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Adapting the "Success Case Method": Experiences in evaluating a large-scale primary education initiative

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The Success Case Method is a simple method of 'finding out what is working and what is not, which also provides accurate and trustworthy information that can be used to make timely decisions' (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p.3). This paper reports on the experiences of applying this approach to the recent evaluation of a Victorian educational initiative that aims to improve the capacity of schools to support students at risk of disengagement and who are not achieving their educational potential.

In 2005, two separate evaluations were undertaken of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative (PWOI). Case study was employed in both evaluations to obtain detailed information to complement other sources of qualitative and quantitative data. A number of challenges were encountered during the first evaluation in obtaining and reporting the most pertinent case information.

As a result an alternative case study approach was adopted in the second review. The Success Case Method was used to help identify suitable sites for in-depth investigation and proved to be a straightforward and effective process for identifying key issues and recording useful information of successful program delivery to enhance program development.

This paper provides an overview of the Success Case Method and explores some of the issues that surround its application within this large scale evaluation context.

Brinkerhoff, R. 2003. *The Success Case Method: Find Out Quickly What's Working and What's Not*. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA.