

# Leading learning 2013 onwards

## Context

### We Live Learning!

*The image that describes our leadership of learning is the "Cosmic" metaphor. This leadership style involves having a dream and an idea to help achieve it. It is not minor repairs or reinventing the wheel. It involves being driven and determined to see this idea make a difference.*

*Cosmic leadership though, comes with a caveat: Don't fall in love with the idea or the process without being clear on what you want it to achieve. The fruit of the idea is the dream, what this idea can help produce. The idea itself is nothing; it is just a process or a structure. The real success is what this idea can grow. A great idea that takes hold, that becomes everyone's idea, can create something wonderful. Culture can be influenced by a good idea that takes root in a community. Its influence comes from its level of ownership. The idea grows because everyone takes responsibility for watering it, for keeping the weeds away, for helping it grow tall and bear fruit.*

*Remember, it's the fruit of the idea that matters, and this is our focus in 2013*

## Committing to Action

CMMS is the big idea at St Peter's. It is the process or structure that has taken hold and is clearly being nurtured by this community of learners. The future for learning at St Peter's is now about the fruits that must come from this idea. So what are we expecting this idea to produce? What fruits are we hoping to pick?

- A clearly defined school wide pedagogy (SWP), the things that are not negotiable
- Improved feedback to teachers on these instructional approaches that are not negotiable
- Improved teacher capacity in using ICLT tools to enhance teaching and learning for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners
- Improved teacher ability to enable students to choose and use mathematics to solve real problems proficiently
- Instructional approaches that are embedded in practice and on-going, not temporary, regardless of current initiatives.

## Organisational Diagnosis

*The organisational diagnosis is an assessment of where we are now.*

Through feedback from teachers, visiting consultants, our classroom visits and observations of teachers' planning, the evidence suggests that our teachers are adapting their personal pedagogies to include school wide instructional focus. There is still some inconsistency with minor individual adaptations of programs and strategies, which results in the loss of the intent of the instructional focus resulting in less improvement on learning. Our work on authoritative pedagogy and our attempts to align this with our beliefs and values, has been productive in that this was the first time for many of us to reflect on why we teach the way we do. The arrival of the BCEO pedagogy as our authoritative source is timely and gives us the chance to begin the process of clearly stating the instructional approaches that we all agree need to be explicitly and consistently mastered and used by every teacher in the school.

The content, *what* we teach, is the Australian Curriculum, Queensland Essential Learnings and the BCEO Religious Education Curriculum. The SWP, *how* we teach things at St Peter's, is based on proven effective practice. Much of the SWP is being done well, but we haven't labelled it as SWP. We need to be clear about what is SWP and therefore not negotiable. Teachers are still to be introduced to many of the things that make a difference to engagement in learning and improvement in learning outcomes. At this point in time, many of these instructional approaches are seen as optional teaching strategies that have a familiar language or a vague connection with past teaching experiences.

The diagnosis suggests that we are ready to start harvesting the fruits of SWP. Teachers are ready and willing to learn, master and use the strategies that are proven to be the most effective way to achieve engagement in learning and therefore improved outcomes. The soil is good - the culture is right!

## Seeking new Heights

There is no place for the attitude of privatisation of classrooms in education today, and certainly no place for this in our school. CMMS has opened the doors and opened our eyes to the reality and benefits of reciprocal learning and

teaching and what we can do for each other. The leadership team will develop processes to ensure that we are in tune and teachers are not playing their own version. Our planning must reflect our beliefs and values. Our classroom management must reflect our beliefs and values. As we name and implement our SWP the leadership processes must adapt to ensure we are providing just the right amount of support, pressure and supervision. We must be clear that SWP is not optional. The proven value of a SWP that is mastered by the whole staff and well embedded is most significant. The research proves the benefits to the learner are astronomical in comparison to schools that have no clear expectations of SWP.

## Micro Pedagogical Deepening

The SWP from 2013 will include a series of instructional approaches in which teachers will become proficient. They are proven by research to have the greatest impact on learning. Many of these practices have been our focus over the last few years in our work with consultants like Pat Edgar and Dr Judy Hartnett. Many are skills modelled by year level CMMS peers. Our leading learning plan highlights the instructional approaches that have been introduced and, in most classrooms well embedded. It also highlights the instructional approaches and strategies that will be the focus in 2013 through our CMMS groups or introduced through staff meetings or twilights.

We believe, as do many educationalists, that we have spent far too long analysing and assessing where education goes wrong and much less time implementing any of the discoveries. Lee Crockett enthusiastically suggests that, "We are ten years into the twenty-first century and we are still studying what the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner are!" It's time to stop talking the talk and to start walking the walk!

The use of digital technology to engage 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners and Crockett's dimensions of pedagogy for the digital age expressed in his work "Literacy is not enough" will be a focus for our ICLT CMMS group. Daniel Pink is also well worth reading with his plea to education to move to pedagogy that focuses on right brain thinking- the higher order skills of creativity, design and empathy. The idea of relevance, creativity and design as the keystones of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom is paramount, but of course that will be our focus further down the track after we master the practical things that can have an immediate impact on learning.

The SWP CMMS group will deliver coaching and feedback that will embed the instructional approaches that work. The following instructional approaches are proven to be effective and will be our focus from 2013:

- Creating an environment for learning
  - Setting objectives and providing feedback
  - Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
  - Co-operative learning
- Helping students develop understanding
  - Cues, questions and advance organisers
  - Non-linguistic representations
  - Summarising and note taking
- Helping students extend and apply knowledge
  - Identifying similarities and differences
  - Generating and testing hypotheses

The CMMS Mathematics will focus on developing teacher skills in various approaches to computation, examining a number of different strategies that lead students to a higher degree of number sense and accuracy. The inquiry and problem solving model, that is our school wide pedagogical approach, has been proven to be an excellent vehicle for encouraging students to engage with mathematics in the real world. Mathematical proficiency is essential for the learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Cementing Success

Over the next five years the leadership team will continue to nurture teacher leaders and use the CMMS reciprocal teacher obligations to assist them to become both better teachers and learners. We will continue to improve our culture of mentoring throughout the school. The leadership team will provide feedback relating to the National Teaching Standards and help teachers recognise specific areas for improvement, particularly in relation to SWP. We will continue to encourage our teachers to strive for excellence in their teaching by learning from the modelling of experts and receiving critical feedback on professional practice.

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