-off external activities to on-going classroom/school focused professional learning
- is inclusive; assumes that all take part as each person plays a part in forming the culture of the school
- clearly identifies the importance of organisational culture in meeting the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes.

The Performance and Development Culture broadens the thinking about school improvement as it focuses on reforming those school workforce and organisational practices that have the greatest potential for substantially improving teaching and learning practices within classrooms.

The objective is for all Government schools to be accredited as Performance and Development Culture schools by 2008 and to invite non-government schools to join this improvement journey.



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Introduction

In November 2003 the Minister for Education and Training, Lynne Kosky MP, released the *Blueprint for Government Schools*, which outlined the Government's approach to transform the quality of outcomes for all students in government schools. The three priority areas for reform are:

- recognising and responding more effectively to diverse student needs
- building the skills of the education workforce to enhance the teaching – learning relationship
- continuously improving schools.

An important aspect of this reform is the acknowledgement of the key role of the organisational culture of a school in enabling improvement in the outcomes for students.

Research reveals that successful schools create and sustain a culture that has a consistent set of values, beliefs and actions that explicitly support improvement in the quality of teaching.

The *Blueprint* calls this a Performance and Development Culture through which is established a more enriching, supportive and motivating environment for teachers as a body of professionals.

A Performance and Development Culture ultimately promotes more innovative and creative teaching and produces improved student outcomes. The goal is for all schools to have highly effective leaders and teachers who are sustained by a vibrant Performance and Development Culture.

The focus on organisational culture arose through research in Victorian schools which concluded that the processes for providing teachers with performance feedback and for meeting their development needs generally have been ineffective in improving classroom practice.¹ As performance feedback and professional learning potentially generate significant improvement in teacher performance and therefore student outcomes, new ways of undertaking these important processes needed to be explored.

The Performance and Development Culture accreditation scheme represents a breakthrough in thinking about school improvement as it focuses on reforming those school workforce practices that have the greatest potential for substantially improving teaching and learning practices within classrooms.

The following discussion paper explains the rationale for the Performance and Development Culture initiative and its benefits, the key concepts, how it operates and what the issues are in going forward.

Companion documents explain the scheme and its requirements in more detail

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/innovations/pandd/index.asp> and, as more schools are accredited, case studies and evaluations will examine the benefits of this workforce and workplace improvement strategy.

¹ The Boston Consulting Group, 2003, *Schools Workforce Development Strategy*
Department of Education & Training

The importance of reforming organisational culture

The school sector is not alone in its attempt to improve organisational culture – indeed, the sector is relatively late in coming to this reform. Many commercial and government sector organisations are also engaged in transforming the culture of their workplaces so as to ensure improved productivity and better outcomes overall. A high performance workplace is a central feature of any organisation's strategy to be successful in the twenty-first century.

Research over the past decade in Australia and elsewhere has consistently shown that successful and sustainable organisations are those that are not only operationally effective - get the job done - but also engage and develop the commitment and creativity of the people that make up the organisation.² These are also the places where people want to work.

The broad characteristics of the high performance workplace found in the literature include features such as:

- evidence of innovation and creativity
- a sense of workforce cohesion
- flexible attitudes and workplace practices
- values aligned with behaviour
- 'can do' attitudes
- self management and professional capability building
- teamwork and leadership, and
- advocacy for change and improvement.

Many organisations now see these and similar attributes as essential for longer term success and devote considerable resources to their development.

Focus on schools

The most important resource that a school possesses is the knowledge and skills of its leaders and teachers. This resource is effectively nurtured and developed by a range of practices that assist schools to establish strong leadership teams and a working environment that promotes and sustains a collaborative and accountable professional community.

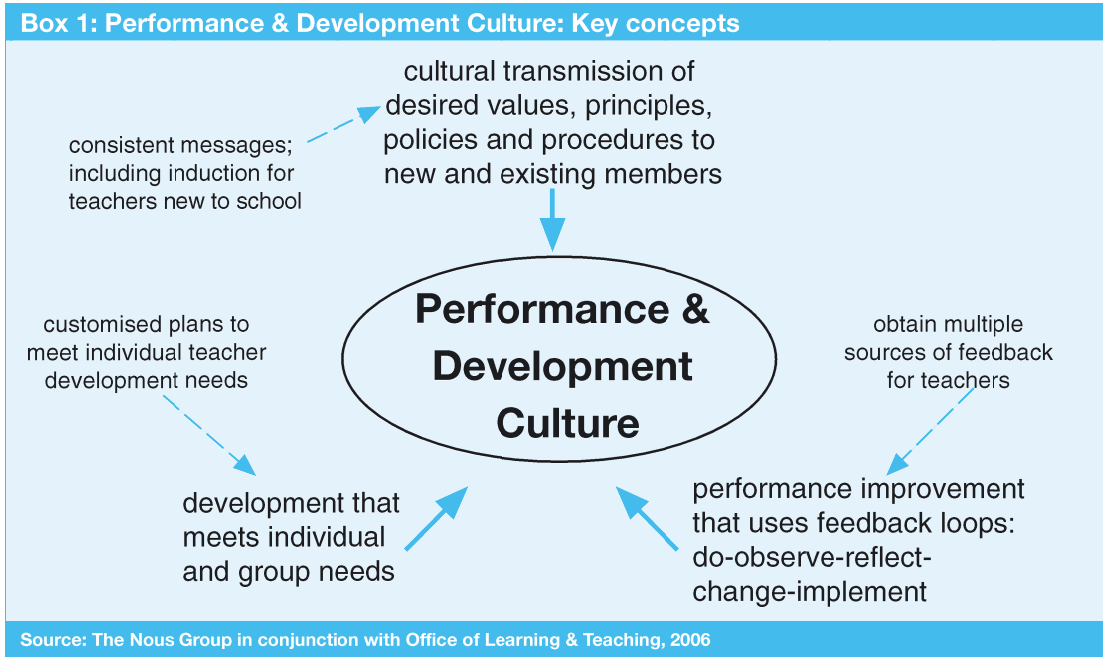
Several inter-related strategies that were announced in the *Blueprint* have been initiated to improve organisational practices in schools. These include:

- improved principal selection processes
- a mentoring program for first-time principals
- a coaching program for experienced principals
- a balanced score-card approach to principal performance management
- an accelerated program for high potential leaders
- a development program for high performing principals
- teacher professional leave, and
- an induction program for beginning teachers complemented by a mentoring program.

² For example, Turner, D., and Crawford, M., 1998, *Change power: Capabilities that Drive Corporate Renewal*, Sydney, Woodslane; and Dunphy, D., et al 2000, *Sustainability: The Corporate Challenge of the 21st century*, NSW, Allen and Unwin.

The organising framework for all initiatives to improve workforce effectiveness will ultimately be the Performance and Development Culture accreditation scheme. This has been developed to support schools to monitor and implement those workforce practices that are fundamental in an organisational culture that sustains excellent outcomes. The scheme is based on the understanding that, in order to take the next step in improving student learning outcomes, the focus must be on improving how the staff of a school work together, reflect on their teaching practice and individually and collectively become accountable for improving their students' learning outcomes.

The diagram below (Box 1) is a representation of the key concepts underpinning the approach.



Performance and development culture accreditation

The Performance and Development Culture is an accreditation scheme which provides quality assurance for the developmental and management processes in the school that enable teachers to teach as well as they possibly can.

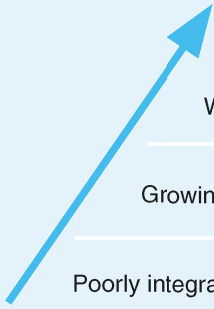
This is an innovative way of ensuring that schools adopt performance and development processes that reflect best practice.

Why accreditation? Steps on a journey

The idea of an accreditation scheme comes from quality assurance techniques that verify standards in areas as diverse as environmental management or product manufacturing. This approach selects the critical factors or processes that contribute to continuous improvement and the achievement of successful outcomes.

Accreditation should not be seen as simply a compliance requirement. Rather, it is designed to lead a school through the stages of organisational growth that one expects to see as a school progresses to high performance. There are five levels of performance that capture where a school is at any time and show where it should aim to be. Essentially, the levels show progression from an ad hoc, unconnected approach to fully integrated practices where the school is highly reflective of how it operates. Accreditation for Performance and Development Culture is a journey to improvement.

Box 2 is a representation of the progress from level 1 to level 5.

Box 2: Level characteristics		
	Whole school commitment; innovative and leading edge strategies	5
	Whole school commitment to sustaining integrated strategies	4
	Growing commitment; well designed and integrated strategies	3
	Poorly integrated; limited adoption	2
	Idiosyncratic; missing and unconnected strategies; ad hoc	1
Source: Office of Learning & Teaching, 2006		

The features of the accreditation process include a school self assessment against performance standard indicators and an independent external verification of the school's performance against these performance standards. The Self Assessment Framework used to support Performance and Development Culture accreditation is based on five multi-level indicators. Schools use this tool to map the quality of their Performance and Development Culture.

As schools demonstrate their commitment to sustaining and improving key performance and development practices they can seek accreditation as a Performance and Development Culture school. A confidential online staff survey based on the elements of the Self Assessment Framework provides schools with a report that indicates whether the school has the required evidence to support an application for accreditation.

An independent external verifier reviews evidence presented by the school to determine whether the school has satisfied accreditation requirements. All schools are expected to be accredited by 2008.

Performance and Development Culture accreditation provides schools with a coherent agenda for a staged improvement of workforce practices. It has been designed to bring all schools towards the current workforce practices of today's best performing schools. It will help school leaders to drive those workplace reforms that are essential for improving how teachers develop their content and teaching knowledge and for supporting them in meeting the diverse learning needs of their students.

Accreditation is a means to an end as the construction and growth of a Performance and Development Culture in schools is an ongoing process. Consequently, as schools become more attuned with those practices that promote a positive school culture they will continue to extend and deepen these practices in ways that further benefit student learning.

Understanding the elements

The development of a strong Performance and Development Culture is central to successful school reform because sustained improvement in student learning is largely determined by the quality of teaching that students experience. Quality teaching is an outcome of good teacher training, induction, feedback and other approaches to performance improvement and professional learning.

The task at the school level is to translate learning and teaching beliefs and principles into the day to day work of teachers and students. These beliefs and principles can be realised in a variety of ways within the classroom, and the role of the teacher is to master those teaching and learning strategies that are most appropriate for advancing the learning of all of their students.

Teachers working in a school environment with a strong Performance and Development Culture are supported to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching and to make adjustments in their practice when progress in a student's learning does not meet expectations.

A strong Performance and Development Culture incorporates the teacher support and growth practices described below in Box 3. Five elements have been selected to encapsulate the key aspects of the preferred organisational culture of schools. They were informed by analysis of the culture of other organisations of professionals – or knowledge workers – where staff have qualities such as a high degree of autonomy and accountability and are required to keep up to date with the body of knowledge for their field and liaise with and receive feedback from colleagues.

Each element is further developed through descriptions of the progressive levels of performance that would take a school to accreditation standard and beyond. Taken as a whole, these elements contribute to building a school environment where high expectations of student learning are matched by high expectations of teacher learning.

Box 3: The elements of the P&D Culture Self Assessment Framework

Element 1: Induction for teachers new to the school

Element 2: Use of multiple sources of feedback on teacher effectiveness for individual teachers and teams of teachers

Element 3: Customised individual teacher development plans based on individual development needs, student learning and school priorities

Element 4: Quality professional development to meet individual development need

Element 5: Belief by teachers that the school has a performance and development culture

Elements explained

Induction

Teaching is a complex and demanding task which a beginning teacher should not be expected to take on without structured support from more experienced practitioners. Appropriate support for beginning teachers not only assists them to be more effective teachers; it also makes their introduction to teaching more rewarding and helps to improve their sense of efficacy. This outcome is important, not only for beginning teachers and their students, but for the teaching profession as a whole. As a teacher's experience in the first few years of teaching has a significant impact on his/her decisions to remain in or leave the teaching profession, it is anticipated that a quality induction program will contribute to higher levels of teacher retention and help to sustain a vibrant and well-trained teaching force.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching, through its description of beginning teacher standards and its induction and mentoring programs for provisionally registered teachers, provides guidance to schools on the procedures and processes for reaching the accreditation level expected for Element 1. This Element also focuses on the induction required for experienced teachers who are new to a position, role or school.

Performance improvement

Element 2 is concerned with multiple sources of feedback on teacher effectiveness. Feedback data from a variety of sources provides teachers with indicators of their teaching effectiveness. Increasing numbers of schools are designing their own tools, such as student surveys, to inform teaching and learning programs. In addition, data collected as part of the school improvement process provide information about student outcomes, student perceptions and parent satisfaction that is appropriately benchmarked for comparison purposes. For many of these value-added data sets it is possible to link response scores with a particular teacher, although data is not yet available for teachers at all school levels and in all subject areas.

What has generally been missing from teacher feedback is regular and informed feedback from peers that is generated from a structured observation of classroom practice. This, however, is changing as more schools adopt the practice of observing teachers work and giving feedback on the effectiveness of classroom teaching and on teacher participation in whole school and group improvement actions. As classroom observation benefits both the practitioner who receives the feedback and the observer who learns from seeing a colleague take a lesson, it can be an excellent strategy for improving teacher effectiveness across the school.

Professional learning needs analysis and planning

Elements 3 and 4 are concerned with improving the quality of teachers' professional learning plans and the programs and strategies that are used to support teacher professional learning. Fundamentally, these elements are concerned with improving the links between professional learning and improved teaching practice. The principles of highly effective professional learning (outlined in Box 4) have been developed to guide schools in their selection of professional learning strategies.

Box 4: Principles of highly effective professional learning

Highly effective professional learning is:

- focused on improving student outcomes
- focused on and embedded in teacher practice
- informed by best available research
- collaborative involving reflection and feedback
- evidence based and data informed to guide improvement and to measure impact
- ongoing – fully integrated with the operation of the school
- individual/collective responsibility at all levels of the school.

Source: Professional Learning in Effective Schools, 2005, Department of Education & Training
<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/pdfs/ProfLearningInEffectiveSchools.pdf>

As well as ensuring that professional learning is customised to meet identified needs (as evidenced by the various feedback sources referred to in Element 2) these two elements are promoting a shift away from traditional models of professional development which have often proven to be relatively ineffective in improving teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

The changes in professional learning practices that are consistent with building a Performance and Development Culture focus more on professional learning practices that take place in the school and classroom and build staff collaboration in planning and delivering the curriculum than on external and one-off events. See Box 5 below.

Box 5: Shifting the balance in professional learning

Less of this

External workshops
Reliance on experts
Separation of training from work
Professional learning as an isolated event
Individual pursuit of professional learning

More of this

Workplace-based professional learning
Staff sharing experiences and expertise
Integration of teacher work and learning
Professional learning as a routine practice
Group pursuit of professional learning

Source: Cole, P., 2005, Leadership and Professional Learning, IARTV, Seminar Series, no. 150, December, Melbourne.

Whilst elements 3 and 4 encourage schools to initiate teacher facilitated and school-located professional learning it is likely that few teachers currently would agree that their school and colleagues present as the most effective sources for meeting their professional learning needs.

This perception is understandable as many teachers:

- equate ‘professional development’ with an external training activity and devalue, or do not see the potential in, other professional learning opportunities
- feel reluctant to call upon their colleagues for assistance with their teaching as it may expose a professional ‘weakness’
- feel reluctant to offer to help colleagues as this implies that they feel they are superior to their colleagues or because they feel they have nothing useful to offer
- do not see that part of their professional role should be to contribute to the learning of other teachers within their school
- do not have the time to visit another teacher’s classroom to acquire skills or to observe practice and offer feedback
- do not feel they are skilled and engaging demonstrators, presenters, mentors or coaches (despite the fact that they perform these roles in their classes daily)
- are not working in an environment where there is a culture of vibrant teacher discourse, debate and disclosure about pedagogy and a commitment from all teachers to engage in mutually supportive activities designed to continually improve their teaching effectiveness.

Nevertheless, these factors are not insurmountable and are areas that should be worked on to make schools optimal professional learning workplaces in which learning arises from and feeds back into daily experience and where professional learning is considered to be part of one’s ongoing work.

Evidence of a performance and development culture

Element 5 provides a check on how effective the school has been in developing the expectation that the school supports individual professional growth and development. It is one thing to have processes in place; it is another to receive endorsement from the staff they are designed to assist. A quality assurance process always looks for evidence of the breadth and depth of implementation.

The five elements

The selection of the elements of the Performance and Development Culture is premised on their direct relationship to securing improvement in student outcomes. The adoption of these new practices for improving teacher and school effectiveness will have a dramatic effect on the quality of teaching and learning in schools and will significantly contribute to lifting the standards of student achievement.

Showcasing schools' experience

Twenty accredited performance and development culture reference schools gave presentations at a Performance and Development Culture Expo held on 28th April 2006. These presentations are available at <http://elearning.education.vic.gov.au/pd/expo.htm>

Five are summarised below.

Peer coaching at Kambrya College

This rapidly growing school of just under one thousand students in the Southern Metropolitan Region uses peer coaching as a key element in the process of improving learning and teaching outcomes and developing its overall learning community. In an effort to improve both student learning and teacher effectiveness, teacher coaches provide collegial support, in classrooms, to teachers and students through a process of pre-observation conversation, observation and debriefing in a program that is 'confidential, non-evaluative, flexible, voluntary (but encouraged), based on trust, and focused on observable behaviours'.

More specifically, the coaches work with teachers to support learning programs in the classroom and 'whatever is required and is most appropriate is provided'. Coaches in this context can be 'silent observers, collecting data and making notes for a feedback session, or they may be more interactive with the students and teachers'. In this way, teachers, students and teacher coaches are encouraged to focus on the core business of deep learning and effective teaching.

This is a reflection in practice of the school's foundation statement for each individual and the school itself:

*As a member of the Kambrya Learning Community, I am valued for my individual skills, beliefs and understandings and the contribution I can make to my community.
I explore a learning environment where I construct meaning — I only know what I experience not what you tell me. I learn what is relevant and desire the opportunity for success.
The school I go to is accountable for creating a learning community and provides a foundation for learning. My education journeys create an opportunity to grow with others through innovative practices and a holistic supportive curriculum.*

Improving teacher practice at Orbost Primary

This Gippsland Region school of 206 students has initiated a Teacher Development Program that includes such elements as: customised performance development plans with a team focus; a peer assessment program aimed at improving teaching and learning in the school; professional development on giving and receiving effective feedback; and a tool to assess the impact of this program on teacher effectiveness and student learning over time.

The school's determination to develop a performance-driven culture arose from its successful experience with a number of prior initiatives. These included the Early Years Literacy Research Project, which involved professional development targeted specifically at the school's priorities and individual teacher growth, the Science in Schools project, the Middle Years Pedagogy Research and Development Project, the Innovation and Excellence Project and Principles of Learning and Teaching. All of these were grounded in research, the collection and analysis of data and sharing of the results, and have made a major contribution towards a culture of continuous improvement.

'Getting there' at Wodonga Senior Secondary College

The accreditation journey taken by this Hume Region school of around 990 students was part of a five year process involving leadership team development, a Quality Schools Program and an Investors in People Learning Bridge Program which, whilst different in language, was consistent with the new performance and development approach.

The factors that proved instrumental to developing a culture of continuous improvement included: improved strategic planning; leadership team development; the development and documentation of policies and processes that support a performance and development culture in the school; a team approach to the achievement of school goals and targets; the focusing of professional development planning on improving student learning outcomes; building staff capacity through targeted professional development including a range of feedback measures; and engaging staff in understanding the value of a performance and development culture around the message 'it's not all new, and value what we do'.

The verification report from the accreditation has proved a useful guide for planning further improvement as the P&D culture is maintained and improved. In particular, the school is now looking at: refining and extending use of feedback through such means as online surveys for all teachers and all units, student self assessment, research related to parent feedback online, classroom observation, and moderation of student work; and embedding the culture through better recognition of teachers and their work.

Supporting staff at Concord School

This Northern Metropolitan Region special school of 242 students has worked to support all staff to achieve improved outcomes for themselves, their colleagues and - most importantly - the students in their care. Adopting such an operating framework has resulted in significant changes in the school's operation and the way that students and staff work together and interrelate; with a positive flow on effect to the learning outcomes achieved.

A particular focus was the school's induction and mentoring program and its approach to professional development and the difference they make to teaching and learning in a school.

The keys to success are: creating a climate of encouragement and support; transparency; trust and acknowledgment; resourcing of staff; building effective and cohesive teams; curriculum engagement; a focus on strategy, structure and staff; and the collection and documentation of data.

The team approach at Corio West Primary

Staff personal responses led to the Professional Enhancement Program now used at this Barwon South Western Region school of 405. Strategies to make the program part of the normal practices of the school included the use of individual and team 'Teacher Focus Plans' complemented by the use of student data and the Principles of Learning and Teaching.

Central to the approach is the use of action research. Teachers decide the questions to pursue to gain insight into what is happening in their classrooms. They select a focus, collect, analyse and interpret data, and then take action. To gain professional development funding, action research plans must involve three or more members of staff, seek to improve student outcomes, complement the strategic plan, be completed in terms 2 and 3 with a defined duration, and incorporate the use of student learning or other relevant data.

Completed projects are presented to staff and written up in a report to the principal, with information on: goals; strategies used; pre and post data; outcomes; recommendations for the school curriculum; insights to further action research projects; and other relevant information such as whether or not the team enjoyed the experience.

Accreditation is just the beginning as far as this school is concerned: 'the culture builds and builds around the school's incentive to make an educational difference for their own students and colleagues'.

Conditions for success

Astute leadership

Leadership is critical to the development of a robust Performance and Development Culture in schools. School leaders need to be proactive in promoting new approaches to improve the effectiveness of performance feedback systems and professional learning processes. They also need to continuously improve their Performance and Development Culture practices as they are not static attributes but require on-going development.

High quality school leadership is of critical importance as proactive leadership is a cornerstone of effective workforce development and has a significant impact on student outcomes through its influence on school culture and development and on the quality of classroom teaching. Research consistently shows that leaders need a repertoire of skills and approaches to meet the demands of creating school environments that encourage and support effective teaching and learning and drive school improvement.

The need for improvements in these areas is reinforced by the knowledge that, just as they can have a positive impact on student learning outcomes, principals can also have a marginal or negative impact on achievement. If school leaders fail to provide the kind of leadership that produces and sustains effective school and classroom practices, they can negatively impact student achievement levels. It is one thing to identify good school and classroom practices and another to implement them. Effective leadership teams understand and know how to implement and sustain the factors that will produce improved teacher effectiveness and student learning. Excellent leaders create the environment that enables others to sustain performance at a high level.

A range of DE&T initiatives seek to address this need and a number of professional associations work with leaders on these capabilities. A challenge for the future is to ensure all leadership development activities embrace the goals of the Performance and Development Culture.

Quality curriculum and educational vision

The Performance and Development Culture is a necessary but not sufficient condition for good student outcomes.

A core component of the *Blueprint for Government Schools* is a comprehensive package of student learning reforms comprising the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*, *Principles of Teaching and Learning*, advice on whole school curriculum planning and assessment and guidelines for student reporting. A discussion paper *Closing the Loop: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment & Reporting*³ explains the nature and importance of these reforms and the significant opportunity Victorian schools have to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

³ Department of Education & Training (2005), *Closing the Loop: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment & Reporting* http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/pdfs/fs1news/closing_the_loop.pdf

Schools with a strong Performance and Development Culture should be on a positive trajectory towards achieving improved outcomes for students – but if curriculum and teaching and school culture are not being improved in tandem, student outcomes may suffer.

Box 6 illustrates the nexus between a Performance and Development Culture and good curriculum and teaching. For example, a strong Performance and Development Culture without an equally strong curriculum and educational vision could mean a wasted opportunity for students – highly motivated staff but a weak curriculum. On the other hand, a high quality curriculum and vision without a strong Performance and Development Culture is a high risk environment where progress could not be assured and outcomes would not be sustainable.

Box 6: Balancing good curriculum and culture			
Quality of curriculum & educational vision	HIGH	High risk Relevant curriculum and clear vision, but not moving forward	Improving performance High probability of achieving good outcomes
	LOW	Declining performance Unmotivated staff working with poor curriculum	Wasted opportunity Motivated staff, but not focused or working with the best curriculum
		LOW	HIGH
Performance & Development Culture			
Source: Office of Learning & Teaching, 2006 (adapted from Boston Consulting Group, 2005)			

Box 7 summarises in another way the relationship between a Performance and Development Culture and good outcomes. While the relationship is positive, a strong organisational culture is not a guarantee of an outstanding school; it is a necessary but not sufficient condition.

Box 7: The scope of a Performance & Development Culture	
What it is • Recognition that the school has very good processes for developing and managing staff • Recognition that the culture in the school is open to personal growth, continuous improvement and the use of data	What it is not • Evidence that the school has a sound vision for what type of education should be delivered • Sufficient to ensure that good school outcomes will be achieved
Source: Boston Consulting Group, 2005	

Making progress: Key themes from experience

At the Performance and Development Culture Expo held on 28th April 2006, four key lessons emerged:

1. We are engaged in a journey that no longer needs justification but now is a given.
This was evident in such observations as:
 - 'It's all about the how, not the what'
 - 'It doesn't need to be sold and the interest is in the practical'
 - 'There is a strong desire to see the nuts and bolts now, given we are going down the path, recognising that there is no one right way and mistakes have been made. It's a learning process'.
2. It is hard but worthwhile work that is most likely to succeed when connections and links are made to other Blueprint strategies and imperatives and the language used is agreed. Successful schools are managing their reform in an integrated way. This was reflected in such comments as:
 - 'Linkages need to be made to other Blueprint initiatives so things are coordinated and energy is not dissipated'
 - 'The language of the materials is an issue. It needs to be unpacked and explained and we need to develop a common understanding of what is meant'
 - 'The process is seen as very worthwhile, particularly in promoting local collaboration'.
3. Legitimate fears emerge and need to be managed; concerns about using data, commenting on peers and managing change:
 - 'There is some fear about data, and especially student surveys and feedback and how we deal with it in schools'
 - 'There is an underlying concern about multiple sources of feedback. Staff need information to unpack the questionnaire'
 - 'We need to determine how we actually work out value add'
 - 'There is concern about how to change long held practices in schools'
 - 'There may be a background issue about staff workload and making sure we avoid burn out'.
4. The whole exercise is not just a 'one off', but rather something that needs to be made sustainable over time so continuous school improvement will occur. This primarily is seen as an issue of building capacity at the local level as seen in such common observations as:
 - 'Sustainability once you've got it in place is an issue we need to confront'
 - 'We can make things more sustainable by skilling people in the school, particularly as coaches and mentors working with each other, and developing the leadership team'.

Ten key suggestions

A range of strategies and advice have been provided by experienced schools to help others embarking on the Performance and Development Culture accreditation path.

The ten key suggestions for schools are:

- Keep to the fore the overall purpose of improving student learning and achievement
- Spread ownership of the process by involving all staff through teams, and doing so right from the start
- Build sustainability through a model of distributed leadership
- Avoid overloading staff by making links to other priorities of the school, such as linking in to the Principles of Learning and Teaching; manage an integrated approach appropriate for the context
- Explain clearly that this is a valuable opportunity to re-examine the structures, programs, teams and leadership of the school and improve them as a result
- Work together to unpack the questionnaires and the meaning of the language used
- Be clear and specific. If you are doing surveys, explain why and then make sure the evidence is in place for honest judgments to be made
- Use a critical friend to look at both your application and the process you use to avoid duplication
- Create opportunities for lots of informal as well as formal conversations in the school
- Be prepared to trial, evaluate the impact and, where necessary, change what you are doing as a result.

Conclusion – making the breakthrough

The Performance and Development Culture represents a significant breakthrough for Victorian schools. In summary, there are five key new features that are central to the change and together they form a coherent framework for professional practice.

The Performance and Development Culture:

- introduces evidence-based performance improvement through multiple forms of feedback
- ties development plans clearly to performance needs
- shifts the focus of professional development from one-off external activities to on-going classroom/school focused professional learning
- is inclusive; assumes that all take part as each person plays a part in forming the culture of the school
- clearly identifies the importance of organisational culture in meeting the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes.

As a package, the reform proposals outlined in the *Blueprint* provide a coherent agenda for a staged improvement of workforce practices. The Department of Education and Training has therefore commenced work in those areas which are in most urgent need of reform and which will generate the greatest benefits for students whilst building a solid foundation for further reform over the next few years.

When fully implemented by 2008, the Performance and Development Culture initiative will result in all schools creating and sustaining a highly effective organisational culture. Importantly, the key attributes of this approach will be evident in the wider human resource, performance management and professional development policies and initiatives for schools.

In the global knowledge economy, human capital development - giving people the knowledge and skills to productively contribute to the economy and society - is a key to economic success and a cohesive society.

Many countries throughout the OECD are implementing transformational workforce and organisational models for schools in support of excellent education. They are improving schools through innovations such as more flexible classroom arrangements and formats, a broader mix of professionals in the classroom, and different models for managing the school day. Innovations such as these are also being tested in various schools in Australia and point to challenges for the future.

The task for now is to bring all Victorian schools to a level whereby all can be accredited as having a robust Performance and Development Culture.

Timeline

2005	2006	2007	2008
85 schools accredited	380 government schools seeking accreditation First group of Catholic schools seeking accreditation	700+ schools aim to achieve accreditation	Expectation that all remaining schools will seek accreditation

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Websites

Performance and Development Culture

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/innovations/pandd/index.asp>

Performance and Development Culture Expo SharePoint

<http://elearning.education.vic.gov.au/pd/expo.htm>

Please use your TO number and EduMail password to log into the Sharepoint. If you experience difficulties accessing this address please email: performance.development.culture@edumail.vic.gov.au

Performance and Development Culture SharePoint

<http://elearning.education.vic.gov.au/pd/>

Building Leadership Capacity

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs3/default.asp>

Teacher Professional Development

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs5/default.asp>

Assessment Advice

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment.asp>

Curriculum Planning Guidelines

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/default.asp>

Principles of Learning and Teaching

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/polit.asp>

Victorian Institute of Teaching

http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=1

