

***Rooty Hill High School - a case study of
successful agency, learner profiles and portfolios***



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Abstract

In 2013, with the release of the ACARA capability benchmarks, the school was able, for the first time, to identify new ways of triangulating students, peer, teacher and external assessment to enable students to understand, articulate and record their progress against capabilities as well against more traditional normative assessment. After all, if the Year intake cohort is composed of 60-80% of students who have not met Year 6 benchmarks and are 1.0-2.0 standard deviations below the “mean” on external testing, it is unlikely that students and their families will feel confident that are well prepared to leave school as “educated” Australians. By shifting to assessment and evaluation against the ACARA benchmarks, the school was able to create with each student a learning portfolio demonstrating their progress and achievement on meaningful, subject and capability measures. This presentation describes a curriculum, assessment and reporting journey underpinned by a deep commitment to student, teacher and school agency. In the words of Andy Hargreaves, “We should not just value what we measure but measure what we value”.

Biography

Christine Cawsey AM FACEL is a past president and a life member of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council (NSWSPC). She is the current principal (1997 -) of Rooty Hill High School, a highly successful, comprehensive secondary school in the western suburbs of Sydney. Christine believes that all schools are able create shift and to commit to new ways of knowing, doing and being. It is those that are able to design, deliver and embed new systems of work, teaching, learning and assessment behaviour and practice in the “present” that are most innovative in creating opportunities for students to be agents of their own futures.



In September 2018 Christine was invited to join the “expert panel” with Professors John Hattie and Geoff Masters to provide advice to government, co-authoring a concept paper for implementing the Gonski 2.0 recommendations on learning progressions, formative assessment and the assessment of learning progress. In 2019 Christine was appointed to the DESE Project Management Board overseeing the Discovery and Alpha phases of the “OFAI” – Online Formative Assessment Initiative.

Her academic and professional expertise includes work on strategic school planning, professional practice, capability-based teaching, learning and assessment, classroom observation, strategic partnering, evidence informed learning and equity. Her educational passion is to deliver the moral contract with students and parents in western Sydney to give every student an opportunity to do his or her best.