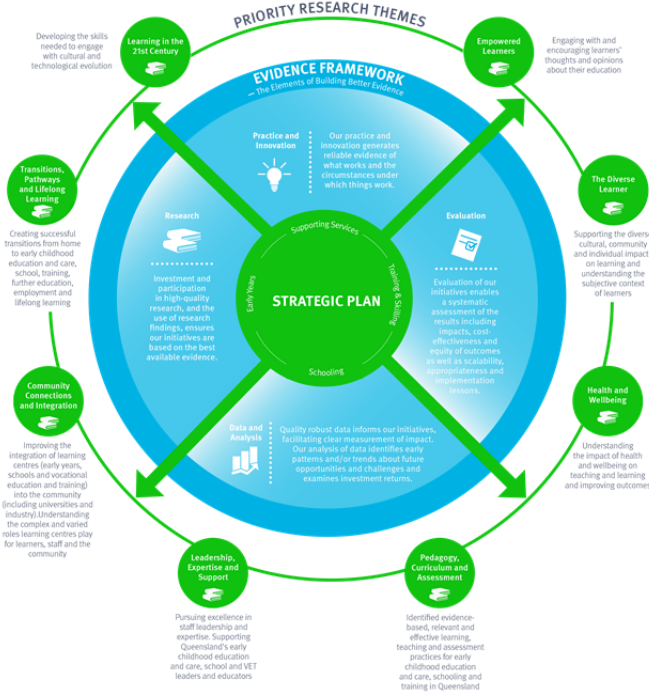


# Priority Research Themes



*Investment and participation in high quality research, and the use of research findings, ensures our initiatives are based on the best available evidence.*

The Department has identified the following **Priority Research Themes** to maximise the benefits to the government of research undertaken within schools or other departmental locations.

Further information on the **Priority Research Themes** is contained in this document, including a list of priority research questions for each theme.

All research applications are assessed on their merit. Priority Research Themes are used to encourage researchers to investigate critical areas of relevance to the department and inform research approval processes.





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## Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Priority Research Theme

Technological and cultural change is affecting Queensland society in many ways, large and small. Further research is needed to identify the opportunities and impacts of technological and cultural change on learning methods and pedagogies, as well as on skills and employment outcomes.

### Priority Research Questions

- What role will creativity and innovation play in education and training in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How is creativity and innovation best taught and measured?
- Disintermediation, in economics, is the practice of removing the 'middle-layer' and going directly to the source. How can Queensland's education system best respond to disintermediation in education and training?
- How do educators effectively adapt pedagogy to capitalise on technological change? For example, how is technology best used to empower learners, enrich interaction within and beyond the learning environment, and maximise outcomes?
- How can the benefits of assistive technologies, already used in some settings, be maximised across early years, school education and vocational education and training settings?
- What are the most effective approaches to developing digital literacy, skilling young coders, nurturing young innovators and creating young entrepreneurs?
- What access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) do children and young people have across the State, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged? What are the types of use, including measures of digital literacy?
- What are the benefits of teaching children critical thinking/reasoning and problem solving from an earlier age, with consideration of the impact on key learning areas as well as preparing learners for the jobs of the future?
- Which Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills and qualifications are most needed for Queensland's labour market, now and into the future?



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## Empowered Learners

### Priority Research Theme

The Department respects and values the opinions of learners and welcomes research which builds knowledge and provides evidence of activities and methods which will improve learners' outcomes and experience.

### Priority Research Questions

- What are the core features of an effective learning environment from the perspective of children and young people? For example, what changes or reforms would children and young people suggest to improve their education or training?
- What do children and young people view as the essential purposes of education, and the essential characteristics of effective teachers and educators?
- How is student/learner agency incorporated into teaching and learning practice? What are teacher perceptions of agency and how does this intersect with planning and curriculum decision-making? Does fostering student agency improve wellbeing, engagement and achievement?
- What do children and young people view as important factors in fostering entrepreneurship?
- What do children and young people believe they need to develop a global mindset?
- What education and training programs/practices do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls find engaging? What are their impacts?



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## The Diverse Learner

### Priority Research Theme

Learners bring a wide variety of life experience with them into learning activities, and this experience can have a significant impact on their motivation and application to the learning task, as well as to learning outcomes. Research which facilitates better outcomes for learners of all backgrounds and abilities is valued by the Department. Of special significance is research which facilitates better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

### Priority Research Questions

- How can gifted and talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners best be identified (assessed) and developed?
- How can the learning and support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners with disability be met?
- How are EAL/D (English as an additional language/dialect) learners, including Indigenous EAL/D, best supported to acquire the language and literacy skills needed to access the curriculum and succeed academically?
- What works in supporting educators in delivering best practice for children with diverse behaviours in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings?
- What are the patterns of school participation, attainment, achievement and behavioural indicators for students in out of home care?
- Which supports for higher needs learners are most effective? Why? How can the success of these supports be measured at a school or state-wide level?
- What approaches increase engagement and participation by underrepresented groups in STEM subjects and career pathways?
- What contextual factors affect attrition and non-completion in vocational education and training (VET) and higher education?
- How long does it take for students to attain their VET qualifications? What learner characteristics make a difference?
- What factors affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' VET timeframes and completion rates?



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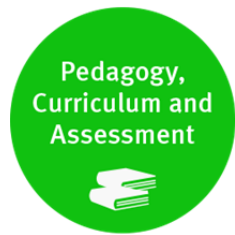
## Health and Wellbeing

### Priority Research Theme

There is a proven link between health, wellbeing, and productivity. The Department values research that supports the health and wellbeing of all staff and learners. A better understanding of the impacts of health and wellbeing on learning and other outcomes will support the Department in implementing best practice across the system.

### Priority Research Questions

- What are the core characteristics of learning centres (in the early years, school education and vocational education and training) that promote good health and wellbeing in learners and educators? In what ways could learning centres be reconfigured to promote good health and wellbeing in learners and educators?
- What skills do educators require to support wellbeing, and how can they be taught?
- How do educators best support and work with traumatised students?
- How can performance assessments and tests be delivered in ways that support student health and wellbeing?
- What are the core factors associated with good health and wellbeing in the teaching and training workforce?
- How are ECEC educators supporting the health and wellbeing of children in early childhood settings? How can they engage with parents in supporting children's good health and wellbeing?
- What is the relationship between social and emotional health and wellbeing in early childhood and children's education/developmental trajectory?
- How do schools build a culture that supports learning, and what element/s of culture matter most?



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## Pedagogy, Curriculum and Assessment

### Priority Research Theme

New evidence is continually emerging regarding what is important to know and how best to learn, teach and assess. This poses significant challenges for curricula, pedagogy and assessment practices. The Department values research which will help us identify and apply evidence-based practices that enable positive outcomes for students.

### Priority Research Questions

- What are the most effective approaches to embedding Indigenous perspectives in pedagogy, curriculum or assessment? What impact does embedding Indigenous perspectives in pedagogy, curriculum or assessment have on student outcomes?
- What are the benefits and/or impacts of early childhood education for different age groups? Are the impacts different for children from different backgrounds?
- What are the structural and process factors of early childhood service quality that have the biggest impact on child outcomes?
- What are the critical influencing factors on NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) participation or withdrawal?
- What technologies and strategies can assist the Department to offer expanded languages provision (on-line and other distance modes)?
- What school and teacher approaches are most effective in ensuring high performing students have steep learning and achievement trajectories?
- How are moderation practices supporting learning within and across schools?
- How are schools narrowing and deepening their improvement focus to address problems of practice related to systematic curriculum delivery, effective pedagogical practices and expert teaching teams?
- What are the most reliable, valid and feasible measures of assessing quality of training?



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## Leadership, Expertise & Support

### Priority Research Theme

Research shows that effective leadership can improve the performance of learning centres on a variety of measures (across the early years, school education and vocational education and training). Effective leadership can be encouraged and developed, and expertise shared to enhance outcomes for both staff and learners. The Department values research on how staff leadership and educator expertise can best be supported.

### Priority Research Questions

- What teacher and educator preparation/support is associated with better EAL/D outcomes?
- Of the preparation/support teachers and educators receive, what support is associated with the best outcomes for the management of challenging learner behaviours?
- What support works best for educators teaching in areas outside their specialist qualifications?
- What are the most effective strategies to build leadership capacity and capability in the education and training workforce?
- What pre-service teacher education and training provides the best-equipped language teachers?
- What expertise and resources are required for schools to plan, implement and evaluate improvement and innovation?
- How are schools aligning performance review processes with collaborative approaches to school improvement?
- What impact does the role of professional associations provide in supporting beginning teachers?
- How do leaders/educators best determine that a school improvement initiative is making the intended difference to student outcomes?
- Is there a relationship between qualifications of teachers and trainers in VET (vocational education and training) and student outcomes or experience?



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## Community Connections & Integration

### Priority Research Theme

Research suggests that early years education, schooling and training works best when the learning environment (across the early years, school education and vocational education and training) is integrated into the community of which it is a part. The Department encourages research which provides evidence to build our understanding of the complex relationships between learning centres, learners, parents, and the broader community, including universities, business and industry.

### Priority Research Questions

- What are the community-level factors that impact on positive early childhood, schooling and training outcomes?
- What are the factors that enhance/deter Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent engagement?
- What role does community and family support have in encouraging students into STEM subjects and career pathways?
- What measures can best demonstrate the value of what schools provide to communities beyond the standard measures, e.g. NAPLAN and Year 12 outcomes?
- What support do schools need to ensure thriving, innovative global schools through languages?
- How can schools make and use connections, locally and internationally, to develop teachers' and students' global competencies?
- How can teacher-community connections in remote communities be supported?
- How are school communities learning about and improving support for student learning needs?
- How can schools form productive and sustainable partnerships with higher education, research and industry organisations for improved school performance?
- What do industry and employers want from vocational education and training (VET) and higher-education graduates (e.g. capacity vs competency)?





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## Transitions, Pathways and Lifelong Learning

### Priority Research Theme

Positive transitions between learning centres (early years, schooling and vocational education and training settings) and different levels of education and training are critical for learners of all ages and abilities. The Department values research which will inform effective transition strategies at a systemic and local level and help deliver positive outcomes for learners.

### Priority Research Questions

- What are the measures within administrative data that differentiate successful versus non-successful early childhood, school, VET (vocational education and training) and higher education outcomes?
- What factors support children to make a successful transition to school? How can information sharing between schools and early childhood education and care services be improved or facilitated to support successful transitions to school?
- How can we measure/define a successful transition to school from a child, family and school perspective?
- What factors support students to make a successful transition into boarding school? What factors impact retention of students in boarding schools, especially those from remote communities?
- In 2006 the compulsory age of schooling was raised and VET pathways within schools were extended. What difference did these changes make to student transitions into further training/learning and employment?
- How do we define post-school success – and transition students successfully?
- Given the variety of senior curriculum offerings, how can schools maximise opportunities for post school transitions for all students?
- Do learners from low socio-economic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or regional and remote backgrounds make different senior curriculum choices and how does this affect their post school transitions?
- What are the barriers/enablers to students continuing with language study beyond the compulsory years in Queensland schools?
- What are the factors that influence VET completion? Do qualifications lead to industry related employment and/or to other employment? How does this differ across cohorts and locations?