Thriving Minds of Learners

Murarrie State School
2013-2015
Acknowledgements

This charter has evolved through the gracious efforts of many adults whose understandings of learners contributes to a whole-of-community direction for educating the thriving minds of Murarrie learners.

Teachers, Teacher Aides, P & C Executive members, Parents, Administration Officer, Facilities Officer, Cleaners, Principal Coaching Mentor (Education Department), Students and Billy.

Process

This charter has evolved from subsequent milestones in the life of learning since 2005:

* TSR (Triennial School Reviews)
* QSR (Quadriennial School Review)
* Staff Meetings
* Charter Chat
* Professional Development (Whole School Community)

Charter Defined

The purpose of this Charter is to provide critical information about the delivery of education. The Charter states the values and beliefs that underpin and drive all community members. These values and beliefs steer the actions of adults so that students can focus on living the life of their minds.

To be reviewed every three years by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>P &amp; C President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P &amp; C Executive Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Teachers are encouraged in their risk-taking with the “how” and “why” of teaching. The “what” of teaching is framed by the content upon the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting framework. The implementation process respects the professional integrity of the teacher to ‘serve’ as skilled and highly effective operators whose decisions are continually adapted to address student needs.

Teaching is a dynamic process that changes with time and new educational research, and with the development of new ideas that emerge with teacher experience. Teaching stands as a highly creative process that acknowledges the particular crafts and deft skill of the individual who brings to the learning canvas, a genuine interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Teaching honours the traditional values of Piagetian and Vygotsky theory, of the development of the whole child (Mazlow, Erickson), and creative learning through real life opportunities (Steiner). Teaching also embraces new ways of thinking about the learner, through explicit teaching and feedback (Hattie, 2012), the implementation of basic knowledge (Fleming, 2007), real life learning (Yumi Deadly, QUT, 2011) and the significance of holistic learning and brain development (Claxton, 2013).

Teaching must allow flexibility and autonomy in curriculum development and implementation, and decision-making required to advise, guide and support thriving minds. It is not a belief in a simplistic methodology. The framework must be as dynamic and adaptable as the nature of the students’ minds.

The values and beliefs that steer teaching

Teaching is considered as something not static, but changing and evolving with technology, the reality of life in the 21st century, and the growing purposes of education to develop responsive citizens caring for our environment.

Teaching adjusts and evolves according to the thriving minds, expectations, content, learning environment, and reflection. As teaching evolves and changes with traditions and current theory and practice, so too does the emphasis placed on the differentiated models of teaching.

Student-centred teaching and learning practices, High Expectations, Targeted Scaffolded and learning alignment of curriculum, Pedagogy and assessment, Evidence-based decision making, Safe, supportive, connected and inclusive learning environments develops self-respecting learners.

Differentiated Model of Teaching

Staff recognise the importance of students’ prior knowledge. Their knowledge emanates from their souls. This soulfulness is cherished and valued for its significance in shaping the all learning opportunities, and how they are used as the springboard for addressing the Australian Curriculum. Amplifying the uniqueness of their souls accounts for flexibility in teaching approaches.

To address this, a differentiated model maximises every minute, and every encounter. The school week is designed to provide variety to ensure engagement to the learning canvas. Variety is viewed in terms of class compositions for traditional teaching, and multi-age compositions for innovative teaching.

Traditional teaching is specific to the teaching of general units of work in Mathematics, English, Science, History, Technology, The Arts, PE, LOTE and Instrumental Music. Teaching during this time is explicit to the domain area of that subject area. Mathematics is implemented according to the Queensland University of Technology ‘Yumi Deadly’ (2010) model that places a particular emphasis on real-life learning. When teaching English, all aspects of learning must bring together the prior-knowledge of students with the wealth of literature available for teachers.

Innovative teaching is specific to the teaching of knowledge and skills with a focussed intent on recall of the basic facts (Hippocampus Time), accelerated Mathematics and English learning (Neuro Time - Mathematics, Inferential Reading, Morphographs), and student negotiated learning (Vision Time).

Hippocampus is a 20min period twice a day with the intent on recall of basic number facts and spelling.

Students may be required to leave their class composition for the innovative teaching periods, mainly during Neuro (3 x 20min sessions per week) and Vision Time (1 x 50min session per week). Neuro time is explicit teaching across the three areas as opportunities for students to attend workshops where they can accelerate their learning. Vision time incorporates multi-age learning on a broad scale (Prep to Year 6). The focussed intent for Vision time is the implementation of student-negotiated projects (such as Hedgemaze, Drama, and Apple I Movie workshops, BMX Bike Workshop, Dance, Animal Care).
Elements of Teaching

A number of elements underpin our teaching methodology, indicating the need for wide-ranging approached to advise and support diverse minds that thrive and connect pathways of meaning.

Teaching is a highly subjective role, demanding teachers to bring their passions, cognitive rigour, emotional strengths and spiritually-rich, moral obligations to the learner. Teachers are expected to show depth and bouyancy in their knowledge of the Australian Curriculum, to present creative learning opportunities that connect the symbols and abstractions in the classroom, with the real lives and minds of individuals both past, present and future. In this way, teachers demonstrate to their learners, their place in the overall global community of learners. Just as the school community has high expectations on teachers, so too, teachers are required to capture every second, every encounter to reach the steps in the learning pathways.

Teaching is the ability to inspire the minds of others to think as an individual. It is achieved through understandings about “how” learners learn (individually), and “why” an educated learner grows stronger (socially, cognitively, emotionally and spiritually) through connections with others. To do so requires a high degree of understanding of each learner’s stage of growth, and effective negotiation as to the myriad of learning pathways availables, and how each step in the journey is achieved. Both learner and learned take the journey together according to point in time advice and support, and is more relevant when the teacher releases some of the responsibility to students.

Student-centred teaching and learning practices are grounded in the decision-making of the “why” and “how” of the teaching and learning process. Learners who engage, practise and teach others permeates throughout all aspects of school life (cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual). Learners provide staff with the necessary information in which to design and implement learning experiences relevant to their minds.

Teaching demands creative and innovative ways to present negotiated learning pathways that balance the diversity of thriving minds with the parameters of the Australian Curriculum. This means capturing the many moments across the school day to adapt and personalise the learning experience. Students who then teach students, are also effectively engaging in a personalised approach to learning. Learning experiences stay within the parameters of the Australian Curriculum, but extend the parameters of age-related content and peer groupings.

Teachers are required to engage their own thriving minds with questions for their learners: What do they know? What are the parameters of the curriculum and what are the standards? How do I teach it and why is it relevant to make connections to their real world minds? How will they demonstrate their learning? How will I negotiate the next stage in the learning pathway?

The design of learning requires teachers to provide support and advice so that learning is scaffolded, is age-appropriate, and needs-based. In those situations where instruction is explicit and reinforced through diverse modes of delivery (TED), learners become more proficient with practising their understandings and skills and teaching others. In those situations where learners require further consolidation (Hippocampus), learners become more efficient with transferring fundamentals from short to long-term memory.

What is TED?
Teachers apply the TED model of instruction to ensure that not only the discourse, but also the teaching lesson is similar in structure. TED represents Teaching, Engaging and Demonstrating. New concepts are explicitly taught in various modes of delivery, the engagement of learning requires learner application of the concept to a hands-on and real-life problem, followed by learner demonstration of his/her understanding. On-going consolidation of the demonstration process occurs with peer mentoring over the course of the day and the week.

Learning requires an emphasis on the importance of students’ place in the relationship with abstract and real world ideas and thoughts. Learning is facilitated through structured, problem-based investigations. Feedback is provided through the standards set for an “A” through to “E” (Australian Curriculum). The learning process requires backward designing of the learning experiences.

The Principal is required to demonstrate the same high level of purpose, teaching knowledge and research understandings. The Principal must have a solid grasp of all learners progress and the “what” and “why” the support and advice is implemented in the classrooms. The “how” is what has been developed in the teaching framework (2013) and what is revisited over time to assess the efficacy of the framework, and the teaching.

The Charter must evolve and respond with emerging evidence-based research and the experiences of staff. The Charter must acknowledge an achievable goal where teachers become learners of their own learning, and students become teachers. With a safe and supportive learning environment in which to thrive, all engage in a journey of learning that follows no one linear path.
If we........then..........
Thriving Minds

Introduction
- Thriving minds definition
- The Learners’ gifts
- The future

School community context
- Contributing social factors
- The learner - understandings
- Learners as an heterogeneous group

School vision of improvement
- “Every minute and every encounter, counts”
- Living the life of the mind

Teaching
- Defining the “what”, “how” and “why”
- Using dynamic processes
- Balancing traditional and evidence-based research

Framework for teaching
- Fluid processes between learners, content, learning environment and reflections

Differentiated curriculum
- Valuing the learner’s mind and soul
- Maximising every minute and encounter
- Focusing on student-centred learning
- Innovating with Hippocampus, Neuro and Vision Time

Elements of teaching
- Implementing many learning pathways
- Decision-making about learners and the Australian Curriculum