Designing Evaluations for Policy Coherence:

The Differentiated Support for School Improvement Case

Centre for Program Evaluation

Victorian Department of Education and Training

Agenda

Item	Speakers	Timing
Introduction • DSSI & Education State (policy coherence) • Commissioning the evaluation	Stephanie Moorhouse	10 minutes
Evaluation design • Fixed and flexible components • Measurement model	Janet Clinton & Ruth Aston	10 minutes
Co-design and production of the DSSI Data Portal	Ruth Aston & Emily Qing	10 minutes
Closing comments	Janet Clinton	10 minutes
Discussant response	Ghislain Arbour	5 minutes
Q & A	All	10 minutes

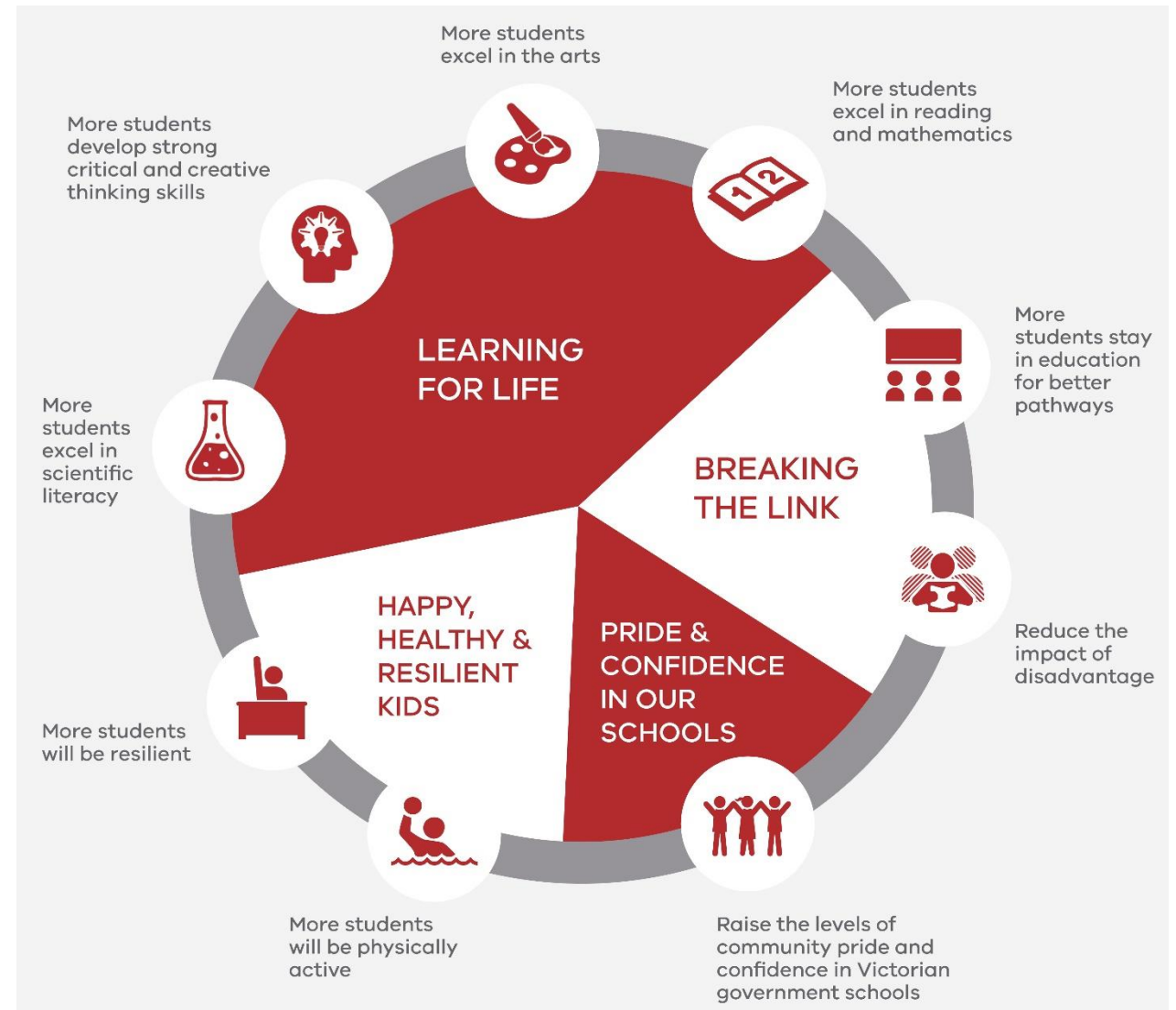# What's happening in Victoria?

1GE 1IB
VICTORIA - THE EDUCATION STATE

The result: A rapid and large-scale reform agenda

A record **$9 billion** invested in schools over 2014-18, with a further **$2.8 billion** committed in the 2019-20 State Budget
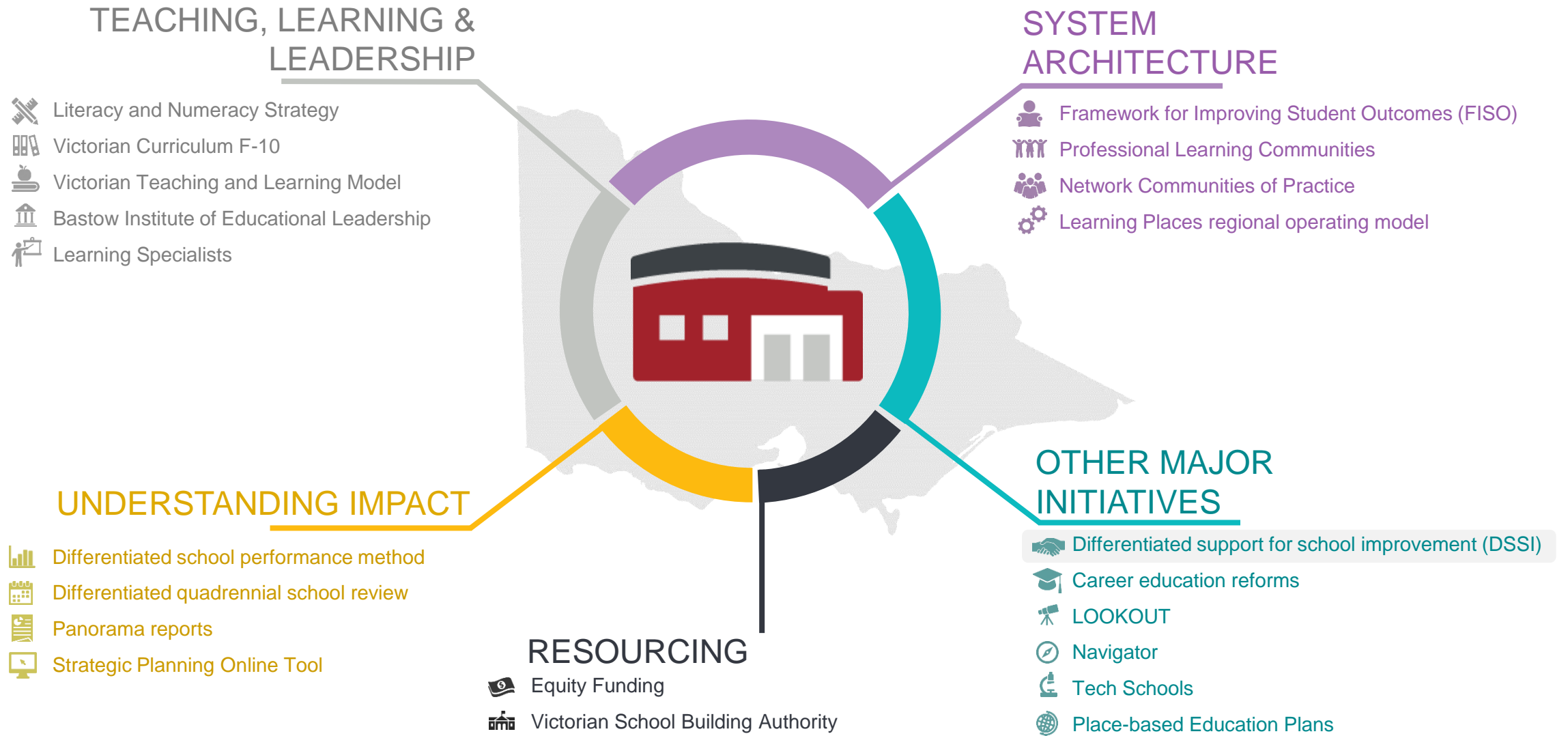
In September 2015, the '**Education State**' in schools reform agenda was announced.

A vision of **excellence** and **equity** to be delivered through four ambitious targets, with five and ten-year goals.

What does this mean for schools?

TEACHING, LEARNING & LEADERSHIP

- Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
- Victorian Curriculum F-10
- Victorian Teaching and Learning Model
- Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership
- Learning Specialists

SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

- Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)
- Professional Learning Communities
- Network Communities of Practice
- Learning Places regional operating model

UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

- Differentiated school performance method
- Differentiated quadrennial school review
- Panorama reports
- Strategic Planning Online Tool

RESOURCING

- Equity Funding
- Victorian School Building Authority

OTHER MAJOR INITIATIVES

- Differentiated support for school improvement (DSSI)
- Career education reforms
- LOOKOUT
- Navigator
- Tech Schools
- Place-based Education Plans

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Creating coherence

Coherence **is not** "when those in charge explain how things ***should fit*** from their perspective."

"Coherence is a **shared depth** of **understanding** about the purpose and nature of the work in minds and actions individually and especially collectively. Coherence is not structure, alignment or strategy."
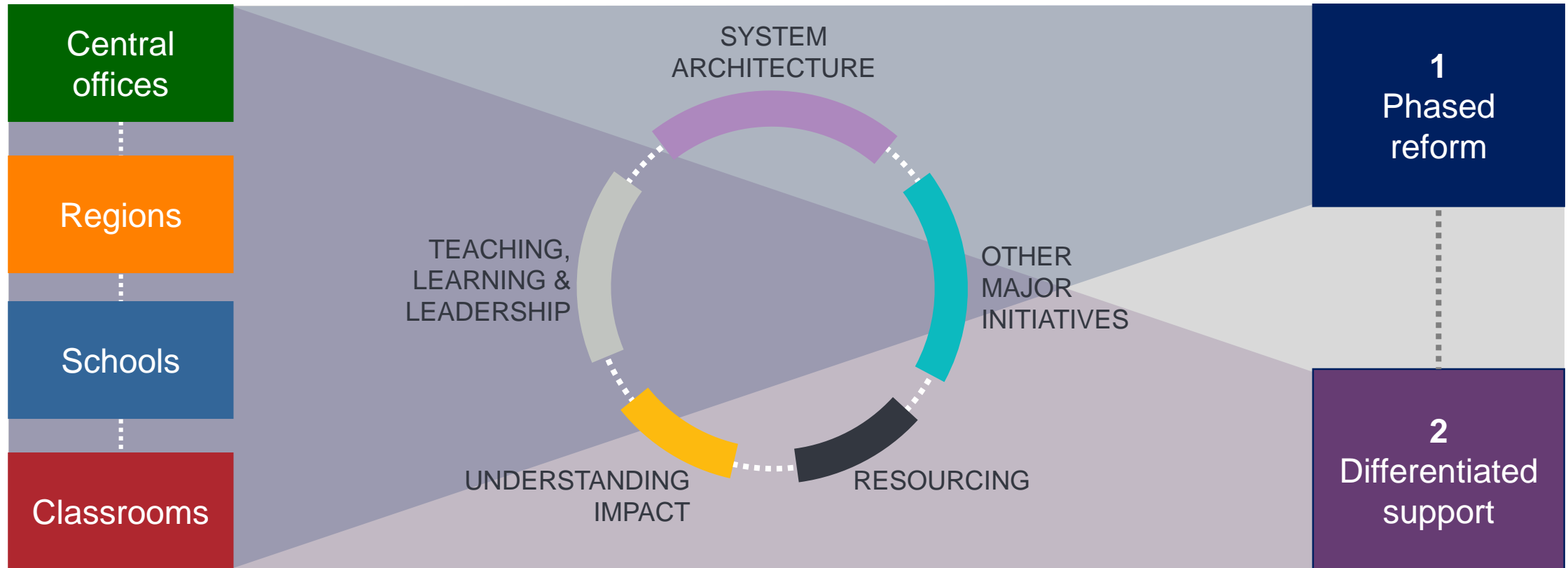
(Fullan & Quinn 2016)
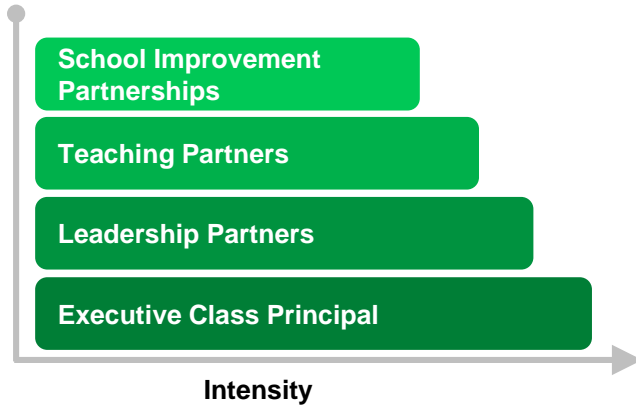
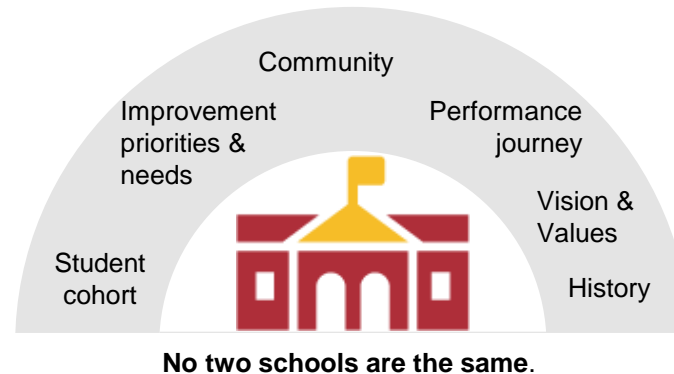# Coherence vertically, horizontally and in staging

What is Differentiated support for school improvement (DSSI)?

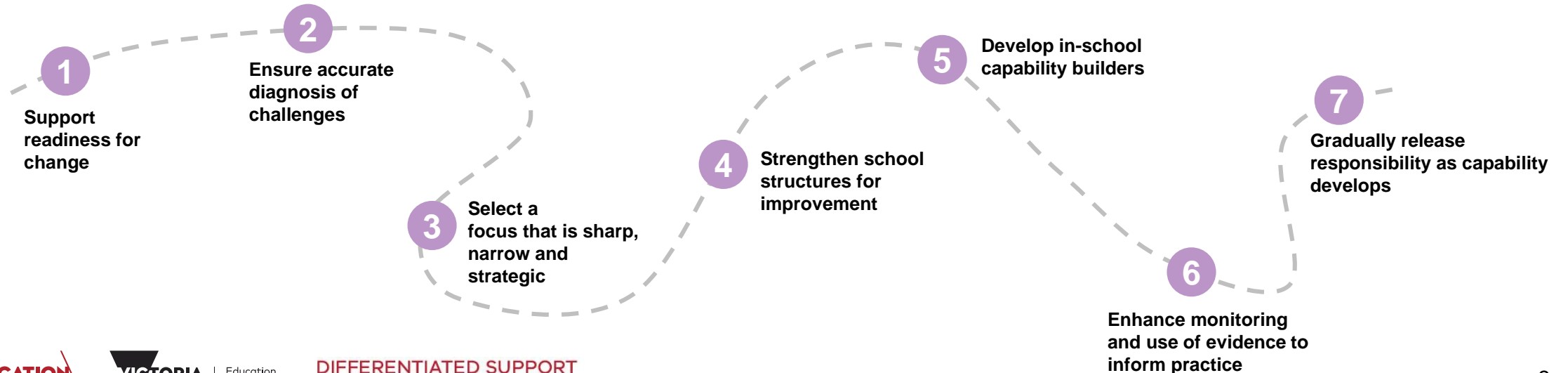DSSI is a suite of four initiatives, that vary in **focus, duration and intensity**.

- School Improvement Partnerships
- Teaching Partners
- Leadership Partners
- Executive Class Principal

Intensity

DSSI **targets lower performing schools**, but allocates support by looking at **context** to deeply **understand school needs**.

Community

Improvement priorities & needs

Performance journey

Vision & Values

Student cohort

History

No two schools are the same.

Contextualised implementation is guided by **principles** to support **consistency** where it matters:

- ✓ School ownership of improvement
- ✓ Adopt a partnering stance, ensuring equity of voice, transparency, and mutual benefit
- ✓ Implement with attention to 'people' and 'place'
- ✓ Integrate system resources and requirements
- ✓ Engage in an explicit improvement cycle
- ✓ Collaboratively build capability for sustainability

DSSI offers a **flexible pathway** to improvement that is **adapted** in each context:

1. **Support readiness for change**
2. **Ensure accurate diagnosis of challenges**
3. **Select a focus that is sharp, narrow and strategic**
4. **Strengthen school structures for improvement**
5. **Develop in-school capability builders**
6. **Enhance monitoring and use of evidence to inform practice**
7. **Gradually release responsibility as capability develops**

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The theory of change for DSSI

If schools receive support that is differentiated so that it meets them at their point of need

And if this support collaboratively builds the capability of school leadership and teachers to engage in evidence-based practices

Then schools will develop and be able to sustain the attitudes, skills and practices that contribute to improved student outcomes

An evaluation to support policy coherence

We want to confirm:

Vertical coherence	**Horizontal coherence**	**Staging coherence**
Is there shared depth of understanding about the **purpose and nature** of DSSI between different system layers?	Is DSSI enabling schools and regions to engage with other supports in a connected way? Or are we creating conflicting demands?	Is DSSI making sense as a 'first step' support for schools at the beginning of their improvement journey?

Why does this matter?

- Coherence-building as a way of working and part of continuous improvement
- Coherence expected to be a necessary condition for success at the school, program and system levels
- If DSSI is operating as 'program version' of how the system wants to operate, evaluation findings have an application far beyond the four initiatives

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

10

Evaluation design

Prof Janet Clinton

Dr Ruth Aston

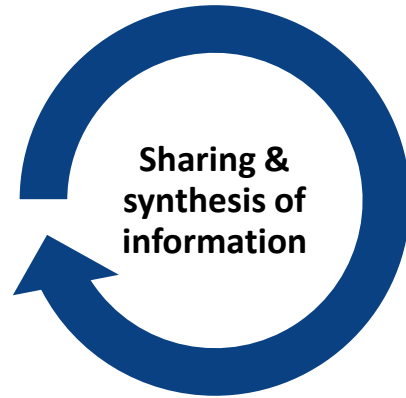# Meeting the challenge: creating an evaluation design to support policy coherence
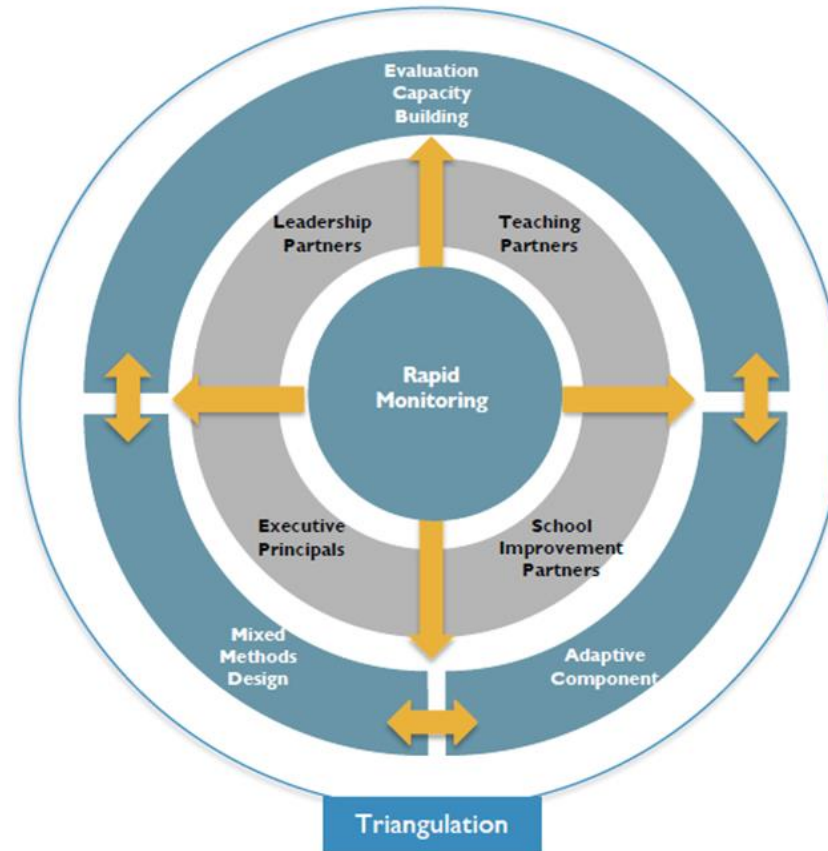
Overarching design requirements

- Defensible & evidence-informed

- Generates relevant information

- Informs policy implementation

- Supports evaluation use

- Supports responsivity

- Future-proofed

A systems view of the evaluation design

**Evaluations of other EdState reforms**   **Evaluation of DSSI**   **School improvement planning & monitoring**

Sharing & synthesis of information

Sharing & synthesis of information

Evaluation Capacity Building

Leadership Partners   Teaching Partners

Rapid Monitoring

Executive Principals   School Improvement Partners

Mixed Methods Design   Adaptive Component

Triangulation

A learning education system where there is policy coherence through the generation of evaluative feedback on implementation

Structured measurement on <u>modifiable</u> constructs
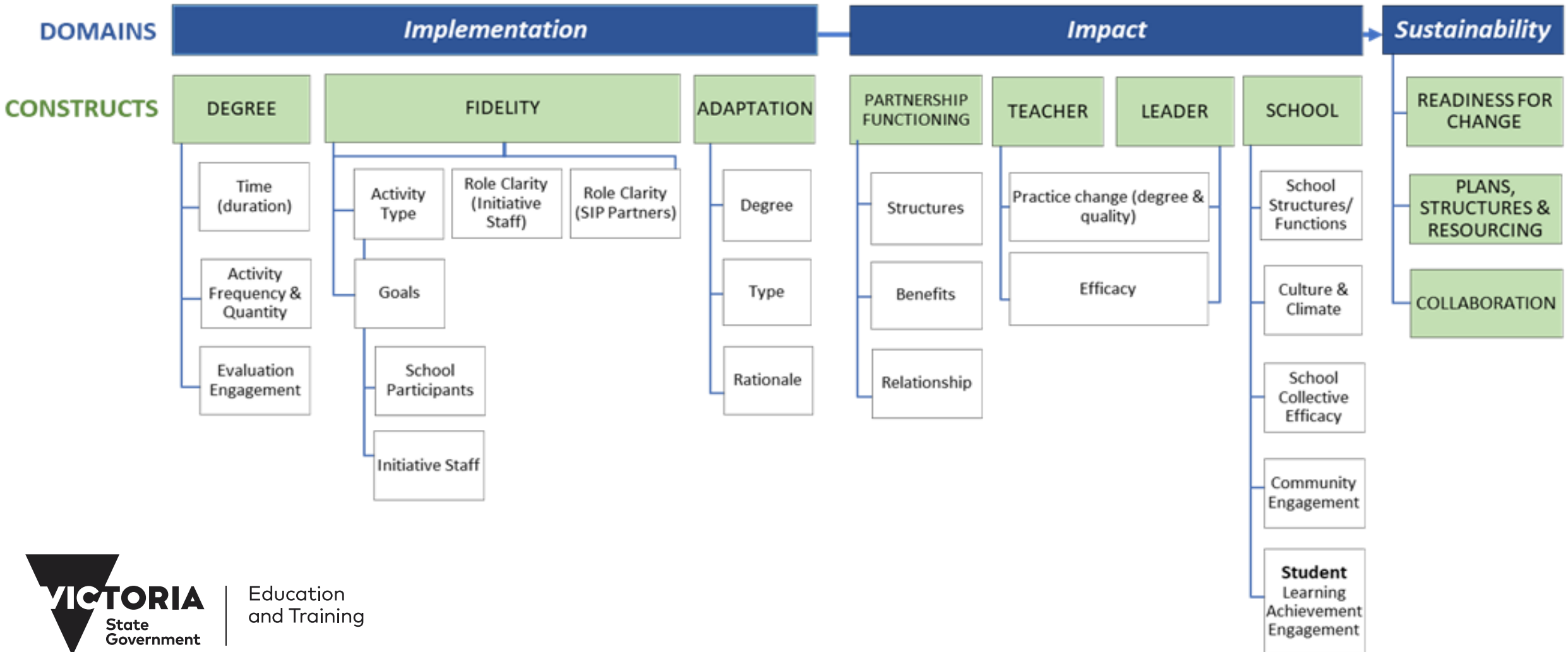
Multiple & repeated methods

To-date:
Survey data: 7, 500+ respondents
Case studies: 16 complete, 4 in-progress
Monitoring reports: analysed 500+ docs
Regular monitoring: reports gathered every 5-weeks

Sixteen multi-method **case studies** annually

Bi-annual **surveys** of school and initiative staff

System data analysis

Document analysis (AIPs, School Agreements)

Regular **monitoring reports** for each school

Interviews with key stakeholders
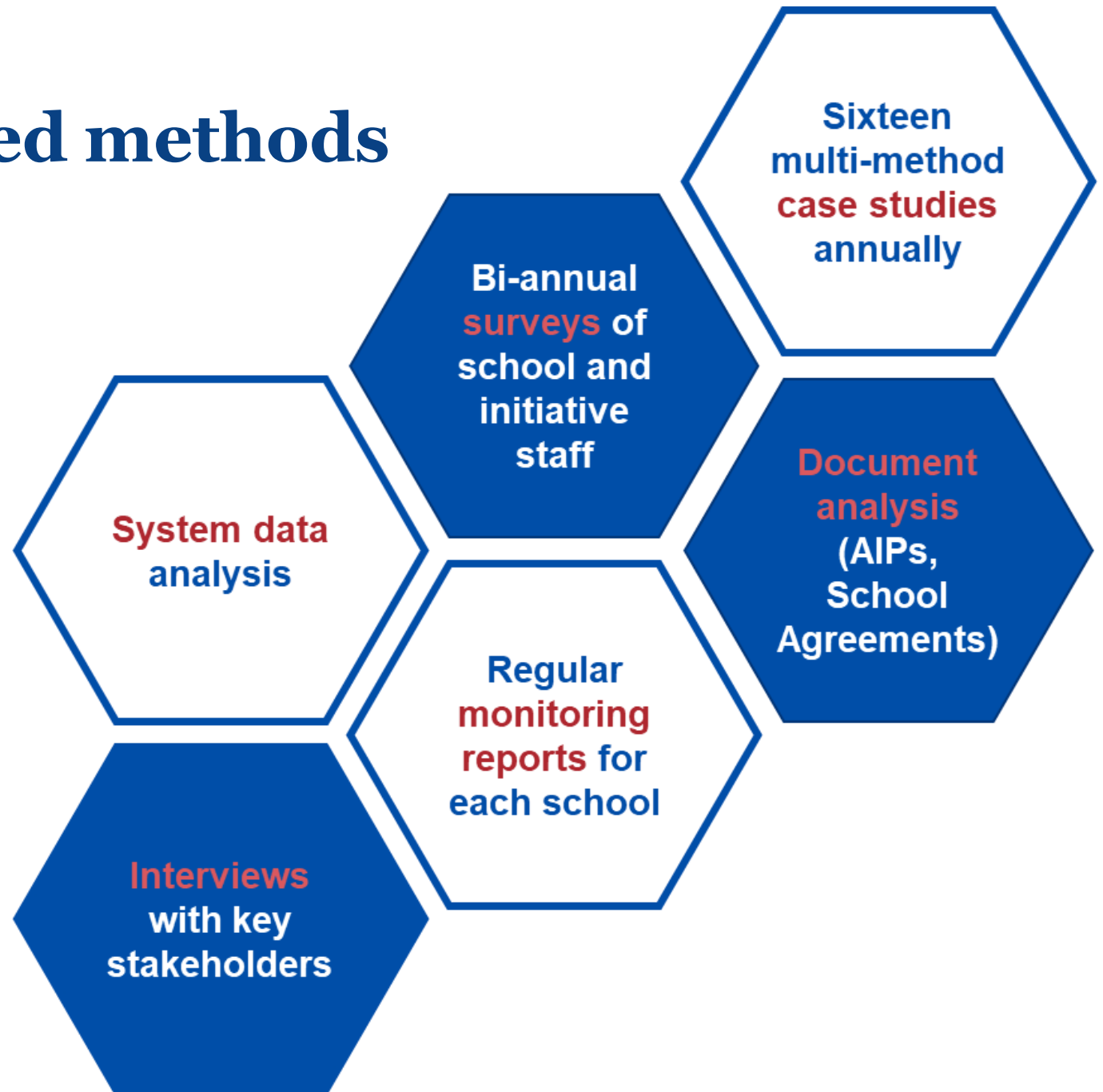
Communicating findings to support policy coherence: developing an algorithm to test contribution

$$Impact = \frac{(ToC + F)^2 \ x \ (OD + E)^2}{(C + R)^2 \ x \ Ep}$$

ToC= theory of change

F= fidelity (degree of implementation, adaptation, quality of activity)

OD= organisation development [partnership structures, resources, leadership, planning, collaboration, sustainability]

E= evaluation engagement

C= context

R = readiness for change

Ep = Existing policy

Communicating findings to support policy coherence: testing the policy implementation pathway to impact
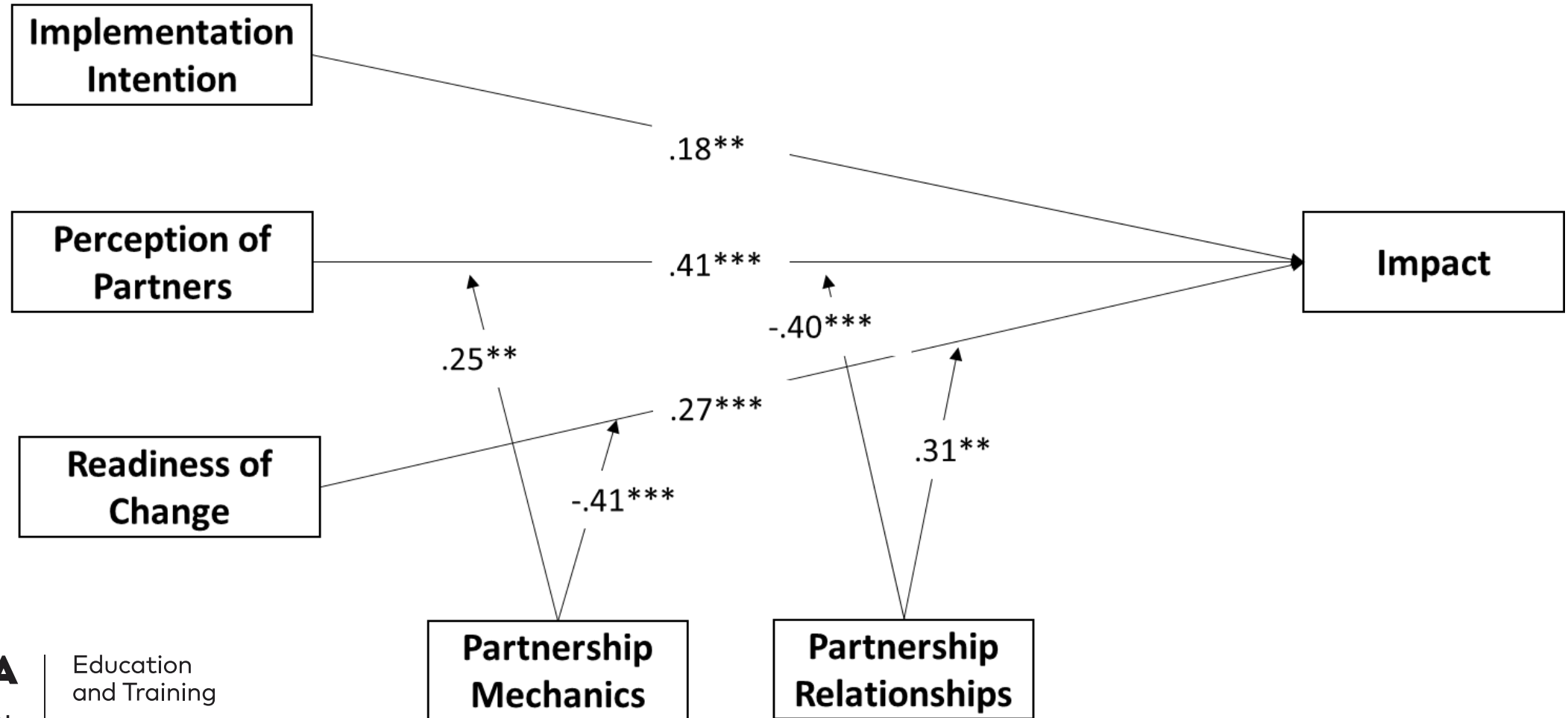
Tracking progress according to the theory of change

Driving forces

Leadership, champions of change | Targeted resourcing | Organisational structures & systems | Implementation environment | Monitoring & evaluation

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

In November 2018, all initiatives have moved beyond early implementation, into established and in some cases sustained school improvement activity. We are seeing some evidence of school improvement, through practice change and modest performance group improvements.

Implementation

Causal process → Awareness & attitudes | Knowledge | Intention to engage | Activity | Sustaining Activity

Implementation stages → Mobilisation | Implementation | Embedded

Readiness | Context | History | Mindset | Change fatigue

Resisting forces

How does this support policy coherence?

1. Inform **policy design**

   a) School selection – role of assessing readiness for change

2. Inform **way of working** & **setting agenda** for value of information sharing, data synthesis

3. Reinforced the importance of **client-consultant relationship**

4. Provided **conditions for effective co-design** of data portal
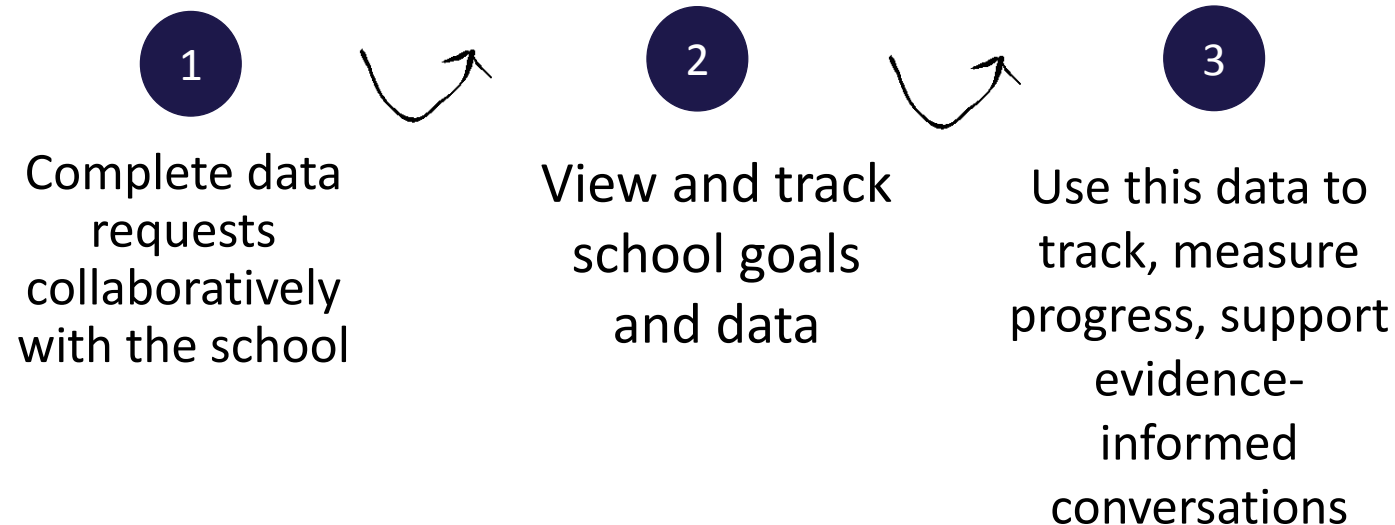
Co-design and production of the DSSI Data Portal

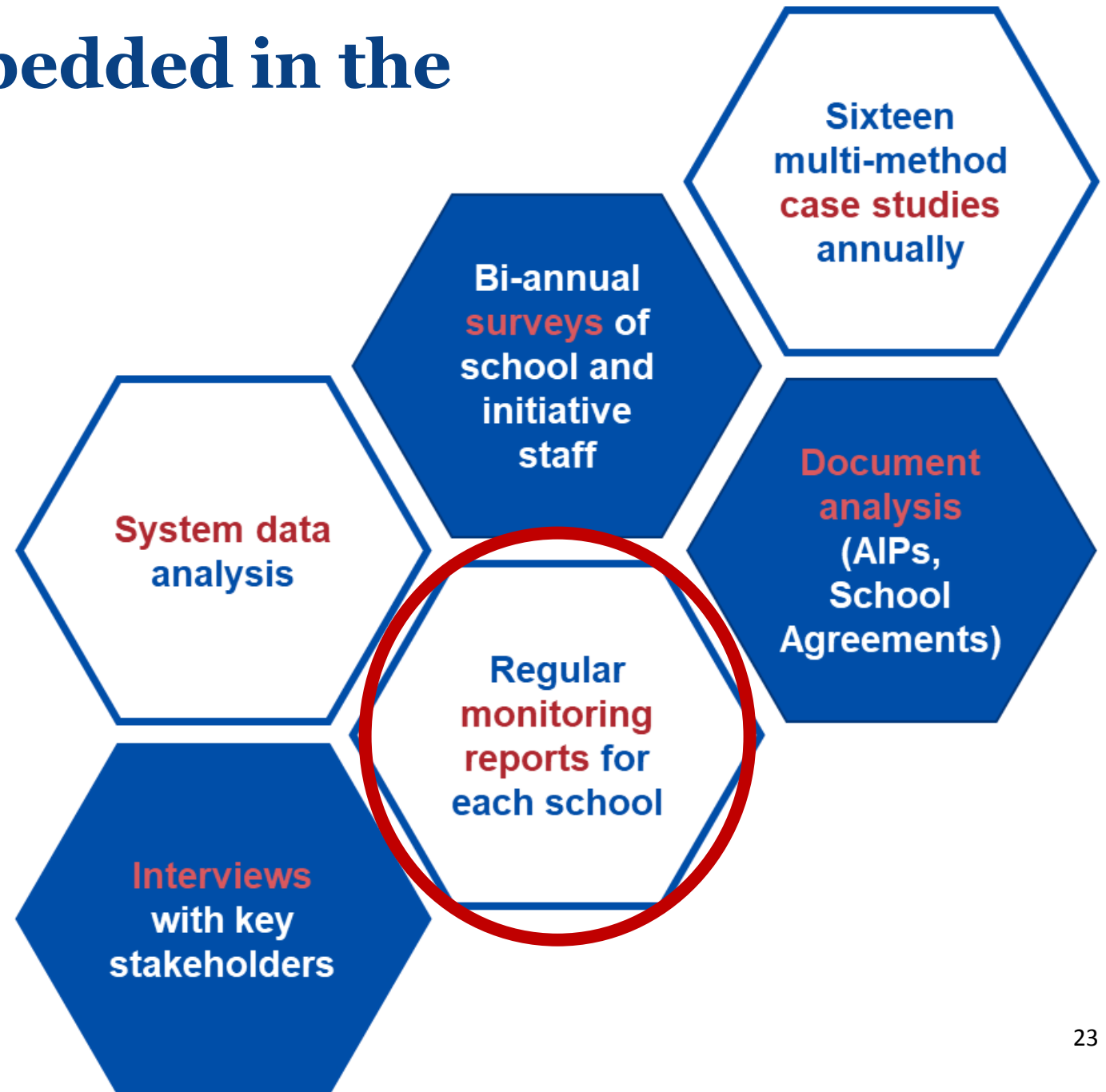**Dr Ruth Aston and Emily Qing**

Centre for Program Evaluation

The DSSI Data Portal ('the Portal')

The Portal is a personalised online platform used in the evaluation of DSSI.

- Enables quality (and frequent) data collection

- A tool and scaffold for collaborative conversation at the school level

- Adds value through the provision of tailored data and analytics

- Provides oversight of progress

1 Complete data requests collaboratively with the school

2 View and track school goals and data

3 Use this data to track, measure progress, support evidence-informed conversations

Data Portal is embedded in the evaluation

Sixteen multi-method case studies annually

Bi-annual surveys of school and initiative staff

System data analysis

Regular monitoring reports for each school

Document analysis (AIPs, School Agreements)

Interviews with key stakeholders

Why co-design?

Developing the DSSI Data Portal involved a **design process.**

The primary purpose of the Data Portal was to support the implementation of the DSSI initiatives.

Therefore, the end users should be involved in the design to ensure that it achieves the intended purpose.

Hence a co-design process was necessary.

Developing potential solutions

Understanding and clearly defining the issue

Stakeholders

Implementing/testing ideas/solutions

Outcomes

NCOSS, 2017
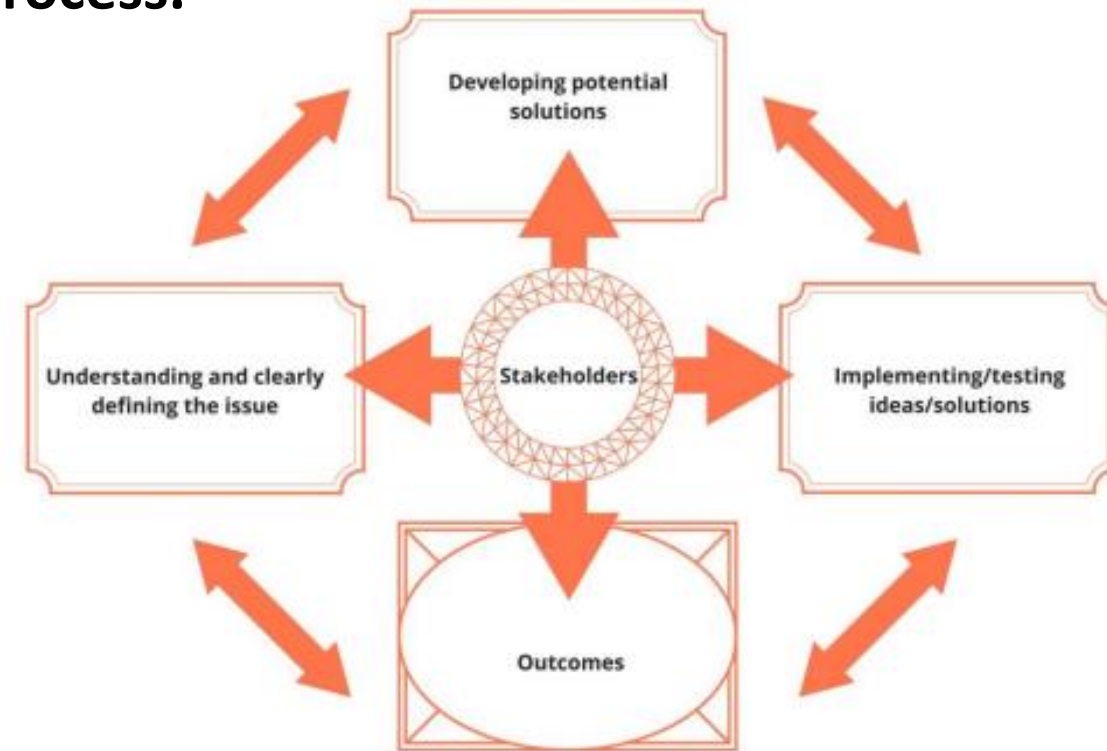
How did we do it?

1 Identify the necessary design specifications to meet intended purpose

2 Iterative testing of all design aspects

3 Continuous refinement to be responsive to need

Key stakeholders involved throughout this process: the evaluation commissioners, end-users, and the evaluators.

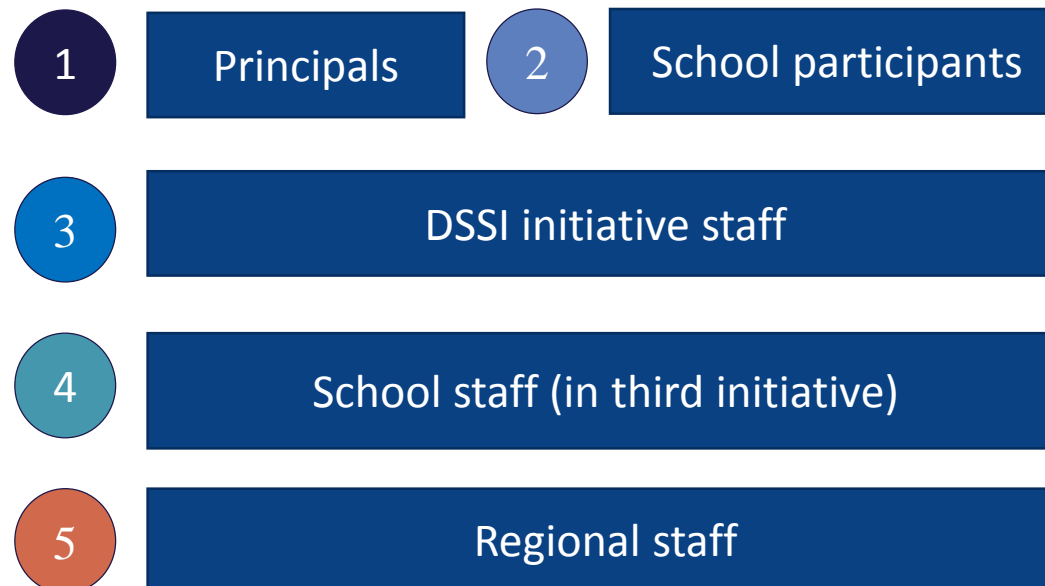| Establishing technical & practice-related requirements | Multiple iterations (e.g. of questions) | User acceptance testing: online trials | User profiles to reflect roles and responsibilities within the program | **Post-launch:** continuous refinement to be responsive to needs |

Example: figuring out the users

This program comprises multiple initiatives that function in different ways and need to be evaluated separately and collectively.

Role configuration, and functionalities on the Portal had to be distinct to reflect this.

1 Principals	2 School participants

3 DSSI initiative staff

4 School staff (in third initiative)

5 Regional staff

DSSI Data Portal [TEST ENVIRONMENT]

- Home
- Goals
- My Forms   1
- My Data
- Users
- My Profile
- Logout

(1)

School Improvement Partnerships Home

Hi SIP. Welcome to the DSSI portal!

Your last login was on 16/05/2019 at 11:52am.

Term 2 Update: Entering Activities in Data Requests   a minute ago ✕

Refinements have been made to the way DSSI activities are reported in the Portal. This update explains the changes to the format of the activity questions, and the ability for some users to now enter activities at any point during the monitoring cycle. The core data request questions on impact and progress will continue to be released during two-week windows, over weeks 4-5 and weeks 9-10 each term.

This resource on reporting on DSSI activities and completing data requests in Term 2 is available here.

Using and Interpreting 'My Data' (Term 2)   a minute ago ✕

From the beginning of Term 2, schools, regions and initiative staff will have access to data analytics based on the two data requests made in Term 1. To help you navigate and interpret data analytics, we have prepared this resource on using and interpreting data, available here.

The document suggests questions that can be used to reflect on your Term 1 data to support forward planning for and progress in Term 2. As you continue to enter data into the Portal, your data analytics will become richer, allowing you to compare and monitor progress over time. More analysis functionalities will be incorporated in Term 2, and this resource will be updated accordingly.

If you have any questions or feedback about this resource, please contact dssi-eval@unimelb.edu.au or use the Feedback form in the Portal.

(2)

115. Our current status in relation to achieving our intended impact is:
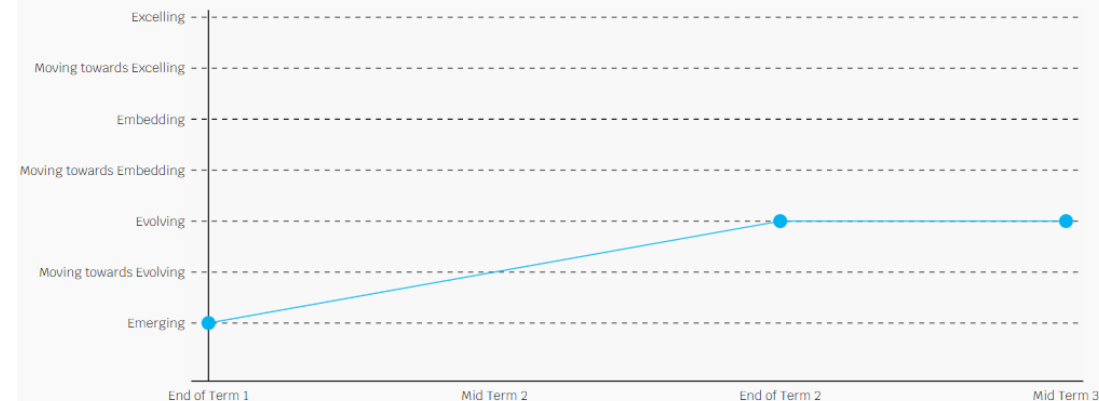
No response   Too early to tell   Emerging | Evolving | Embedding | Excelling
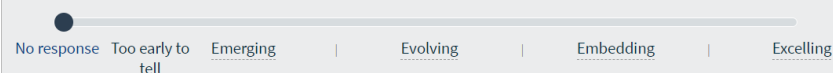
116. Please explain why you have provided this rating. What data or evidence are you using to come to this conclusion?
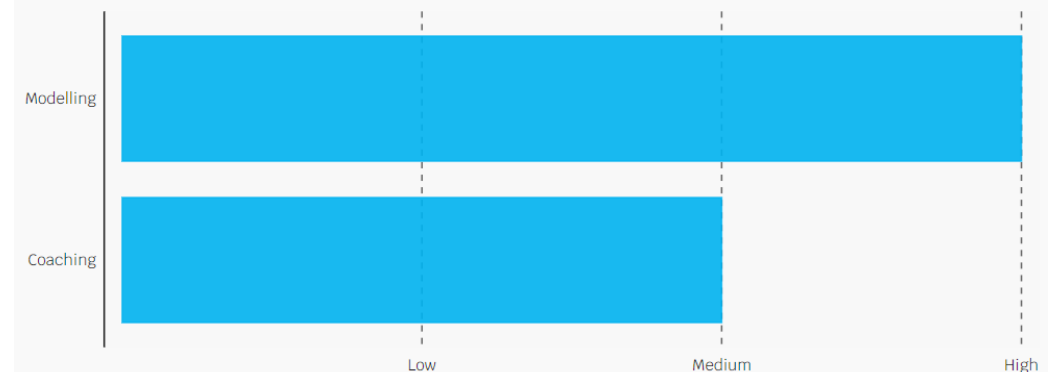
ADD FILE

3 **School Data view**

Current status in relation to achieving intended impact

Impact of activities undertaken (End of Term 2)

27

Supporting engagement, usability, and practice

1

THE EDUCATION STATE

DSSI Data Portal
DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

USING AND INTERPRETING 'MY DATA' (TERM 2)

This document is for school, initiative and regional staff involved in Teaching Partners, Leadership Partners and School Improvement Partnerships. It provides an overview of the data available in the 'My Data' page of the Portal from early Term 2 with suggestions for interpreting and using this data.

2

YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ALL INITIATIVES

What are the expectations for completing the joint/collaborative data requests?

3

DSSI DATA PORTAL: SENIOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT LEADERS

This resource is for Senior Education Improvement Leaders (SEILs) involved in the Teaching Partners, Leadership Partners and School Improvement Partnerships (SIPs) initiatives.

- **Part 1** explains the new process for approving data requests in the DSSI Data Portal (the Portal).
- **Part 2** is a technical guide for SEILs using the Portal.
- **Part 3** provides background information about the Portal.

PART 1: UPDATED APPROVAL PROCESS

Was it worth it?

Uptake of the Portal was high within the first Term of use, reaching **98% engagement of schools.**
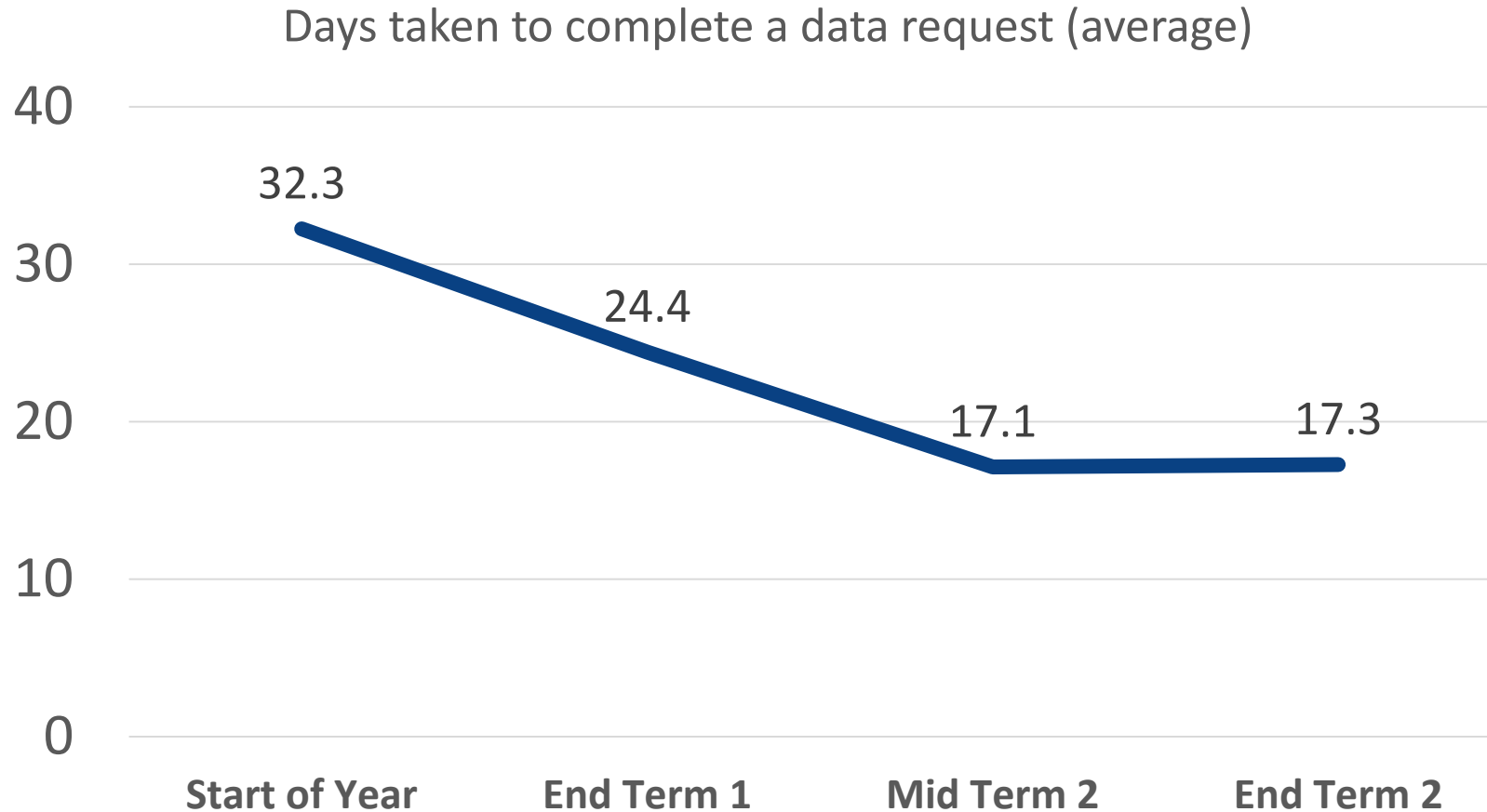
Design flaws and threats to uptake addressed early:

Example 1: Length of time users were spending to complete data requests

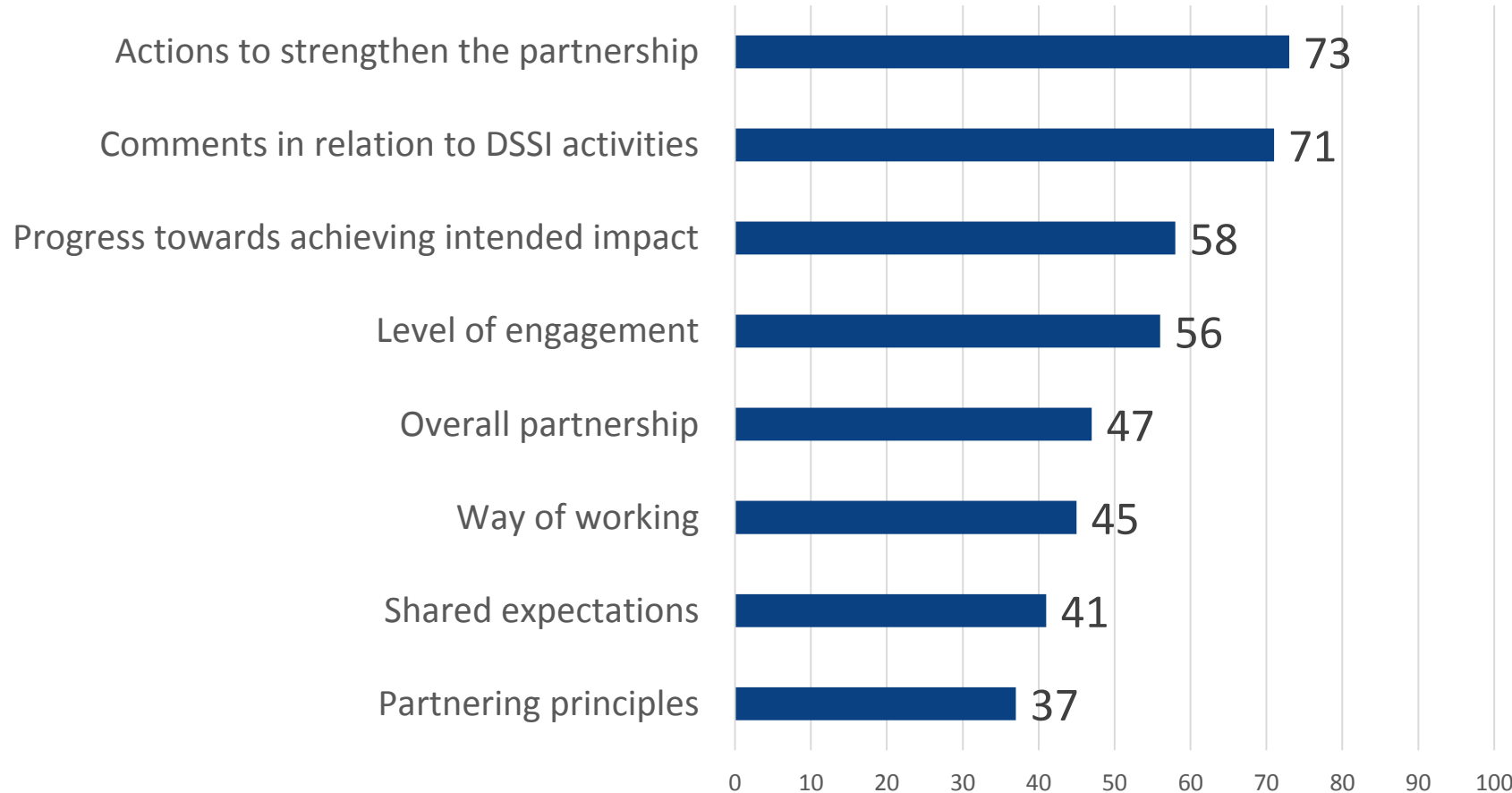Example 2: Utility of data request questions

Effect of co-design
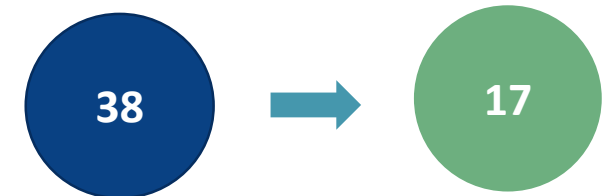## Example 1: Addressing problem of length of time to complete data requests

Days taken to complete a data request (average)

32.3	24.4	17.1	17.3
Start of Year	End Term 1	Mid Term 2	End Term 2

Effect of co-design
Example 2: Reviewing questions

Response rates to optional free text questions (%)

Result:

Reduced number of questions, of greater utility:

38 → 17

Early signs indicate quicker up-take and improved response rates

Value of co-design for the Portal

Pros

- Practical benefits: user & acceptance-testing happens in the design process
- Pre-empt and prevent common design flaws
- Problems are noticed early
- Supports ownership & engagement
- Supports use of data

Cons

- Considerable time investment for all parties
- Not all users have the same view!
- Need to build a test space to work through the co-design process

Requirements for the co-design process

Professional trust
- Transparency
- Responsiveness to needs of multi-level users

Positioning evaluators as participant observer
- Regional staff members
- Direct links to school stakeholders

Supporting usability & interoperability
- Adding direct value and support for planning processes
- Coherence around school data entry and data provided via existing platforms

Closing comments

Prof Janet Clinton

Understanding working together in Evaluation

It about all about:

RELATIONSHIPS

UNDERSTANDING

TRUST

RIGOUR

ROLE DEFINITION

TRANSPARENCY

DATA, DATA, DATA

How do we truly be collaborative and maintain objectivity?

Guiding principles for a way of working

Rigorous methods that are open and transparent
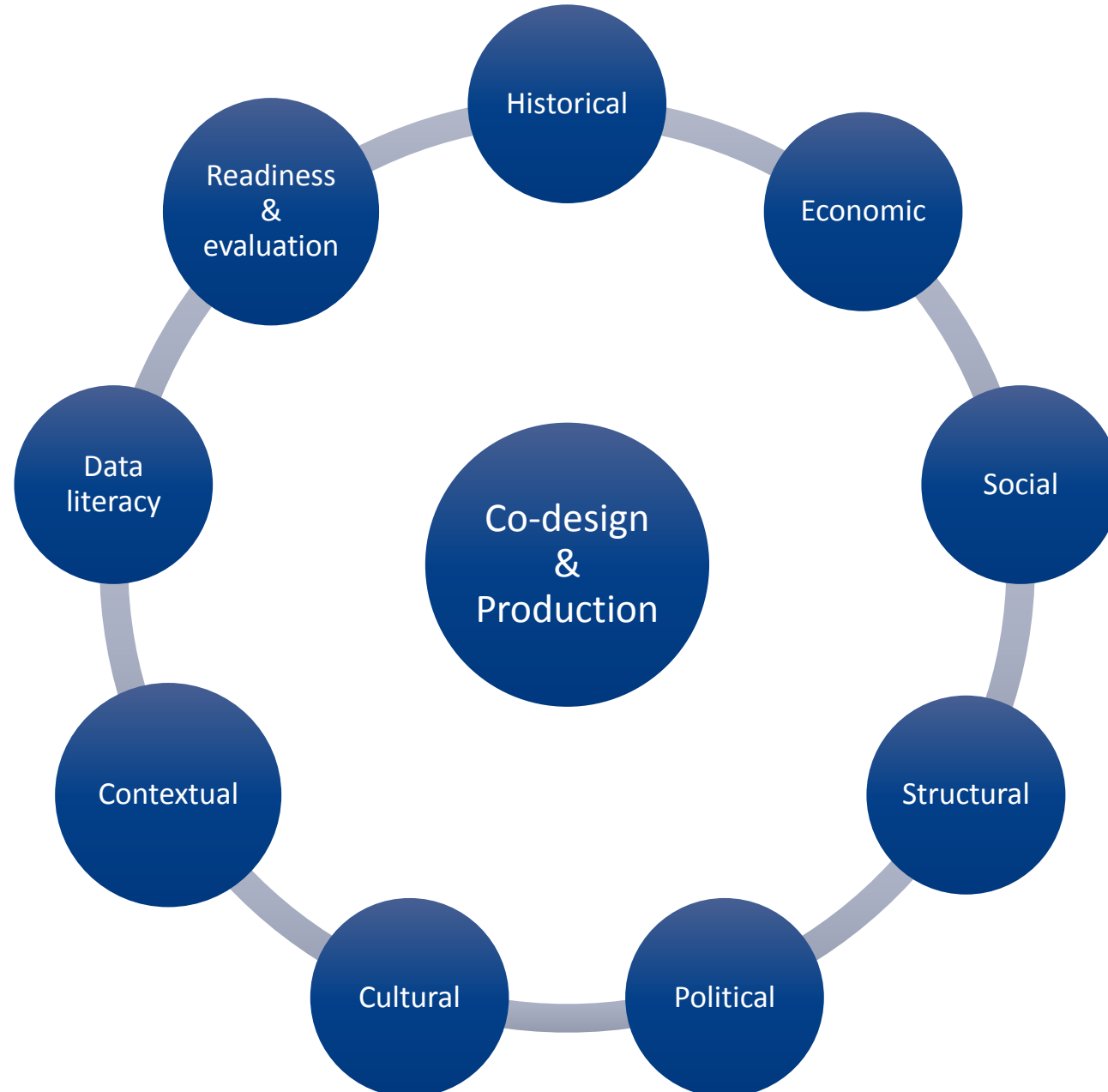
Population level data & statistical modelling

Understanding organisational influences

Understanding Relationships
- How it evolves?
- Practically how it works
- What does it mean for methods

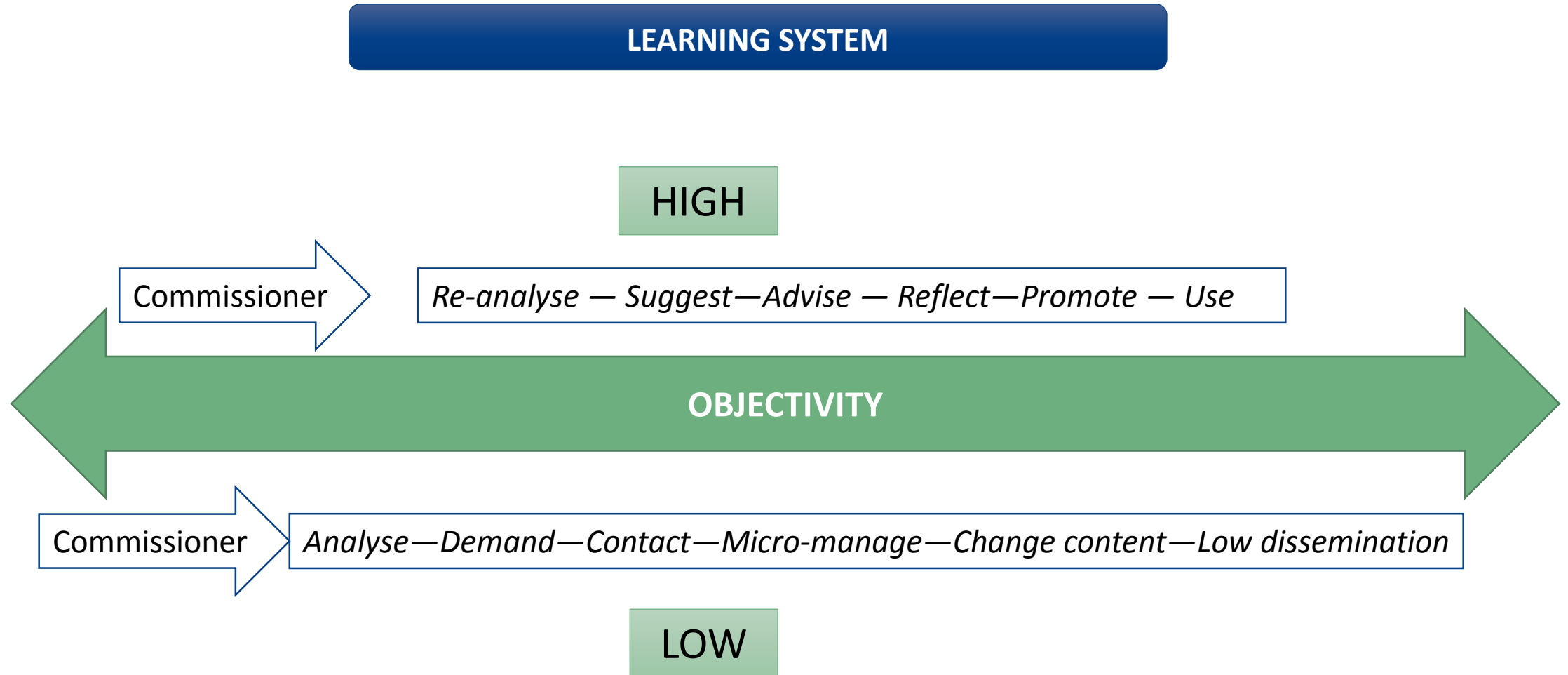# Understanding the Influences for each organisation

Conversation & teams
- Open & frank
- Structure
- Lose the emotion
- Process is the solution

Historical

Economic

Social

Structural

Political

Cultural

Contextual

Data literacy

Readiness & evaluation

Co-design & Production

Consider :
Structural integrity
&
Principles of stability

Model of Objectivity

It Ain't Easy!

Discussant comments

Dr Ghislain Arbour

Q & A

Thank you

jclinton@unimelb.edu.au

ruth.aston@unimelb.edu.au

emily.qing@unimelb.edu.au

moorhouse.stephanie.s@edumail.vic.gov.au

ghislain.arbour@unimelb.edu.au