



Early Life Foundations

Walker Learning January Intensive

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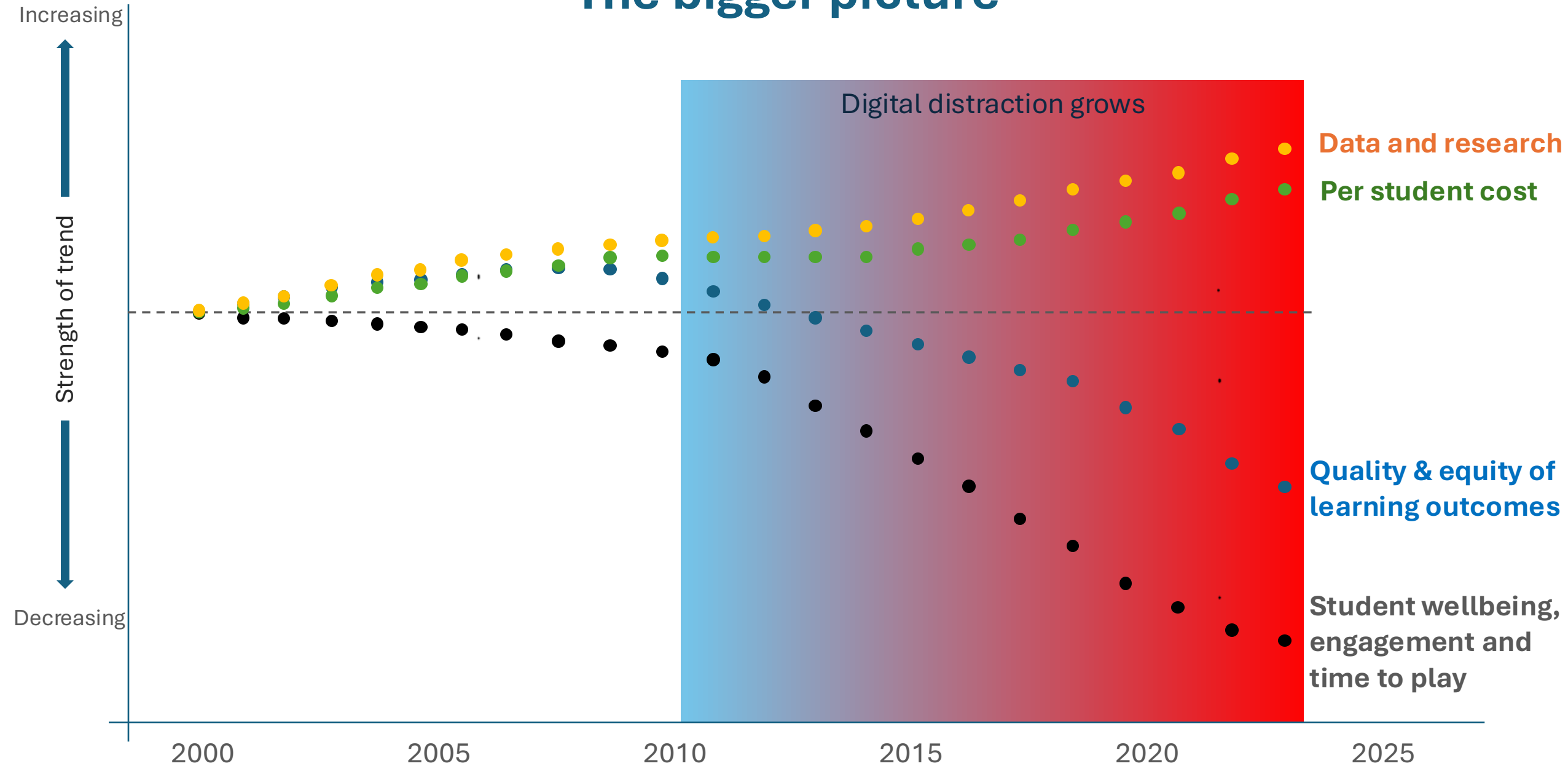
Live Webinar
22 January 2025

The bigger picture

Us and them

What could we do?

The bigger picture



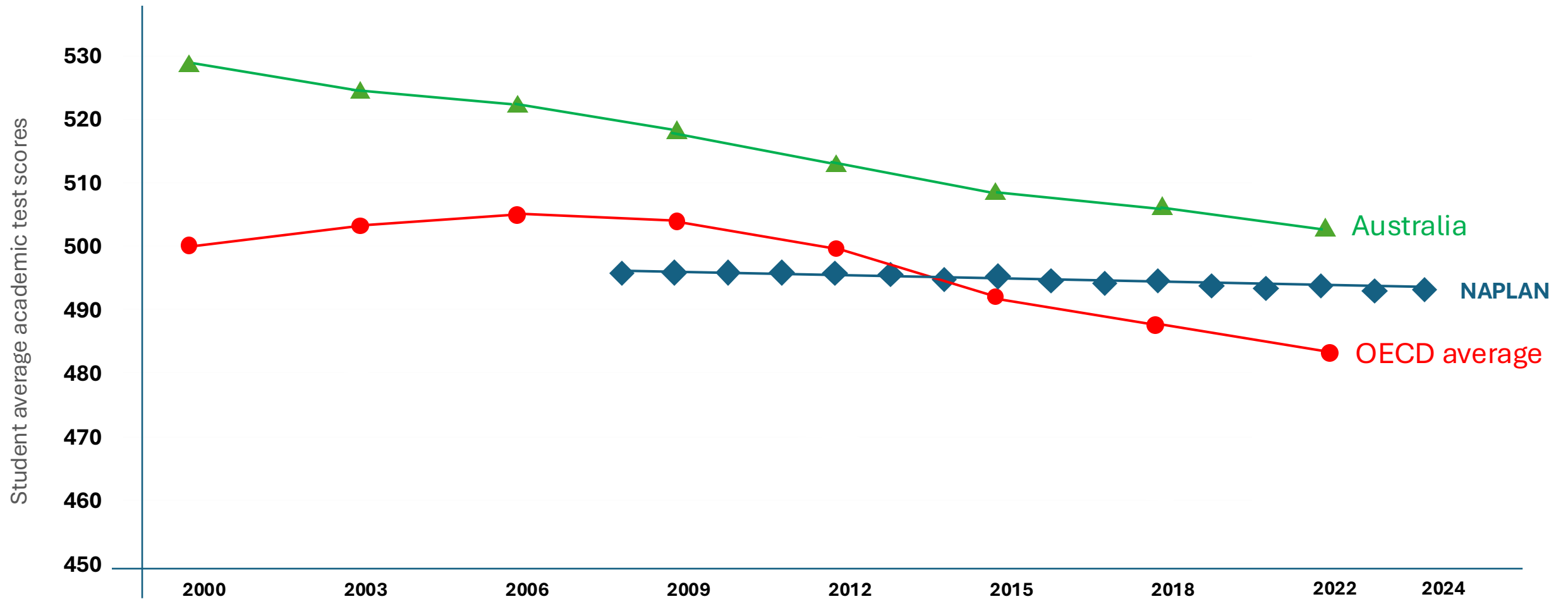
“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.”

–Rita Mae Brown



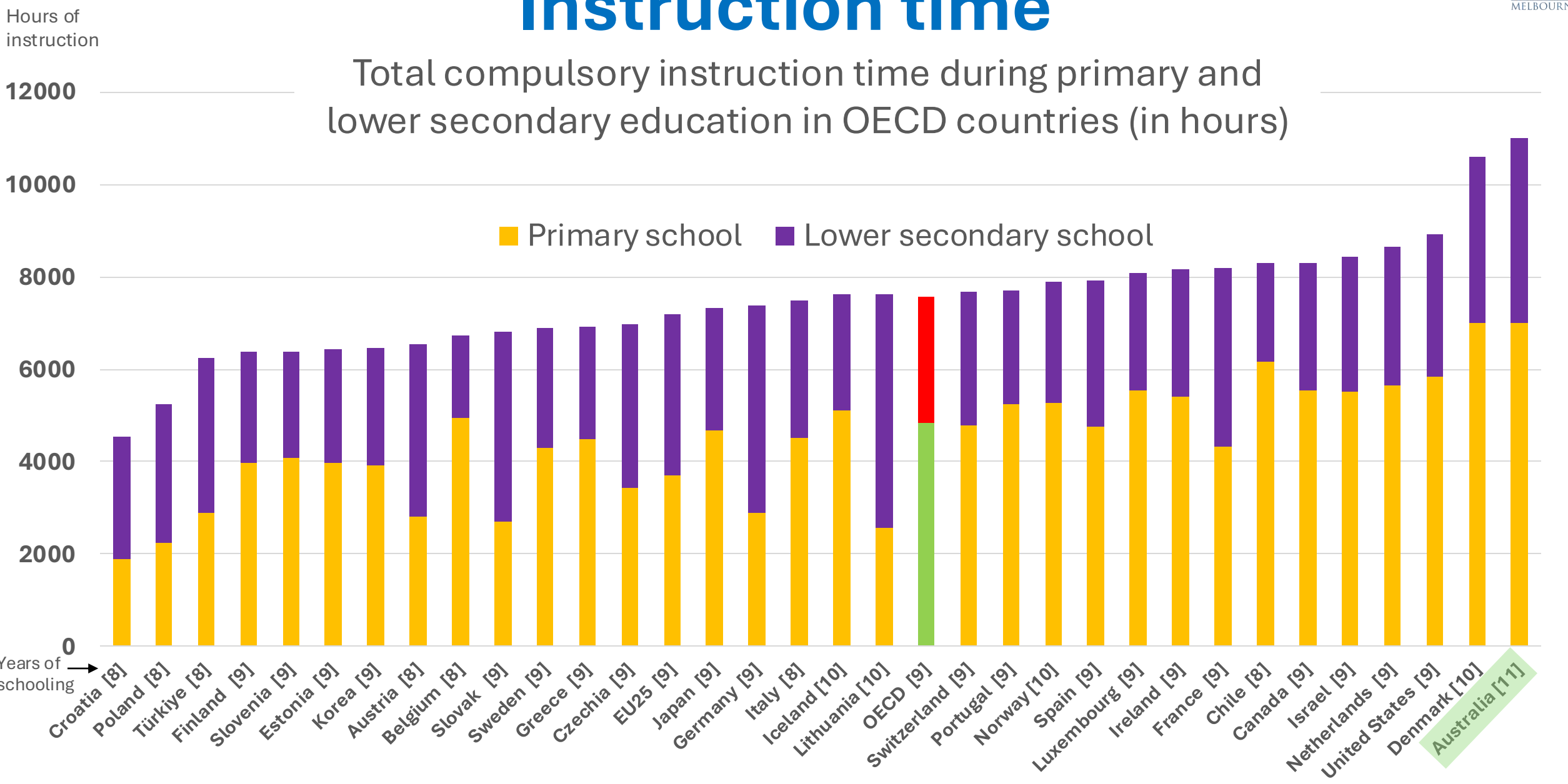
Us and them

Student achievement in Australian schools



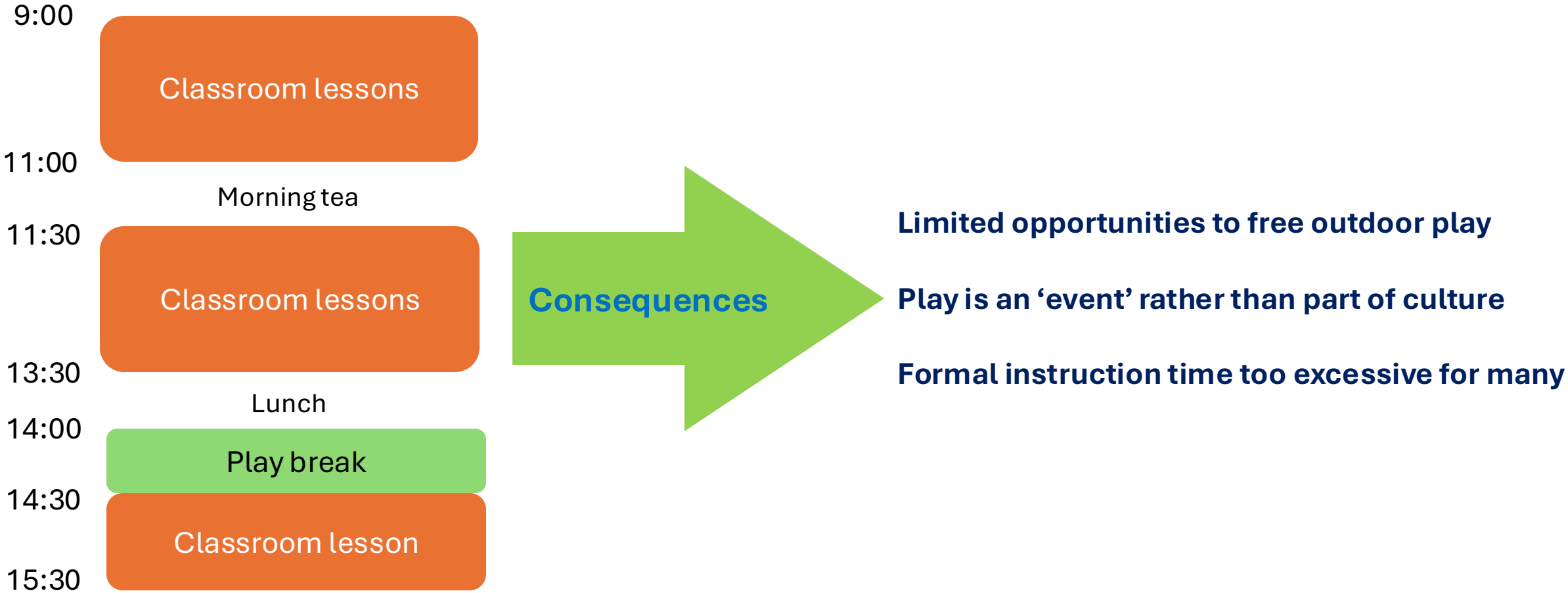
Instruction time

Total compulsory instruction time during primary and lower secondary education in OECD countries (in hours)



Instruction time

Typical primary school day in Australia



PLAY matters – more than we think

WHAT PARENTS' THINK ABOUT PLAY?

80% of parents believe that children are under pressure to grow up too quickly.

85% of parents say kids today spend less time **PLAYing** than they did when they were their children's age.

Three ideas to promote play

1 Doctor's order: The children must play

“PLAY is integral to a child’s education. The importance of playtime for children cannot be overemphasised to parents, schools, and community organisations.”



Let the Children Play

HOW MORE PLAY WILL
SAVE OUR SCHOOLS AND
HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

PASI SAHLBERG & WILLIAM DOYLE

foreword by SIR KEN ROBINSON

When Australians* are asked about children's access to opportunities for free play...



acknowledge the benefits of play.



however, 51 per cent want less break time at school.



think the first few years of schooling should focus more on learning through play than they do now.

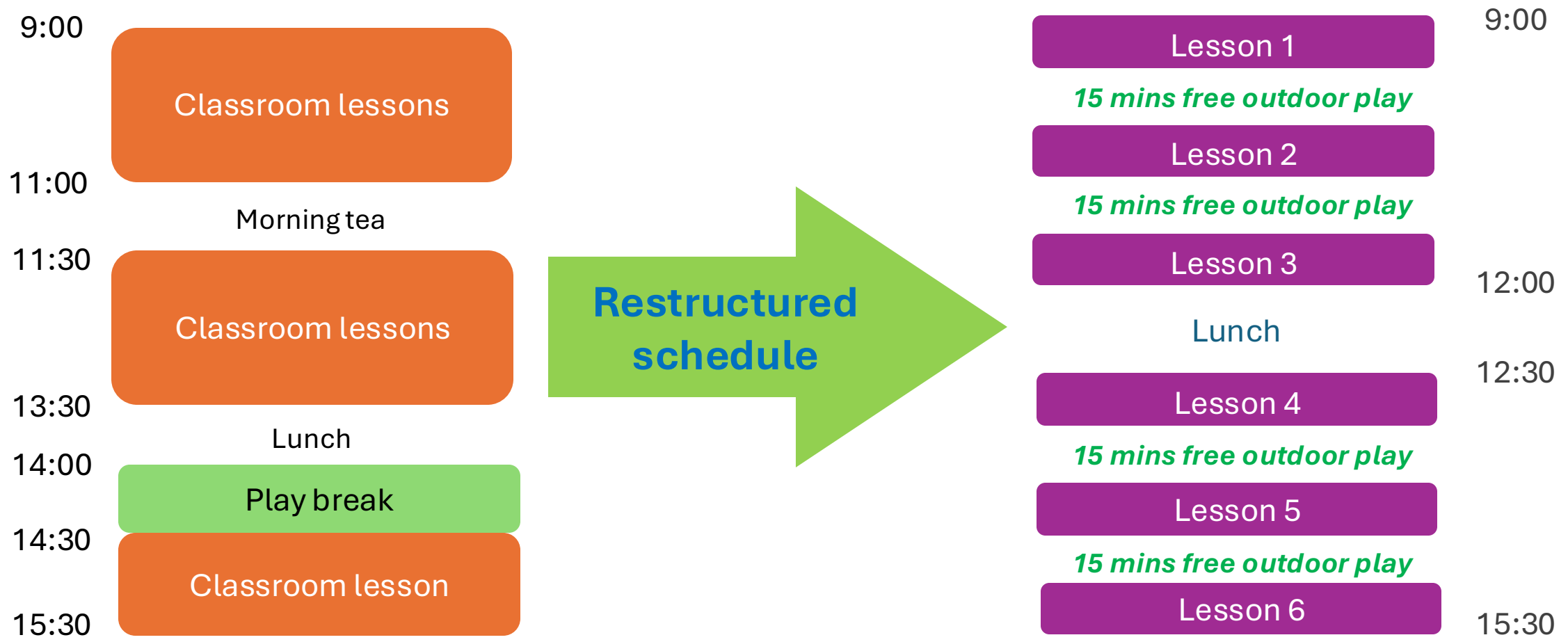


*1700 respondents nationwide

Three ideas to promote play

2

Restructure school day for time to play



Three ideas to promote play

2 Restructure school day for time to play

Benefits:

- 1) More opportunities to free play
- 2) Builds playful school culture
- 3) More time for teachers to collaborate

Challenges:

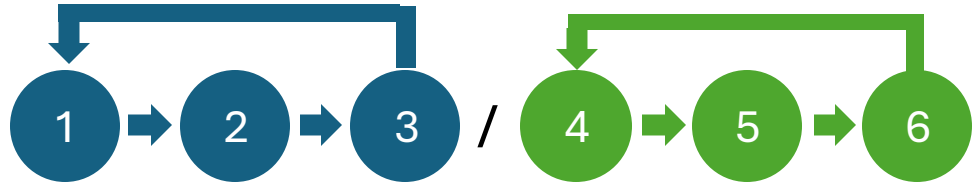
- 1) Narrow understanding of play
- 2) Parents' expectations
- 3) Preparing students to buy in

Three ideas to promote play

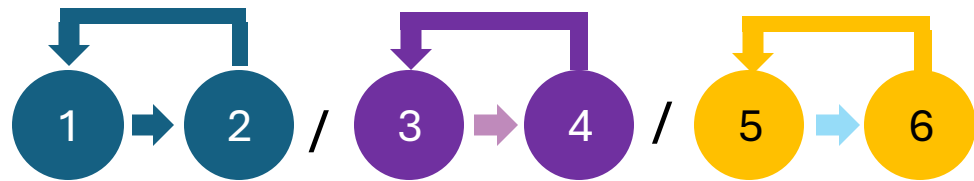
3

Better relationships by teacher looping

Two 3-year loop:



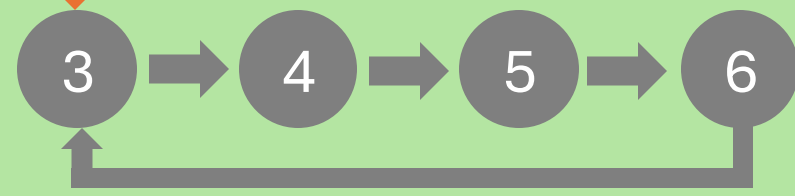
Three 2-year loops:



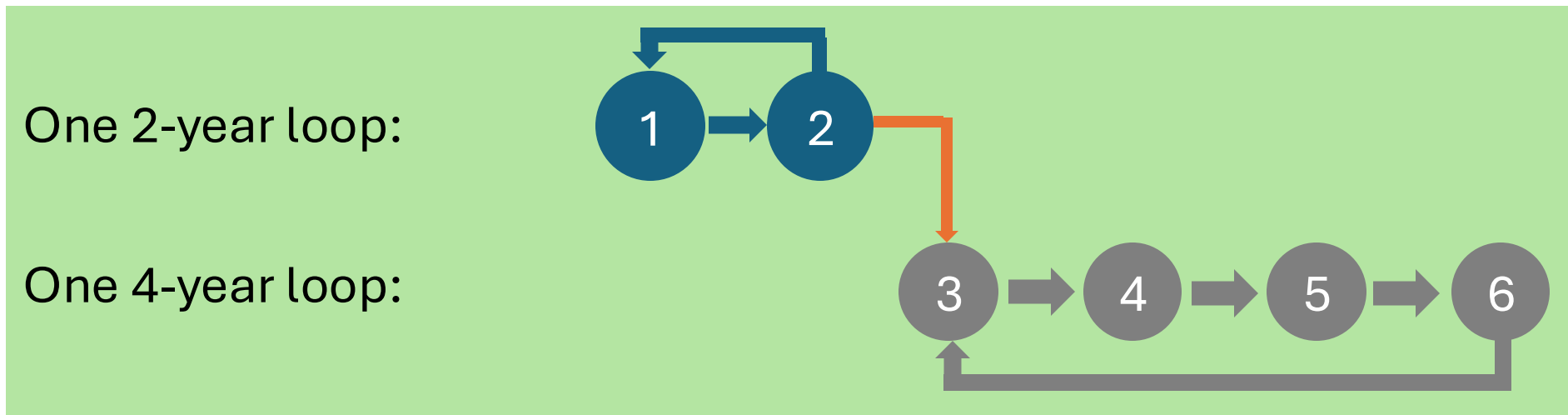
One 2-year loop:



One 4-year loop:



The Finnish Model



Three ideas to promote play

3 Better relationships by teacher looping

Benefits:

- 1) Healthier student-student and student-adult relationships in school
- 2) Builds understanding of play as an effective way of learning
- 3) Supports parents' acceptance of playful learning

Challenges:

- 1) Student and teacher don't get along well
- 2) Additional planning and preparation time
- 3) Parents' expectations

THE POWER OF FREE PLAY

*“A primary cause of the rise in mental disorders is a decline over decades in opportunities for children and teens **PLAY** roam, and engage in other activities independent of direct oversight and control by adults.”*

Source: GRAY et al. (2023)

***“If you are not prepared
to be wrong, you will
never come up with
anything original.”***

-Sir Ken Robinson





SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PLAY AWARD

- An annual award for primary schools, educators or children in Australia
- A recognition of a practical idea that positively contributes to children's lives and learning through play
- \$10,000 cash award to advance childhood play

Online submission open:



Thank you!