School leaders’ experiences with the IEA

Why are teachers and schools engaging in IEA assessment workshops?

Pam Ronan — St Francis de Sales College

I did a Masters in assessment over 10 years ago and some things have changed since then. The performance standards coming into the SACE and the capabilities and even the Australian Curriculum being totally online has had to change the way we thought about assessment and linked assessment as being absolutely connected to learning.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

I like the fact that it took us back to some theory, I think that is always a good place to go to. Some of our staff have been teaching 20, 30, 40 years and the last time that they really looked at theory of assessment was when they trained.

Janet Fletcher — Tyndale Christian School

Often we see assessment as something that comes at the very end of what we do rather that driving what we do.

Rosslyn Mattner — St Francis De Sales College

Probably the most important significance from the IEA has been learning that it is assessment and learning, not just assessment, so bringing that into context so that everything that we do informs the improvement of student learning

Amela Martin — Faith Lutheran College

Prior to enrolling in the course the connection between assessment and learning I feel now is imperative I don’t think one can actually go without the other.

Brandon Dimmel — St George College

The quality of the Assessment for Educators course has been really quite high and I think that all staff have found it a very effective way to focus us on assessment as a group.

Rosslyn Mattner — St Francis De Sales College

And then having a look at the reliability of the assessment and also the validity, so being able to work with staff and develop those concepts and constructs so that we have a fit-for-purpose assessment pieces for all students. I think that has been one of the key areas and that’s going right across from reception to Year 12.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

I guess the trigger to looking for a resource related to assessment came with the SACE Board self-review tool; and assessment came out very strongly where we felt there were some gaps in what we were doing; and it was through that we heard about the IEA course and thought this is a great opportunity, its exactly when we need so we decided to engage with it.

How have teachers and schools found the delivery model?

Brandon Dimmel — St George College

One of the key things to the IEA was a really good model to give whole school professional development in a really cost effective and time effective manner.

Rob Rohde — Cornerstone College

The modules have been delivered in an extremely professional way. Depth is something that I have noticed. I guess in these areas sometimes you can have a superficial delivery where you ask yourself at the end, what have I really learnt out of this? But I believe the presentation has been exceedingly professional and I gauge the value of that or the depth of that on the response to further questions to see how the deliverer of the course can respond to those but also the engagement of our staff. I’ve noticed over a period an increased interest and engagement and I put that down to the way in which the course has been delivered

Pam Ronan — St Francis de Sales College

What I’ve really liked are the customised practical examples that we get to work through where we bring our work and our own challenges to the actual sessions and get to work those through in a very safe and supportive environment as well.

Ben Anderson — School of Languages

It’s been a very good balance of ¾ of an hour or so of theory work and then we put that into practice and the practice really contextualises what it really is that we have been doing on the theory.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

There has been a lot of flexibility in the presentation to allow conversations to flow where it is kind of appropriate for us and there has been some really rich professional conversations between the leaders. So that aspect and the flexibility has been excellent.

Lyn Sparkes — Thebarton Senior College

The pace has been really good, the presenters have been able to pick what we already know and gloss over that and then focus on the areas where we can really get engaged. We have had some really animated discussions and some really great activities that allow us to play and think.

Ben Anderson — School of Languages

The presenters have been aware that we are a single topic school and they have really focused very well on language learning and assessment which is not easy to do if you are not a trained language teacher and they have really gone to great lengths to do the best they can in that regard, so that has been really great.

How has the feedback been from teachers?

Pam Ronan — St Francis de Sales College

I think what we have is a really high quality course people can use it as part of a Masters but also links with the standards expected with the Teachers Registration Board as well.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

Staff feedback has been very positive, the Year 7 though to Year 12 teachers have found there are very useful aspects to the course.

Rosslyn Mattner — St Francis De Sales College

Very positive feedback, it’s one of the most ideal professional development learnings that we have encountered because it is real life; it is authentic. It speaks to us and develops a consistency the different generations of teaching may not have been able to procure with their learning.

Janet Fletcher — Tyndale Christian School

I have found it really excellent; the presentations have been engaging, I feel like they have been given by teachers for teachers.

Carly Vause — School of Language

The sessions are really useful because not only do I have the resources to go back through later, but there is always something that I can usually apply immediately either to my individual lessons or my programming or when I am providing advice to the teachers that I line manage.

Amela Martin — Faith Lutheran College

Excellent, really good. General reading, the mode of delivery, the relevant examples I think have definitely enhanced my skill-set and understanding in assessment and learning.

What have some of the benefits to schools and individual teachers?

Fiona Thompson — Eynesbury Senior College

It’s been really good; it’s really involved a lot of thought not just being told what to think and we get a lot of discussion between tables.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

The chance to sit and talk to colleagues, that’s probably one of the things we really value, to be able to sit and talk about learning together, to talk in their learning areas and even to talk across learning areas.

Brandon Dimmel — St George College

The big thing we have seen is an increased amount of collaboration amongst teachers and that is across year levels and subjects, because we have done the whole school, R to 12 approach, senior teachers have been talking to primary teachers and teachers of different subjects and it’s been really great to share their experiences across subject levels.

Julie Sampson — Cornerstone College

With the leaders, I think to have conversations about moderation, about consistency of grades, for them to continue to talk about how do we assess now that we are working with the Australian Curriculum and grappling with that and how do we assess and report with and against the achievement standards so there has been lots of conversations around those things.

Amela Martin — Faith Lutheran College

I enrolled in this course for my own personal development and my own professional practice and I may well use it to provide evidence for my leadership and further training.

Brandon Dimmel — St George College

I think the real key at the moment for teachers is having a large chunk of professional learning focused on assessment and going towards their TRB requirements I think the teacher see that as a big bonus right off the bat and I think as we get further into the course people will start looking at higher learning options or converting it to the certificate course.

Pam Ronan — St Francis de Sales College

I’m looking at a few young staff who are on contracts applying for jobs, they’re foregrounding their IEA courses being their point of difference and I found that really interesting and fascinating but it also says the value they are putting on it in terms of their own marketability.

Lyn Sparkes — Thebarton Senior College

I would like to take it on as prior learning to continue on and do a Masters, I have that need to take it to the next step, looking to continue to learn and grow so I think this is a good starting point for that.