FINAL REPORT

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE BCE MIDDLE LEADERS PROGRAM

for

QUEENSLAND EDUCATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE LTD (QELi)

**Developing our middle leaders
to improve the quality of
teaching, learning and classroom outcomes**

Evaluators:

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December 2012

Contents

The Program

The subject of this evaluation is the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) Middle Leaders Program. The BCE program was supported by the Queensland Education Leadership Institute Ltd (QELi), targeted at nominated middle leaders in BCE. Its broad goal was to build and strengthen the capacity of participants to lead quality teaching and learning in classrooms (BCE QELi/Middle Leaders Program/Program Guide, 2012).

Ten schools (see Appendix 1) participated in the program; participants included the ten Principals and Middle Level Leaders (MLL) – three from each school, except for one school which had only two participants. All MLL held a Position of Added Responsibility (PAR) position that focused on a Discipline, a Pastoral Role or other educational services.

Program outcomes

The Middle Leaders program documents contained the following learning outcomes and goals.

This program is focused on achieving the following learning outcomes:
- build the capacity of 30 BCE middle leaders from identified secondary schools in the North and South Brisbane regions to lead and influence improvement in classroom practice
- build a professional learning community for middle leaders across the sector
- lead change and innovation at the school level
- identify and work on a significant key Leadership Challenge that will strengthen individual, school and system leadership capability
- build educational leadership and associated skills including coaching, giving and receiving feedback, classroom observation and data analysis.

This program will enable participants to:
- engage in in-depth understanding and analysis of contemporary research and evidence related to the impact of quality teaching and learning on student outcomes, the challenge of leading change and leading self and others
- examine the challenges to driving change in learning organisations and learn how to lead and influence others with emotional intelligence and resilience
- identification of a key Leadership Challenge that is focused on closing the gap with respect to student performance and enhancing teacher capacity
- engage with innovative approaches to improving student learning outcomes
- set clear goals for future leadership and establish mentoring relationships for support and challenge
- engage with their Principals and colleagues to enhance their leadership capability.

(BCE QELi/Middle Leaders Program/Program Guide/March 2012)

Program Structure and Overview

Phase 1	Identifying the middle leaders	
Phase 2	Establishing expectations (29 November 2011)	
Phase 3	Learning about leadership and identifying the leadership challenge (Sunday 25–Tuesday 27 March 2012)	Working: • as whole cohort • in clusters (e.g. each cluster made up of 3 cells) • in (school) cells comprising three middle leaders (and others)
Phase 4	Application 'on-the-job' (in collaboration with principal)	Working in (school) cells (April, May & June)
Phase 5	Peer reflection and coaching support (with coaching sessions end of June and Sept TBC)	
Phase 4	Application 'on-the-job' (in collaboration with principal)	Working in (school) cells (July, August & September)
Phase 6	Review and celebration (24 October 2012)	Working: • as whole cohort • in (school) cells (October)

Middle Leaders Program Guide March 2012

Purpose of the Evaluation

The generally accepted broad purpose of program evaluation is to determine the degree to which the stated outcomes of the program have been achieved. While the authors of this evaluation have undertaken the evaluation consistent with that purpose, it is also hoped that the findings and recommendations contained within this report serve as stimuli for ongoing improvement and organisational learning opportunities for both the BCE and QELi. Furthermore it is the authors' hope that future programs will benefit from the findings and recommendations of this report.

Client/Assumed Audience/Stakeholders

This report has been commissioned by QELi and is written assuming distribution to relevant members of QELi. Additionally it is recognised that relevant personnel with BCE will also have access to this report.

The authors also give permission for the contents of the report to be provided to stakeholders, including Principals and participants from the schools which undertook this program.

Data Collection

During the data collection process the authors were guided by the knowledge that no one source of data is usually sufficient. Thus in order to enhance both validity and credibility, salient data were collected from various stakeholders (Participants: MLL, Principals, BCE representatives and the Program Facilitator). Additionally data were collected at various times throughout the year (see Table 1) using a variety of procedures (questionnaires containing a 5 point Likert scale (see Appendix 3), written responses, selected school visits and interviews with MLL and Principals (Appendix 4). BCE representatives and the Program Facilitator were also interviewed. Observational data were collected by the authors who attended part of the initial 3-day workshop (25-27 March 2012) and the final workshop held on 24 October 2012.

TABLE 1: Summary of Data Collection Process

Phase	Method(s) / Date	Data Collected	Notes
1	Evaluator observational data – attendance at workshop Survey from QELi Survey from USQ (March 2012)	All school MLL	Interim report including summary of results sent to QELI. See Appendix 2
2	School visits – 4 focus group interviews with participants in selected schools (4 schools in total). Principals also interviewed. (September 2012)	Selected Sample – Principals + MLL group	These data are aggregated with other qualitative data displayed in Table 3.
3	Evaluator observational data: – attendance at workshop. Interview with BCE Coordinator and Project Facilitator Participant Survey (October 2012)	All school MLL BCE Coordinator & program Facilitator	These data are aggregated with other qualitative data displayed in Table 3. See Table 2

Results

The interim report (report extract refer appendix 2) provided feedback from the MLL participants' perceived worthiness of the March Workshop. The feedback on this aspect of the program was positive.

A summary of the data collected in phases 2 and 3 is presented in Tables 2a, 2b and 3. Table 3 includes data from both interviews and written response from the survey as the feedback in both instances was consistent. Evaluators' observations appear in Box 1.

TABLE 2a: Consolidated Responses – Participants' Perceptions of Attainment of Stated Program Outcomes

The program is focused on achieving the following learning outcomes	MEAN
1. Build the capacity of 30 middle leaders from 10 identified secondary schools from BCE to lead and influence improvement in classroom practice	4.4
2. Build a professional learning community for middle leaders across the sector	4.0
3. Lead change and innovation at the school level	4.3
4. Identify and work on a significant key Leadership Challenge that will strengthen individual, school and system leadership capability	4.6
5. Build educational leadership and associated skills including coaching, giving and receiving feedback, classroom observation and data analysis	3.3

n = 26
Data collected 24 October 2012

TABLE 2b: Program Outcomes

This program will enable participants to:	MEAN
1. Engage in in-depth understanding and analysis of contemporary research and evidence related to the impact of quality teaching and learning on student outcomes, the challenge of leading change and leading self and others	3.6
2. Examine the challenges to driving change in learning organisations and learn how to lead and influence others with emotional intelligence and resilience	4.2
3. Identify a key Leadership Challenge that is focused on closing the gap with respect to student performance and enhancing teacher capacity	4.3
4. Engage with innovative approaches to improving student learning outcomes	4.1
5. Set clear goals for future leadership and establish mentoring relationships for support and challenge	3.6
6. Engage with their Principals and colleagues to enhance their leadership capability	4.0

n = 26
Data collected 24 October 2012

TABLE 3: Examples of Typical Qualitative Comments

Question 1: In your opinion, what were the most positive aspects of this program?
- Experience of working with other MLL (colleagues) in the school to form relationships and work together (in some schools participants commented that such opportunities are rare).
- Opportunity to form networks of similar MLL from different schools and to learn from their experiences and presentations of projects.
- The experience of developing projects, having some autonomy in the development and management of a project that had the capacity to make a difference.
- Being supported by the principal.
- Experiencing leadership.
- The quality of the expert speakers and the experience of the face-to-face planning days.
- Quality of the facilitator.
- Face-to-face workshops were very valuable – great opportunity to network with colleagues, within and between schools. Great guest speakers – well facilitated.

Question 2: In your opinion, what aspects did you find most challenging?
Time was the greatest challenge – in particular:
- To manage time when there are many other conflicting priorities.
- Making time for busy people to get together.
- Making time for deep thinking, planning and implementation of the project. The nature of the Leadership Challenge requires quality time be allocated.
- Online component was problematic – existence of two portals was confusing, needed to be better organised and facilitated.

Question 3: If a similar program were to be offered in the future, what changes would you suggest?
- The 'face-to-face' components were highly valued, however more 'hands-on' activities were needed.
- Online component needs reconsideration.
- Greater need for coordination of the program – regular support / contact from a mentor / coach / coordinator who can contact / visit schools at key times, give support and monitor progress – big gaps in time lines and contact from program organisers and thus it was easy for the project to be put on the 'back-burner'.
- Careful consideration to the composition of the school-based MLL team – all members need to commit to work together.
- The school principal and upper leadership team at the school must add value to the project and give explicit support to the team and the project.

Question 4: Do you believe that this experience has changed your view of yourself as a leader? Explain…
Most (approx 2/3 of group) indicated that the experience had changed their views of themselves as leaders. Comments include:
- I now have a view of myself as a leader and understand that everyone can be a leader.
- I realise that teachers can also be leaders.
- I can now distinguish between management and leadership.
- It has made me reflect on my role and opened my mind to different ways of doing things.

- I now know that I can work effectively with others and can instigate change.
- I have a greater body of knowledge.

The remaining 1/3 commented that the program had not changed their views of leadership – several commented that they were already MLL and had leadership experience and had completed leadership courses in the past. The following examples are typical of their concerns:
- Not all principals explicitly supported the project and there was a great deal of variation in the level of principal support.
- Some principals appeared to be unsure about the project and their role.
- The composition of the teams varied from school to school – some experienced leaders, some inexperienced, some motivated participants and some less so.
- The manner in which the teams of the various schools were formed varied from school to school – some were selected by principals, some were volunteers.
- Participants enjoyed working on projects and learnt from the experience, however, some uncertainty about the exact nature of the project – scope, focus, expectations.

Data in Table 3 were collected during Phase 2 (school visits) and Phase 3 (October workshop).

BOX 1: Evaluators' Observations

1. The staff involved had a range of interesting projects and reported in the final feedback session (October) on the value of these experiences, particularly in the use of data and the research experience.

2. For some participants there was confusion about the exact nature of the project.

3. The online component of the program fell far short of expectations. Had this been successful it could have encouraged professional sharing during the program.

4. The evaluators observed that the challenges were not explicitly leadership focused and the focus of the reflection was not around the experience of leadership.

5. The leadership experiences of members of the MLL group varied considerably. Some had prior leadership experience and had participated in previous leadership programs, while others had no prior experience or formal leadership knowledge. As a result the reported value of the program varied.

6. Some of the stated program outcomes appear difficult to achieve in the timeframe of the program: e.g. "closing the gap with respect to student performance and enhancing teacher capacity".

7. It was unclear to the evaluators if there were any plans in place to build on the potential to keep these Middle leaders connected to continue professional learning (refer program outcome).

Summary of Findings

Survey findings

At the October group presentation day the participants were asked to complete a survey designed to determine their perceptions of the attainment of the program goals (see Appendix 3). Table 2 demonstrates the positive nature of the participants' responses and demonstrates that collectively they believed the program was successful. However, the overall positive views represented in Table 2 don't always align with some of the 'qualitative responses' in Table 3. Analysis of Table 2 reveals that the mean varies from question to question and depending on the nature of the particular question the possible reasons for lower means seem to be consistent with some of the concerns raised in the 'qualitative comments'. Data collected by the evaluators in the sample schools also revealed the diversity of experiences of participants between schools. This may also explain the variation in the mean scores.

While the analysis of the quantitative data revealed the participants' positive views of the program, it is worth reflecting on the relatively lower means in the following questions:
- Table 2a – question 5 relates to skill development and coaching;
- Table 2b – question 1 relates to in-depth understanding of leading self and others; and
- Table 2b – question 5 relates to future goal setting.

Analysis of the qualitative responses

Analysis of the qualitative responses gathered during phases 2 and 3 (refer Table 3) reveals:

- Participants valued the opportunity to meet in person, learn from each other, and from experienced leaders and thinkers.
- Face-to-face workshops were very well facilitated.
- The Leadership Challenge provided participants with an opportunity to work together and for most groups this was rewarding and enhanced their experience and knowledge.
- Where principal support was high and the project was valued and promoted, the experience of the participants was positive and the Leadership Challenge appeared to be more successful.
- Where principal support was low (goals of the project were not explicit and /or well promoted to the wider school; or where access to staff and resources was not available), participants found the Leadership Challenge much more difficult and some seemed bitter about their experiences.
- Previous leadership experience and training of participants varied widely. Those with previous leadership development opportunities and experience did not seem to benefit as much as those who were less experienced in these areas.

- The composition of the in-school team was also important. Most teams consisted of members who wanted to be involved and readily shared responsibility. Some members in some teams were not committed to the project or experiencing leadership. This was to the detriment of other members and the success of the Leadership Challenge.
- The online component was not successful and participants found it difficult to engage effectively. Expectations of various roles and responsibilities were unclear and the program appeared to be uncoordinated.
- Changes in administrative staff at QELi appear to have adversely impacted on the coordination of the program, levels of consultation and communication.
- Lack of time to complete the Leadership Challenge in the school setting was the greatest challenge identified by the MLL.

Recommendations

The recommendations are made in the hope that they will enhance the delivery and success of similar future programs.

The evaluation process identified three key themes: 'clarification', 'coordination' and 'review'. The various recommendations have relevance to the program design, role of participating organisations / systems (e.g. QELi and BCE), participating schools, principals and those for whom the program is designed.

The recommendations that follow are grouped according to the three identified themes.

Clarification
During the design phase of the program it is important that QELi and BCE clarify:
- relative roles and responsibilities of each organisation;
- the exact purpose of the program with respect to the nature of intended participants;
- the role of the principal – the expected level of support, mentorship, time release, access to resources;
- the preferred method(s) of participant selection;
- the expectation of the participants in relation to the Leadership Challenge time release, principal support and access to staff and resources.

Coordination
- At the organisational level, arrangements should be made such that the program be managed through one point of coordination through which all contact and communication of expectations, timelines and other relevant program details be conducted and that communication be clear, regular and timely.

- QELi and BCE review the role of the online component of the program. The preference of participants for 'face-to-face' learning, combined with the problems experienced with the online component should be key considerations when designing future programs. The balance of 'face-to-face' and 'online' components and the role of each need to be carefully considered with reference to intended outcomes, time, and resources available.
- The nature of the Leadership Challenge to ensure that participants and principals develop tasks that are explicit and authentic in terms of leadership and that the final presentation requires participants to engage in processes of critical reflection of leadership. Such reflection may be enhanced by the use of a suitable leadership framework.

Thanks

The evaluators wish to thank QELi for the opportunity to conduct this evaluation, BCE representatives, principals and participants for their feedback and cooperation.

APPENDIX 1: BCE Middle Leaders Participants' Contact List

School	Middle Leader 1		Middle Leader 2		Middle Leader 3	
Southern Cross SCARBOROUGH QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Middle/Pastoral Coordinator 4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Y 8 Pastoral coordinator 3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Y10 Pastoral coordinator 3
Xavier College ELI WATERS QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Director of Pastoral Care 4/4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Deputy Head of House 2/2	**Role:** **PAR:**	Director of Library and Digital Learning 4/4
San Sisto College CARINA QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Y10 Coordinator (term1-3) 4/4	**Role:** **PAR:**	SOSE/Y9 Coordinator 4/4		
St Teresa's Catholic College NOOSAVILLE QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Senior Curriculum Coordinator 4/4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Middle school curriculum & SOSE Coordinator 7/4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Teacher Librarian unknown
Assisi Catholic College UPPER COOMERA	**Role:** **PAR:**	Middle Years Science & Mathematics Coordinator 2/3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Science Coordinator 3/3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Middle Years English 7 Humanities Coordinator 2/3
Clairvaux MacKillop College UPPER MOUNT GRAVATT QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Acting of Music/Performing Arts 4/4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Y8 Assistant Pastoral Coordinator 3/3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Head of History/SOSE 4/4
St Mary's College IPSWICH QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Pastoral Care Coordinator 4/5	**Role:** **PAR:**	Science and Graphic Coordinator 4/5	**Role:** **PAR:**	Sports Coordinator 2/2
St Francis College CRESTMEAD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Head of Mathematics 3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Head of Humanities 3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Year 10 Coordinator 3
St Columban's College CABOOLTURE QLD	**Role:** **PAR:**	Arts Coordinator 4	**Role:** **PAR:**	Pastoral Coordinator 3	**Role:** **PAR:**	Middle School Studies Coordinator 4
Marymount College BURLEIGH WATERS, QLD,	**Role:** **PAR**	**Unknown**	**Role:** **PAR**	Coordinator Science 3	**Role:** **PAR**	ICT Coordinator unknown

CE QELi/Middle Leaders Participant list 28.03.12

APPENDIX 2: Evaluators' Progress Report

29 May 2012

Ms Lea Gamble
Manager of Programs
Queensland Education Leadership Institute
Floor 4, 154 Melbourne Street
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

Dear Lea

Re: Evaluators' Progress Report: Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) – Emerging Middle Level Leaders

Please find below a brief progress report on our ongoing evaluation of the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) – Emerging Middle Level Leaders Program. This progress report contains two parts: Part A summarises the main findings which emerged from the analysis of the participant evaluation forms collected after the 25-27 March workshop. Part B contains a brief update on our intended activity for the remainder of 2012.

We are very pleased to be involved in the evaluation of this program and should further information be required please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews
Faculty of Education

Dr Mark Dawson
Faculty of Education

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Part A

At the conclusion of the three day workshop (25-27 March), evaluation forms were distributed to participants. Each participant completed two evaluation forms, the first form developed by QELi asked participants to respond to a series of questions aimed at determining the effectiveness of the Three-day Program. The second form, which we developed as the evaluators, asked respondents to reflect on their emerging understandings of leadership, their understanding of the task and the confidence in addressing the challenges ahead.

The points below represent a summary of the findings resulting from the analysis of the respondents' comments contained in the two evaluation forms.

- Overall the evaluation was very positive and the workshop was considered highly worthwhile.

- The three-day workshop was very well facilitated. The skills of the facilitator were readily acknowledged as a contributor to the success of the program.

- The content and design of the three-day workshop was considered very effective. Some mentioned the timing and possibility of a 'live-in' program in consideration of those that had to travel each day.

- The opportunity for planning time, collaboration with in-school colleagues (including principals) and colleagues from other schools was highly valued.

- The guest speakers were well received, however, in order to allow greater understanding of concepts and in order to give participants the opportunity to engage in deeper discussion with the speakers, many suggested that it would have been better to schedule the guest speakers on separate days or separate sessions rather than 'back to back' in the one session.

- Many commented that the concept of distributed leadership was very useful and enabled them to understand the importance of collaboration and working with others when leading.

Part B

In the next phase of the evaluation, we will be gathering data from a number of school sites. We will work with the schools, BCE representatives and QELi to identify up to five suitable sites. It is anticipated that the sites will be chosen after consideration of context, the nature of the various in-school middle-level leadership teams and the nature of the Leadership Challenge at the various sites. We will be seeking voluntary participation of the various schools and will be gathering a range of in-school data, including participant and principal interviews. In order to commence this process, we will arrange a suitable meeting time with BCE and QELi representatives. It is anticipated that this will occur early in semester two, 2012.

The final data gathering phase will require that we attend the Review and Celebration day on 24 October. A brief written evaluation will be presented to QELi in mid-December 2012.

APPENDIX 3: Evaluation Survey

Evaluation QELi BCE Middle Leaders Program

The following survey has been designed to enable you to reflect on your involvement in the QELi BCE Middle Leaders Program and use this experience to provide comment on the degree to which stated goals and outcomes outlined in the program documentation have been achieved.

Evaluators:

Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews & Dr Mark Dawson

October, 2012

School Name:_____

Program goals

The program is focused on achieving the following learning outcomes	PLEASE PLACE A TICK (√) ON THE LINE THAT REFLECTS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION.
1. Build the capacity of 30 middle leaders from 10 identified secondary schools from BCE to lead and influence improvement in classroom practice	Totally Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Or Disagree Agree Totally Agree _|_____|_____|_____|_____|
2. Build a professional learning community for middle leaders across the sector	Totally Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Or Disagree Agree Totally Agree _|_____|_____|_____|_____|
3. Lead change and innovation at the school level	Totally Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Or Disagree Agree Totally Agree _|_____|_____|_____|_____|
4. Identify and work on a significant key Leadership Challenge that will strengthen individual, school and system leadership capability	Totally Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Or Disagree Agree Totally Agree _|_____|_____|_____|_____|
5. Build educational leadership and associated skills including coaching, giving and receiving feedback, classroom observation and data analysis.	Totally Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Or Disagree Agree Totally Agree _|_____|_____|_____|_____|

Program Outcomes

This program will enable participants to:	PLEASE PLACE A TICK (√) ON THE LINE THAT REFLECTS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION.				
7. Engage in in-depth understanding and analysis of contemporary research and evidence related to the impact of quality teaching and learning on student outcomes, the challenge of leading change and leading self and others	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				
8. Examine the challenges to driving change in learning organisations and learn how to lead and influence others with emotional intelligence and resilience	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				
9. Identify a key Leadership Challenge that is focused on closing the gap with respect to student performance and enhancing teacher capacity	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				
10. Engage with innovative approaches to improving student learning outcomes	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				
11. Set clear goals for future leadership and establish mentoring relationships for support and challenge	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				
12. Engage with their Principals and colleagues to enhance their leadership capability	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
	|————————|————————|————————|————————|				

Further Comments:

In your opinion:

1. What were the most positive aspects of this program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What aspects did you find most challenging?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. If a similar program were to be offered in the future I would suggest the following changes ….

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you believe that this experience has changed your view of yourself as a leader? Explain ….

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 4: Evaluation Interview Sessions

The Principal:

1. Why engage with this project?

2. How did you select the group?

3. What level of Involvement did you have?

4. Overall Program Goals and Outcomes (show sheet on goals and outcomes and ask principal to comment on those relevant to their experience)

The Group

1. How did you become involved**?**

2. How did you select the workshop**?**

3. Reflections on the program (include workshops, principal's role; implementation in the school).

4. What have you achieved?

5. What have you learnt?

6. Program Goals and outcomes (show sheet on goals and outcomes and ask the group to comment on those relevant to their experience)