

# TRANSFORMING QUALITY TEACHING TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES



Our education researchers have transformed teaching practices and student outcomes in over 2,500 schools – and they're just getting started.

Few things are more critical to a nation's well-being than the quality of teaching provided to its students.

The link between quality teaching and positive student outcomes is not a new one. However, few studies have shown evidence of measurable impacts on teachers or students, despite vast global investment in teacher development.

Education researchers at the University of Newcastle are changing that. Their Quality Teaching (QT) model and Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) program have made a tangible and significant impact on teacher development and education policy.

The research underpinning these innovative programs has profoundly shaped how quality teaching is conceptualised, delivered and researched in Australia. The two programs are also delivering quality outputs and strong engagement with end-users.

## Quality Teaching model

Developed by Associate Professor James Ladwig and Laureate Professor Jennifer Gore, the Quality Teaching model provides teachers with a tested conceptual framework for articulating, assessing and refining their own and each other's practice.

It features three dimensions that are linked with improved student outcomes: intellectual quality, quality learning environment, and significance.

Each of these dimensions distils for teachers the key elements of classroom practice necessary for providing students with a quality education.

The model provides teachers with a tested conceptual framework for articulating, sharing, assessing and refining their practice. It also develops teachers' understanding of what it means to teach well in accessible and measurable ways.



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The Educator's 2015 'hot list' of who's who in Australian education captured the transformative power of the research, stating that:

*"Gore's work stands out as a beacon. It shines a light on how to improve teacher practice in classrooms through collaboration, peer observation and feedback, and distributed leadership."*

## Quality Teaching Rounds

Quality Teaching Rounds was developed by Professor Gore and her University of Newcastle colleague Dr Julie Bowe in 2007. It enables teachers to draw on their collective strengths and the advice of their peers to find creative ways to improve their teaching practice.

Using an evidence-based model whereby small groups of colleagues watch a lesson in progress and analyse performance, each teacher takes a turn to host a round – similar to medical rounds used to teach junior doctors in hospitals. The lesson is coded and discussed by the teacher and observers against the dimensions and elements in the Quality Teaching model.

The underpinning research for Quality Teaching Rounds and outcomes from several studies were so successful that the NSW Department of Education wrote QTR into its blueprint for reform in all NSW public schools.

The department also collaborated with Professor Gore and her team to develop a QTR website and online observation tool, which were launched in 2016. Within eight weeks of going live, the resources were accessed by nearly 1,300 teachers.

The transformative impact of QTR is evident in increased teacher morale, with many stating the program had a positive influence on their practice, their perceptions and expectations of their students, and their perceptions of colleagues.

QTR is also associated with growing confidence and clarity, with one school leader stating:

*"This is the first time in my career I feel I'm actually teaching students. Until now, I've just been giving them work to do."*

The ultimate beneficiaries of QTR are students. At the end of 2016, clear correlations had been found

between teacher participation in QTR and student performance on NAPLAN.

Powerful narratives from teachers and school leaders also indicate strong improvements, with one principal reporting a significant dip in results for students whose teachers had not participated in Quality Teaching Rounds.

*"The rest of the school was on a momentum shift...there's been an identifiable link to our NAPLAN results in terms of student improvement."*

## Research Impact

- The Quality Teaching model has been applied in more than 2,300 public, 300 Catholic and 30 independent schools across NSW and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
- Seventy percent of Catholic Education Dioceses in NSW and the ACT have used the Quality Teaching model to support teachers' professional development.
- The ACT's Director of Teaching and Learning describes QT as *"the pedagogical framework underpinning the delivery of curriculum in ACT public schools"*. The model is identified in the ACT's 'Great Teachers by Design' policy (2016) as a key strategy for improving classroom practice and student learning.
- Since 2010, the South Australian Department's 'Teaching for Effective Learning framework' has been embedded in policy and practice. This framework is based on Quality Teaching model concepts.
- The Quality Teaching Rounds program has been trialled in more than 250 schools across Australia, mainly in NSW and the ACT.
- Teacher engagement with Quality Teaching Rounds has shown positive impacts on NAPLAN results.
- In 2018, the University of Newcastle received \$16.4 million from the Paul Ramsay Foundation to expand the Quality Teaching Rounds program to an additional 30,000 teachers over the next five years.

### To learn more about this research program:

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