



EdTech

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Assessment Report

**Capabilities for Success:
What's Working in EdTech Today**

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Opening: Planning and Prioritising for Success

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The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a rapid evolution in the world of education, and especially in schools' adoption and implementation of edtech. Now more than ever, it's important that schools take a critical look at which resources and strategies are most effective for teachers and students.

The demands on school communities are enormous. The modern workforce now expects students to graduate with academic results as well as a developed sense of soft skills such as communication and collaboration. School stakeholders are calling for more adaptable and personalised learning opportunities, and educators around the world have seen the importance of engaging parent communities in students' learning.

The first step toward making these changes is to make an honest assessment of where your own school stands in these high-impact areas. Once a clear benchmark has been established, it's far easier to assemble a plan that ensures all voices in the school community are heard—a step that almost always improves adoption.

This paper highlights key insights from a global database that shows what's working well in Australian schools when it comes to edtech implementation and adoption.

It's important to examine how states and countries are succeeding and to learn lessons from educators around the world. At a high level, Australian educators and leaders report that they are in fact meeting student preparation and other academic goals and performance metrics. However, compared to the rest of the world, Australian educators and leaders admit that greater attention needs to be directed to using technology more effectively in their teaching and learning.

Understanding where to improve the effectiveness of both teaching and learning with technology will help prioritise policy investment, and training. Empowering educators with technology can ensure they direct their energy correctly to improve outcomes for each learner.

Introduction & Research Basis

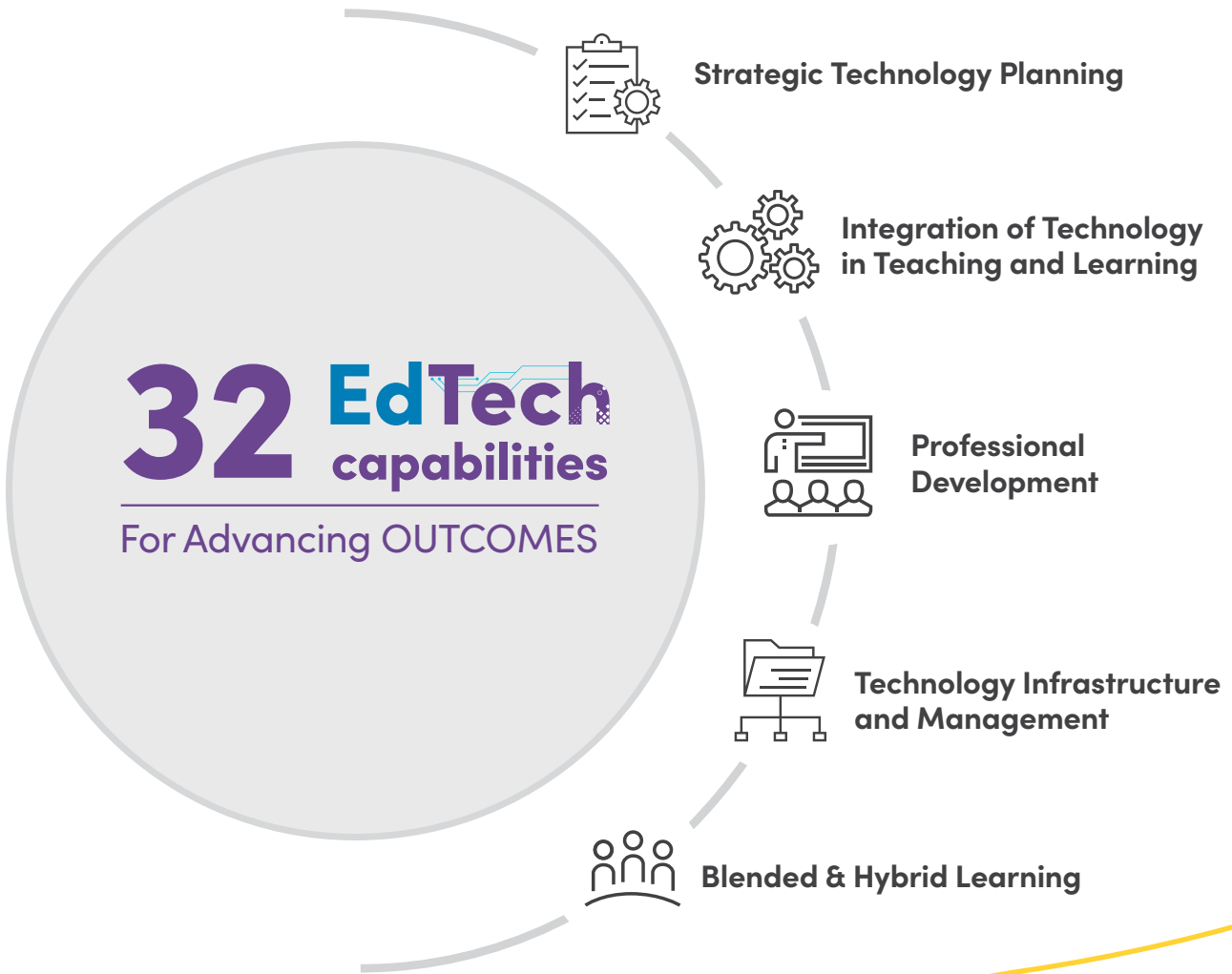
This research is based on more than 5,000 responses from educational leaders, policy makers, administrators, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) coordinators, teachers, and other stakeholders. Today, the world of education looks different than it did when this research project was launched in 2018. At that time, leaders who had detailed technology plans, involved teachers and students in planning, and who formally evaluated technology effectiveness were more likely to show better outcomes.

Community engagement, student participation, and family involvement in edtech planning have had the most significant effect on outcomes.

Although some of the key capabilities for success remained the same in 2022, others became more significant in their relation to positive outcomes and impact for schools during the pandemic. Community engagement, student participation, and family involvement in edtech planning have had the most significant effect on outcomes.

The term “outcomes” is a varied and dynamic term in the world of education. The outcomes referenced throughout this paper are multifaceted and are not confined to academic success; they also include elements such as meeting teaching and learning goals, rankings, career preparedness, teacher retention, and others.

This paper will examine edtech’s capabilities and outline some best practices.



A Global Look

Community & Family Engagement in EdTech Planning

At the outset of virtual learning due to COVID, the importance of engaging with the broader school learning community became obvious very quickly. When school communities are actively engaged with how learning is delivered, outcomes are improved for all students.

What do schools that are highly developed in these areas look like?

- ✓ Families have significant involvement in ICT planning.
- ✓ Families actively support and develop students' digital competencies.
- ✓ Schools or organisations actively support students by providing access to technology and infrastructure outside of school.
- ✓ Information about the use of education technology is regularly included in school communications. These communications inspire action, showcase effective use, and encourage parental and community involvement.

The correlation between community engagement and high outcomes has become stronger over the course of the study, although this correlation is stronger in some regions than in others.

Around the globe, schools have identified some key strategies for improving community participation and engagement in technology planning:

Provide open methods of communication to families about the day-to-day of classroom delivery.

- When families can see the impact of technology and classroom practice firsthand, they can better understand and contribute to planning choices. Communication should help showcase students' development in academic skills as well as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills (such as communication and collaboration), and should provide opportunity for dialogue between families and teachers.



Have families offer input about how their students are doing at home to help create conversation and mutual trust.

- Offer a variety of methods for the community to share their thoughts and provide input to current and future technology planning. Ensure accessible options for participation so families can do what works best for them. For some schools, these options have included virtual, in person, and hybrid options for large and small group meetings. Offering asynchronous options is also important: using email, a phone message line, or even text messaging to allow community members to add their input gives more people more opportunities for involvement.
- Ask specific questions, and provide materials for community members to engage with so that they can provide informed input based on more than the experiences of their own children. Again, providing information in a variety of formats and languages will help ensure that all families can access and engage in the conversation.

Broaden a school's language capacity by having volunteers (or students!) from the community help translate into languages that support their neighbours.

- Ensure that community involvement and engagement are ongoing. Community engagement is about building trust and relationships. With a strong foundation in communication, it's easier to engage community members and families with important projects and decisions when they arise. Using a variety of methods (email newsletters, social media, take-home materials, text messaging systems) ensures that messages reach families and are reinforced regularly.

Discover how South Melbourne Park Primary School used technology to connect families with classrooms during the pandemic, and how they are maintaining these connections.



Student Engagement in EdTech Planning

Although it may seem obvious that students should be a key stakeholder in technology planning and implementation, the reality is that they're often overlooked. Student agency, voice, and choice can all contribute to planning technology implementation, and the evidence demonstrates that the earlier and more meaningful the engagement is, the better the outcomes.

What do some school examples of successful approaches to student participation in edtech planning look like?

- ✔ **Students are represented and active in the decision-making group for ICT plans, policies, and standards. Students are often given the option to choose the tech, content, and other resources used in their classrooms.**
- ✔ **Multiple opportunities exist for all students to be informed about, and engage with, technology planning and implementation.**
- ✔ **Students and teachers work together to drive technology implementation.**

Ensuring that students can provide meaningful input that is based on their specific learning needs can make a significant difference to them. Students who have agency in their learning can experience an improved sense of belonging in their school and classroom, which often leads to improved engagement and academic outcomes, better attendance, and even improved retention and completion rates.

Here are some approaches that some schools and organisations have used to create sustained student involvement in ICT planning and implementation:

- ✔ **As a basis for participation in planning, provide students with options to help them understand their own learning needs. This can be done through surveys, classroom reflection activities, and conversations with teachers and peers. Understanding their own needs will allow students to provide more meaningful feedback about the options they would like to see in their classroom.**
- ✔ **Form a student council or a subset of the existing school council for ICT planning. It's important to work with a diverse set of students who can not only bring their own voices to the table but also help to capture and understand the input of their peers is important. These students can also help to craft survey questions for other students and the community, allowing them to truly guide the conversation.**

Where possible, offer students credit for their participation. This type of extracurricular involvement can help develop and demonstrate key skills.

Much like community and family engagement, ongoing communication and engagement that happen on an ongoing basis are vital to sustainable success.



The Australian Story

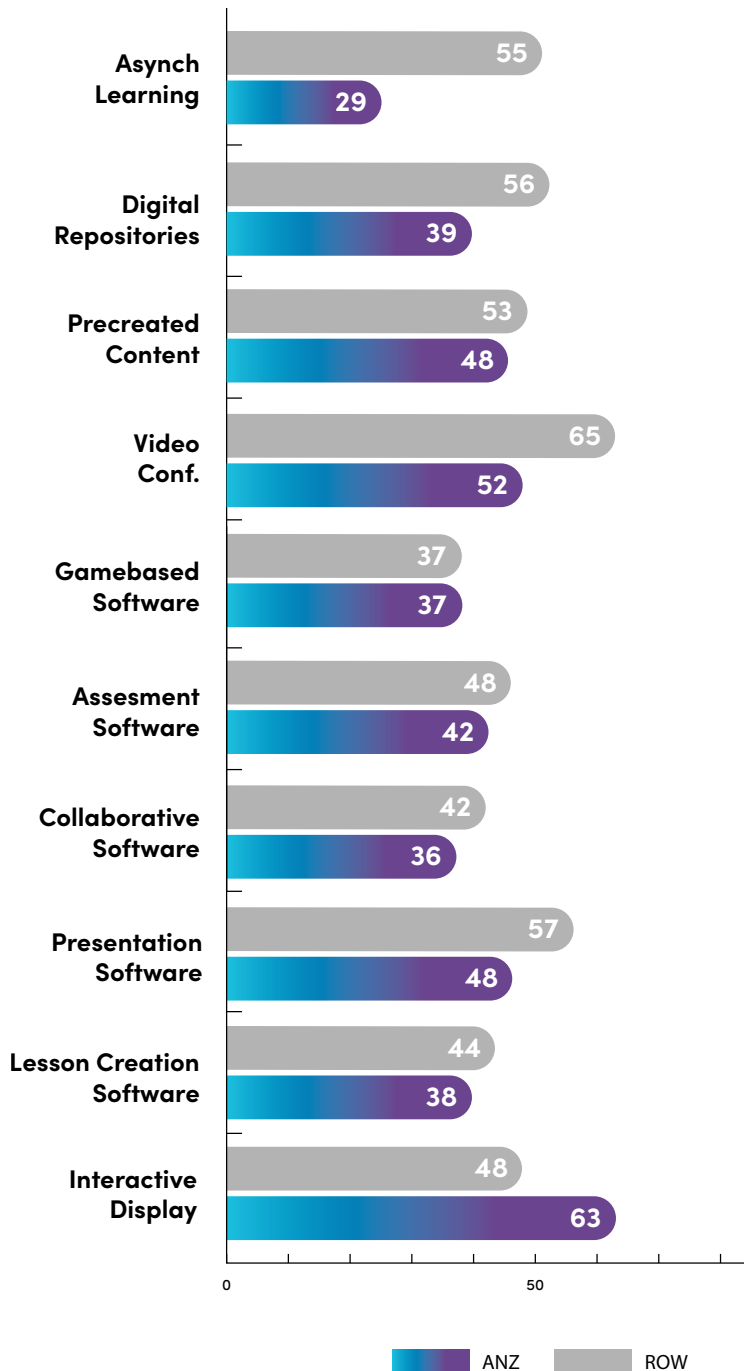
Technology Adoption & Outcomes

A comparative analysis between the recent results generated by the Australian survey with the rest of the world (ROW), highlights opportunities for Australian schools to further develop some key edtech capabilities.

Australian schools and educators are using classroom hardware, including interactive displays and devices, more than the rest of the world. Interestingly, the data also shows that Australians are making less use of software for teaching and learning, such as software for formative assessment, student collaboration, and creating and presenting lesson material.



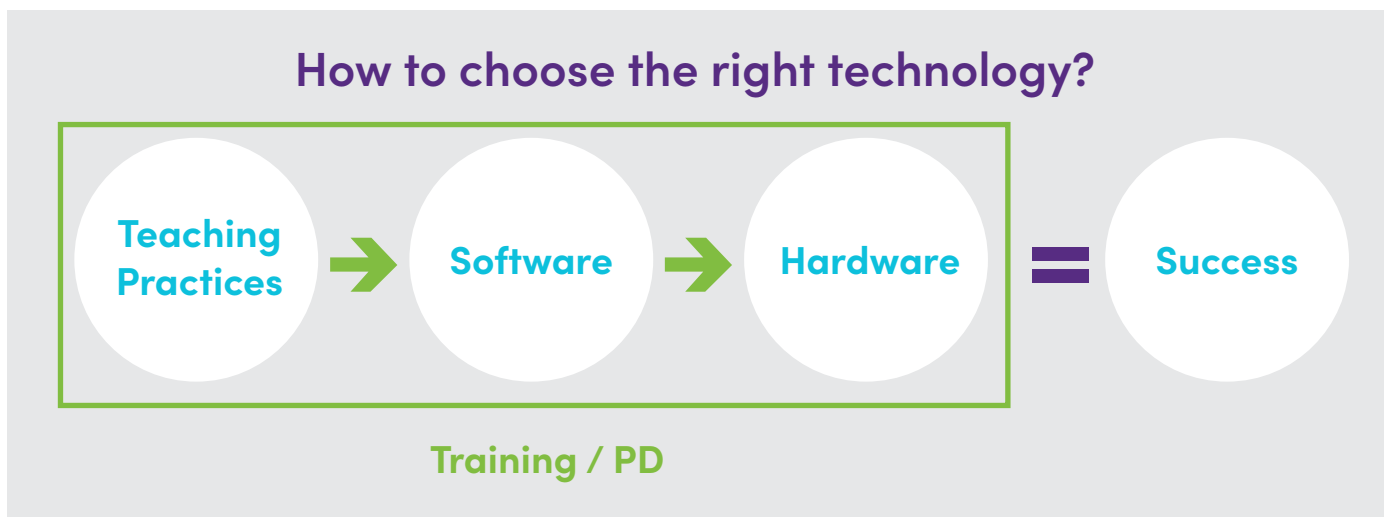
ANZ: ROW Reported Technology Use



These types of software have been shown to be effective in classrooms around the world, as those that report higher outcomes are using game-based software, collaborative software, and especially assessment software more than groups reporting lower outcomes. The data suggests that creation of digital repositories of resources, and investment in software and tools that feature collaboration, assessment, and interactive activities can be important areas of focus for Australian schools and systems.

Many years of global reports about the impacts (or lack thereof!) of edtech, indicates that success with classroom technology occurs when software is considered first and selected based on its relevance to pedagogy. To ensure successful adoption, software must support and amplify the ways teachers deliver teaching and learning. By starting with software that drives evidenced-based pedagogy, schools choose hardware that complements the software, and then design professional development and training that complements them both.

The formula for success



Current usage data for Australia shows that edtech decisions have often been made in reverse, which can contribute to limited adoption and reduced effectiveness of teaching and learning with the technology.

It should be noted that Australian teachers report much higher usage of both lesson creation software and interactive displays than the other categories of respondents, indicating that the experience of classroom practitioners can be distinct from the experiences of school leaders and other stakeholders.

Capabilities for Success

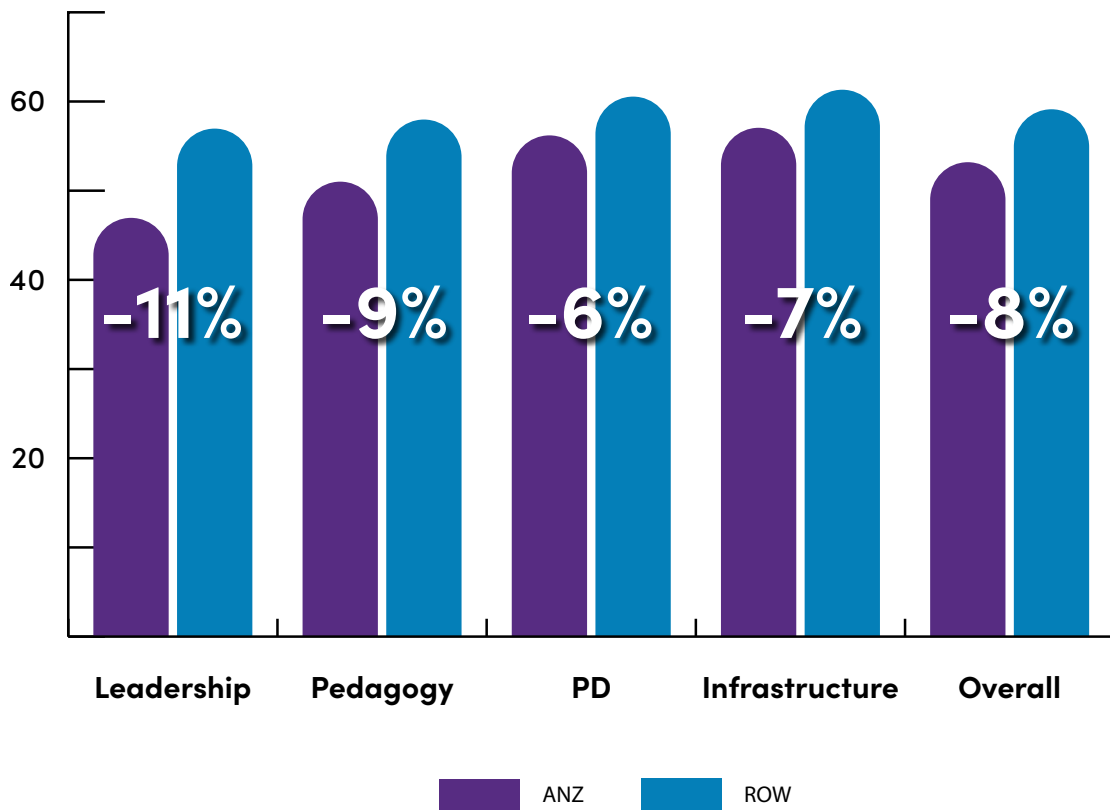
The 32 capabilities outlined in the opening of this paper are grouped into five categories: strategic technology planning, integration of technology in teaching and learning, professional development, technology infrastructure and management, and blended and hybrid learning.

Looking at the recent survey's data in all capability areas, Australia ranks just slightly lower than respondents in the rest of the world. The specific capabilities with the

largest opportunity for further development have been previously mentioned: student, parent, and community participation in technology planning. In addition to technology change management, the three capabilities under the strategic leadership banner that Australia can focus on are listed below. When it comes to building capacity in leaders and prioritising how to plan and implement technology, development in these three areas will likely lead to improved success.



ANZ ROW Level of Development in Key Areas



Examples of improvements in technology change management implemented by schools:

- Ensuring adoption by both teachers and students early in the process and ensuring that decisions are made collaboratively between both IT and teaching staff.
- Following the 'Formula for Success' as outlined above: selecting technology that complements teaching and learning practices and implementing professional development around the effective use of the technology to support these practices. Ensure changes are documented and communicated to all stakeholders through a variety of channels.

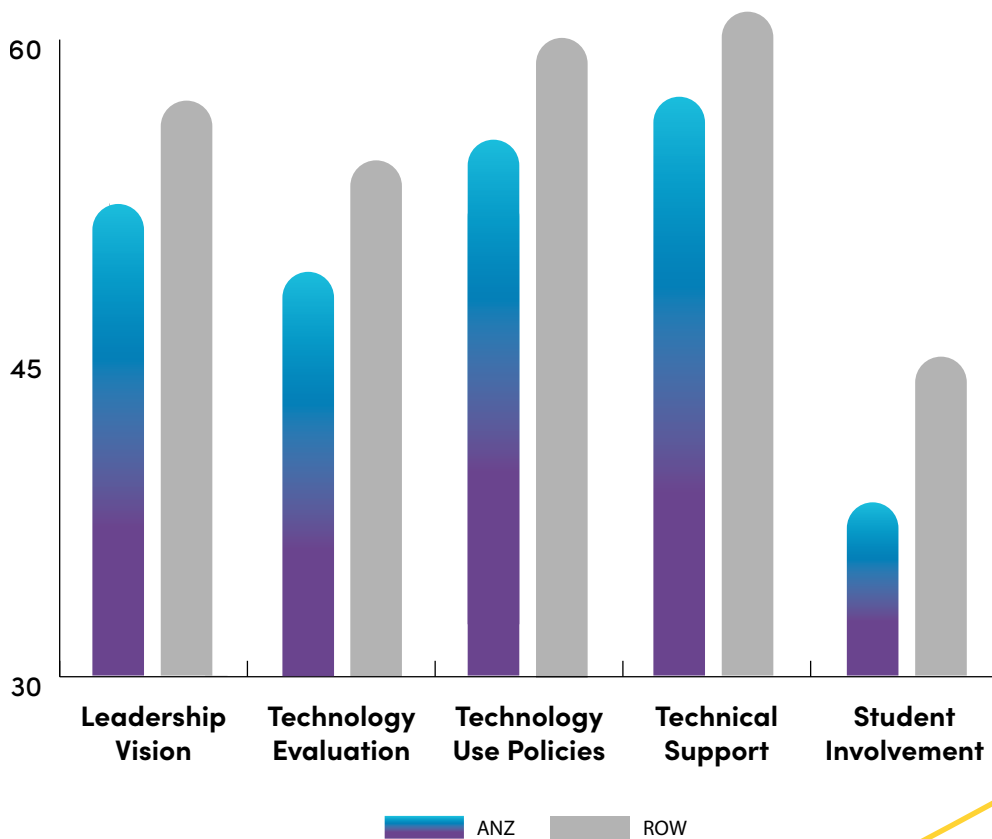
The fourth and final capability of focus for development is the use of digital content. To further develop this capability, schools and systems need to ensure the availability of relevant, easy-to-access digital content for educators (by providing robust content-creation workshops, training, and professional development) and enable educators to share this content and resources across networks.

Improving Outcomes in Australia

What other practices are driving high outcomes in Australia today? High-performing schools in Australia have shown improved levels of capability development as well as increased use of edtech.

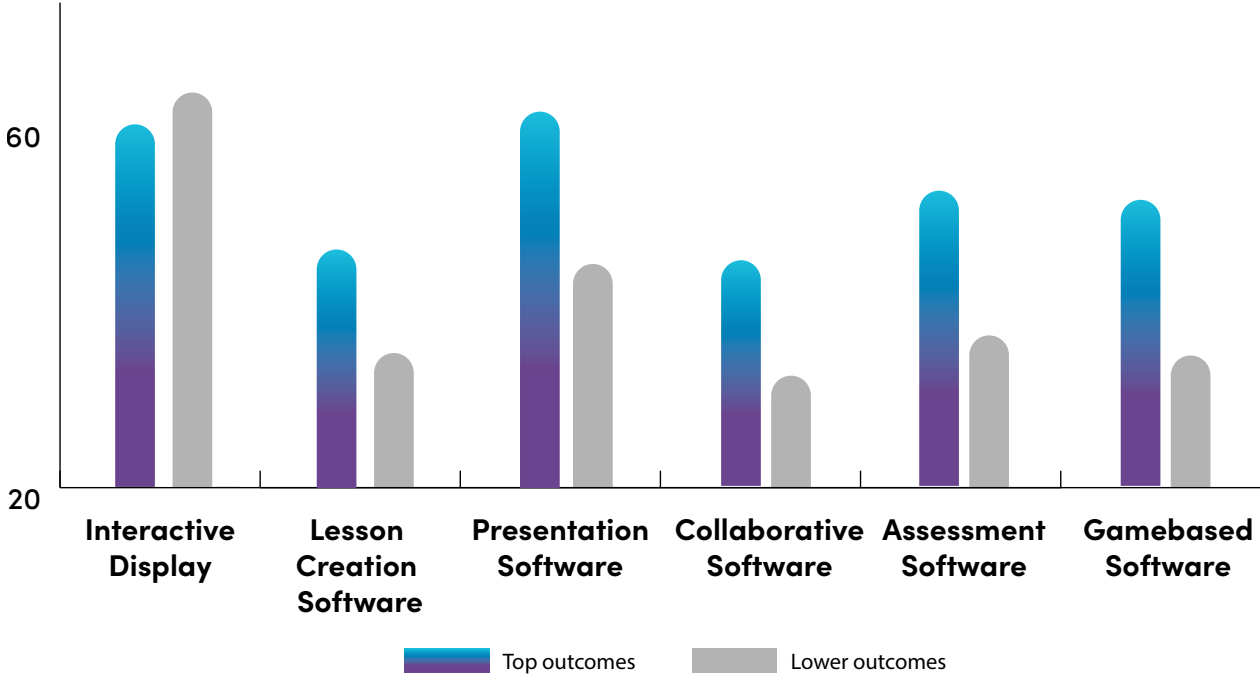
The levels of development with the biggest gap between highest outcomes and lower outcomes schools are parent and community engagement, the focus of professional learning along with options for training, and the evaluation of technology. These results mirror many of the comparisons in other parts of the world and clearly indicate which capabilities are most important for success.

ANZ: ROW Level of Development In Key Capabilities



With regard to technology, schools and systems seeing high outcomes in Australia are using more interactive software, more digital and ready-made content, and making use of asynchronous learning with supporting technology, such as software and devices.

ANZ Technology Use in Top vs Low Outcomes Schools



These results indicate that there are many overlaps between that which promotes favourable outcomes globally and the areas of success for high-outcome schools in Australia.

Conclusions

In the same way that relationships and trust form the foundation of a strong classroom for teaching and learning, that same trust and communication have a significant and increasing effect on a school or organisation's overall success. Beyond that, there are key areas that Australian schools and systems can invest and focus on to improve outcomes:

- Community engagement, student participation, and family involvement in technology planning and implementation.
- Thoughtful selection of interactive software that aligns with pedagogy.
- Focus of professional development and training offers that include not only technology skills but also the use of technology to help improve teaching and learning practices.

When done well, these areas of practice have a significant effect on educational outcomes for students, and they can help elevate results for individual schools, systems, and the entire country.

While there are many components to successful edtech implementation, it's important that schools, especially those planning and leading technology decisions and implementations, can prioritise their activities for maximum benefit. Ongoing surveying and benchmarking helps to measure progress, and allows schools to show how they are refining their approach to meet the needs of their learning communities, as this is vital to sustainable success.

Learn more, add your voice to this research, and connect with us today at:

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