



Asia Education Foundation



WHAT
WORKS 7

Study programmes
to Asia

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Front cover image: Adapted from 'Blue Marble: Land Surface, Shallow Water, and Shaded Topography', NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, 2002

Inside cover image: Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown, Petaling Street (Image by Azreey), under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 license

Inside back image: *CEO Sydney Japan Study Programme*, 2011

What Works 7 examines both the transformations experienced by participants in Asia Education Foundation (AEF) Study Programmes to Asia and how these programmes have catalysed and/or enabled these personal transformations to occur. It is neither a summative piece nor an evaluation. The focus is on 'what works' within these study programmes that leads to change in participants. More generally, the findings of *What Works 7* are relevant also to other in-country study experiences.

AEF study programmes involve intensive professional learning for teachers and school leaders aimed at developing Asia literacy and intercultural understanding in Australian schools. This year entering their 21st year of operations the study programmes to Asia are a longstanding feature of AEF's suite of professional learning offerings.

AEF study programme participants tend to experience a complex combination of personal and professional transformations towards heightened Asia literacy and intercultural understanding, a greater capacity to develop students' Asia-relevant capabilities, as well as improved teaching capacity more generally. In order to gain insights into the impact of AEF study programmes, *What Works 7* uses a biographic-qualitative approach. This approach involves a detailed analysis of the multiple transformations experienced by six (6) participants as a direct or indirect result of their study programme participation.

This meta-analysis was guided by four focus themes:

1. How study programme participation has led to deeper intercultural understanding and knowledge/awareness of Asia
2. How participation has influenced professional learning choices
3. How participation has helped build capacity to promote Asia literacy and intercultural understanding at school
4. Other professional transformations as a direct or indirect result of participation

In spite of variations in their design and specific objectives, all AEF study programmes combine information-based learning (e.g. seminars, lectures) with experiential learning through cultural immersion (e.g. homestay, school visits). Hence, *What Works 7* applies an analytical framework that combines Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe's (1994) 'biographical perspective' on teachers' professional development with well-established experiential learning theories (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Mezirow, 1997), specifically the importance of first-hand experiences and personal reflections to transformative learning (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

> Key effects of AEF study programmes

While each of the six case studies tells a unique personal story, they all demonstrate three key effects of AEF study programmes.

1. Heightened cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding leading to changes at school

The six selected study programme participants all highlighted that their own knowledge and cultural awareness of the visited country in Asia, including knowledge of its education system, has expanded as a result of participating in AEF study programmes. Heightened intercultural understanding and expanded global mindedness are other common transformations.

These transformations have had tangible and sustained effects on the participants' subsequent professional decisions and actions aimed at building Asia literacy and intercultural understanding in their schools and beyond. They have developed the confidence and authority to teach about Asia and lead their school's Asia engagement strategies, including implementing curriculum, pedagogic and whole-school changes. The establishment of an international school partnership, including student and/or teacher exchange, is a common example of whole-school change resulting from study programme participation.

2. Sustained commitment to engage personally and professionally with Asia

After completing their study programmes, the six participants did not simply return 'to business as usual' at school, citing the catalytic effects of their in-country experiences. Their study programme participation reignited, refreshed and reinforced their eagerness to become more Asia literate and Asia engaged. This has, in turn, resulted in a strong and sustained commitment to foster their students' Asia-relevant capabilities, which has manifested itself in many ways, in particular, subsequent personal and professional visits to Asia and professional learning choices focused on developing greater expertise in Asia literacy and intercultural understanding.

3. Sustained overseas engagement and communities of learners

Some case studies in *What Works 7* pinpoint other positive effects that go beyond the immediate goals of AEF study programmes. These additional effects include, for example, the formation of a community of learners—as a result of professional networking during and after a study programme—to provide further impetus and momentum for Asia literacy in schools.

School leaders who participated in the *DEECD-AEF Eastern Metropolitan Region study programme* to China in 2012, for instance, successfully established a community of learners that undertook an independent (non-AEF coordinated) study programme to China, led by Ian McKenzie, the Principal at Alkira College. In another instance, Kim Hann, who participated in AEF's *Indonesia: Uncovered* study programme in 2013, utilised her study programme connections to help set up a partnership between an Australian university and a university in Indonesia.

Another spin-off effect is active global citizenship and social action. The most notable examples of this are the establishment of school aid and development projects overseas that include involvement of the study programme participant's own school community.

> What works?

The positive effects of AEF study programmes are caused by the complex interplay of various programme components, good timing and the personal knowledge, understandings, skills, behaviours and dispositions of participants. Nevertheless, meta-analysis of the six case studies has revealed three key and common success factors. These factors resonate with previous research findings on overseas programmes while highlighting some specifics of AEF study programmes.

1. Sound combination of formal (information-based) learning and cultural immersion activities

While most case study participants referred to the various opportunities to expand their knowledge about Asian societies and cultures through information-based learning, all six case studies draw attention to cultural immersion as a highly valuable component of AEF study programmes that enables personal and professional transformations. The combination of both information-based learning and experiential learning through first-hand cultural encounters is key to the success of an overseas study programme (Engle & Engle, 2003; Howlett, 2014). The impact of immediate cultural experiences—during homestay, school visits and other forms of direct contact with locals—exceeds what a 'normal' tourist visit would be able to provide.

2. School visits

Some case study participants highlighted specifically school visits as a key feature of AEF study programmes. This resonates with previous studies on overseas study programmes that have identified immersion 'within both a culture and school' as particularly valuable (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 35). School visits allow study programme participants to witness and gain deeper insights into the mechanisms and challenges of education systems in the Asia region. This experience allows them to reflect on issues of school improvement and enables them also to establish international school partnerships.

3. Professional networking and reflection

Most participants describe the professional networking and informal discussions that take place during AEF study programmes as beneficial and inspiring. These study programmes bring together committed and often experienced school leaders and teachers to share their experiences of building Asia literacy in their schools. Intensive conversations lead to opportunities for learning from and with one another. In addition, reflection processes—personal or collective, informal or guided—are crucial, enabling transformative learning to occur, particularly in the context of developing intercultural understanding (Cushner, 2007; Engle & Engle, 2003; Marx & Moss, 2011; McAllister, Whiteford, Hill, Thomas, & Fitzgerald, 2006). In some cases, professional networking during AEF study programmes has led to the development of an active community of learners for supporting Asia literacy in schools (see above).

There is robust empirical evidence pointing to a link between participation in overseas study programmes and increased country-specific knowledge and cultural awareness.

Facilitating and leading study programmes to Asia for teachers and school leaders is a key strategy of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF). AEF study programmes provide intensive professional learning for teachers and school leaders aimed at developing Asia literacy¹ and intercultural understanding² in Australian schools (Halse, 1999). The rationale behind these programmes follows the well-established pedagogical principle that first-hand experiences are an important source of transformative learning (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

There is robust empirical evidence pointing to a link between participation in overseas study programmes and increased country-specific knowledge and cultural awareness. For example, teachers who have participated in study programmes to Asia or other (more extended) cultural exchange programmes show significantly higher levels of Asia literacy (Halse et al., 2013, p. 38). Moreover, personal overseas experiences often function as a 'critical trigger in stimulating their commitment to teaching and learning about Asia' (p. 62). Thus, participation in overseas study programmes can be regarded as a milestone towards enhanced Asia-related capabilities for teachers and school leaders.

AEF study programmes appeal to a broad spectrum of teachers and school leaders. For some of them, participation is motivated by already existing personal and professional interests and dispositions. For others, reflecting on the study programme experience catalyses further engagement with Asia-related issues, both personally and professionally.

The general change logic of AEF study programmes is to build teachers' and school leaders' personal and professional capacity for Asia literacy and intercultural understanding to nurture more Asia capable young Australians. This logic aligns closely with the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders, which highlights 'that purposeful professional learning for teachers and school leaders is one of the most effective strategies for improving student outcomes in our schools' (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2012, p. 6).

1 In What Works 7, 'Asia literacy' is defined as 'foundational and in-depth knowledge, skills and understandings of the histories, geographies, societies, arts, literatures and languages of the diverse countries of Asia and their engagement with Australia' (AEF, 2011).

2 'Intercultural understanding' is defined as 'recognising culture and developing respect', 'interacting and empathising with others', and 'reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility' (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014).

Previous evaluations of selected AEF study programmes demonstrate their overall success (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD] & AEF, 2014; Asia Education Foundation [AEF], 2012). For example, in a 2014 evaluation involving teachers ($n=40$) and principals ($n=48$) who participated in the *DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program*, '100% ... strongly agreed/agreed that participation in the program had strengthened their own intercultural understanding' (DEECD & AEF, 2014, p. 26), and 90% of teacher participants stated that their confidence to teach about Asia has (significantly) improved (p. 28).

Acknowledging these findings, *What Works 7* applies a biographic-qualitative approach to examine AEF study programmes as a catalyst for personal and professional change, i.e. greater engagement with, and improved teaching of, Asia literacy. Through this lens, it seeks more in-depth insights into the multiple transformation processes of selected participants, influenced directly or indirectly by their programme participation. The study examines changes to participants' cultural knowledge and awareness, intercultural understanding, professional learning, and confidence to promote and/or support Asia literacy at school. Other broader, more transferable changes to professional capacity beyond Asia literacy are also of interest to this study.

> Policy context

Australian governments, businesses and educators have acknowledged the importance of developing Asia literacy through school education. The *Melbourne Declaration* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2008), for example, emphasised the need for all young Australians 'to become "Asia literate", engaging and building strong relationships with Asia' (p. 4) and to be able to 'communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia' (p. 9). The Australian Curriculum has reinforced this focus, specifying 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' as one of three cross-curriculum priorities and 'Intercultural understanding' as one of seven general capabilities (ACARA, 2014). In Australia, there is largely bipartisan support for this greater push towards Asia (see Salter, 2013).

For the Commonwealth Government, the need for greater Australia-Asia engagement was reinforced by the launch in December 2013 of the New Colombo Plan, a two-way exchange and scholarship programme that sends Australian undergraduate students overseas to Asia (and subsequently Asian students to Australia). The rationale for this initiative is not dissimilar to that of AEF study programmes. In addition, the Commonwealth Government has committed also to boosting the number of Year 12 students studying a language other than English (especially Asian languages) to 40% within a decade (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014).

All study programmes share the same rationale, offering Australian educators the chance to engage in professional learning that involves information-based learning about, and cultural immersion in, the destination country.

> **AEF study programmes to Asia**

AEF study programmes to Asia provide intensive professional learning opportunities for Australian teachers, school leaders, and other education professionals. AEF has been organising and delivering a variety of short-term study programmes since 1993, with the general aims of building participants' demand for Asia literacy, developing their Asia-relevant capabilities, and enabling them to lead Asia literacy in their respective schools.

AEF study programmes vary in their activity schedule, target objectives, funding models (e.g. full-paying or subsidised), and the profiles, aims and motives of the participants. Moreover, some programmes are developed solely by AEF, while others are designed in collaboration with partner organisations. Nonetheless, all study programmes share the same rationale, offering Australian educators the chance to engage in professional learning that involves information-based learning about, and cultural immersion in, the destination country.

This study programme experience aims to function as a catalyst for personal and professional transformation with regard to Asia literacy. The longer-term goal of this transformation is improved student learning outcomes: 'Professional learning is the formal or informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improve their individual professional practice, and a school's collective effectiveness, as measured by improved student learning, engagement with learning and wellbeing' (AITSL, 2012, p. 2).

The AEF study programmes change logic is illustrated in Figure 1 on the right.

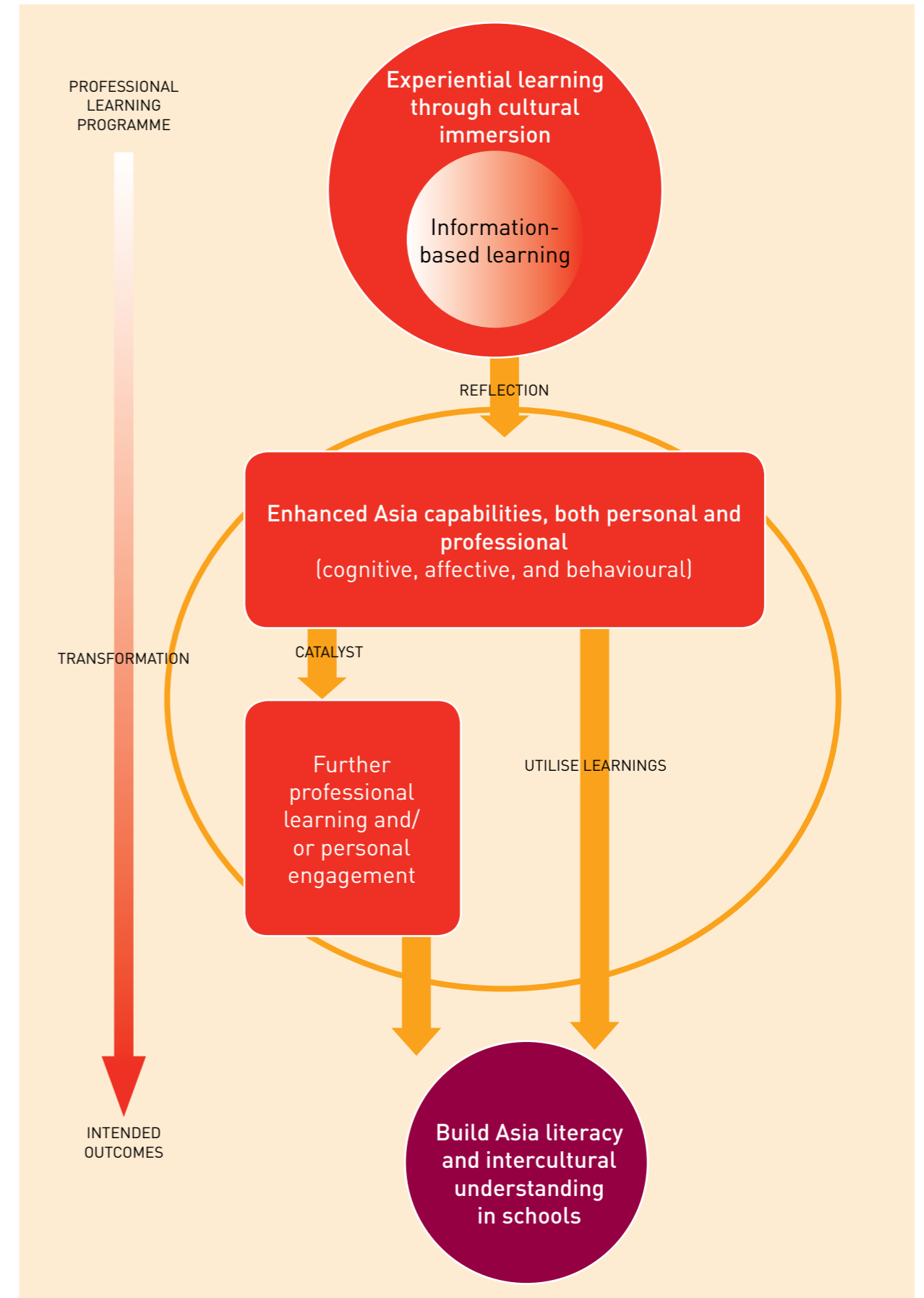


Figure 1. Generic change logic for AEF study programmes to Asia

Given that AEF study programmes are teacher capacity building programmes, *What Works 7* focuses primarily on their effects on participants' enhanced Asia capabilities and further professional learning and engagement with Asia (see circled section in figure 1 above). While these increased capacities enable teachers and principals to build subsequently students' Asia literacy and intercultural understanding, improved student learning outcomes are not the thematic focus of *What Works 7*.

While this model captures the fundamental change logic applicable to all AEF study programmes, it does not reflect the diversity among various programme types. AEF study programmes generally have five interrelated facets, some of which are emphasised more than others depending on a programme's specific goals and/or thematic emphasis. The central focus is capacity building for enhanced Asia literacy as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

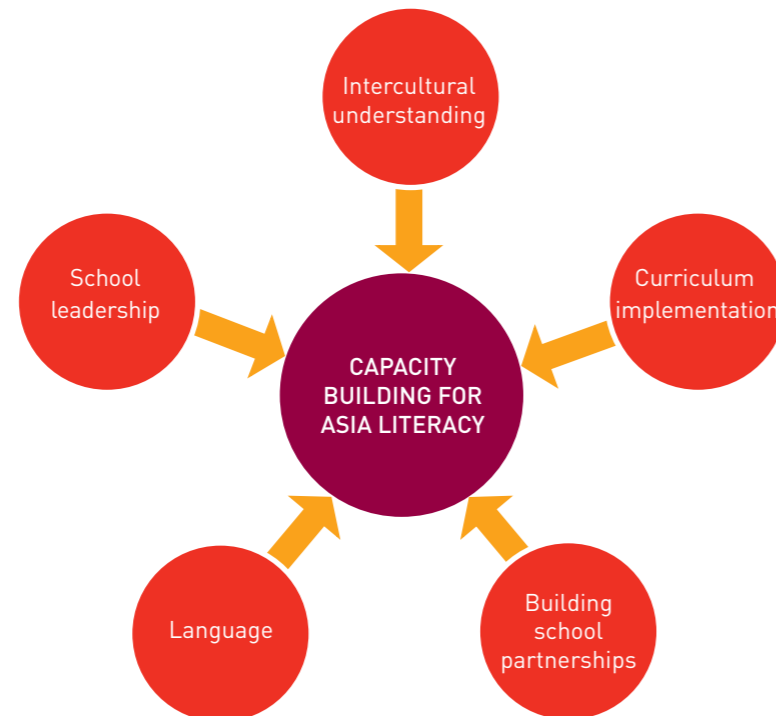


Figure 2: Facets of AEF study programmes

Visiting cultural sites and other locations of interest are important features of all AEF study programmes. In many instances, visits to schools, which sometimes include opportunities for team-teaching, and workshops about the local education system are also key programme components. Most study programmes last for up to two weeks, and usually occur during school holiday periods to maximise teacher and school leader participation. The list of visited countries is long and includes Japan, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Bhutan, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, India, and Cambodia.

> School leadership capacity building

Some AEF study programmes emphasise building school leadership capacity to effect whole-school change to support Asia literacy, targeting school principals, teacher-leaders and, in some instances, school teams (usually the principal accompanied by two teachers). These programmes have generally been developed in collaboration with partners, such as state departments of education and AITSL.

One such programme is the *Singapore School Leaders Program* (September 2012), organised by AEF in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The programme focused on building knowledge and understanding of leadership within leading educational institutions, and supporting development of school leader networks in Australia to promote Asia literacy in schools. A similar programme, which takes school leaders to Singapore and Shanghai, has been developed by AEF in partnership with AITSL. The *High Performing Schools, Linking with Asia International Learning Offering* has been designed for school leaders who seek to develop themselves and their school communities via engagement with high performing schools and education systems in Asia.

> Language capacity building

Some AEF study programmes provide the opportunity for participants to develop their second language skills through cultural immersion alongside gaining a deeper understanding of the society, history and culture of the destination country. For instance, the AEF-coordinated *Bahasa Indonesia Study Tour* (September/October 2014) includes as a major feature attendance at the Australian Society for Indonesian Language Educators (ASILE) conference. The *China: Language and Cultural Immersion* study programme (January 2015) also falls within this category. Moreover, the *Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships*, a Commonwealth Government initiative coordinated previously by AEF gave practising and pre-service language teachers the opportunity to spend 3-4 weeks in-country to improve their language skills and cultural knowledge.

> Capacity building for curriculum implementation

While many AEF study programmes seek to contribute to teachers' capacity to implement changes in their teaching about Asia, some programmes place more emphasis on curriculum implementation. These programmes tend to focus on certain curriculum areas and on enabling participating teachers to implement curriculum changes upon their return. The study programme *In the Footsteps of Chairman Mao* is one example, seeking to build participants' capacity to include China-related content in the school curriculum, with specific reference to history and politics. *Cambodia: Past and Present* is another AEF study programme that places particular emphasis on enabling participants to implement curriculum changes.

> Capacity building for intercultural understanding

While developing intercultural understanding is one of two fundamental goals of all AEF study programmes, some programmes have this as their primary objective. The *Towards Intercultural Understanding* study programmes, jointly developed by AEF and DEECD, are examples. These programmes took participants to Hong Kong/Korea and India (respectively) and were designed to support school-based programs and activities that build intercultural understanding among students, staff and the broader school community. The programmes included a series of briefings and regular professional learning activities, led by group leaders, which encouraged participants to critically reflect on what they had experienced during the day and share their reflections with one another.

> Building school partnerships

A distinct feature of some AEF study programmes is the establishment of direct face-to-face contacts between Australian school leaders (and school teams) and representatives of schools overseas. The objective is to promote the development of sustainable international school partnerships. For more details on the impact of AEF's work in the area of international school partnerships, please refer to *What Works 6: Australia-Asia school partnerships*.

The DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program, for example, aims to 'build teacher capacity to support international education and Asia literacy' (DEECD & AEF, 2014, p. 4). It has a strong operational focus on establishing international school partnerships and reciprocated visits between schools in Victoria and China.

An evaluation of this study programme—which has also another component focusing on high-performing school systems—has demonstrated its overall success and effectiveness. Among others, the programme has contributed to the development of leadership and teacher capacity (DEECD & AEF, 2014, pp. 6-7), provided 'impetus for curriculum change in line with the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and AusVELS' (p. 8), and contributed to improved student learnings and their intercultural understanding (p. 8).

The *Australia-India Leaders Program* is another study programme that emphasises building school partnerships. It has been operated by AEF since 1998 in collaboration with Australia Education International (AEI) in New Delhi, India, and the Australia-India Council (AIC). As of late 2013, over 250 Australian and 190 Indian school leaders have participated. The programme offers an opportunity for Australian and Indian school leaders to exchange professional expertise and develop school partnerships, and is aimed at enhancing (Australian) participants' ability to lead Asia literate schools. School leaders are partnered with Indian schools and participate in intensive in-country professional learning, which includes a school visit and homestay component. Indian school leaders reciprocate these visits by travelling to Australia.

> *Linking Latitudes*: in-country conferences with fieldwork components

Linking Latitudes, another major AEF teacher capacity building initiative, is the name of a series of in-country conferences, complemented with intensive pre- and post-conference fieldwork programmes. These study programmes have taken place in Indonesia, China, Vietnam, and India. The fourth (and last) *Linking Latitudes* conference was held in New Delhi and Agra, India, in 2007. The five-day conference was part of an innovative study programme for teachers, school leaders and other educational experts, who participated also in fieldwork that offered in-depth insights into various facets of India. *Linking Latitudes* sought to enable teachers and principals to build Asia literacy among their students and prepare them as global citizens.

> Methodological and conceptual framework (Literature survey)

Overseas study programmes—both short-term and longer-term initiatives—and their effects on participants have been researched extensively for several decades. In recent years, handbooks have been compiled that seek to consolidate the empirical and theoretical knowledge within this broad thematic area (Lewin, 2010), and specialised journals regularly publish the latest research, for example, the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad (Frontiers)*.

While there have been some large quantitative studies, a few of them longitudinal (Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Peters, 2004), the majority are pilot or case studies, based on qualitative in-depth analysis of small numbers of participants. Some studies use pre- and post-intervention measurement tools to determine the impact of an overseas study programme, but this type of research design is an exception rather than the rule.

The ample body of relevant literature provides a fundamental reference point for the examination of AEF study programmes. There are, however, some limitations for the applicability of this literature due to the specific nature of AEF study programmes. For instance, most studies have focused on programmes designed for university students, with some of them investigating programmes designed specifically for pre-service teachers (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 37). Overseas study programmes for practising teachers are rare. In her examination of AEF study programmes, Halse (1999) concluded that ‘research on the impact of study tours on the personal and professional identities of practising teachers has been limited’ (p. 20). This observation still holds true for the most part, with some exceptions (Cook, 2009, citing O’Brien, 2006; DEECD & AEF, 2014).

Another limitation is the fact that AEF study programmes are much shorter in duration than most overseas study programmes that have been the subject of much research, these typically being year-long, semester-long, and summer intensives. Based on Engle and Engle’s (2003) classification of different types of study programmes, AEF programmes fall under the category of ‘study tours’, which are under-researched. The final limitation is that the existing research does not capture all the objectives of AEF study programmes, some of which are tailored to cater for the specific needs of participants, for example, the *Australia-India Leaders Program* or the *DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program* with their focus on school partnerships.

While the specific objectives established for study abroad programs vary from institution to institution, academic and intercultural competencies are common to virtually all programs’ (Anderson, et al., 2003, p. 458). There is a broad consensus within international education research that many overseas study programmes are effective in reaching these broad objectives (see, for example, Cushner, 2007; Sachau, Brasher, & Fee, 2010)

Nonetheless, AEF study programmes share some fundamental characteristics with most other overseas study programmes, whereby the

complementary interface of in-class and on-site experience is ... vital. Through real-life application, often perceived as more immediate and telling than that of on-campus course work, guided authentic cultural encounters instead tend to confirm the value of objective classroom learning—and vice versa—and all the more so when that learning takes place according to local cultural norms. (Engle & Engle, 2003, p. 4)

This combination of cultural immersion and information-based learning resonates with the four interconnected objectives that most overseas study programmes seek to achieve, namely:

- Expanding knowledge and cognitive skills (e.g. problem solving, language skills, cultural knowledge)
- Professional growth (e.g. professional contacts, sense of direction for future career choices, a sense of responsibility)
- Personal growth (e.g. personal identity, flexibility, creativity)
- Intercultural growth (interest in other cultures, diminished ethnocentrism, cultural sensitivity) (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2003).

In addition, ‘[w]hile the specific objectives established for study abroad programs vary from institution to institution, academic and intercultural competencies are common to virtually all programs’ (Anderson, et al., 2003, p. 458). There is a broad consensus within international education research that many overseas study programmes are effective in reaching these broad objectives (see, for example, Cushner, 2007; Sachau, Brasher, & Fee, 2010).

Expanding knowledge and cognitive skills: Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of overseas study programmes on participants’ cultural knowledge. For example, many participants acquire ‘cognitive skills’, learning about the respective country (e.g. religion, politics, history, economy) and deepening their awareness for cultural differences (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013, p. 519). In a qualitative analysis of AEF study programmes, participating teachers stated that their overseas experiences have deepened and expanded their knowledge about the respective country (especially, but not exclusively, contemporary life) and helped them gain ‘more nuanced insights and understandings’ (Halse, 1999, p. 63). Moreover, many of them expressed greater awareness of cultures and values, and obtained a deeper understanding of diversity (pp. 66-67).

Other studies have demonstrated positive effects of overseas study programmes beyond a country-specific dimension, such as increased awareness of global interdependence, cultural relativism (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) and globalisation (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Studies on such programmes for pre-service teachers highlighted additionally that participants have often expanded their pedagogical knowledge and skills (Lee, 2011) and, through learning about new pedagogical approaches and educational philosophies, have developed their professional competence (Cushner, 2007, p. 30).

Recent research has found also that teachers who have participated in study programmes to Asia (especially more than 3 weeks) have a significantly higher knowledge and understanding of the region than those who have not (Halse, et al., 2013, p. 38). While these findings do not indicate a causal relationship, the correlation is in itself significant and pinpoints two interrelated patterns of behaviour:

1. Teachers may participate in overseas study programmes because they have already some knowledge about and/or interest in Asian cultures and societies
2. Participants' Asia literacy and commitment to Asia-related learning appears to increase following a study programme

A qualitative study of a small number of US teachers who participated in a short-term study programme to Japan revealed that many of them were not only highly motivated, but also were able to develop fresh lesson plans on Japan upon their return (Cook, 2009, pp. 97-98). These new lessons, in turn, led to positive effects on students' classroom engagement and learning (pp. 106-111). Similarly, another study showed that teacher-participants gain authentic knowledge and cross-cultural insights, which are then translated into lesson plans that benefit students, peers and the broader school community (pp. 42-43). AEF's evaluation of the *DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program* also found that 90% of participating teachers ($n=40$) feel more confident teaching about Asia as a result of their involvement in the programme (DEECD & AEF, 2014).

Studies have highlighted also the positive effects of overseas study programmes on the development of language skills, and there is a broad consensus that overseas experiences often lead to greater language proficiency (for example, Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). For example, research on pre-service teachers from Hong Kong who participated in a six-week immersion programme in New Zealand found 'evidence that extensive and intensive interactions with native speakers during their practicum abroad helped enhance the pre-service teachers' language awareness [and] the effectiveness of their classroom language' (Lee, 2011, p. 17).

Personal growth: Several studies, including some large-scale evaluations, have demonstrated that overseas study programmes provide a boost for participants' self-confidence, flexibility, toleration of ambiguity and, more generally, personal maturity (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Cushner, 2007; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008). Oftentimes these changes do not relate only to participants' personal growth, but also to their professional development (Willard-Holt, 2001). In the aforementioned case study of practising teachers who participated in a short-term study programme to Japan, personal growth and increased self-confidence were evident, in addition to becoming more committed to their responsibility as global educators to promote intercultural understanding (Cook, 2009, pp. 114-118).

Professional growth: Several studies have demonstrated that overseas study programmes often influence participants' future academic decisions and/or professional careers. For example, a longitudinal study found that over 75% of 3,400 International Education of Students (IES) alumni maintained that they have 'acquired skill sets that influenced their career path', and 62% stated that their overseas study experiences triggered an interest in a certain career direction (Dwyer, 2004, p. 159). The vast majority of respondents (87%) also agreed that these experiences 'influenced their subsequent educational experiences' (p. 157).

Another study surveying six annual cohorts of university students involved in a two-week programme to Costa Rica found that the programme has encouraged many of them to travel overseas again and enrol in university courses outside their regular major studies, leading to an increased interest in interdisciplinary studies (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Other studies highlight the '[l]ongterm impact on career advancement and personal accomplishment has been also associated with study abroad' (Cushner, 2007, p. 29), concluding that participants

return with a new sense of authority and a greater desire to share their knowledge and experience with others, have greater academic prestige because of their participation in an overseas program, and are more likely to apply and be selected for additional opportunities for international travel and study. (Cushner, 2007, p. 29, citing Martens, 1991)

A study involving practising teachers who participated in AEF study programmes in the 1990s found that these programmes 'ignited a desire to enhance ... newly acquired knowledge' and urged them 'to redress areas of ignorance that had been highlighted by the ... experience, or to build on the known by learning more' (Halse, 1999, p. 64).

Intercultural growth: Overseas study programmes share the common objective of developing intercultural understanding. Qualitative and quantitative research suggests that many programmes achieve this goal. For example, longitudinal analysis of the long-term effects of the IES programme showed that 98% of alumni stated that their experiences ‘helped ... better understand ... cultural values and biases’ and 94% agreed that they continue ‘influencing ... interaction with people from different cultures’ (Dwyer, 2004, p. 158). Moreover, the experiences have increased participants’ interest in other cultures and affected the development of cross-cultural friendships beyond the programme (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Dwyer, 2004).

A pre- and post-intervention study of a short-term overseas study programme—using Hammer and Bennett’s (2002) Intercultural Development Inventory—found that the senior students who participated ($n=16$) ‘improved their ability to accept and adapt to cultural differences [Acceptance/Adaptation]’ (Anderson, et al., 2003, p. 464). However, improvement in other dimensions of intercultural understanding, such as the perception of cultural commonalities and similarities, could not be confirmed. Other studies examining the effects of study abroad programs have found an increase in participants’ intercultural awareness and competence (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004) as well as positive experiences of cultural difference (Jackson, 2009).

Studies on the implications of overseas study programmes designed for pre-service teachers have arrived at similar conclusions (see, for example, Romano & Cushner, 2007). Such programmes ‘can be the catalyst that starts teachers on a path of learning from others as well as forging relationships based on deep and meaningful understandings of people’s similarities and differences’ (p. 224). A study investigating the impact of international practicum experience on the professional and personal development of participating US pre-service teachers ($n=50$) concluded that ‘the greatest impact was on students’ beliefs about self and others, as evidenced through increased cultural awareness, improved self-efficacy and self-awareness, and professional development in terms of global-mindedness’ (Cushner & Mahon, 2002, p. 49). Similarly, a study on the impact of an international field experiment involving 15 pre-service teachers—from the US to Rome, Italy—found that ‘benefits included both professional and personal changes, such as increased confidence, [and] a better appreciation and respect for differences of others and other cultures’ (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008, p. 14).

All of these findings resonate with the results of the *DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program evaluation*: all 88 teachers and principals surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the programme had strengthened their own intercultural understanding (DEECD & AEF, 2014, p. 26).

Another in-depth case study found similar effects on intercultural growth, highlighting that transformative intercultural learning processes are facilitated by personal ‘immersion within both a culture and school’ and the ‘essential role of an intercultural guide who promoted reflective practices around issues of culture and self’ (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 35). All of these findings resonate with the results of the *DEECD-AEF Overseas Study Program evaluation*: all 88 teachers and principals surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the programme had strengthened their own intercultural understanding (DEECD & AEF, 2014, p. 26).

Some studies, however, are more cautious in their appraisal of overseas study programmes as a powerful enabler of intercultural growth. While acknowledging some positive effects of such programmes on participants’ cognitive, affective and behavioural skills, one study concludes that many participants reflect only superficial levels of intercultural understanding (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). This indicates that a baseline definition of ‘intercultural understanding’ is still a challenge for education researchers.

The literature on overseas study programmes not only sheds light on their multiple effects on participants’ personal and professional development, but also highlights the following success factors.

1. Balance of cultural immersion and content

Education researchers have highlighted the importance of providing a balanced mix of authentic cultural encounters and content during overseas study programmes (see, for example, Engle & Engle, 2003). The core goal of these programmes should be to ‘present participants with a challenge—the emotional and intellectual challenge of direct, authentic cultural encounters and guided reflection upon those encounters’ (p. 7).

While researchers may not always agree on the ideal balance of content and cultural immersion—due to the wide variety of overseas study programmes and associated objectives—there is a broad consensus that both elements are crucial (see, for example, Howlett, 2014, citing Spence & Tuma, 2002). Moreover, immersion experience in other cultures and education systems during pre-service teacher training is considered to have a very positive effect on pre-service teachers’ intercultural development (Marx & Moss, 2011).

2. Duration of the programme

Research shows that (length of) time is another important factor in boosting the sustainability of study programme impacts, with more generally considered better (Dwyer, 2004). Nevertheless, numerous studies have found a range of positive effects from study programmes that are less than one semester in length (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Cook, 2009; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). But, importantly, shorter programmes correlate also with a greater need for sound design and implementation in order for them to be effective (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Dwyer, 2004).

3. Planning and implementation

To increase the effectiveness and impact of (especially) short-term overseas study programmes, careful conceptualisation, planning and execution are crucial, and include the following three requirements.

Competent facilitator/group leader and other speakers

Competent and experienced guidance is a key success factor (AEF, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011), and programme facilitators need to possess the pedagogical competence for experiential teaching (Howlett, 2014). Integrating guest lecturers from the host country into the programme is another important element (Howlett, 2014).

Pre-departure preparatory components

There is a broad consensus that pre-departure preparation constitutes another key factor of successful programmes, especially for short-term ones (AEF, 2012; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; McAllister, et al., 2006; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013).

Reflection

Reflecting on experiences gained during overseas study programmes enables transformative learning to occur, particularly in the context of deepening intercultural understanding (Cushner, 2007; Engle & Engle, 2003; Howlett, 2014; McAllister, et al., 2006). Both educationalists and researchers agree that 'experiences are not automatically educational; there must be a connection (reflection) to the experience to give it meaning' (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). This reflection can be personal and/or facilitated, even though some participants will need more guidance than others (Marx & Moss, 2011).

> Research questions

From the perspective of AEF study programmes as potentially powerful catalysts for personal and professional transformations, the research questions for *What Works 7* focus on the changes participants have experienced as a result of their study programme participation.

- How has participation in a study programme led to the deepening of their intercultural understanding and knowledge/awareness of the respective country in Asia, including its history, society, geography and contemporary culture?
- How has participation led to further commitment to professional learning for Asia literacy?
- How has participation helped build participants' confidence to promote Asia-related teaching and learning in schools?
- What other changes have occurred in participants' professional life as a direct or indirect result of their participation?

> Analytical framework

What Works 7 views AEF study programmes as professional learning that provides a combination of information-based learning (e.g. seminars, lectures) and experiential learning through cultural immersion (e.g. homestay, school visits, visits to cultural sites). In addition to its alignment with AITSL's definition of professional learning, this analytical framework resonates with the previously identified success factors for short-term overseas study programmes that seek to achieve cognitive, affective and behavioural learning outcomes (Howlett, 2014; Marx & Moss, 2011; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013; Spencer & Tuma, 2002).

The well-established framework of experiential learning (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Kolb, 1984) provides a way of examining the transformative learning processes as a direct or indirect result of AEF study programmes. According to this framework, learning constitutes a 'process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). This is because 'experiences are not automatically educational' (Howlett, 2014, p. 15) and cross-cultural contact does not automatically lead to intercultural learning or competence (Nam, 2011; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). Learners need to interpret and make meaning out of their personal experiences to guide subsequent understanding and action (Mezirow, 1990), pointing to the interrelation between experiences, reflection and the application of new learning in practice (Itin, 1999).

The analytical framework for *What Works 7* combines elements from experiential and transformative learning (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow & associates, 1997) with Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe's (1994) 'biographical perspective' on teachers' professional development.

The notion of reflexivity being key to transformative (experiential) learning (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990, 1997) has been confirmed by empirical research on overseas study programmes discussed previously. Hence, in reflecting the nature of AEF study programmes as capacity building activities for teachers and school leaders, the analytical framework for *What Works 7* combines elements from experiential and transformative learning (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow & associates, 1997) with Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe's (1994) 'biographical perspective' on teachers' professional development.

Teachers' professional behaviour and career decisions are influenced by both their professional situation and their background and experiences (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Teachers go through various transition periods during their professional careers, some seamless and others discontinuous. During discontinuous transitions, *critical incidents* are key to challenging one's existing patterns of thinking and acting (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). The notion of critical incidents aligns with experiential learning models, urging teachers to reconsider their choices and personal priorities in their work, and to make decisions that further influence their professional growth (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994).

> Method

What Works 7 is primarily qualitative, with some references to quantitative data and findings from previous evaluations of AEF study programmes to Asia. Unlike previous *What Works* research, the case studies in *What Works 7* use a biographic-narrative approach, instead of school illustrations, focusing on six individual study programme participants and their change journey.

The literature survey has helped identify factors that can enable and/or impede effective transformative learning and its subsequent application upon participants' return from an overseas study programme. The findings from this survey have assisted also in the development of specific guidelines for in-depth interviews and Most Significant Change, or MSC, narratives (Davies & Dart, 2005). The qualitative data gathered from these interviews and MSC narratives have been examined—with reference to the analytical framework—to inform the compilation of six detailed case studies.

The participants for the six case studies were identified using the following criteria:

- Participants from different jurisdictions, with attention paid to including a variety of sectors
- A mix of study programme types
- A mix of school levels (primary and/or secondary)
- A mix of location (e.g. metropolitan, regional, rural)
- A variety of change types (e.g. personal, in teaching practice, in leadership).

Participants completed written responses to a questionnaire followed by an MSC narrative at the end of the data gathering process. The AEF Research Team also contacted some participants to seek more information.

The case studies are intended to show how AEF study programmes bring about personal and professional changes among participants towards heightened Asia literacy and intercultural understanding. In illustrating 'what works', the case studies are indicative of the kinds of transformations experienced as a result of the programmes *as well as* how and when these transformations occurred, what triggered them, and their broader impacts. So while the case studies delve into deep, meta-level analysis of what transpired, they are neither representative nor prescriptive.

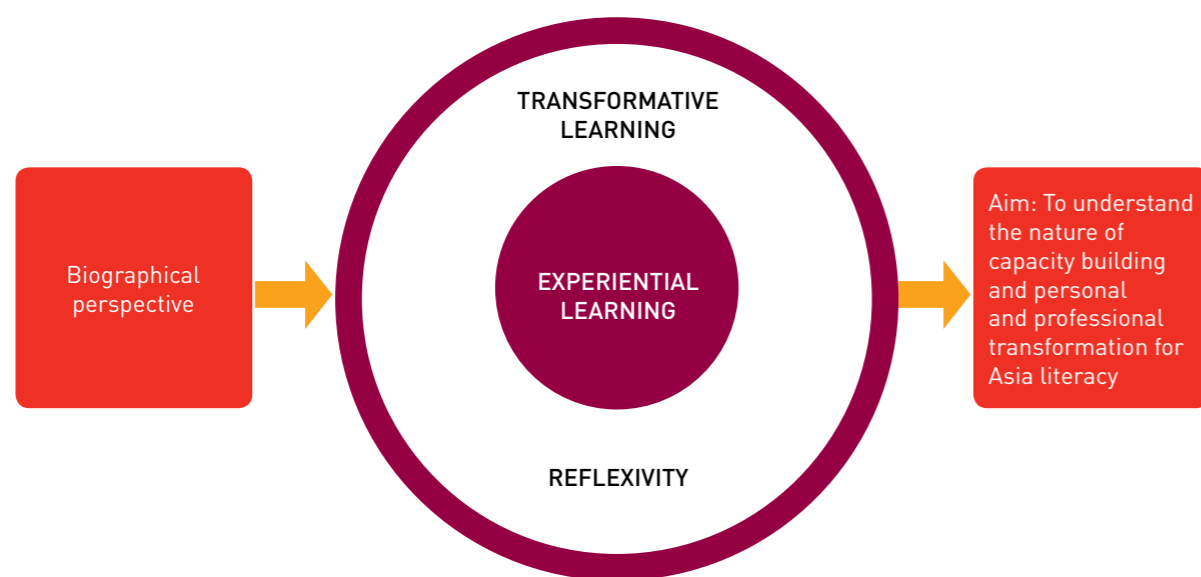


Figure 3: Analytical framework for *What Works 7* and intended outcome

Case study	School and location	Study programme/s	Key changes
1 Susan Alexander	Telopea Park School (ACT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India – 1999 Korea – 2006 AEF conference/study programme to India (Linking Latitudes) – 2007 China – 2009 Vietnam – 2010 Myanmar – 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triggered and sustained interest in Asia Enhanced Asia literacy and engagement Promotion of Asia literacy among students by incorporating Asia perspectives in teaching Mathematics Vision and confidence to undertake a major project with students to support a school in Vanuatu
2 Ian McKenzie	Alkira Secondary College (VIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China (Hong Kong, Nanjing and Shanghai) – 2010 Korean Studies Workshop Program – 2011 Australia-India Leaders Program (in-bound only) – 2012 AEF-DEECD Eastern Metropolitan Region Study Program – 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained and further reinforced personal interest in various aspects of Asia Built school partnerships with student and teacher exchange programmes Building Asia literacy within and beyond school community
3 Kim Hann	St Catherine's Catholic College (NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia – 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed capacity as a teacher of multiple languages Increased capacity to teach Indonesian from a more authentic perspective Further reinforced personal commitment to Asia literacy and teaching Indonesian Initiated cross-cultural university partnership between the University of Newcastle and the State University of Yogyakarta
4 Mary Pendergast (now DEECD Senior Advisor)	Warrnambool College (VIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korean Studies Workshop Program – 2010 Australia-India Leaders Program – 2011 Singapore School Leaders programme – 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Asia literacy and intercultural understanding Commitment to promote to promote Asia literacy and global-mindedness among students Introduced major curriculum shifts towards Asia
5 Polly Smart	Open Access College – School of the Air (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia-India Leaders Program – 2011 Japan – 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforced commitment to promote Asia literacy among students and across the school community Sustained and further encouraged personal interests in Asia as well as professional development focus on the region
6 Wendy Hall	Aspley State High School (QLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korea – 2005 AEF conference/study programme to India (Linking Latitudes) – 2007 Myanmar – 2013 China – 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Asia literacy, intercultural understanding and commitment to Asia engagement Personal transformation leading to curriculum and pedagogical changes at school Developed capacity to teach about Asia with authority

Each case study is accompanied by a visual timeline of change, providing a snapshot of, and insights into, key transformations that occurred. In addition, these timelines reflect a change journey. For the majority of these case studies, the transformations have centred on teacher capacity, which is the primary focus of AEF study programmes. In some instances, however, the transformations have impacted also on student learning and outcomes (see, for example, DEECD & AEF, 2014). There appears to be a time lapse between participants' transformations and changes to student learning and outcomes.

Table 1: Case studies in *What Works 7*

Susan Alexander works as School Career Advisory at Telopea Park School (ACT) and was previously a teacher of Mathematics. Telopea Park is an IB school, and many of its students come from diplomat families. The student population is very diverse, with students coming from around 90 countries.

Susan has participated in numerous AEF study programmes, visiting India (1999), Korea (2006), India (2007, as part of the *Linking Latitudes* conference), China (2009), Vietnam (2010) and most recently Myanmar (2013). For Susan, these study programme experiences have increased substantially her knowledge and awareness of the diverse cultures, peoples and education systems within the Asia region. She now feels more informed about Asia and believes that she can speak about the region with some authority.

Susan has experienced also the transformative power of AEF study programmes, commenting that 'study programmes have encouraged me to step outside my comfort zone, given me a balanced perspective, and increased my confidence to participate in conversations relating to Asia'. In particular, she highlights the cultural immersion aspect of these programmes as particularly valuable and powerful experiences, citing examples such as homestays, school visits and other first-hand experiences, for instance, a visit of the South-North Korean border zone.

In addition, participating in AEF study programmes has further increased Susan's personal interest in the Asia-Pacific region, leading her to become an avid follower of Asia in the media. Despite being a veteran of these study programmes, Susan is committed to continuing her Asia literacy journey, stating:

My experience with the study programmes I have been involved in is only the tip of what I want to experience within Asia. I am looking forward to participating in many more AEF study programmes and maybe even lead a programme one day.

This commitment to Asia literacy has influenced also Susan's teaching and, more specifically, her desire to promote Asia literacy among students. She states:

After each study programme I always incorporate aspects of my Asian experience into the content of my lessons ... [As a Maths teacher] I would provide background notes on the topic and hence contribute to my students' Asia literacy [e.g. applying the Pythagoras theorem during a Chinese Kite making unit].

A major reason for Susan's interest in Asia and participation in AEF study programmes has been her desire to know more about her students, many of whom have come from, or lived in, various Asian countries.

Apart from fostering her students' Asia literacy and intercultural understanding, Susan actively encourages her teacher colleagues at Telopea Park to participate in AEF study programmes, with many of them taking up the opportunities offered.

A major reason for Susan's interest in Asia and participation in AEF study programmes has been her desire to know more about her students, many of whom have come from, or lived in, various Asian countries. The study programme experiences have helped her understand her students better, leading to improved student-teacher and parent-teacher relationships as well as positive learning outcomes. Referring to her participation in the *Korean Studies Workshop Program* (2006) as an example, Susan reflects:

When I share with my Korean students the experiences I had during a visit to their country, I can see their eyes light up. This leads to an improved relationship with my students and fosters improved learning outcomes.

In addition, the experiences gained from AEF study programmes have empowered Susan to organise her own aid project for a school in Vanuatu, which she visited during a private trip. Through participation in various study programmes, Susan was introduced to various school support projects in the Asia region, inspiring her to initiate her own school building project after she witnessed in 2006 the poor resources at a school in the remote village of Port Resolution, in Vanuatu.

Together with many of her students and support from Rotary Australia, Susan has embarked on a project to improve the school's infrastructure and student literacy at the remote village school. In the past seven years, the school has witnessed significant renovations, including a new school hall, kitchen, fully equipped library (with two computers) and a generator. This was achieved also as a result of Susan's students raising around \$114,000. In that time, a solid relationship has developed between Telopea Park and the school in Port Resolution. Susan saw her students' direct involvement as paramount, commenting:

I did not want to only support a school in Asia Pacific; I wanted my Australian students to be part of the journey. I wanted my Aussie students to see the value of undertaking a community service project ... It was the AEF study programmes that gave me the vision and confidence to embark on this ambitious project.

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences and school visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authentic perspectives that deepen knowledge about Asia Authentic perspectives that help develop confidence and authority to engage in discussions about Asia Better equipped to understand students and parents from an Asian background Better understanding of diverse education systems and impact on daily life in the respective countries Commitment to promoting and building Asia literacy within the school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining/developing authentic perspectives are a common effect of in-country experiences (DEECD & AEF, Cushner, 2007; 2014; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008)
Information-based learning about the countries visited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded knowledge and understanding of various countries in Asia Sparked and sustained an interest in Asia and learning about Asia Incorporate Asian perspectives into maths lessons Influenced professional learning trajectory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded knowledge about the target destination is central to overseas study programme outcomes (Halse, 1999) Overseas study programmes can lead to incorporation of newly acquired knowledge into classroom teaching and learning (Cook, 2009) Overseas study programme experiences influence future professional learning decisions (Dwyer, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001)
Personal and professional networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When combined with guided reflection exercises, led to transformative and lasting learning experiences Changed perceptions about the Asia region Commitment to doing something about the transformative learnings gained (e.g. setting up a school development initiative in Vanuatu) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions and sharing with other participants—especially with guided reflection—lead to transformative thinking (Cushner, 2007; Engle & Engle, 2003; Howlett, 2014; Marx & Moss, 2011)

Table 2: What worked for Susan Alexander

Susan Alexander's Most Significant Changes

Triggered and sustained interest in Asia, enhancing Asia literacy and engagement
 Promotion of Asia literacy among students by incorporating Asia perspectives into teaching and learning (maths)
 Vision and confidence to realise a major social action project (together with students) to support a school in Vanuatu

Key quotes and personal thoughts

Study programmes help me understand and improve my relationship with my students and their parents. When I share with my Korean students the experiences I had during a visit to their country, I can see their eyes light up. This leads to an improved relationship with my students, and fosters improved learning outcomes.

The AEF study programmes have exposed me to Asia. I have learnt about the high end development, as well as the poverty and the needy in Asia. The study programmes have encouraged me step outside my comfort zone, given me a balanced perspective, and increased my confidence to participate in conversations relating to Asia ... Due to the AEF study programmes I have participated in, I now have an increased awareness of the cultures of Asia, its peoples and their education systems. I now read more articles about Asia in the newspaper and watch more Asian programs on TV.

The most significant change for me, as a result of the AEF study programmes, was my increased awareness of aid programs to support the needy in Asia. This awareness gave me a vision to improve literacy in a remote, under privileged school in Vanuatu.

Start

No pre-existing Asia engagement except for participation in a study tour to China in 1996 (not organised by AEF)



Continuously expanded **Asia literacy** and awareness of Asia's cultures, peoples and education systems, leading to enhanced professional capacity and confidence to teach about and engage with Asia
 Future plans to participate in more AEF study programmes to further understanding and knowledge about the region

Improved understanding of and relationship with students (especially those born in Asia), leading to improved learning outcomes

Impact on classroom teaching and learning and promotion of Asia literacy among students: Susan has regularly incorporated Asia perspectives in her maths classes.

School community: Encouraging other staff to participate in overseas study programmes

Implementation of a major project **supporting an under-developed school in Vanuatu** (indirect effect of AEF study programmes) and establishing a partner school relationship
 AEF study programmes have given Susan insights into school support initiatives in Asia and the confidence and vision to successfully pursue this project that is now more than seven-years old; the project has involved many of her students in fund-raising (\$114,000), building of new school hall, school kitchen and fully-equipped library in Vanuatu, supported by Rotary Australia; students involved in this voluntary aid project developed employability skills, such as communication, time management, team work, organisational skills, cultural sensitivity etc.

Personal and professional transformations

Ian McKenzie is Principal at Alkira Secondary College (VIC), located in Melbourne's southeast. Alkira was established in 2009 to cater for a total student enrolment of around 1,150+. The school has offered a Chinese (Mandarin) language programme since 2009.

Ian's interest in various aspects of the Asia region dates many years prior to participating in his first AEF study programme in 2010 and his time as Principal at Alkira. As teacher in his previous school, for example, he ran Japanese History classes for senior students and introduced Japanese Studies. He has travelled extensively in Asia, visiting India, Malaysia and Singapore for cultural and historical interest, and has completed an Indian history and economics major and Indian politics minor at university.

Ian described his first AEF study programme participation as the catalyst for taking part in subsequent programmes. He emphasised that the *DEECD Study Tour* study programme (Hong Kong, Nanjing and Shanghai) in 2010

... triggered an enduring interest in modern day China. [It] has ignited an interest in me to learn about regional food variations. [It] has got me interested in learning about the Minority groups – especially the MIAO group – in China as well as the Muslim population [and] the relationship China has with the nations around the South China Sea; Japan, Vietnam etc.

Prior to this, China had not been central to Ian's Asia-related interests, and he now admits that the experience has motivated him to research more about Chinese history and follow media developments around China.

Ian's first study programme experience included a visit to a school in Nanjing, which Alkira later adopted as its partner school. Ian highlighted experiences of cultural immersion and visits to cultural sites, such as the Massacre Museum in Nanjing and the Jewish Synagogue in Shanghai, as particularly valuable components of the China study programme. He drew attention to the opportunities to interact with locals, guides, teachers, students and principals, underscoring the significance, on a personal level, of daily life experiences such as sharing a meal with his host family.

In subsequent years, Ian took part in three more AEF study programmes, namely: 1) the *Korean Studies Workshop Program* in July 2011; 2) the *City of Melbourne India School Leaders* programme (2012, in-bound only, hosting school leaders from India in Melbourne); and 3) *DEECD-AEF Eastern Metropolitan Region Study Program* to China (2012).

Participation in a range of AEF study programmes has encouraged Ian to accelerate the development of broader Asia literacy within his school through the study of different countries in the Asia region. One approach has been to compare Western/European perspectives of historical events with those of Asia.

According to Ian, his AEF study programme experiences have influenced, and continue to influence, his capacity as an educator, his global outlook, and his school community. Having just established Alkira's Chinese language programme the year before, Ian went on his first study programme with the intention of learning first-hand about the languages and cultures of China. These learning experiences have led to profound changes within his school community.

For example, the study programme to China in 2010 gave him the opportunity to meet other school leaders and identify a Chinese school in Nanjing suitable for an international school partnership and exchange. Furthermore, his participation in the programme has enabled him to create opportunities for staff and students to develop and promote the school's Chinese programme, with support from the University of Melbourne's Confucius Institute. Alkira's Chinese programme has since become a leading example of Chinese language education for Victorian schools and—through collaborations with schools and the Education Bureau in Changzhou—its international school partnership has matured to incorporate not only student exchange, but also teacher exchange and curriculum sharing. Moreover, Alkira established recently a teacher exchange with a school in South Korea and a partnership with a school in Delhi, India.

In 2011, Ian participated in the *Korean Studies Workshop Program*, highlighting his growing interest in the Asia region and desire to learn more about it. His motives for participating in this study programme included the economic status of South Korea, its reputation as 'Green Nation', and his perception that Korean is a relatively easy language to learn.

Asia literacy at Alkira, however, is not limited to its Chinese programme. Participation in a range of AEF study programmes has encouraged Ian to accelerate the development of broader Asia literacy within his school through the study of different countries in the Asia region. One approach has been to compare Western/European perspectives of historical events with those of Asia.

Ian's participation in AEF study programmes has led also to changes that transcend his school community. He describes:

As a result of my participation and my keen interest to involve my school community, I have found that the enthusiasm has spread to other schools, not only neighbourhood schools, but also those further afield. As a result, I have acted as a guide and mentor to ten principals, supporting and encouraging them in their participation in the teaching of Mandarin and Chinese culture.

Ian has mentored two primary schools to consolidate partnerships with their respective partner schools in China, and Hillsmeade Primary School—Alkira’s feeder school—has most recently entered into a school partnership with a school in Changzhou.

Ian’s participation in the *DEECD-AEF Eastern Metropolitan Region study programme* to China in 2012 has led to the establishment of a community of learners involving six schools from the programme, including Alkira. Ian plays a key role within this community, which is aimed at supporting further development of Asia literacy within the respective schools and beyond. In 2013, a group of principals and staff from the community undertook an independent study programme to China for which Ian acted as facilitator and group leader.

Ian’s commitment to Asia engagement has been demonstrated also by his frequent visits to the region, both on a professional and personal capacity. He has travelled to China six times in the last five years, including two visits to Alkira’s partner schools in Nanjing and Changzhou, as well as to Korea and Singapore on two occasions and to India to set up a school partnership. On a personal level, he has visited Malaysia and volunteered in animal protection projects.

Evidently, participation in AEF study programmes has enabled Ian to build and strengthen his professional networks locally and within the Asia region. The international school partnerships and exchange programmes established between Alkira and schools in China, Korea and India have resulted from the networking opportunities afforded through study programme participation. Professional networking has enabled Ian also to develop strong interpersonal relationships, commenting, for example, ‘I have continued to have extremely close relations with teachers, principals, bureaucrats [in China] ... I have strong links with Singaporean Principals, and the common thread is pedagogy.’

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences and cultural site visits (China 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded cultural awareness Sparked ongoing interest in China Reignited interest in Asia region Catalyst for subsequent professional and personal learning Catalyst for further AEF study programme participation (Korea 2011, India 2012, China 2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crucial importance of first-hand cultural experiences to transform thinking (Engle & Engle, 2003) Transformations through experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) Overseas study programmes can trigger sustained personal interest in a region and influence future professional learning (Dwyer, 2004; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994)
Professional and personal networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish school relationships and partnerships Boost Alkira’s Chinese programme Promote Asia literacy across the school community Expansion of Ian’s professional and personal networks with educators and others in China, India and Korea Sustain Ian’s interest in and engagement with Asia Active community of learners in Australia to support Asia literacy (six schools, including Alkira) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional growth (e.g. professional contacts, sense of direction for future career choices, a sense of responsibility), is one of four general objectives of most overseas study programmes (Anderson, et al., 2003) Intercultural growth (interest in other cultures, diminished ethnocentrism, cultural sensitivity) is another general objective (Anderson, et al., 2003)
School visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish school relationships and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above Immersion experience in other cultures and education systems is important for teachers’ intercultural development (Marx & Moss, 2011)

Table 3: What worked for Ian McKenzie

Ian McKenzie's Most Significant Changes

Sustained and further reinforced personal interest in various aspects of Asia
Established school partnerships with student and teacher exchange programmes
Building Asia literacy within and beyond school community

Key quotes and personal thoughts

Start
(Pre-existing Asia engagement)
Born in India
Studied Indian history, politics and economics
Ran Japanese History classes for senior school; introduced Japanese studies in previous school
Travelled to India, Malaysia, Singapore, for cultural and historical interest

[The 2010 China programme] triggered an enduring interest in modern day China ... [It] has got me interested in learning about the Minority groups ... in China as well as the Muslim population [and] the relationship China has with the nations around the South.

As a result of the study tour, I was encouraged to accelerate the development of Asia literacy in our school ... we have encouraged our students to look at the different countries in Asia.

The enthusiasm has spread to other schools, not only neighbourhood schools but those further afield. As a result, I have acted as a guide and mentor to ten Principals, supporting and encouraging them in their participation in the teaching of Mandarin and Chinese culture.



Catalyst for subsequent AEF study programmes

Teacher exchange with Korean school

Further strengthening school partnership and Chinese programme

Cultural learning and trigger for ongoing personal interest in China and the region

Personal and professional relationships
Close relationships with school leaders, bureaucrats and tour guides/directors, including personal friendships

School community
Impetus for new Chinese programme (introduced in 2009)
Establishing a school partnership following a visit to a school in Nanjing, extending later to teacher exchange
Boost for Asia literacy across school community

Community of learners beyond the school community
Ian's commitment to Asia literacy spread to other schools in Australia; Ian has assisted ten principals in their endeavour to extend their Chinese programmes (language and culture).
School leaders (all participants in the AEF 2012 China study programme) set up a network to assist each other in the implementation of Asia literacy, with Ian playing a key role (e.g. as group leader for a study programme to China).

Personal and professional transformations

Kim Hann taught Indonesian at St Catherine’s Catholic College (NSW) until the end of 2013. She currently teaches French at Turramurra High School, but intends to teach Indonesian again in the future. During her years at St Catherine’s, Kim helped introduce and teach an Indonesian programme. She has participated in AEF’s Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools (BALGS) programme (2011) and Australia-Asia BRIDGE School Partnership Project (since 2012), managing a partnership with a remote village school in Central Java.

Kim calls herself an ‘Indonesianist’. Whilst teaching at St Catherine’s Catholic College, she completed her Diploma in Modern Languages in Indonesian and studied Indonesian for one month in Lombok in 2013. In the same year, Kim participated in AEF’s *Indonesia: Uncovered* study programme.

Through her study programme participation Kim’s understanding of Indonesian culture and society has broadened and deepened substantially. She stressed that the experience has brought her ‘academic knowledge to life’. In particular, the intensive cultural immersion experiences have enabled Kim to gain much deeper insights into the country than a tourist visit could have offered. This has since spurred her commitment to Asia literacy, with a particular focus on Indonesia, and further reinforced her interest in learning about and visiting the Asia region. Moreover, Kim has become ‘much more personally committed to engage with and be inclusive of colleagues who are of Asian heritage’. She adds:

The study programme really did galvanise my belief that Indonesia and Indonesians are so poorly understood and most frequently totally misunderstood by the majority of Australians. For the stability, prosperity, peace and harmony of our region, it is critical that we work to engage with our neighbours in a truly respectful manner, from a basis of open-heartedness and willingness to cooperate to build bridges of friendship for the common good.

The knowledge, understanding and skills that Kim gained through her study programme participation has enabled her also to improve her teaching, by including more authentic perspectives and fostering intercultural understanding among her students. She comments:

Professionally speaking, it makes an enormous difference being able to teach and bring first-hand experiences into the classroom. Authenticity is so important when it comes to working to create an intercultural experience at school for students.

Kim also has incorporated her study programme experiences and learnings into her curriculum development activities. She recently finished developing a unit of work on intercultural understanding and language skills, which has been inspired and influenced by her experiences in Indonesia.

Another outcome of Kim’s participation in an AEF study programme has been the expansion of her personal and professional networks, both in Indonesia and Australia. This expanded network has enabled her to play an important role in establishing an initiative between the Schools of Education at the University of Newcastle and the State University of Yogyakarta. Both universities have since been collaborating to establish joint student projects for pre-service teachers.

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen already existing knowledge about Asia • Authentic perspectives that enable Asia-related knowledge to transform student thinking • Commitment to promoting and building Asia literacy within the school community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact of overseas study programmes on the depth of participants’ cultural knowledge (Halse, 1999; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013) • Teacher-participants may be enabled to translate knowledge gained from overseas study programmes into lesson plans and to teach with greater authority and confidence (DEECD & AEF, 2014) • Teachers who participate in overseas study programmes become more committed to their responsibility as global educators to promote intercultural understanding (Cook, 2009)
Debriefing activities facilitated by a competent study programme leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled crystallisation of entire experience into useful knowledge and understandings for the classroom • Thinking about how to utilise new knowledge in a classroom context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound reflection and debriefing processes have been emphasised in the theoretical framework on experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990) • Competent and experienced leader/guide is a key success factor of overseas study programmes (AEF, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011)

Table 4: What worked for Kim Hann

Kim Hann's Most Significant Changes

Increased capacity to teach Indonesian from a more authentic perspective

Further reinforced personal commitment to, and passion for, Asia literacy and teaching Indonesian

Initiated cross-cultural university partnership between University of Newcastle and State University of Yogyakarta

Key quotes and personal thoughts

I was passionate about Asia Literacy before I undertook this study programme ... I worked very hard at my former school with the Principal to transition from teaching European languages to an Asian language (Indonesian), as I fundamentally believe that it is critical for us to work to build bridges of understanding, tolerance and mutual respect with our closest neighbours.

For the stability, prosperity, peace and harmony of our region, it is critical that we work to engage with our neighbours in a truly respectful manner, from a basis of open-heartedness and willingness to cooperate to build bridges of friendship for the common good.

I keep in touch with many Indonesian friends and acquaintances and hope to travel back to visit them one day.

The study programme brought academic knowledge to life.

Professionally speaking, it makes an enormous difference being able to teach and bring first-hand experiences into the classroom. Authenticity is so important when it comes to working to create an intercultural experience at school for students.

Starting point

Personal recognition of the importance of engaging with Asia and, more specifically, with Indonesia

2010-2013: enrolment in Diploma in Modern Languages (majoring in Indonesian)



Introducing and teaching Indonesian programme at St Catherine's Catholic College (which Kim left at the end of 2013)

Asia literacy and interest in Indonesia
Provided further impetus for personal commitment to Asia literacy and sustained interest in Indonesia

Curriculum resources
Developed a curriculum unit on intercultural understanding and language skills using her study programme experiences

Pedagogical change
Personal and authentic in-country experiences enrich teaching and help foster intercultural understanding

Beyond school community
Bringing together representatives from University of Newcastle and State University of Yogyakarta to establish a university partnership between education faculties

Maintaining contact with friends and acquaintances from Indonesia

Personal and professional transformations

Mary Pendergast has been working as Senior Advisor, Regional Performance and Planning (South-west Division), at the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) since January 2013. Prior to this role, Mary was Principal at Warrnambool College (VIC) for six years, during which she went on several AEF study programmes.

Mary’s commitment to Asia literacy began when she was appointed Principal of Warrnambool in 2007, at which time the school had already a longstanding partnership of more than 20 years with a school in Yogyakarta (SMA3). In 2009, Mary participated in AEF’s *Leading 21st Century Schools* programme and subsequently went on three AEF study programmes: 1) *Korean Studies Workshop Program* (2010); 2) *Australia-India Leaders Program* (2011); and 3) *Singapore School Leaders Program* (2012). Her participation in these programmes has led to a range of personal and professional changes, including deepened knowledge on, interest in, and commitment to Asia literacy, heightened intercultural understanding and global mindedness, as well as the capacity to drive substantial changes with staff towards a more Asia literate curriculum at school.

As a result of taking part in the *Singapore School Leaders Program*, Mary has gained insights into Singapore’s high performing education system and how Australia might learn from it. For her, this programme in particular has had a major impact on her commitment to Asia literacy in education, believing that it is an imperative for all schools and broader Australian society. Even while Principal at Warrnambool—a regional school—she saw it as her role to ensure all students understand the need to become global citizens who are ‘world ready’ and culturally literate by the time they exit school.

Mary also highlights the opportunities to network, discuss and share with other participants as a particularly valuable aspect of AEF study programmes. She comments:

Put a group of principals together and you hothouse the application of experiences to ideas about how they transfer to our work. This is a significant value add of these tours. The networking, the development of like minds and new contacts, the default mentoring of less experienced leaders and the common focus are all addictive! The ideas coalesce into actions and the actions become part of school improvement strategies.

In addition, Mary has shared systematically her study programme experiences and learnings with other schools through the Warrnambool Network Schools.

Mary sees authentic in-country experiences for teachers and students as pivotal to transforming thinking about Asia. During her time as Principal, she enabled 25 staff members to travel overseas on study programmes, and many of her students have gone on overseas trips to Borneo, Vietnam and Thailand to engage in, among others, community work.

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of intercultural understanding and global-mindedness • Improved knowledge and understanding about various aspects of the Asia region • Commitment to promoting and building Asia literacy within the school community • Commitment to ensure that students are ‘world ready’ and globally competent • Catalyst to implement curriculum changes at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near-immediate effects of overseas study programmes have been discovered and supported by research (Cushner, 2007; Romano & Cushner, 2007) • Pivotal importance of cultural immersion during overseas study programmes (Engle & Engle, 2003) • First-hand experiences provide valuable experiences for personal growth and professional development (Anderson, et al., 2003; Engle & Engle, 2003)
Information-based learning about education systems (with school visits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of Singapore’s high-performing education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information based learning and immersion within an education system can contribute to both personal and professional development (Anderson, et al., 2003; Engle & Engle, 2003) • Immersion ‘within both a culture and school’ is valuable during overseas study programmes (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 35)
Professional networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies to build Asia literacy through peer discussion and sharing • Sharing with like-minded leaders provided a basis for implementing changes at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional growth (e.g. professional contacts, a sense of responsibility), is one of four general objectives of most overseas study programmes (Anderson, et al., 2003) • Overseas study programmes influence professional learning (Dwyer, 2004)

Table 5: What worked for Mary Pendergas

Mary Pendergast's Most Significant Changes

Expanded Asia literacy and deeper intercultural understanding
 Reinforced commitment to promote Asia literacy and global-mindedness among students
 Introduced major curriculum shifts towards Asia at school

Key quotes and personal thoughts

Start
 (Pre-existing Asia engagement)
 Developed interest in Asia in 2007 when appointed Principal
 Long-standing school partnership with Indonesian school
 Led study tours for students and school community to Asia

[New skills, cultural awareness and competency] then became part of my everyday vernacular which in turn, over time, normalised the work locally. No one would be in any doubt in my community, of my commitment to enabling students to be Asia literate.

The history of India was new to me, particularly the story of Buddha as well as the development of Hindu beliefs ... the guide gave me a deep appreciation of the beliefs of the Hindu people.

The networking [between participating principals], the development of ... new contacts ... The ideas coalesce into actions and the actions become part of the school improvement strategies.

What it taught me was that there is no substitute for learning 'in-country'.



Developed interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, and intercultural understanding

Substantially deepened knowledge of Asia, intercultural awareness and understanding, and global mindedness

Personal experience during Korea study programme contributed to **curriculum changes**

Intensive learnings about Singapore education/school system [e.g. 'talent-spotting'], leading to plans to make series of tangible changes in school practice

Learning through networking and intensive discussions, and sharing of best practice between like-minded principles during the programme

Curriculum changes: Participation offered drive to effect curriculum innovation at school and beyond

Professional commitment to promote Asia literacy: Providing opportunities for staff and students to gain first-hand in-country experiences and sharing her learnings and experiences with other school communities

New boost for commitment to ensure students leave school 'world ready' and globally aware

Sustained personal interest in Asia and global social justice, including active involvement in building an English learning centre in a village in Cambodia

Personal and professional transformations

Polly sees the building of professional networks as another major benefit of AEF study programmes, enabling her to interact and share knowledge and experiences with other like-minded educators.

Polly Smart is Head of Primary Years at the Open Access College (OAC) – School of the Air in South Australia. This school serves students in remote areas through a combination of online and face-to-face teaching. Polly was interested already in Asia prior to her participation in AEF study programmes. During her travels to Nepal, India, China, Mongolia and Bhutan, she was drawn to the cultural diversity and richness of the Asia region. This motivated Polly to participate in several AEF programmes. First, she took part in the *Australia-India Leaders Program* in 2011 and hosted an Indian participant in 2012 as part of the reciprocal visit. In 2013-2014, she participated in AEF's *Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia* (L21CS) programme. In 2014, Polly went to Japan as part of the Introduction to Japan study programme.

Polly describes her participation in the *Australia-India Leaders Program* in 2011 as enriching and inspirational, both personally and professionally. At the same time the OAC school community was showing increasingly positive attitudes towards the study of an Asian language and finally decided on Japanese. This decision shifted the Asia focus of the school more towards Japan.

Polly's participation in L21CS and AEF study programmes has heightened her interest and commitment to Asia literacy, promoting it among staff and students at OAC. In addition, through her participation in study programmes, she has gained deeper insights into the lives of people in the Asia region and further developed her abilities to interact cross-culturally. Now, Polly believes she has the professional capacity to lead Asia literacy in her school by initiating discussion, sharing knowledge, identifying teaching and learning resources, and modelling Asia capable practice.

Importantly, reflecting on her study programme experiences has enabled Polly to develop her commitment to build students' Asia literacy on as many levels as possible, convinced that this learning focus is relevant, necessary and urgent for her school. She explained that in her capacity of the Head of Primary Years at OAC, she seeks to keep Asia literacy 'in the forefront of teachers' awareness when they develop student learning materials'.

Polly sees the building of professional networks as another major benefit of AEF study programmes, enabling her to interact and share knowledge and experiences with other like-minded educators. This interaction and networking has provided her also with the confidence and a sound platform to engage in discussions with her school community about the need for Asia literacy.

Polly's professional learning decisions, too, continue to be influenced by her L21CS and study programme experiences, stating that these programmes

... have had a considerable influence on my professional learning decisions. Not only has the development of Asia literacies been the focus of my professional learning for the past two years, but I feel also that my interest and involvement in this area will have direct bearing on my future professional decisions.

Nowadays, Polly is committed to implementing changes within her school community towards heightened levels of Asia literacy among students. Her recent study programme participation in Japan has given her the opportunity to further this agenda, moving a step closer to achieving her aim of partnering with a school in Japan. Reflecting on the school visits she undertook as part of the programme, Polly states:

These visits gave me a much clearer focus for my goal of establishing links with a school in Japan. I have a clearer idea of the type of community that would most likely have some common links with our school, and also how a shared language programme could be used to establish and maintain communication between students and teachers.

Polly Smart's Most Significant Changes

Reinforced commitment to promote Asia literacy among students and across school community

Sustained and further encouraged personal and professional learning interest in Asia

Of great significance to me is the recognition of how much more there is to know about Asia. I also believe that Australia has enjoyed being in the right place at the right time in terms of its development as a prosperous nation. The next century will see other countries in even stronger positions and I think that will see significant changes for all of us.

Key quotes and personal thoughts

My experiences in impoverished schools in Asia, as well as participation in two AEF study programmes (Japan and India) have added greater depth to my appreciation and understanding of life beyond Australia; of our differences, the things we have in common, and the things we hold dear.
The study programmes have not only sustained my interest in the Asia region, but they have triggered also more interest, and given me a particular focus for further exploration and participation.

Development of Asia literacy has been the focus of my professional learning for the past two years. I feel that my ... involvement in this area will have direct bearing on my future professional decisions.
I feel I have a much greater ability to initiate discussion, sharing, workshops, and generally generate enthusiasm for Asia literacy in our school by modelling, encouraging and directing. I am also able to direct teachers to ... high-quality resources for promoting Asia literacy, and endeavour to keep this in the forefront of teachers' awareness when they develop ... learning materials.

These visits [to the Learning Centre and the primary school] gave me a much clearer focus for my goal of establishing links with a partner school in Japan.

Start

(Pre-existing Asia engagement)

Travelled extensively in a number of countries in Asia, including Nepal, India, China, Mongolia, Bhutan, and Japan

Heightened cultural appreciation

India 2011

L21CS 2013

Japan 2014

Intercultural understanding: Increasing appreciation and recognition of cultural similarities and differences

Professional learning: Continued influence on professional learning decisions focused on Asia literacy

Enabled Polly to implement the knowledge, resources and contacts gained in classroom teaching and learning for students

Personal and professional commitment
 Further reinforced personal and professional commitment to, and enthusiasm for, Asia literacy, with a new focus on Japan

School community
 Commitment and increased capacity to promote Asia literacy among students and staff
 Catalyst to lead a new international school partnership in the future

Sustained and reinforced personal interest and networks in Asia
 Triggered more interest in, and continuous learning about, the region
 Personal relationships
 Planned [personal] visits

Personal and professional transformations

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences (India 2011, Japan 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further developed knowledge about the Asia region Improved intercultural understanding Commitment to promoting Asia literacy within the school community Reflecting on cultural immersion experiences has led to increased confidence and capacity to effect sustainable changes at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near-immediate effects of overseas study programmes have been discovered and supported by research (Cushner, 2007; Romano & Cushner, 2007) Pivotal importance of cultural immersion during overseas study programmes (Engle & Engle, 2003)
Cultural site visits (Japan 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened appreciation of daily life in an Asian country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above
School visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted in the endeavour of establishing school links for a school partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersion 'within both a culture and school' is valuable during overseas study programmes (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 35)
Professional and personal networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on study programme experiences and learnings through peer discussion Gaining new insights and knowledge through peer sharing, stimulating new thinking Commitment to further professional learning and a professional pathway in Asia literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional growth (e.g. professional contacts, sense of direction for future career choices, a sense of responsibility), is one of four general objectives of most overseas study programmes (Anderson, et al., 2003) Overseas study programmes influence professional learning and career decisions (Dwyer, 2004)

Table 6: What worked for Polly Smart

Wendy Hall teaches History/Geography and English at Aspley State High School (QLD). Her professional interest in Asia was triggered in the mid-2000s when she was introduced to AEF’s Access Asia initiative. Inspired by this professional learning experience, Wendy and her colleagues created a unit on Asia that was taught to Year 8 students in History, Geography, English, art, cooking, drama and music.

Wendy participated in the AEF study programme to Korea in 2005, which reinforced her interest in Asia. Two years later, in 2007, she attended the AEF *Linking Latitudes* conference (including fieldwork programme) in India and subsequently participated in two more AEF study programmes, *Discover Myanmar* (2013) and *Introduction to China* (2014). In addition, in 2009, Wendy went on a study tour to Kanazawa, Japan—organised by the Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange (IFIE)—where she attended a Japanese language school. Reflecting on all these in-country experiences has enabled Wendy to gain a better understanding of various aspects of Asia (e.g. its countries, regions, peoples and challenges in the contemporary world) and develop her ability to deal with differences arising from cultural diversity.

According to Wendy, these transformations have reinforced her commitment to teach students about the countries of Asia and foster their intercultural understanding and global mindedness. This commitment has enabled and encouraged her to implement curriculum and pedagogical changes to her classroom teaching. She describes: ‘As an educator I pass on to my students knowledge of Asia, gained through visiting countries, experiencing different cultures, seeing first hand education systems.’ Wendy complements this knowledge transfer with stories from her in-country experiences, using them as a hook to ignite students’ curiosity and engage them in Asia-related topics.

The more she learns about Asia, the more Wendy’s interest in and commitment to Asia literacy flourishes. She describes herself as ‘a constant learner’ and ‘an avid watcher of most things to do with the countries of Asia’. She has firm plans to extend her knowledge about Asia by enrolling in and successfully completing the Flinders University Studies of Asia course.

> What works?

Study programme aspect	Outcomes	What the research says
Intensive cultural immersion experiences and school visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded knowledge about societies (including education systems) in Asia, and their current and future challenges Knowledge that is shared with students Gained personal stories shared with students in History and Geography classes, to build their curiosity and increase engagement Development of intercultural understanding and global-mindedness Commitment to promoting and building Asia literacy within the school community Encouraged to implement curriculum and pedagogical changes in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum and pedagogical changes result from quality overseas study programme experiences (Cook, 2009) Pivotal importance of cultural immersion during overseas study programmes (Engle & Engle, 2003) First-hand experiences provide valuable experiences for personal growth and professional development (Anderson, et al., 2003; Engle & Engle, 2003) Active school visits are a valuable component of overseas study programmes (Marx & Moss, 2011)
Debriefing activities (especially by the tour coordinator in China 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraged proactive personal reflections on study programme experiences Thinking about how to utilise new knowledge in a classroom context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on experiences contributes to transformative and lasting learning (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990) Guided reflection processes under competent guidance foster transformative learning outcomes (AEF, 2012; Howlett, 2014; Marx & Moss, 2011)

Table 7: What worked for Wendy Hall

Wendy Hall's Most Significant Changes

AEF study programmes are key milestones on Wendy's path towards heightened Asia literacy, intercultural understanding and commitment to Asia literacy within school education

Personal transformations leading to curriculum and pedagogical changes, with a heightened capacity to teach about Asia using first-hand experiences and with authority

Key quotes and personal thoughts

As an educator I pass on knowledge of Asia to my students, gained through visiting countries, experiencing different cultures, seeing first hand education systems ... Engaging in dialogue with people native to those countries, sharing stories, and sharing photographs; there's a story to be found everywhere and in everything. Students love stories. Tell them a story and you have them hooked, what better way to engage a child and their curiosity.

[I am] continuing daily to improve [my] knowledge of regions, ethnic peoples and the challenges they face in a modern world, becoming much more tolerant towards others.

I feel it's my responsibility to ensure my students take off their 'blinkers' look sideways and 'see' exactly what's right on their doorstep.

My interest in Asia began several years ago when I was introduced to [AEF's] Access Asia.

Korea trip is the most important factor because it's what actually set me off on my love affair with everything Asian. Thereby bringing learnt knowledge back to my students in Australia in the hope of broadening their mindset and accepting cultural differences.

My appetite now whetted, I went to my first Linking Latitudes conference to India and did a side tour to the northern part of the country.

This study programme has provided me with the knowledge to give my students a bird's eye view of a country in the process of change.

Participation gave me valuable insight to share with my senior students who study Ancient China.

Access Asia

Korea 2005

India (Linking Latitudes) 2007

Myanmar 2013

China 2014

Starting point

Korea study programme ultimately **triggered passion for Asia** and commitment to promote student's intercultural understanding and Asia literacy

Sustained interest in Asia leading to curriculum changes in previous school

Introduced unit on Asia in several subjects

Continuous **friendships** and contacts with families and teachers from Korea

Growing understanding about school systems and education challenges in different Asia countries, feeding into Wendy's teaching about Asia

Personal level of Asia literacy and intercultural understanding

Increased first-hand knowledge about Asia countries and heightened intercultural understanding

Curriculum and pedagogical changes

Personal in-country experiences offer rich and authentic teaching resources

Sense of obligation to ensure students become more open-minded and learn about Asia

Personal and professional transformations

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