



University of Wollongong
NSW Department of Education

Evaluation Report (2018-2021)

**School Leadership Institute
Aspiring Principals Leadership Program (APLP)**



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

The NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) School Leadership Institute (SLI) Aspiring Principal Leadership Program (APLP) is co-designed in partnership between the SLI and the University of Wollongong (UOW). The design methodology is centred on co-design between the two partners, where feedback and advice are continuously contributed by program participants, the SLI Advisory Board, NSW Primary Principals Association (NSWPPA), NSW Secondary Principal Council (SPC), and various academics.

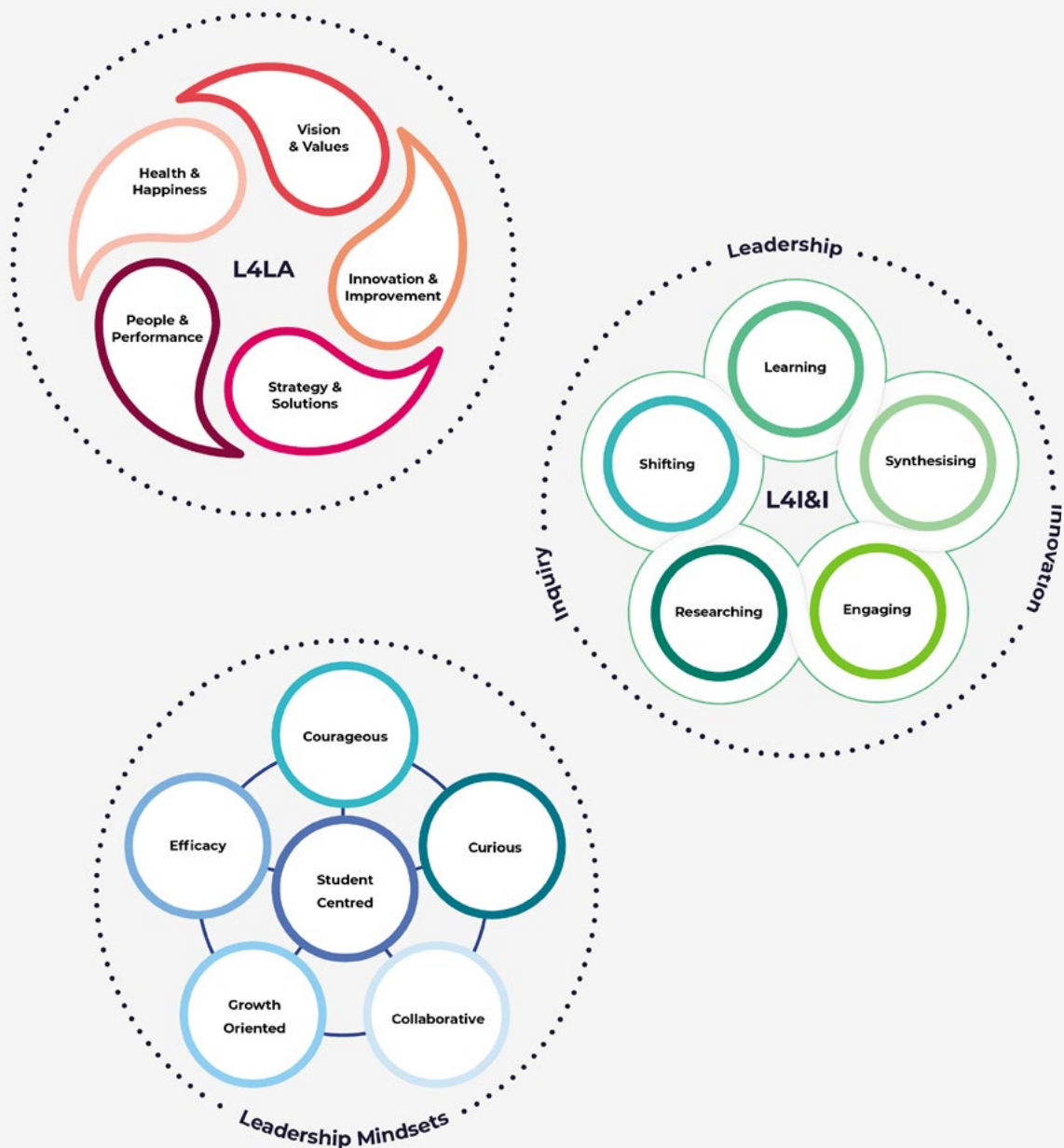
The program is a 12-month leadership development program for aspiring principals and/or those seeking to enhance their leadership impact. The program supports the development of participants across five intended outcomes:

- 1) capacity to lead school improvement, innovation, and change
- 2) understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes
- 3) capacity to lead collaborative, evidence-informed professional learning to improve teaching and student learning
- 4) personal and interpersonal qualities to lead with influence
- 5) capacity to confidently lead the strategic organisation of their school.

The program requires participants to analyse their current practice, develop new learnings, and reflect on the impact of their leadership actions by leading an inquiry in their context. Three unique frameworks (see Figure 1) were co-designed to support leadership learning in and beyond the program:

- NSW DoE SLI Leadership for Learning Analysis (L4LA);
- NSW DoE SLI Leadership for Inquiry and Innovation (L4I&I);
- NSW DoE SLI Leadership Mindsets.

Figure 1. NSW DoE SLI Leadership Frameworks



The Leadership for Learning Analysis (L4LA) was designed in partnership between the SLI, UOW and the Voice Project. In essence, the framework represents key capabilities required to lead effectively in NSW public schools. The L4LA is an online 360-degree survey and is completed by all participants, their line manager (e.g., principal) and self-nominated work colleagues. APLP participants receive a report comprising self-reflections mapped against aggregated perceptions of colleagues. This is provided to give aspiring principals insights into their self-perception and the perceptions held by colleagues of their leadership capabilities, and to compare similarities and differences between these perceptions.

The Leadership for Inquiry and Innovation (L4I&I) Framework articulates the key stages, actions, and guiding questions required to lead inquiry, innovation, and improvement within NSW public schools. The framework is designed to engage school leaders in innovation through collaborative inquiry with the aim of examining student, teacher, and leader learning in their school context. Inquiry questions are provided for each element of the framework to facilitate thinking and support the inquiry process.

The Leadership Mindsets Framework is designed to frame leaders' thinking to consider how they perceive and process information that underpins their behaviours and actions. There are six mindsets. These mindsets are flexible, interconnected, and can be developed over time. Details about the co-design and content of each framework is available in the Leadership for Learning Report: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-leadership-institute/research/frameworks>

A variety of engagement elements are built into the program including eight Leadership Seminars (Table 1) presented by national and international scholars and leaders. An additional Leadership Seminar, Leading for Improved Performance, was included from Cohort 4 onwards, however this was not evaluated in this report. Professional Leadership Teams of 4-6 participants led by trained Principal Facilitators are formed at the beginning of the program to provide a safe and collaborative small network for aspiring principals to learn together throughout the program and beyond. A Leadership Inquiry and Portfolio of Evidence are completed as part of a learning validation and qualification process. At the conclusion of the validation process, an award is granted from the following list:

- **Certificate of Graduation:** This award indicates participants have successfully met all program requirements and have demonstrated leadership learning, development, and impact. Graduates are eligible for 50% credit in a Master of Education: Educational Leadership degree at UOW.
- **Certificate of Participation:** This award indicates that participants have completed at least 80% of the program successfully but were unable to complete all program requirements and/or demonstrate leadership learning, development, and impact.
- **Nil:** This indicates that participants were unsuccessful in completing the program.

Table 1. The 8 Leadership Seminars of the APLP

Leadership Seminars

1. Student centred leadership
2. Inquiry and innovation as a foundation to leadership learning
3. Leading a whole school approach to wellbeing
4. Leading for inclusivity and engagement
5. Leading complex organisations through professional collaboration
6. Leading authentic improvement and complex problem solving
7. Leading Connecting with Country
8. Leading to inspire

This evaluation report from the Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at UOW, reports on both quantitative and qualitative data from four Cohorts who completed the APLP between 2018-2021 (Table 2). It should be noted that Cohort 1 completed the program fully face-to-face, however because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cohort 2-4 included online delivery. This report evaluates the APLP across the Cohorts, and therefore reports on 201 participants who took part in the program between 2018 and 2021.

Table 2. Cohorts 1-4 of the APLP (2018 and 2021)

Cohort	1	2	3	4
No. of participants who commenced program Cohorts	52	50	36	63
Commencement date	Nov 2018	April 2019	Aug 2019	Sept 2020
Completion date	Feb 2020	Nov 2020	Nov 2020	Aug 2021

Evaluation Design

Aim and evaluation questions

The aim of this report is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of Cohort 1-4 of the APLP. In doing so, this report aims to answer the following four questions:

- (1) How well did the program support the development of the participants on the five intended program outcomes (listed on page 3)?
- (2) How engaging were the Leadership Seminars and how well did they support participant understanding?
- (3) How did the participants perceive the quality and usefulness of the various program elements?
- (4) What impact has the program had on workforce promotions?

Data Collection

To answer the evaluation questions, various data sources were collected by different stakeholders. Specifically, workforce data in the form of demographic and employment data for participants was provided by the NSW DoE. Leadership Seminar evaluation data was collected via online surveys designed and administered in partnership between the NSW DoE SLI and researchers from UOW. Post-program information and the validation and assessment process data was collected in the form of a survey designed by the NSW DoE SLI. Each of these data sources is described in detail below. Importantly, the evaluation data was intended to inform formative and summative program evaluation. As such, survey items and responses informed ongoing program development, in addition to aiding the overall program evaluation.

Workforce Data

Demographic and employment data was provided by the NSW DoE. Demographic data included participant gender, the school type (e.g., primary, secondary) and the directorates in which participants were employed. Employment data included participant positions upon application to the program, upon completion of the program, and at 6-, 12-, and 18-months following completion of the program. This data was used to evaluate the impact of the program on participants' post-program career progression.

Leadership Seminar Surveys

Participants were asked to complete a survey following participation in each of the Leadership Seminars. The surveys varied in content as determined by the key learnings for each seminar, yet followed a consistent format (e.g., combination of quantitative and qualitative items) and delivery method (online via Survey Monkey). Items were designed to gather feedback about the seminars and program elements, and to evaluate whether the seminars were successful in supporting participants' learning and understanding in relation to the intended learning outcomes. Quantitative items were statements requiring a response on a 4-point Likert scale to indicate the degree to which they agreed. Example items include: *"I am now better equipped to lead an inclusive culture in my school"*, and *"The presentation helped me gain a better understanding of how to develop teachers to improve student learning"*. Qualitative items gave participants opportunity to provide feedback in the form of open comments for each seminar.

Post-Program Survey

Six months following graduation from the program, participants were asked to complete a post-program survey to examine the perceived impact of the program on their professional practices. The post-program survey addressed the participants' (1) perceptions on how well the program supported their development in the 5 intended program outcomes (page 3); (2) use of the frameworks beyond graduation; and (3) perceptions of how the program had impacted their career progression. The post-program survey followed a similar format to the Leadership Seminar surveys, however, quantitative items required participants to respond on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 indicated a strong positive response, and 5 indicated a strong negative response to the item. Example items include: "After completing the APLP, rate how capable you feel in your capacity to lead school improvement, innovation and change", and "Rate the impact of the L4I&I Framework on your leadership learning and development post program completion". To support the readability of these analyses, items were reverse scored. The post-program survey was delivered via Google forms. Note, at the time of analysis, data for the post-program survey was only available for Cohorts 1-3.

Validation and Qualification Survey

The learning of participants in the APLP is validated through a Validation and Qualification process. The process involves a trained leadership Assessment Panel of experienced and retired principals and academic staff considering a range of sources of evidence submitted from program participants to determine an award of qualification. Assessment Panel members were invited to complete an online survey (delivered through Google forms) to determine the quality of the validation process. Panel members were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the training and validation process, as well as the online collaboration opportunities on 5-point Likert scale items. The survey also invited panel members to provide open-ended responses to determine how the training has supported their understanding of the program, and how it has impacted their own leadership in schools. Note, at the time of analysis, data for the Validation and Qualification survey was only available from panel members for Cohorts 2 and 3.

Data Analysis

For the purposes of this report, only items that relate to the evaluation questions (page 6) were analysed and reported on. In this report, the quantitative findings are reported, and where possible elaborated on using qualitative data. Quantitative data was extracted from the various sources described above and analysed using descriptive statistics in IBM SPSS version 28. Qualitative items that are related to the evaluation questions were also extracted and qualitatively analysed. Specifically, qualitative data presented for the first evaluation question was coded and analysed deductively according to the five intended program outcomes; and qualitative data presented for the second evaluation question was inductively coded and analysed and emerging themes reported (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015¹). While personnel from the NSW DoE were involved in the collection of data, three researchers from UOW analysed and reported the data. One of the researchers was part of program design and delivery and as such provided important contextual information of the program to aid analysis. Two of the researchers responsible for the analysis and reporting of data were independent from the program development or delivery team to reduce evaluation bias.

Limitations

Participation in all surveys was voluntary. For the Leadership Seminar surveys, participation varied considerably across Cohorts and surveys, with an average response rate across the Cohorts and surveys of 58% (ranging 50-72%). In these evaluations, there was also some variation in the composition of items across surveys over time - due to the formative nature of the evaluations, as well as changes in the program team over time. Therefore, not all items reported here were asked of all Cohorts, and the availability of data for each item varied considerably. Similarly, slightly less than half of the participants completed the voluntary post-program survey (64 of 132, response rate 48.5%), and 14 of 20 Panel members completed the survey on the validation process (response rate 70%). Therefore, it is important to note that the data presented in this report does not represent all participants in the program, rather all data that was from those that responded to the surveys.

Program Participants

A total of 201 participants commenced in the APLP across four Cohorts, between 2018 and 2021. Participants in these Cohorts were predominantly female (77.1%) and working in primary (69.2%) or secondary (25.4%) school settings. Just over 45% were from metro areas of NSW, and the remaining from regional (39.8%) and rural areas (15%) across NSW. Upon application to the program, most participants held a Deputy Principal (44.8%) or Assistant Principal (28.9%) position. Only 2.5% held a Principal position, with a greater number acting in a Relieving Principal position (10.9%). Further detail on participant characteristics can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics for 201 participants who commenced the APLP between 2018-2021

		n	%
Gender	Male	46	22.9
	Female	155	77.1
School-type	Primary	139	69.2
	Secondary	51	25.4
	K-12	6	3.0
	Schools for Specific Purposes	3	1.5
	State Office	2	1.0
Directorate	Metro (South)	50	24.9
	Metro (North)	41	20.4
	Regional (South)	45	22.4
	Regional (North)	35	17.4
	Rural (South and West)	18	9.0
	Rural (North)	12	6.0
Position upon application	Principal	5	2.5
	Relieving Principal	22	10.9
	Deputy Principal	90	44.8
	Relieving Deputy Principal	8	4.0
	Assistant Principal	58	28.9
	Instructional Leader	12	5.5
	Head Teacher	2	1.0
	Non-school based Teacher	4	2.0

“

The APLP reinforced the ‘need to keep student learning needs and improvements to students’ learning at the heart of every decision I make as a leader’”

Key Findings

This section is guided by the evaluation questions on page 6 and reported here across four corresponding sections. Firstly, data is presented in relation to the five APLP program outcomes to determine the level that each one was achieved. Secondly, participant evaluations of the Seminars are reported to determine how engaging they were and how well they supported their understanding of the key concepts. Thirdly, participant perceptions of the quality and usefulness of the various program elements are presented, and finally, workforce promotion data is reported to examine the impact of the program on career progression.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: PROGRAM OUTCOMES

How well did the program support the development of the participants on the five intended program outcomes?

The extent to which the five intended program outcomes (page 3) were achieved was evaluated using quantitative data from the post-program survey. In total, 132 participants from Cohorts 1-3 were invited to complete the post-program survey and 64 responded. Thus, the quantitative data presented in this section is based on these 64 responses, except for items with missing data points (noted in the figure keys). The findings as they relate to each program outcome are detailed in Figures 2 to 6.

To further aid understanding of how the program supported development on the intended program outcomes, qualitative data from the final Leadership Seminar evaluation was coded and analysed. Specifically, following completion of the final seminar, participants were asked to *'please comment on the key things you have learned from the APLP to date'*. Forty-nine participants across the three Cohorts provided a response to this item. Responses were deductively coded by two researchers according to the five intended learning outcomes and reported here to contextualise and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

Program outcome 1: Capacity to lead school improvement, innovation, and change

Following completion of the APLP, 81% of responding participants reported feeling 'significantly capable' or 'very capable' to lead school improvement, innovation, and change. Very few participants (4.8%) reported feeling 'not at all capable'. See Figure 2.

In their qualitative responses, participants described having a greater understanding of the processes of change, and further elaborated on how aspects of the program support their efforts to implement change. As an example, one participant shared how the L4I&I Framework provided them with *"a strong base to implement strategic and systematic change and improvement"*. Several other participants detailed their learnings about leading improvement and change, placing particular emphasis on the importance of understanding and engaging with others. One participant shared how important it was to *"dig deeper to understand others' theories of practice"*, and another wrote, *"to build a positive and sustainable culture, we need to go slowly. [We need to] find out people's values and whys, ask inquiry questions and seek feedback"*.

Program outcome 2: Understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes

Following completion of the program, the majority of responding participants (82.8%) reported having a 'significant' or 'very good' understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes (Figure 3). Fewer participants reported having 'little' or 'no understanding' (6.3%).

Figure 2. Ratings of capability to lead school improvement, innovation, and change (N=63)

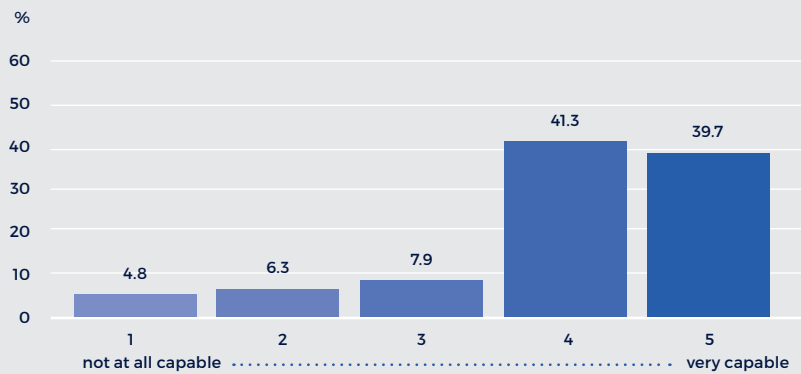
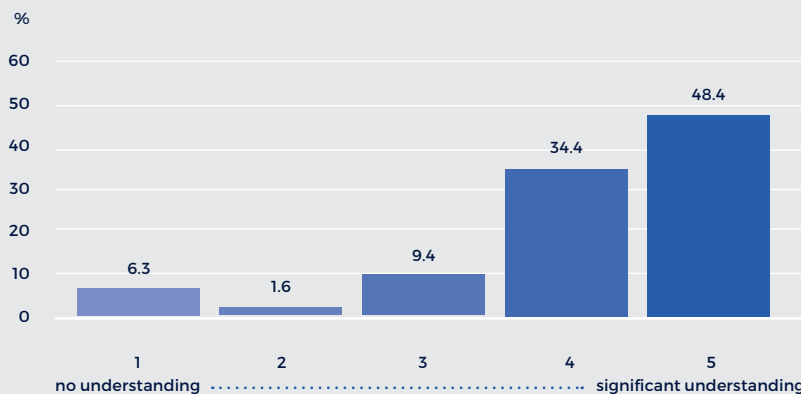


Figure 3. Ratings of understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes (N=64)

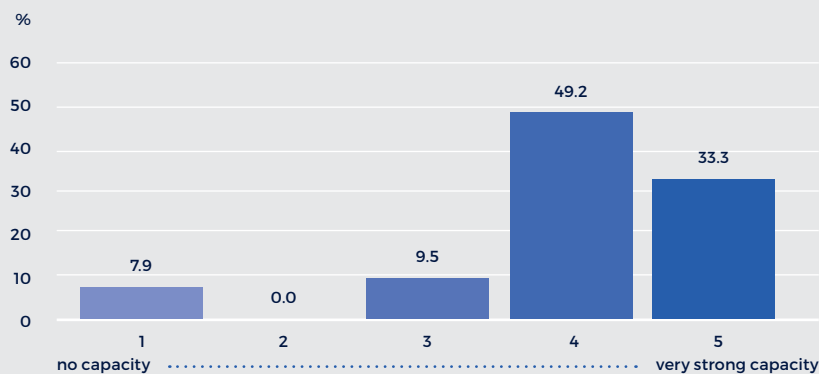


In terms of this outcome and in their qualitative responses, participants shared how the APLP reinforced their beliefs about the importance of student-centred leadership in ensuring good student outcomes. For example, one participant shared that the APLP reinforced the “need to keep student learning needs and improvements to students’ learning at the heart of every decision I make as a leader”. Several other participants wrote about their role and identity as a leader, and how the Leadership Mindsets Framework supported them in demonstrating a student-centred focus. One participant shared that the program facilitated a “deep focus on the moral purpose and [the importance of] keeping everything focused on student learning outcomes”. Participants also recognised that “having high expectations of yourself and others” and a focus on “building teacher capacity” is important in determining student outcomes.

Program outcome 3: Capacity to lead collaborative, evidence-informed professional learning to improve teaching and student learning

Following completion of the program, 82.5% of respondents reported having a ‘very strong’ or ‘strong’ capacity to lead collaborative, evidence-informed professional learning to improve teaching and student learning. Only a handful of participants (7.9%) reported reported feeling ‘no capacity’ (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Ratings of capacity to lead collaborative, evidence-informed professional learning to improve teaching and student learning (N=63)



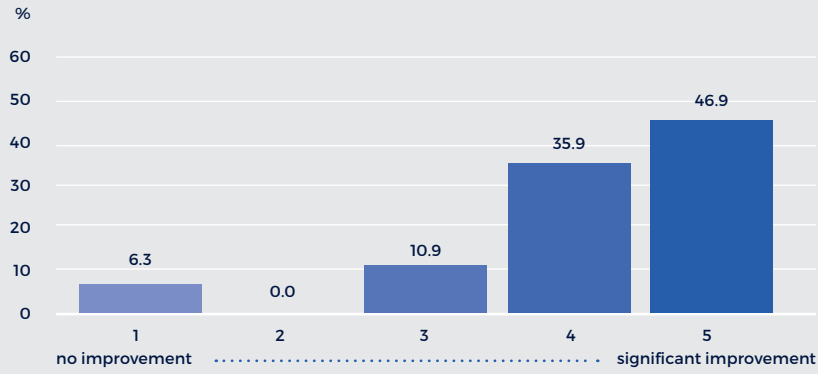
In relation to this outcome and in their qualitative responses, participants shared how the APLP helped them to develop their understanding of current research and theory, as well as their capacity to apply this knowledge to improve their own leadership skills, and the middle leaders they support. Participants also shared how the APLP reinforced the importance of collegial and community collaborations that are based on relational trust, for ensuring a “*shared culture and vision for continuous improvement*”. Several participants also wrote about how the program provided knowledge and strategies for effective communication with other stakeholders. One participant summed up these ideas, sharing that “*leadership is a service – it is less about me and more about the people I am developing. I’ve learnt a lot about humility and how important it is to understand the theories of action of others. I’ve learnt a lot about courage and the conviction to have the conversations that will assist others.*”

Program outcome 4: Personal and interpersonal qualities to lead with influence

Almost half of the responding participants (46.9%) reported ‘significant’ improvement in their personal and interpersonal qualities needed to lead with influence, and another 35.9% reported ‘good improvement’. Very few participants (6.3%) reported they experienced ‘no improvement’ in these qualities following completion of the program. See Figure 5.

In relation to this outcome and in their qualitative responses, many participants shared how the APLP has enabled a process of self-reflection on their personal and professional qualities, describing these reflections as important to informing their development as a leader. For example, one participant shared that the APLP facilitated “*a focus on areas of my own development, time to reflect on the who, what and how of what I do, and the impact I have on others*”. Participants referred to the L4LA survey as a valuable tool in supporting these reflections and in guiding areas in need of development. One participant wrote “*I’ve been able to reflect on my leadership and behaviour strengths and apply this learning in my leadership development through the Leadership Inquiry*”. The importance of being an “*authentic leader*”, guided by a “*moral compass*” was emphasised, as was the need for leaders to prioritise their own personal and professional wellbeing.

Figure 5. Ratings of personal and interpersonal qualities required to lead with influence (N=64)

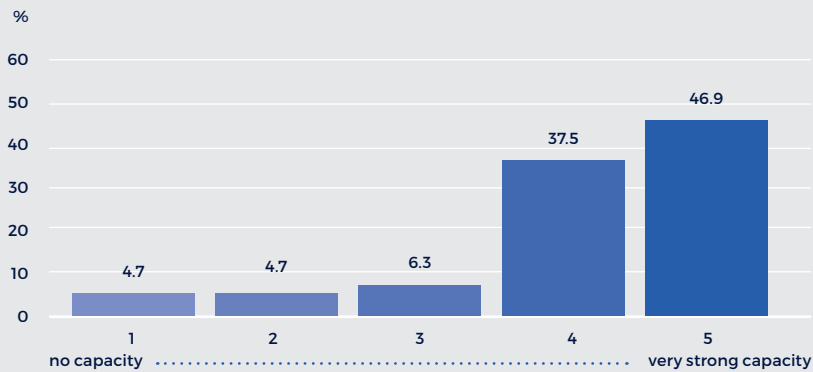


Program outcome 5: Capacity to confidently lead the strategic organisation of the school.

Following completion of the program, almost 85% of participants reported having a 'very strong capacity' or 'strong capacity' to confidently lead the strategic organisation of their school. Only 4.7% participants reported feeling that they had 'no capacity'. See Figure 6.

A very limited number of participants qualitative responses aligned with this outcome, and therefore no qualitative data was coded or analysed.

Figure 6. Ratings of capacity to lead the strategic organisation of their school (N=64)



EVALUATION QUESTION 2: LEADERSHIP SEMINARS

How engaging were the Leadership Seminars, and how well did they support participant understanding?

The extent to which the participants found the seminars engaging and supportive of their understanding was evaluated using data from the Leadership Seminar surveys. There were different presenters for the seminars, however, seminar topics and learning outcomes remained the same and as such results do not report on individual presenters and instead report on participants' engagement and understanding of content delivered. For example, for Seminar 6, participants were asked to rate how well the seminar 'supported greater understanding of how to solve complex problems for improved student outcomes'. In addition to their ratings about the Leadership Seminars, participants were also invited to give open-ended feedback for each seminar. Specifically, participants were asked 'do you have any comments about Seminar x?'. Qualitative responses were thematically analysed and reported alongside the quantitative data below.

Important to note, the number of responses to each item reported here vary considerably (N=36-161), due to variations in survey content and responses for each Cohort as noted earlier. Data available for the quantitative analysis is provided in the figure keys, and the number of qualitative responses analysed in parentheses in the table titles.

Seminar 1: Student-Centred Leadership

Following participation in the first seminar, 99.3% of respondents reported having a good understanding of the key dimensions of student-centred leadership, and 98.2% agreed that the seminar on Student-Centred Leadership was engaging (Figure 7). Thematic analysis of the qualitative feedback supported this. Participants perceived the seminar as being high quality, inspirational, having application to practice and inclusive of pre-readings that supported learning. These themes and illustrative participant quotes are provided in Table 3.

Figure 7. Seminar 1: Participant reports of engagement (N=161) and understanding (N=163).

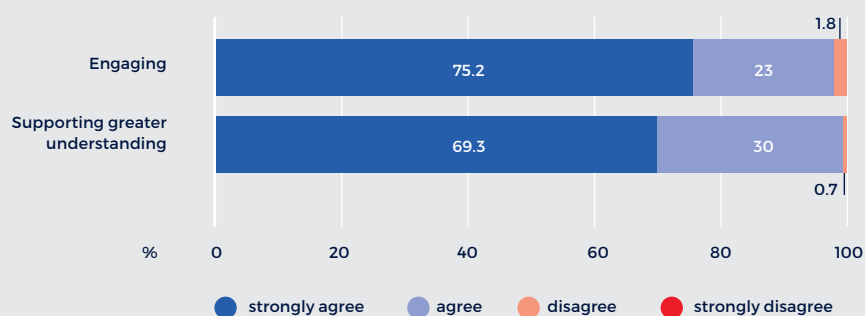


Table 3. Seminar 1: Participant qualitative feedback (N=69)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
High quality	<p><i>"Cutting edge, thoroughly well researched."</i></p> <p><i>"I feel confident that I am a part of world class professional learning."</i></p>
Inspirational	<p><i>"Such a fabulous, exciting opportunity and experience. I am inspired."</i></p> <p><i>"It was an inspiring and engaging start to a wonderful program."</i></p>
Practical application	<p><i>"It was wonderful to hear the words of the presenter and to be led through the thinking around what it means in practical terms to lead through a student-centred framework."</i></p> <p><i>"Developing a deep understanding of the 5 dimensions of school leadership that directly impact student outcomes was incredibly important for my leadership development."</i></p>
Pre-readings to support learning	<p><i>"I found reading the before the seminar very useful. The seminar then linked the principles in the readings to an everyday context which provided depth to my learning."</i></p> <p><i>"The pre-readings were a fantastic entry point for my thinking and made the presentation and associated discussions with my table meaningful."</i></p>

Seminar 2: Inquiry and Innovation as a Foundation to Leadership Learning

Almost all participants (99.4%) agreed that Leadership Seminar 2 was engaging, and 97% also agreed that it helped them to develop greater understanding of how to conceptualise and carry out leadership inquiry (see Figure 8). Analysis of the qualitative feedback showed that participants also found this session to be promotive of self-reflection, as well as providing them useful frameworks and resources to use. However, participants reported that they would have liked more time to allow greater depth and exploration of the concepts. These themes and examples of participant quotes are shown in Table 4.

Figure 8. Seminar 2: Participant reports of engagement (N=161) and understanding (N=67).

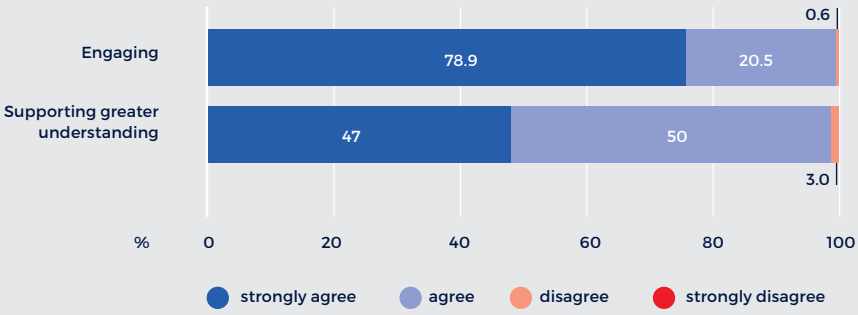


Table 4. Seminar 2: Participant qualitative feedback (N=84)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Promoted personal reflection	<p><i>"The information was particularly relevant and allowed lots of self-reflection/projection into Principal leadership"</i></p> <p><i>"The session for me made me think and reflect on my own practice and where I can strengthen."</i></p>
Useful frameworks and resources	<p><i>"The inclusion of the mindsets and frameworks really set this program apart from anything that I have experienced before. I can already see that these will have a significant impact on my leadership and self-reflection journey."</i></p> <p><i>"The 'Leadership for Learning' frameworks will be of great use. They are clear and concise yet give great leverage/scaffolds for self-reflection."</i></p>
More time needed to allow greater depth	<p><i>"Although informative, the session was brief and could have been easily lengthened"</i></p> <p><i>"I would have liked the presenter to have had more time to speak and delve deeper into her concepts."</i></p>

Seminar 3: Leading a Whole-School Approach to Wellbeing

All participants (100%) reported that the seminar was engaging, and 97% agreed that it helped them to develop a greater understanding of the conditions required to lead a whole-school approach to ensuring that every child is known, valued, and cared for (Figure 9). In addition to this, the qualitative feedback showed that participants across all Cohorts found the information to be immediately applicable to practice. Participants also commented on whole-school approaches, and connection to school settings, with feedback from the early Cohorts being used to continue to develop these areas for the following Cohorts. See Table 5.

Figure 9. Seminar 3: Participant reports of engagement (N=96) and understanding (N=104).

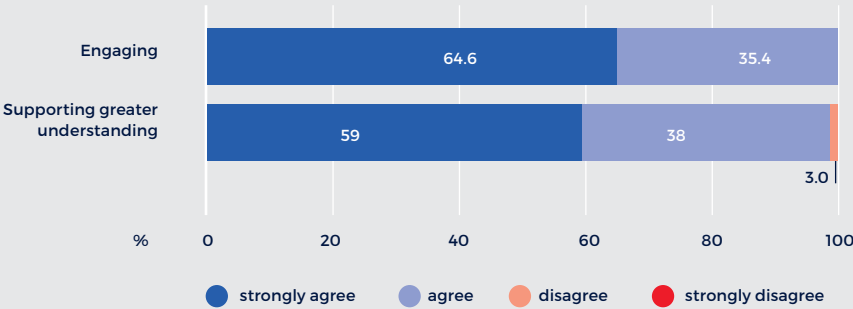


Table 5. Seminar 3: Participant qualitative feedback (N=50)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Immediately applicable to practice	<p><i>"There were practical suggestions that I can use in my school today"</i></p> <p><i>"Something I could take back to staff and re-inspire, breathe fresh visions into programs that are evidence based."</i></p>
Whole-school approach	<p><i>"I would have liked more practical based skills/strategies to lead a whole school approach to wellbeing and academic growth."</i></p> <p><i>"Amazing! Would like more of a framework about how the presenter brought about a student-centered wellbeing culture. Especially with school leadership teams and prof. learning of staff and community."</i></p> <p><i>"The presenter highlighted a lot of what I believed already - but encompassed more in terms of the whole school community."</i></p>
Connection to schools	<p><i>"It would also be good to look at similar impact with Government schools."</i></p> <p><i>"The presenter tied it very strongly back to school context"</i></p> <p><i>"Love hearing actual school stories"</i></p> <p><i>"It was a good balance of theory and application to daily life as a school leader"</i></p>

Seminar 4: Leading for Inclusivity and Engagement

All respondents (100%) agreed that the seminar was engaging, and most respondents (86.1%) agreed that it facilitated greater understanding of disability and inclusivity in NSW public schools. The remaining 13.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 10). In their qualitative responses, participants shared that they found the seminar to be valuable, engaging, and thought-provoking (Table 6).

Figure 10. Seminar 4: Participant reports of engagement (N=107) and understanding (N=36).

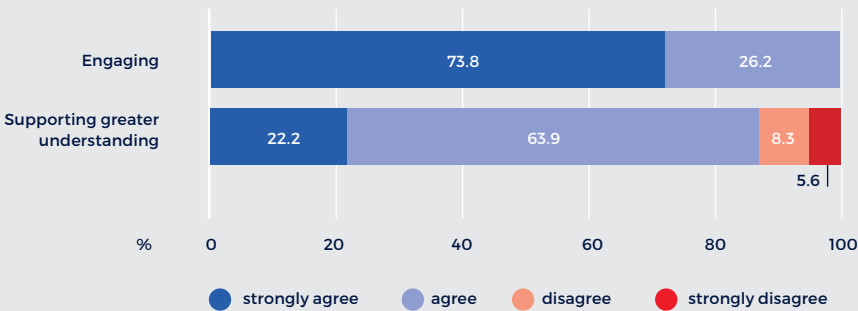


Table 6. Seminar 4: Participant qualitative feedback (N=56)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Valuable	<p><i>“I connected with his presentation and felt inspired to do better back at my school with an armful of evidence, tools and a strong belief I can make more of a difference in my school and learning community.”</i></p> <p><i>“The concept and work around cultural humility was really valuable.”</i></p>
Engaging	<p><i>“The presenter had the audience eating from the palm of his hand from the opening bar of his song. His knowledge, skills and genuine warmth also contributed to a sustained presentation of high quality”</i></p> <p><i>“The presenter was very engaging; this content is highly relevant in current dynamics and the audit was a useful tool for use with executive and community.”</i></p>
Thought-provoking	<p><i>“It provided many insights but most importantly it resulted in a cognitive shift in my thinking, a new awareness that will stay with me.”</i></p> <p><i>“I was really challenged to review my cultural perspectives.”</i></p>

Seminar 5: Leading Complex Organisations Through Professional Collaborations

Across all Cohorts, 96% of respondents agreed that this seminar was supportive of their understanding of the practices required to lead a collaborative culture in a school that positively impacts teacher and student learning. Most respondents (93.3%) also agreed that it was engaging. See Figure 11. The thematic analysis of participant qualitative responses yielded different responses across Cohorts. Participants in Cohort 1 shared that they felt the content was not suitably targeted to their level of expertise. In response, the content was re-developed for the following Cohorts, who shared that the content and learning were relevant and applicable. This is detailed further in Table 7.

Figure 11. Seminar 5: Participant reports of engagement (N=136) and understanding (N=151).

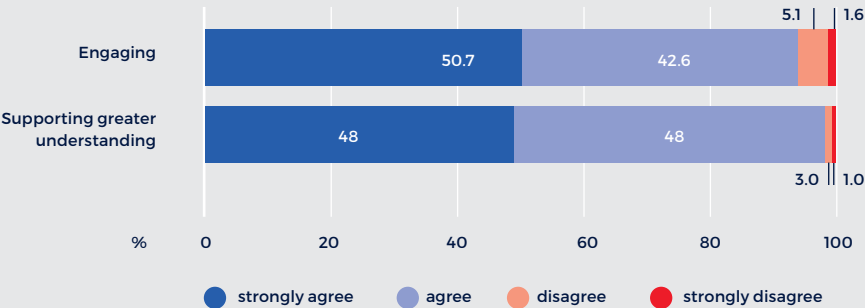


Table 7. Seminar 5: Participant qualitative feedback (N=68)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Content not suitable (Cohort 1 only)	<p><i>"I think the presentation was working below the level of understanding and expertise of the participants at my table"</i></p> <p><i>"Review of current knowledge, not information that was new."</i></p> <p><i>"I felt some of the content was pitched below our level of leadership expertise - building the capacity of others is something we had to demonstrate to get into this program."</i></p>
Relevant and applicable (Cohorts 2-4)	<p><i>"The professional learning was relevant, engaging and effective in providing information regarding the importance of collaboration for leaders now and in the future"</i></p> <p><i>"A day full of practical ideas and strategies that made perfect sense. The Ten Tenets of Collaborative Professionalism provide an excellent framework to be guided by."</i></p>

Seminar 6: Leading Authentic Improvement and Complex Problem Solving

Seminar 6 was also well received, with 95.6% of respondents reporting that it facilitated greater understanding of how to solve complex problems for improved student outcomes, and 94.9% of respondents stating that it was engaging (Figure 12). Further to this, analysis of qualitative feedback showed that participants found the seminar to be relevant and transferable to practice, involving practical scenarios and activities connecting theory to practices. These themes and illustrative quotes are provided in Table 8.

Figure 12. Seminar 6: Participant reports of engagement (N=139) and understanding (N=143).

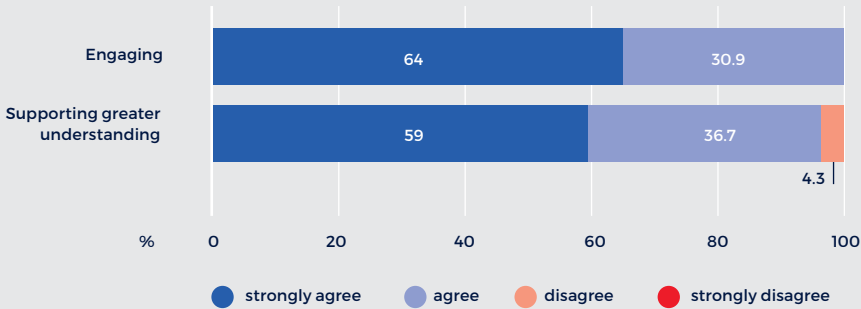


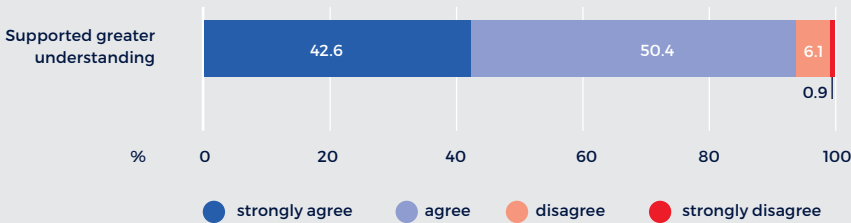
Table 8. Seminar 6: Participant qualitative feedback (N=69)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Relevant and transferable to practice	<p><i>"I really got a lot out of the session and will enjoy putting the theories into practice."</i></p> <p><i>"This session authenticated and contextualised the research from the book, which was highly pertinent to the complexities that leverage in educational school leadership. I will certainly be adopting the four phases of the Theory of Engagement, as a result, as well as Theory of Action, moving forward."</i></p>
Practical scenarios and activities	<p><i>"The presentations were really good - and provided real scenarios that can be applied to different contexts"</i></p> <p><i>"I have used the readings, intercessional activity and PI sessions to think about improving as a leader."</i></p>
Connecting theory to practice	<p><i>"The presenter is exceptional in her ability to activate the link between research and practice and to facilitate/model constructive problem talk."</i></p> <p><i>"I enjoy the connection of theory to practical scenarios. The presenter challenges my thinking and encourages my own personal growth as a leader."</i></p>

Seminar 7: Leading Connecting with Country

Most participants (93%) agreed that the seminar helped them develop greater understanding of the importance of spirituality and ontology for local Aboriginal communities (see Figure 13). Analysis of the qualitative feedback revealed that participants perceived it to be a rich learning experience, however, it was suggested that more practical application for school leaders was required. Table 9 provides illustrative quotes for these themes.

Figure 13. Seminar 7: Participant reports of understanding (N=119).



Note: Participants were not asked the engagement item for this Leadership Seminar.

Table 9. Seminar 7: Participant qualitative feedback (N=62)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Rich learning experience	<i>"I enjoyed the talk and the questions and learnt much about Aboriginal culture and practices."</i>
	<i>"It very much underlined the importance of reaching out to the local Indigenous community for guidance when designing content aligned with curriculum and teaching concepts."</i>
	<i>"It was a great experience that improved my understanding of Aboriginal Education and its complexities"</i>
Greater practical application is needed	<i>"A number of practical scenarios were raised and there was no real support/potential solution offered."</i>
	<i>"I did not feel the information which was presented was particularly useful in changing school practices."</i>

Seminar 8: Lead to Inspire

This seminar was particularly well received with all respondents (100%) agreeing that it was engaging, and that it supported them to develop greater understanding of how to communicate with purpose and inspiration (Figure 14). Analysis of the qualitative feedback supports this, with participants reporting that the seminar was engaging, thought-provoking and had clear links to practice. These themes are further detailed with illustrative quotes in table 10.

Figure 14. Seminar 8: Participant reports of engagement (N=49) and understanding (N=51).

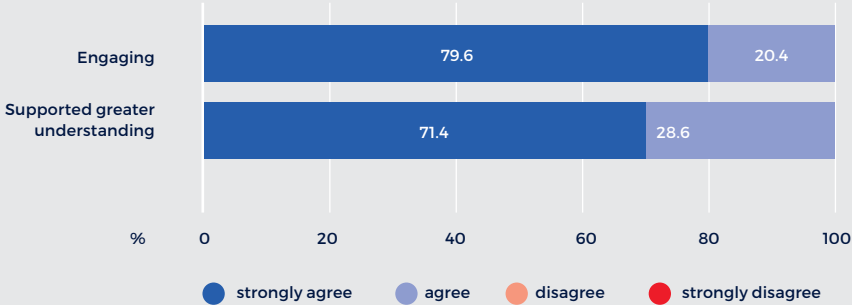
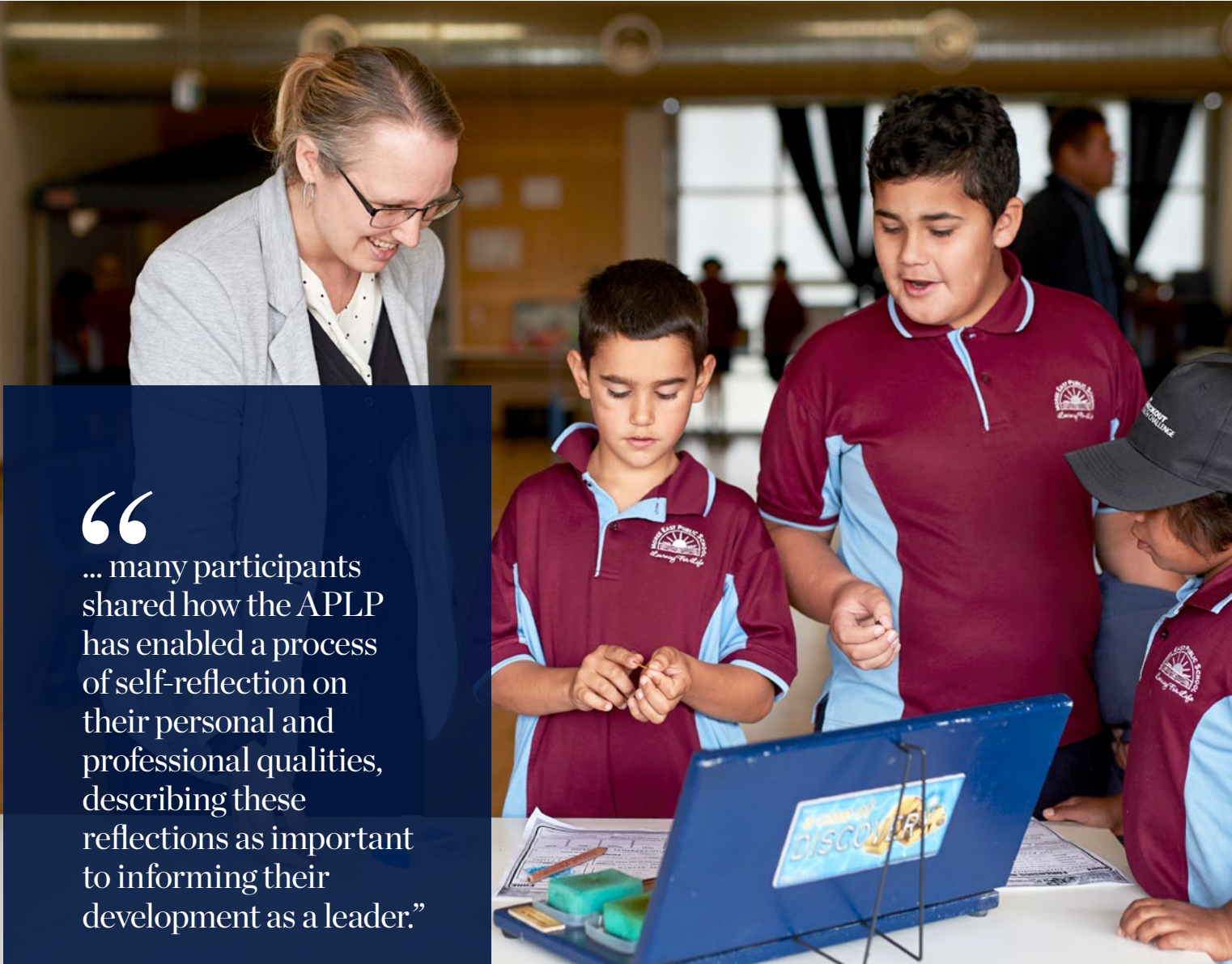


Table 10. Participant qualitative feedback for Seminar 8: Lead to Inspire (N=15)

Theme	Illustrative participant quotes
Engaging	<i>"Engaging and very personable. Some clear takeaways from session about mood, mind, movement and the 'so what?' to use in practice!"</i>
Thought-provoking	<i>"Very insightful and thought-provoking. The presenter made you think deeply about your own communication and strategies to come across positively and with inspiration."</i>
Clear links to practice	<p><i>"An absolute awesome session with practical skills that enabled consideration on how to best engage and communicate."</i></p> <p><i>"The presenter gave us so many practical ways that we can make use of his strategies in our daily work!"</i></p>



“
 ... many participants shared how the APLP has enabled a process of self-reflection on their personal and professional qualities, describing these reflections as important to informing their development as a leader.”

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: PROGRAM ELEMENTS

How did participants perceive the quality and usefulness of the various program elements?

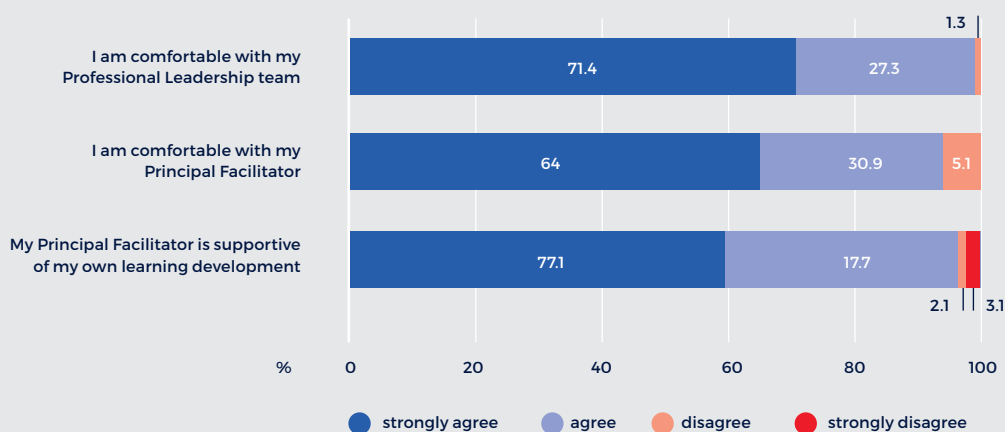
Four key structures were evaluated to explore the effectiveness of the design elements of the program. Specifically, this section presents data on: (1) participants' experiences with their Professional Learning Teams and Principal Facilitator; (2) engagement with the three NSW DoE SLI Leadership Frameworks; (3) Assessment Panel data on the validation and qualification process; and (4) uptake of beyond-program learning opportunities. Several data sources were drawn on in this section and are detailed in the corresponding sections.

Professional Leadership Teams and Principal Facilitators

As part of the APLP, participants are grouped into Professional Learning Teams (Teams) with 4-6 other participants and a Principal Facilitator (Facilitator) who is an experienced principal. Participants engage with their Teams and Facilitators throughout the program (during the Leadership Seminars and between sessions). To evaluate participants' experiences of structures, they are asked to provide feedback during the program and following completion. Specifically, in the Leadership Seminar surveys, participants are asked to rate how comfortable they feel with their Teams and Facilitator, and whether they feel supported; and in the post-program surveys, participants are asked about their relationships with their Teams beyond completion of the program.

Almost all respondents (98.7%) reported feeling comfortable with their Team. Similarly, almost all participants felt comfortable (97.3%) and well-supported by their Facilitator (94.8%). See Figure 15. More than half (52%) of participants responding to the post-program survey (N=64) also indicated that they had sustained their relationships with their team beyond completion of the program.

Figure 15. Participant experiences with Professional Learning Teams and Principal Facilitators (N=96-154).

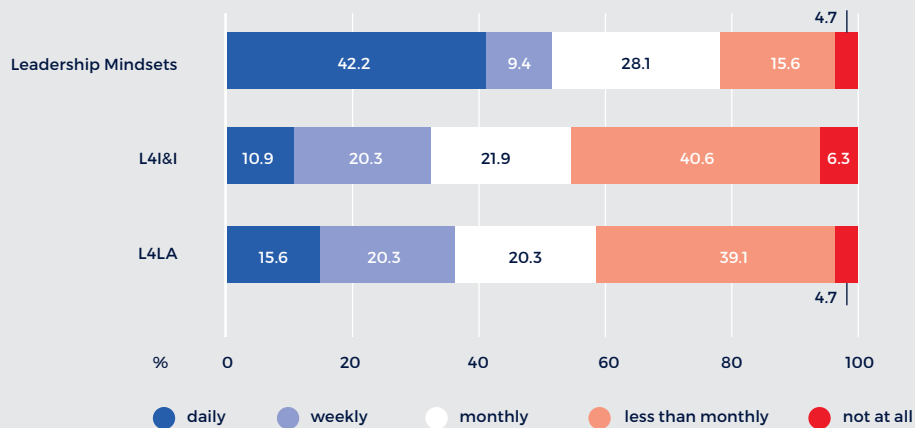


Engagement with the SLI Leadership Frameworks

As part of the post-program survey, participants were asked to report on their continued use and value of the NSW DoE SLI Leadership Frameworks (L4LA, L4I&I, Leadership Mindsets) in their day-to-day leadership practice beyond completion of the APLP. Participants responded to items about the frequency in which they engage with the Frameworks and were asked to further comment on the day-to-day value and impact on their leadership practices.

As can be seen in Figure 16, participants (N=64) reported engaging in all three of the Frameworks regularly. Participants reported that the Leadership Mindsets Framework had the greatest impact on their day-to-day practices beyond completion of the APLP. Specifically, 42.2% reported that they engaged with the Leadership Mindsets daily, 9.4% weekly, and 28.1% monthly. Less than 5% reported not engaging with the Leadership Mindsets Framework at all. More than half of the participants also reported engaging with the L4I&I Framework and the L4LA Framework at least monthly (53.1% and 56.2%, respectively). Only a few reported not engaging with these Frameworks at all beyond completion of the program (6.3% L4I&I and 4.7% L4LA).

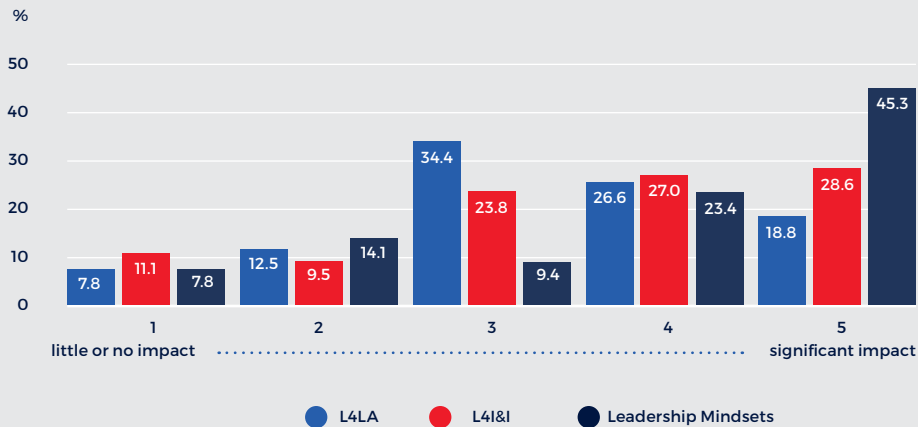
Figure 16. Participant reports on frequency of engagement with the SLI Leadership Frameworks beyond completion of the program (N=64)



Participants also rated their perceived overall impact of the Frameworks on their leadership practices beyond completion of the program. These findings align with those reported above. Specifically, participants reported that the Leadership Mindsets had the greatest impact on their leadership practices beyond completion, with 45.3% reporting it has 'significant impact', followed by L4I&I (28.6% significant impact), and L4LA (18.8% significant impact). Important to note, few participants reported the Frameworks having 'little or no impact' (Figure 17).

Participants were also asked to respond to a selection of items about how they had engaged with the Frameworks beyond completion of the program, and to provide further open-ended comment on the impact of the Frameworks on their leadership development. This data is also drawn from the post-program survey (N=64). These findings are elaborated on in the following corresponding sections.

Figure 17. Participant reports on perceived impact of the SLI Leadership Frameworks beyond completion of the program (N=64)



Leadership for Learning Analysis Framework (L4LA)

Participants reported engaging with the L4LA Framework for various purposes. Specifically, 81.3% of participants indicated the Framework supported their own reflective practice, 53.1% felt that it supported them in leadership development with colleagues and in coaching and mentoring conversations, and 46.9% reported the L4LA Framework was useful when engaging in reflective practice and as part of the Performance Development Process (PDP). See Figure 18.

When commenting on the impact of the L4LA Framework on their leadership development, some shared on the value of the Framework for talking to and supporting others:

- *“This has enabled me to work on the areas that I need to develop personally but has also given me a common language and direction for building leadership capacity in others”*
- *“The knowledge of the framework has become a part of language I use regularly”*
- *“Has been great for having leadership conversations with colleagues and future leaders of the system”.*

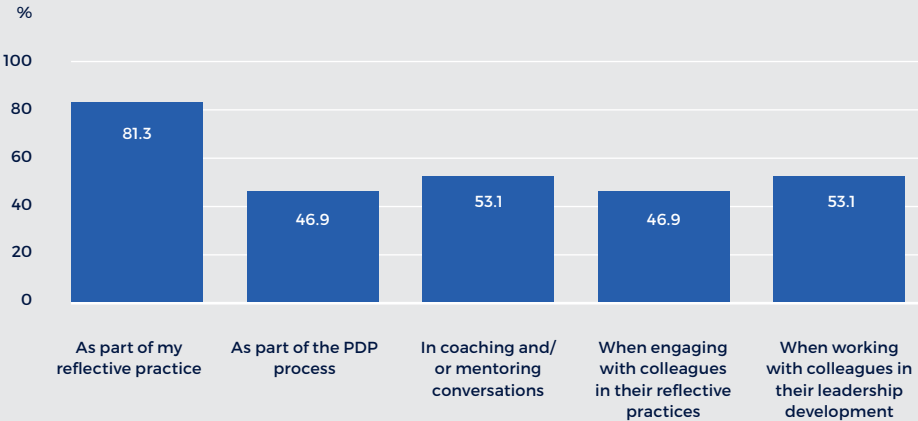
Others commented of the value of the Framework to support their own reflective practices, for example:

- *“As a reflective leader, it has become an automatic and unconscious habit to think about the L4LA. I think that is because I am now very aware of how people perceive me in my role, and am always wanting to grow and develop these areas”.*
- *“It is a tangible framework through which we can gain clarity about the focus of our work and our decision-making which enables a constant focus on learning at the heart of all we do”.*

The reported factors that did prevent some participants from using the Framework were generally related to busyness, for example, “As a small school principal, I am at times, time poor and it is this that limits my ability to effectively engage in the L4LA Framework to the level I would like.” Additionally, a limited number of participants reported that the L4LA did not relate to their day-to-day practice, for example “This framework is not directly linked to PDPs etc.”. Others saw the value but needed constant reminders of the Framework if they were to be able to put it into practice. This was evident in several comments including:

- *“I often get caught up in my default mode of leading and managing the school and it is not until I reflect or completing formal processes that I consider the use of the framework”*
- *“Workload: I need regular reminders. It’s like exercise, I want to, I know I should, sometimes it is hard to prioritise”*

Figure 18. Participant reports on how they have engaged with the L4LA Framework beyond graduation (N=64).



Leadership for Inquiry and Innovation Framework (L4I&I)

Participants reported engaging with the L4I&I Framework for various purposes. Specifically, 67.2% report utilising it as part of the Strategic Improvement Planning process, 60.9% to develop collaborative practice when focussing on inquiry, improvement and/or innovation, and 56.3% to lead inquiry within their school or context. Less frequent use included (in order of frequency), assisting colleagues to lead inquiry, school inquiry, leading inquiry in another context, as part of further study (see Figure 19).

When commenting on the impact of the L4I&I Framework on their leadership development, some shared how they had applied the Framework in practice:

- *“...changing the structure of secondary curriculum and a collaborative way”*
- *“...doing new school plan in conjunction with SEF”*
- *“The L4I&I is used as an evaluative tool to reflect on and ascertain impact for a number of activities that have been implemented at my school”.*

- *“Starting a new school, and a new position, I try to lead initiatives such as situational analysis of the school plan as an inquiry. I recently used it to lead school-based transitions across the school”.*
- *“I found it very helpful when looking at our SIP and working out our Strategic Directions and how we will improve practice with professional learning”.*

Others commented on how it has provided more rigour in their approaches to inquiry and innovation:

- *“This has enabled me to work out what is important and given permission to slowing down the need to change and the importance on focusing on going narrow and deep and truly understanding the what and why and the perspectives of others so that real improvement can be made that is sustained”.*
- *“It has allowed me to more effectively look deeply at issues which has led to more effective change”.*
- *“Allows me to move beyond any assumptions when working on innovation within our school”*
- *“This is a fantastic model that really ensures that I spend time in each of the phases to engage in deep inquiry rather than just trying to jump straight to a solution”*

The most cited factor on preventing some participants from using the Framework was lack of time and “many competing urgencies”. Others also stated a lack of understanding of the Framework at higher levels of leadership within their school made it difficult to implement, for example *“it would be of great benefit if all middle and senior executive were aware of this framework as it is an excellent guide for inquiry”.*

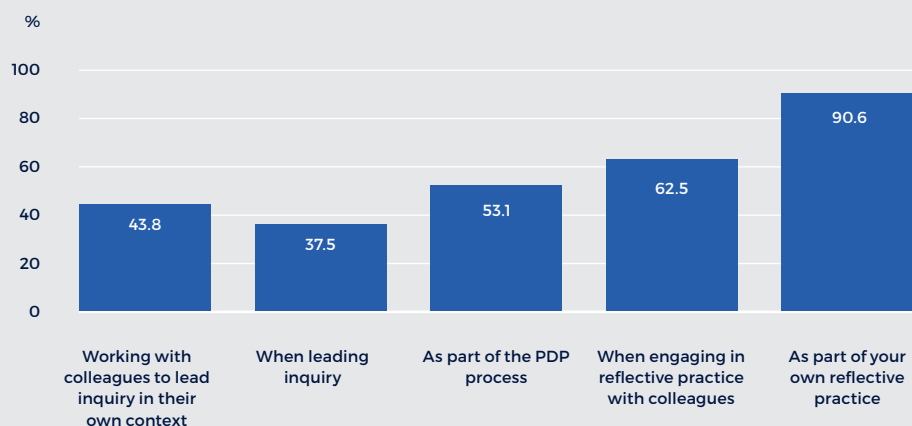
Figure 19. Participant reports on how they have engaged with the L4I&I Framework beyond graduation (N=64).



Leadership Mindsets

The Leadership Mindsets were frequently used by participants as part of their own reflective practice (90.6%) and when engaging in reflective practice with their colleagues (62.5%). More than half also reported using it as part of the PDP process (53.1%), and fewer participants reported using the Framework in leading inquiry themselves (37.5%) or with colleagues (43.8%). See Figure 20.

Figure 20. Participant reports on how they have engaged with the Leadership Mindsets Framework beyond graduation (N=64).



When asked about the impact of the Leadership Mindsets on their leadership development, a common theme was that this was seen to be the most impactful Framework of the three that were presented in the APLP:

- *“This is the most powerful framework for me in my role”*
- *“Significant impact. Has affirmed that my practice is heading in the right direction. This is the most useful framework. It guides me every day”*
- *“The leadership mindsets are used daily and are part of my vocab when speaking with and working alongside staff”*
- *“I use the leadership mindsets in everything that I do, every single day. They guide my leadership practice. Everything that I do is related back to the mindsets”*
- *“This is probably the most influential for me as a way of considering strengths and areas for improvement. It is an easy framework to consider with others as well”*
- *“The leadership mindsets are a great way to reflect upon personal practice as a principal. Am I being courageous? Are the decisions student centred? I think I found these most valuable to reflect on my own leadership and areas for growth”*

Many participants commented on the value of the Leadership Mindsets for its student-centred focus:

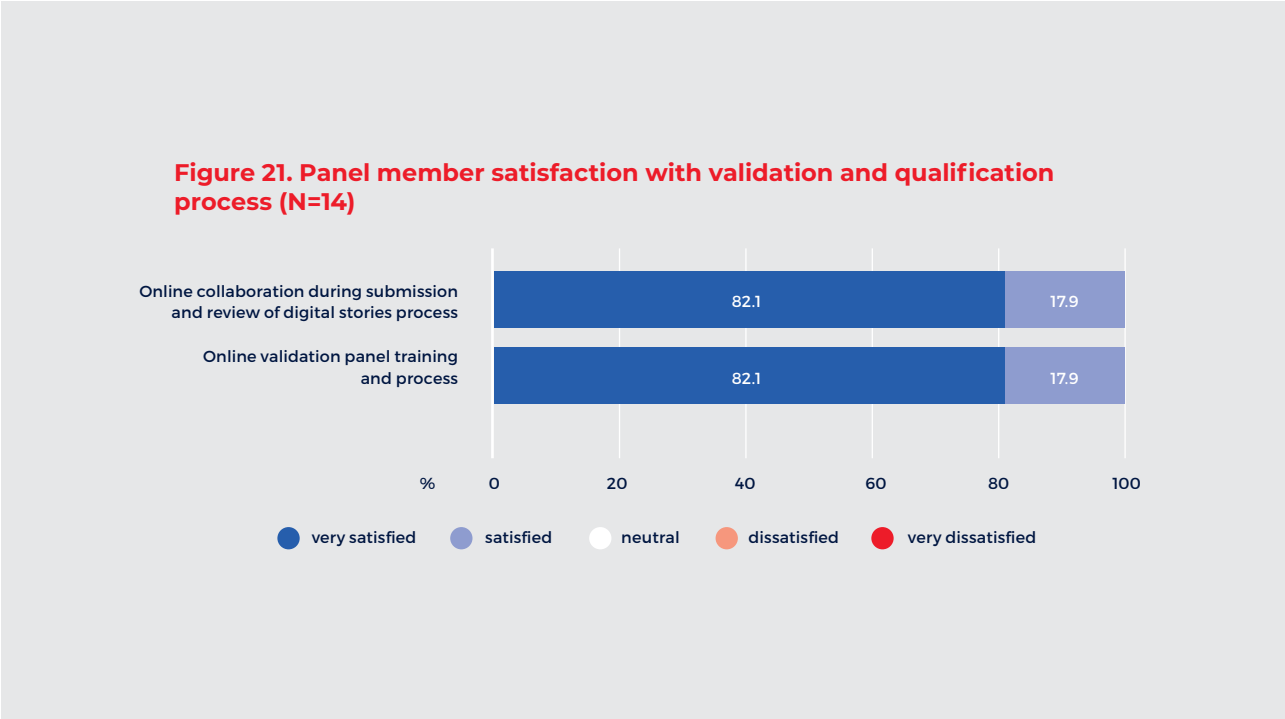
- *“This has reinforced my ‘student- centred’ approach to leadership. Again, this gave me the language and the tools to lead the school to drive student outcomes and the leadership capacity of all staff”*
- *“The student-centred aspect of leadership is central to my leadership. Reflecting on these mindsets has supported me in guiding purpose with conversations about practice and school culture. Often asking why practices are occurring”*
- *“Putting students at the centre of what we do has changed staff culture at my school”*
- *“The mindsets have really reinforced the adaptive nature of leadership and how students must always remain at the centre of everything. It also reminds me that different situations call for different approaches and mindsets has reminded me of the importance of curiosity and courageousness”*

The reported factors that did prevent some participants from using the Framework included difficulties with more senior leadership, for example: “Lack of support and understanding from the leaders in my context” and time: “Focused time to reflect and reinforce the learning on this would be beneficial, but difficult with competing demands.”

Validation and Qualification process

The learning of participants in the APLP is validated through a Validation and Qualification process. This process involves a trained leadership Assessment Panel of experienced and retired principals and academic staff considering a range of sources of evidence from program participants to determine an award of qualification. Survey data from the Assessment Panel members is reported on to determine the quality of this process.

Fourteen of the 20 panel members from Cohorts 2 and 3 completed the survey. Results of the survey showed that all participants (100%) were very satisfied (82.1%) or satisfied (17.9%) with the online collaboration and training that formed part of the process. See Figure 21.



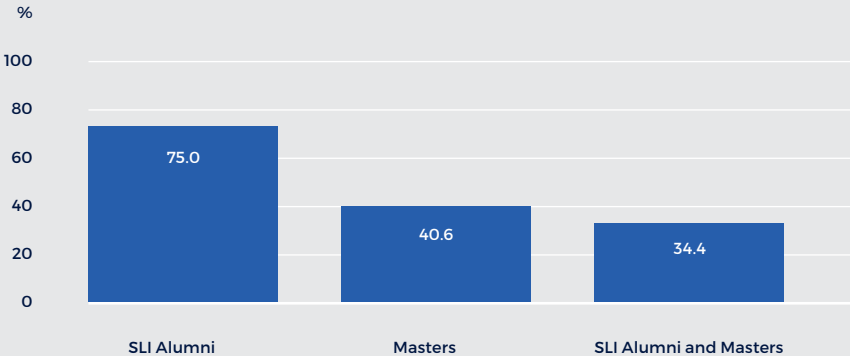
As part of the survey, panel members also gave open-ended comments on how the validation training and process supported their understanding of the program and how it impacted their own leading in schools. In relation to how the process supported their understanding of the program, three themes were identified. Participants shared that the process enabled greater clarity on the expectations of the program (n=6); greater clarity around the assessment process (n=6); and an increased understanding of the frameworks used in the program (n=5). In relation to how the process impacted their own leadership in schools, three themes were also identified. Specifically, participants reported having increased knowledge and skill in mentoring practices of leaders in schools (n= 8); opportunities to reflect on their own leadership practices (n=5); and a deepened understanding of how the program Frameworks can be applied in schools (n=4).

Beyond-Program Opportunities

After graduating from the program, participants are offered two further learning opportunities: free online leadership events as part of an alumni and; a 50% credit into a Master of Education (Educational Leadership) degree at UOW. Participant uptake of these opportunities was examined using data from the post-program survey (N=64). The responses indicated good uptake of these

programs with 75% engaging in the DoE SLI alumni offerings beyond the program, and 40.6% having commenced further studies in a Master's program (Figure 22). More than one-third of the 64 respondents had engaged in both (34.4%). Although 12 participants (18.8%) had not engaged in the further learning opportunities offered, 5 of these indicated intentions to enrol in a Master's course.

Figure 22. Participant uptake of further learning opportunities (N=64)



“

I've been able to reflect on my leadership and behaviour strengths and apply this learning in my leadership development through the Leadership Inquiry.”

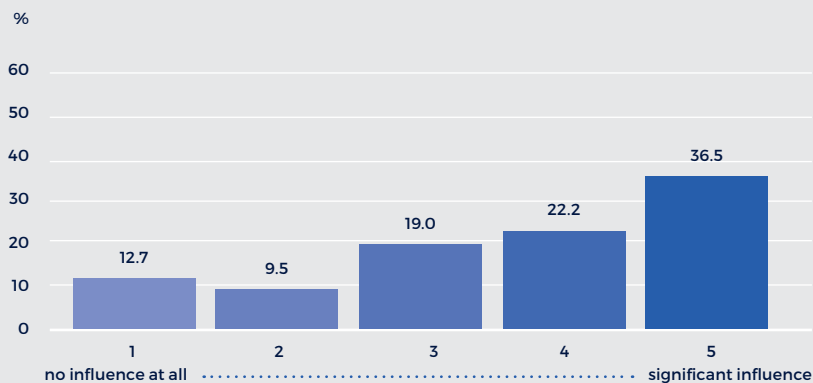
EVALUATION QUESTION 4: CAREER PROGRESSION

What impact has the program had on workforce promotions?

Participant reports of program impact on career progression

As part of the post-program survey, participants were asked to indicate the level of influence they felt the APLP had on their career progression. Just over half of the participants (58.7%) rated influence of the program as having significant impact. Only 12.7% indicating no influence at all. The distribution of participant responses for these items is presented in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Participant reports of APLP influence on career progression beyond program completion (N=63)

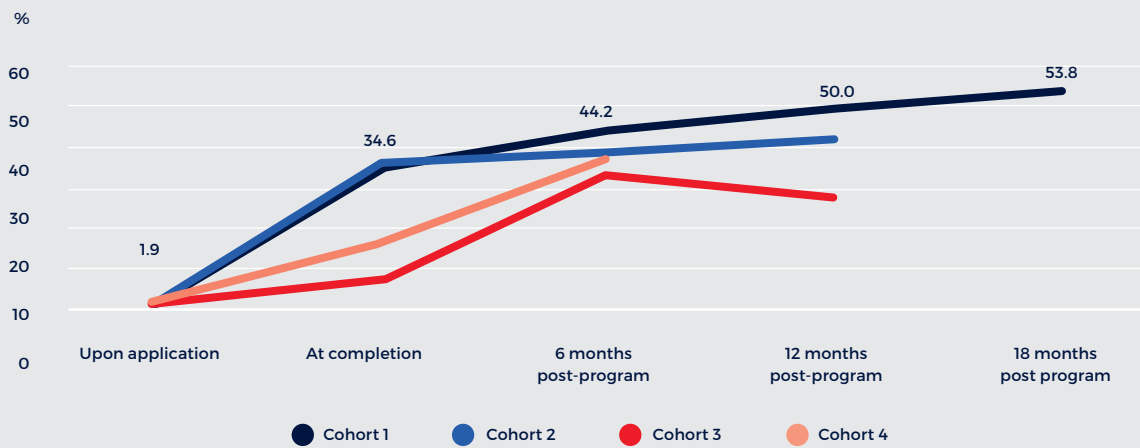


Progression into Principalship – workforce data

The workforce data provided by the NSW DoE was examined to determine the influence of the APLP on participants' progression in Principalship. To examine this progression, data is presented for the proportion of participants in a principal role at multiple time points: upon application, at completion, and at 6-, 12- and 18- months post program completion. The data presented below represents data available for Cohorts 1-4 at the time of reporting. At this stage, only Cohort 1 had reached 18-months post completion, and only Cohorts 1, 2 and 3 had reached 12-months post completion.

As can be seen in Figure 24, there is a significant upward trend in the proportion of participants who held a principal position over the various time points. For example, only 1.9% of participants in Cohort 1 held a principal position upon application to the APLP, but this increased to 34.6% at completion, 44.2% at 6-months, 50% at 12-months, and 53.8% at 18-months post-completion. Cohort 2 appears to follow a similar trend with the proportion of participants in principal positions increasing by 40% over the 2 years between application to the program and 12-months post completion. Cohorts 3 and 4 appear to have slower progression between application to the program and completion, but at 6-months post program, the proportion of participants in a principal position had increased by 30.5% (Cohort 3) and 33.3% (Cohort 4).

Figure 24. Proportion of participants across Cohorts 1-4 holding a principal position upon application, program completion, and 6-, 12-, 18-months post completion (N=201).



“

Following completion of the program, the majority of responding participants (82.8%) reported having a ‘significant’ or ‘very good’ understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes.”

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this document is to provide a comprehensive report of the evaluation data from Cohort 1-4 of the NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute Aspiring Principals Leadership Program. Using both quantitative and qualitative data sources, during and post program completion, findings across four sections (program outcomes, seminar engagement and participant understanding, program elements and beyond graduation) were reported. In this final section we report on the main insights across each of these sections and include some further considerations for program development and evaluation.

Before program commencement, the NSW DoE SLI set five program outcomes for aspiring principals to achieve through completing the program. The outcomes were:

1. **capacity to lead school improvement, innovation, and change**
2. **understanding of the leadership practices that have the greatest impact on student outcomes**
3. **capacity to lead collaborative, evidence-informed professional learning to improve teaching and student learning**
4. **personal and interpersonal qualities to lead with influence**
5. **capacity to confidently lead the strategic organisation of their school.**

At completion of the program, participants were asked to rate their perceived 'capability', 'understanding', 'capacity' or 'improvement' in each of the areas aligned to the five outcomes. A Likert scale rating (1-5) was used with 1 being 'Not at all capable'/'No understanding'/'No capacity'/'No improvement' and 5 being 'Very capable'/'Significant understanding'/'Very strong capacity'/'Significant improvement'. Quantitative post-program survey data indicated that more than 80% of participants reported 4s or 5s across all five outcomes, suggesting that the program supported strong development opportunities in each of these areas. Outcome 1: Capacity to lead school improvement, innovation and change was scored the lowest in terms of perceived capability with 11.1% of participants rating 1 or 2 on the Likert scale. Learning outcome 4: Personal and interpersonal qualities to lead with influence was the highest scored outcome, with reference to perceived improvement, with only 6.3% of participants rating 1 or 2. Overall, there was little variance between outcomes in terms of participant evaluation. Qualitative responses across four outcomes (qualitative data not available for outcome 5) indicate participants particularly referenced leading change and improvement, developing self (e.g., courage), and others (e.g., conversations with conviction) and leading with a student-centred approach as areas of new learning through program completion. Overall, the results of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of self-reported participant data indicate that the program achieved its purpose in supporting participants' development across the five program outcomes.

Throughout the program, participants engaged in eight seminars on topics including: (1) Student-centred leadership; (2) Inquiry and innovation as a foundation to leadership learning; (3) Leading a whole school approach to wellbeing; (4) Leading for inclusivity and engagement; (5) Leading complex

organisations through professional collaborations; (6) Leading authentic improvement and complex problem solving; (7) Leading Connecting with Country; and (8) Leading to inspire. Following each seminar, quantitative and qualitative feedback was sought to ascertain the perceived value of the seminar to participants' learning. For seven of the eight seminars, participants were asked to rate how engaged they felt the seminar to be (this was not asked of Seminar 7, 'Leading Connecting with Country'). In response, over 94% of participants reported 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' to statements related to how engaging they found each seminar to be. For Seminars 1,2,3,4 and 8, this positive response was 98% or higher.

For each of the eight seminars, participants were asked questions related to how well the seminar supported their understanding of leadership. While Seminar 4 only received 86% of participants indicating 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' (that the seminar supported their understanding of the content), each of the other seven workshops scored between 93% to 100% 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree'. The qualitative feedback was thematically analysed, and many positive themes emerged, suggesting the seminars to be high-quality, inspirational, thought-provoking, applicable to practice, promoting personal reflection, sharing useful resources, frameworks, and readings, and connecting theory to practice. The qualitative analysis of feedback also revealed some areas for improvement, including more time needed to explore further into certain topics (Seminar 2), clearer connection to relevant context required (Seminar 3) and one session where the content was deemed not relevant to the participants (Seminar 5, Cohort 1). Through responsive efforts of the program team, changes were made to address each of these concerns immediately, and in time for following Cohorts. Of interest is the qualitative data for Seminar 7, Leading Connecting with Country, which indicates that participants found it to be a rich learning experience, but still feel that further support is needed to guide staff in working with community and addressing Aboriginal education in a practical way.

Four program elements were evaluated as part of this report: (1) Professional Leadership Teams (Teams) and Principal Facilitators (Facilitators); (2) Program Leadership for Learning Frameworks; (3) Validation and Qualification process; and (4) Beyond-program opportunities. The results on items associated with Teams and Facilitators indicate that more than 95% participants were satisfied with these two engagement elements. This response is pleasing given that these two elements are people-focussed and rely on effective relationships being built between strangers. It is important to note that although one of the aims of the teams is to support participants throughout and beyond the program, only 52% of participants responded that their teams had sustained their relationships beyond the program.

The three leadership Frameworks were designed specifically for the program with evaluation data following engagement in the program indicating they are continuing to be used frequently (daily, weekly, or monthly) by more than 50% of participants. The Leadership Mindsets are used most frequently with 80% of participants indicating their frequent application in their practice. How the Frameworks were used in practice most commonly included to support: reflective practice; the development of self and colleagues; and to aid school processes such as Strategic Plans and the Performance and Development Process (PDP). Only 5-6% of participants indicated that the three Frameworks were not used at all.

The Validation and Qualification process was evaluated by the Assessment Panel who validate the learning of participants. All members of the Assessment Panel indicated overall satisfaction with the process, and reported that their participation in the process enabled new learning for them in areas such as program clarity as well as on their own leadership practices in schools. However, important to note is that participants in the actual program did not evaluate the validation and qualification process. This may be an area for further investigation.

Like the Professional Leadership Teams, the NSW DoE SLI intends participants to engage in learning and leadership development beyond program completion. Following engagement in the program, over three quarters of participants had undertaken either free online leadership events as part of an alumni program, enrolled in a Master of Education: Educational Leadership degree or both, indicating that ongoing leadership development is valued.

Overall, the four evaluated program elements seem to be both valued and utilised to support leadership learning within and beyond the program. Supporting participants to develop and maintain sustainable teams may be worthwhile in future program development, as too may be identifying and sharing practice of ways the three leadership Frameworks are frequently used and useful in schools.

Although not solely a principal preparation program, the APLP is shown to support career progression for participants. Of 64 (from 132) participants from Cohorts 1-3 who responded to a post-program survey, 59% indicated that the program had a significant impact on their career progression beyond program completion. The workforce data supports this finding with 2.5% of the 201 participants from Cohorts 1-4 holding a principal position upon application to the program, growing to 28% within 6 months post-completion. For Cohorts 1 and 2, data indicates a further increase in the number of past participants taking up principal positions at 12 months post program (Cohorts 1 and 2) and 18 months post program (Cohort 1). Though, Cohort 3 shows a small decline (12 down to 10) in participants holding a principal position between 6- and 12-months post program engagement. This may warrant further investigation as data is collected at 18-months post program engagement.

In conclusion, analysis of data across all five evaluation questions overwhelmingly demonstrates the positive impact the APLP has had on leadership development, learning and career progression. The quality and consistency of the evidence on the benefits of the program is both convincing and pleasing. The considerations provided in this closing section should act as guidance on how future development of the program could solidify these foundations and build upon them, to ensure its continuous success.



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I've learnt a lot about humility and how important it is to understand the theories of action of others. I've learnt a lot about courage and the conviction to have the conversations that will assist others

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