

Clarkson Community High School

Learning Journey 5



**The Clarkson Recovery Mission
Post-COVID-19**

May 2020

Edited by Adam Inder

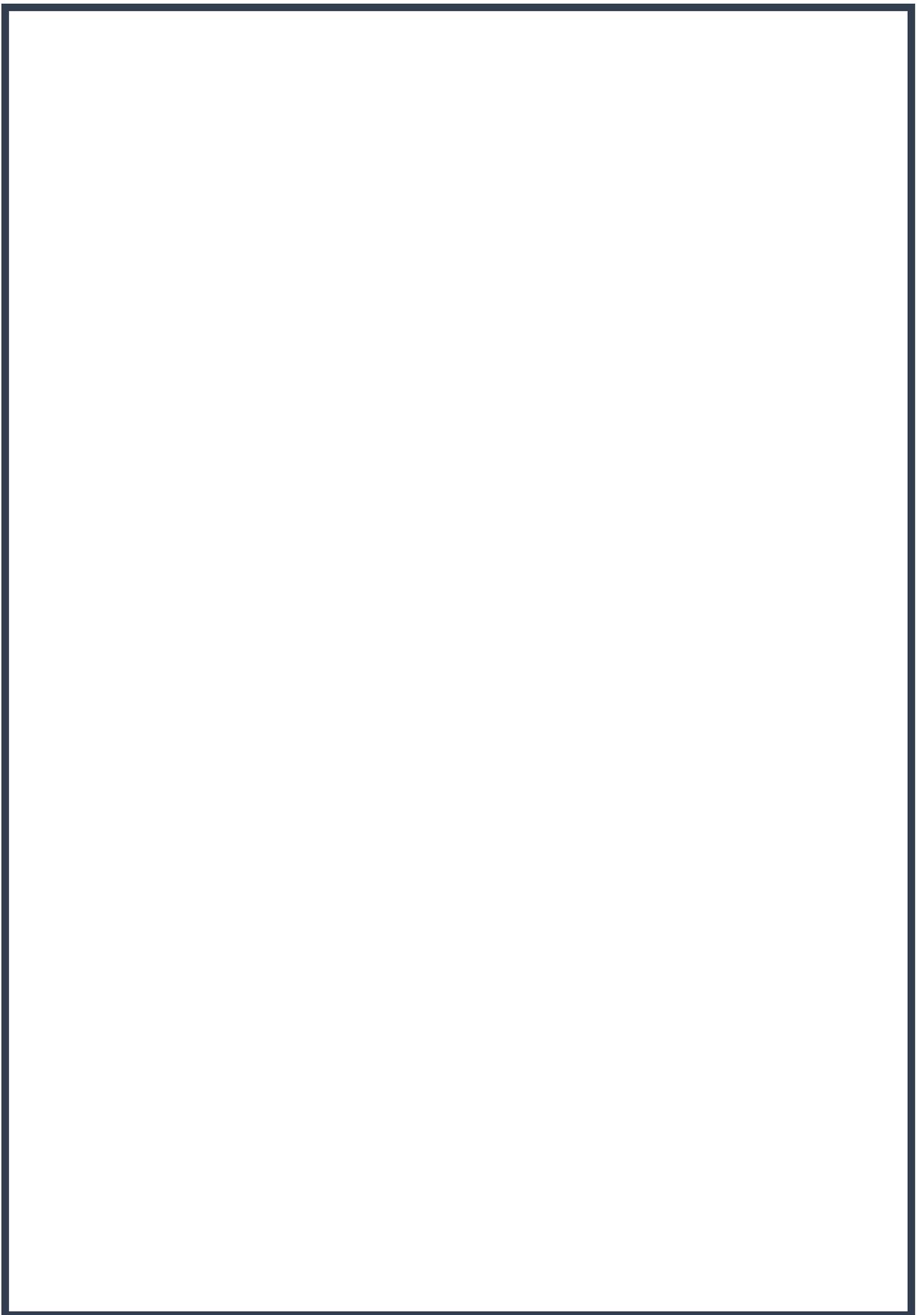
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Clarkson Community High School is a Department of Education WA school

Published 29th May, 2020

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Introduction

“All the beautiful intentions in the world will not add up to a single inviting act. They mean little if they are not manifested in action.”

- William Purkey & Betty Siegel, *Becoming an Invitational Leader*

The beginning of 2020 also marked the start of implementing Clarkson Community High School's *Strategic Plan 2020-2022*, a plan which seeks to serve our school community by fostering a safe learning environment underpinned by Invitational Theory. The plan states that “Our mission is to ensure that all students develop their understandings, skills and attributes relevant to individual needs thereby enabling them to fulfil their potential and confidently contribute to the development of society.” At a practical level, measurable targets have been identified as a means of identifying progress and success. These targets are then pursued by means of actioning strategies centred around Key Focus Areas:

- High Quality Teaching;
- Learning Environment;
- Leadership; and
- Relationships.

As a school team, the beginning of the 2020 school year seemed promising – attendance data seemed to be on track and strides were being made with older students who needed to pick up the pace as graduation crept ever closer. None could predict the devastating impact that COVID-19 would have on the global community, consequentially disrupting our momentum at a school level.

Over the past few months, we have watched the COVID-19 pandemic unfold, following government directives that have needed to respond swiftly in accordance with the rapidly changing landscape around the pandemic. As with all other workplaces deemed essential, we have lived through heightened safety regulations and extra training. Following different government directives over time, we have given parents and carers choice about whether or not to send their children to school, followed by a season of transitioning students out of school. We are now in the process of transitioning students back into standard schooling.

Within the wider community, the discussion around education has highlighted things that we knew all along. Firstly, when political point-scoring is a major driving factor in decision-making around schooling, ultimately, kids lose out. This was discussed in my [2018 article on social segregation](#). Secondly, disadvantaged students need school far more than any other student group. Not just academically, but pastorally. At Clarkson CHS, many of our students are disadvantaged and desperately need our support. We made it our aim during this pandemic to put our students first and not to just survive as educators, but thrive.

We have done this by adopting the ethical principles of I-CORT embedded in our strategic plan: intentionality, care, optimism, respect and trust. *Becoming an Invitational Leader* defines some of these principles:

- “Trust reveals itself in our acceptance of change, our willingness to take risks and find new ways to be.”
 - In these uncertain and rapidly changing times, we found ways to innovate our hygiene practices and our pedagogy.
- “Respect is evidenced by positive and realistic internal dialogue regarding oneself, others, and the world.”
 - We have seen many teachers collaborating, relying on the strengths of others to accommodate their areas of weakness.
- “Optimism is evidenced by the leader’s perceptions of present and future options.”

- We have chosen to provide realistic and manageable options to parents and families whilst looking forward to the time when a standard timetable could resume.
- “Intentionality is demonstrated by the invitational leader’s direction and purpose in life.”
 - All of this we have conducted with a laser-focus, ensuring that our community is served and that our students come first.

To be able to conquer such a tremendous task over a short span of time, it has been important for members of the CCHS team to be professionally inviting with themselves.

Becoming an Invitational Leader defines being professionally inviting to oneself as potentially including the following actions:

- Continuing studies.
- Re-calibrating vocabularies.
- Updating skills.
- Mastering new technologies.
- Studying new research findings.
- Discovering fresh ways to improve professional functioning.

As will be shared in following articles, most of these actions have been undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. By being professionally inviting to ourselves, we have welcomed these strategies, gaining much from the rapid changes brought about by COVID-19.

As mentioned earlier, Invitational Theory undergirds our school vision. Theory into practice has been established in the above paragraphs. Invitational Theory provides a framework which allows us to foster a positive school climate through an intentionally inviting stance. A positive school climate has been shown to mitigate the negative effects brought on by a low-SES background. Although students are our priority, taking an intentionally inviting stance with staff can also have positive effects for the good of the school community and its students, as exemplified by the Learning Journey series.

This Learning Journey almanacs the experiences and thinking of our school teachers and leaders during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It asks the question, “*If the current education system were scrapped, what fundamental building blocks would you use to rebuild it? What would the new world of education look like?*” We have deemed it of absolute importance to capture our thinking as a means of ensuring that we do not revert to normal once the effects of the pandemic leave our school. Whatever we can take into this new world that will make us more effective as operators, we aim to cling to it desperately, despite the natural urge to go back to our old ways. Learning Journey 5 will serve as a document which snapshots this moment in time, allowing us to come back to it to see what we learned as we reflected on it while it was still fresh in our minds.

To encourage people to write for our fifth Learning Journey is to send an invitation. Writing for the Learning Journey is not done through coercion – people are invited to write, and encouraged to believe that what they are thinking or doing is worth documenting and is of value to those who would read the Learning Journey. *Becoming an Invitational Leader* says, “At heart, human beings have a deep longing to be invited to realise their potential... This can only be realized through the facilitation of others.”

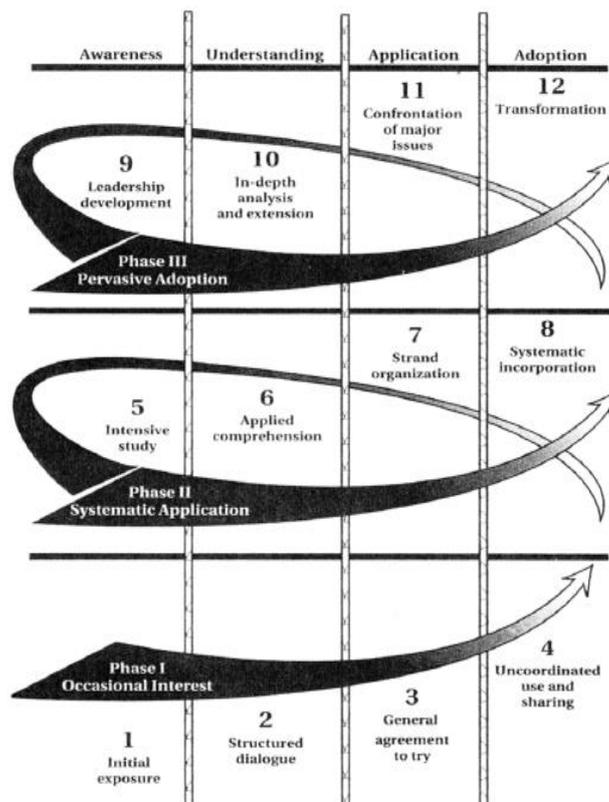


Figure 1: The Invitational Helix

With every Learning Journey released over the past few years, we have moved up The Invitational Helix to greater positions in school transformation. The aspiration is to have all teachers (and, consequentially, students) operating with an intentionally inviting stance. As thinking develops around what it means to be inviting and effective, so do our actions, allowing us to become a more inviting and effective school community.

To new teachers, or teachers who had not yet considered writing for Learning Journey, we would find them at Phase 1: Occasional Interest. By exposing them to previous copies of the Learning Journey, and encouraging them in their thinking, we might find them agreeing to try and reluctantly sharing their thoughts with us. As a school, I would propose that we most generally sit in Phase 2: Systematic Application. The knowledge and thinking of the Learning Journey (and the Invitational Theory it is grounded on) is perhaps not as all-encompassing across the school as we may like, but many have adopted aspects of it and continue to study, comprehend and share their thinking. Each year, I grow more confident in the permeation of the school vision centered on Invitational Education.

I hope that in inviting you to read Learning Journey 5, we impart some thoughts and ideas that resonate with you, allowing our vision of changing the grammar of schooling to travel farther than we could possibly achieve on our own.

The Clarkson Recovery Mission Post-COVID-19: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in a Professional Learning Community

John Young

John Young is the Principal of Clarkson Community High School in Western Australia. He has worked for the Department of Education since 1981. This article was published in Education Today in Term Two, 2020.

2020 has been a watershed, a change that has been unforeseen and dramatic due to COVID-19.

At Clarkson, we began to conceptualise how to lead our school out of this crisis situation.

First, we must have recovery. We viewed a networked approach within our professional learning community as the best way of identifying and dealing with the school's recovery mission.

Where we started

There has been an on-going investment in human resource capital at Clarkson through a model of distributed leadership, with key staff preparing position papers on aspects of whole-school improvement as a means of determining where and how we should concentrate our efforts. We measure our on-going attainment within our established Invitational Education framework. As part of our distributed leadership and invitational education processes we expect to see on-going teacher authorship of strategic essays and practical program to support Learning Journey 5 and to build a team vision and a framework to help enable the recovery.

What we learned

It is this approach that will be the mainstay of our COVID-19 school recovery. One of the position papers adopted at Clarkson is the work of Professor Janet Clinton, concerning supporting vulnerable children post COVID-19. Clinton's work has been invaluable to our recovery and our engagement strategy at Clarkson. She emphasizes in her research (p18) the need to ensure schools are not uninviting (Purkey, 1996); that schools need to be safe; schools must have an effective communication strategy; and that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) be a part of the school curriculum augmented by a system-level, interagency support structure that works.

Clinton also spells out the emerging role for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on-line that help deliver on SEL, and better cater for students at educational risk (SAER) through digital inclusion. With a diverse range of ethnicity at Clarkson it is vital that cultural safety is a clear priority and essential that our school provides an environment that is safe in a physical, social, emotional and cultural sense.

Clarkson has fostered all of these areas over a period of years, inviting students to engage and learn.

As our school went into lockdown the emphasis for digital inclusion and connection in an online learning community became imperative. 'Connectivism' provided insight into the learning skills and the tasks needed by learners. This was essential for students to better

adapt to more effective learning from home. The spectre of worsening student detachment from school altogether was a potential outcome to be avoided. During the lockdown Clarkson teachers used ICT 'connectivism' to improve both student and teacher-to-teacher engagement. When implementing the digital platforms, it was quickly apparent that parents were more than capable of home schooling students who are self-motivated and intellectually agile and generally capable of self-regulation. Teachers also love that they are intellectually able and generally capable of emotional regulation. A valuable lesson from Hattie's Visible Learning research is that teaching self-regulation is even more important for all students post-COVID-19. Dealing with disengaged or disruptive students via ICT connectivism was a much more difficult situation for teachers and parents. Provision of ICT connectivism in itself is obviously not a magic bullet for student engagement. Engagement in, and a sense of ownership of, the learning process is still the main factor for successful student outcomes.

Where we are heading

Low Index of Community Social Economic Advantage (ICSEA) schools such as Clarkson have a greater incidence of teacher dependent students. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation. Lower income students in residualized schools have fewer educational resources. Again, this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation. Prof Clinton's research underscores that schools must be safe havens because some homes are not so. This can result in more stress without the outlet of a school environment, made worse by a significant increase in mental health issues currently emerging across Australia. To address these issues we must re-build at Clarkson a culture of safety and support with physical, social and cultural dimensions that are augmented by the routines of the school structure. These routines provide students with a sense of safety and predictability and thus make learning possible. The provision of ICT alone is demonstrably not an alternative to a supportive school structure, it is merely a support tool for teachers and students to accomplish this goal. Also, the predictability and the consistency of schooling are important factors to consider in a student's life experience. Re-instating positive connections with adults and peers is also an urgent, strategic priority. The need for students to improve self-regulation and self-engagement is central to successful schooling and is key to Clinton's research findings about the importance of Social Emotional Learning.

So what is self-regulation and how do we teach it? Self-regulation is a specific skill that requires practise and then, application to real-life situations. Self-regulation is not something you learn from reading. It is most effectively developed through guided mindfulness experiences. For example, by using a simple "anchor," such as following our breath, we can learn how to be present. When experiencing a strong emotion, we learn to first notice our thoughts and feelings, then calm our minds by redirecting our attention to our breathing, which is something we don't have to control. We may notice other thoughts, but redirect our attention back to the breath. Being present in this way, allows our minds to return to a calm state, instead of being anxious about the future or ruminating about the past. Once calm, our minds are better able help us make more thoughtful choices of behaviour. When teachers undertake this practice themselves, they will then be better able to introduce self-regulation skills to their students. A central motif of the work at Clarkson is teachers understanding that improving the school starts with improving self, which starts with understanding self. As Hattie (personal communication) has said –

"...thinking about self, thinking about thinking, thinking about learning is indeed the meaning of 'self-regulation' and all three can and need to be taught in every lesson."

Our work on personal safety and well-being plans for individual students at Clarkson is well underway. Positive self-concept helps to enable (i) self-management, (ii) social awareness skills, (iii) relationship and (iv) decision-making skills. The articles in Learning Journey 5 reiterate that improving school climate and social-emotional skills is essential when mitigating mental health issues. Staff research findings make clear that interdependent school climate goals at Clarkson must overlap and reinforce the vision and its implementation. Invitational Learning Theory, and Visible Learning research and Social Emotional Learning, shape our school vision.

To achieve these changes, we must understand that the most significant driver of school reform is teachers' thinking. It is teachers' understanding of intentionality that will foster change. It is the self-reflection of teachers as learners of Social Emotional Learning that will help them to better appreciate students' needs. When teachers reflect on their own words and actions, they become more aware of the feelings and needs behind their actions. Learning to reflect inwardly helps us to connect our feelings to our own needs, instead of blaming our feelings on the actions of others. For example, instead of saying to a student, "I'm frustrated because you didn't study for the test," we might say instead, "I'm feeling frustrated because I really want you to do well on the test." This is a vital skill in self-awareness. We can then focus on listening empathically to others—to listen to their words and observe their facial cues, in order to attempt to identify the feeling and needs they may be having, and most importantly, to ask the person we are communicating with if we are current. Once we listen and validate the needs of others, they will be more willing to reciprocate and more willing to accept an invitation to try an alternate behaviour or approach to a situation.

We are now working towards the re-engagement of students whose learning is significantly disrupted by COVID-19. Excellent diagnosis and open eyes are key during this phase. Provision to support a diverse range of students' needs is well underway. We are focusing on positive engagement, the factors that influence attendance, identifying individual students at risk and vulnerable groups. The strategy is to apply a framework, 3 Pillars of Safety by Howard Bath—safety, connections and coping—to identify opportunities for re-engagement and recovery.

How we will measure our progress

We must ask: are we inviting; are we safe; do we have an effective communication strategy that engages our students; is Social Emotional Learning an integral part of our Invitational Education learning? Are we having an impact and thus fostering our students?

We must ask: is leadership at Clarkson a shared responsibility as a part of a professional learning community? Are we self-reflecting as teachers and leading through authorship of strategic essays and practical program to support Learning Journey 5? Have we built a team vision and a framework to help enable the recovery? Are we as a school leadership team optimistic about the fact that we can help make good things happen by focusing on the notion of meliorism?

We were making great progress in all of these areas before COVID-19. Our challenge is now to work in a more focused manner to rectify the problems created by the lockdown and to support our students to develop and engage through Social Emotional Learning aligned with Invitational Education theory and practice.

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See CASEL SEL Competency Chart in this Dropbox folder: <http://bit.ly/3KeysSC2020>

Professor John Hattie, personal email correspondence 26/05/2020

The Second Janus Moment: Maintaining the collaborative breakthrough

Adam Inder

*Adam is one of two Deputy Principals at Clarkson Community High School. With a study background in chemical engineering and chemistry, Adam entered the field of education through the [Teach For Australia](#) Leadership Development Program. Adam has worked in both the private and public sectors of education, finding his passion working in disadvantaged schools. Adam is known for his 2017 TEDx UWA talk, "[Drawing the line on educational disadvantage](#)" and his multiple publications in national magazines such as *Education Today* and *Australian Educational Leader*.*

Unlike many god figures shared between the ancient Greek and Roman societies, the Roman god Janus existed exclusively in Roman mythology. Janus is considered the god of doorways, transitions, time, beginnings, and endings. He is represented, quite fittingly, as a man with two faces directed away from each other. He is said to be looking back into the past whilst also looking forward to the future. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has resulted in government restrictions imposing requirements on practices relating to hygiene, curriculum delivery and social distance. Within many fields – with education no exception – the past we looked to, in order to glean our expectations and our comfort, has been disrupted. It has been a responsibility at the school level to innovative in such a way that adapts to these changes while maintaining a high level of impact in teaching and learning.

As restrictions came into place, we had a unique opportunity to have what I call a “Janus Moment” - to stop, take stock of what we have been doing in the education system in the past, and then, in response to conditions imposed upon us by this pandemic, look forward to what we want it to look like in the future. At Clarkson Community High School (CCHS), what we see as more important is the second Janus Moment, which closely precedes the first. As restrictions are slowly lifted and we cautiously return to normal schooling, it is important for us to intentionally stop, to evaluate what has been a positive change amidst the pandemic-related changes, and determine what we are taking with us for the long-haul into our new future. This article will be discussing some of the changes we implemented at Clarkson Community High School during the pandemic, what worked well, and then how we aim to return to normal schooling over the long-term, implementing practices which deliver on the goals set in our strategic plan.

Breakthrough Innovation

The primary problem presented to us by the Department of Education was clear. Student numbers dwindled as parent choice allowed students to be kept at home. Therefore, how would we deliver curriculum to students who were primarily absent from a physical classroom? The answer to this question was left to the discretion of each individual school, with some support offered in the form of online teaching resources. Clarkson’s response was to develop structures which allowed for synchronous learning (scheduled online classrooms via Cisco WebEx and scheduled discussion/feedback time on online forums) alongside asynchronous learning (discussion forums, recorded tutorial videos and revision sheets).

The disruption created by COVID-19 led us on a pathway which resulted in what is called breakthrough innovation. Breakthrough innovation is a type of innovation that takes an organisation to the next level. Thomas Kuhn said that this innovation is revolutionary because it results in a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970). This is our aim at CCHS – to permanently change our ways of being and doing for the better, following this disruption. In the book *Breakthrough*, Fullan, Hill & Crevola say that breakthrough requires collaborative communities to engage in continuous learning and build communities of practice (Fullan et

al., 2006). For true breakthrough to occur, change must be accepted across the organisation through collaboration.

Collaborative Expertise

One of the Key Focus Areas for CCHS in our strategic plan is to “Build teaching capacity using instructional and feedback models from the *Ten Mindframes for Visible Learning and Visible Learning Feedback* and increased collaborative planning.” John Hattie & Klaus Zierer focus the third of ten Visible Learning Mindframes on collaboration, calling it “I collaborate with my peers and my students” (Hattie and Zierer, 2018). When schools were closed for most students and we were primarily focusing on online learning, the shift towards more asynchronous learning meant that teachers had more time available in the day. Within education, we can be socialised to act as lone wolves, with our domain as our classroom and there being no need to interact with other teachers. However, the urgent response needed from this crisis left no room for such isolation. As such, we ended up with some amazing examples of collaboration. Teachers began teaching online classes together and collaborating in other ways which were not as evident previously. Hattie & Zierer stress that the most effective collaboration is that which discusses impact of teachers on student learning. As the situation developed and resolved so rapidly, we did not have much of an opportunity to measure this impact. However, the practices shown by research to demonstrate high-impact collaboration were very present.

Hattie & Zierer explain that team-teaching is seen as lacking impact in research because teachers often implement team-teaching as one teacher teaching *after* another, rather than teaching *alongside* another. With online classes, for example, we found that one teacher would explain concepts and interact with students over voice chat, while the “chat” function on Cisco WebEx would allow students to type questions, too. Another teacher would then operate the chat and respond to questions from students. This effectively doubled down on feedback during a live lesson, allowing students to ask questions using a medium which was most comfortable or convenient for them.

The term “collective intelligence” draws on the Aristotelian idea that the whole is more valuable than the sum of its parts. This is exactly what we saw both in and out of our virtual classrooms. The more tech-savvy teachers would operate the online chats or forums while the teachers more confident communicating verbally or more skilled in explaining a concept would control the verbal discussion. Teachers lacking the tech knowledge to upload work onto our online platform would be seeking help for this, while supporting others to modify curriculum plans to best reflect what would work in a digital setting.

Lastly, with teachers working together so closely – both through team-teaching synchronous lessons, and publishing resources for asynchronous lessons – we can meet another requirement for our strategic plan. This Key Focus Area is that “All staff embrace classroom observation practices and other forms of development feedback.” Typically, teacher observation and feedback can be met with some apprehension, as it is seen as related to performance review, rather than the far more important purpose of improving in your craft. During school closures, teachers were openly sharing lessons and team-teaching, which resulted in observation and feedback in an organic way. The urgency associated with the crisis left no room for feelings of insecurity – everyone opted for getting the job done, which resulted in some (perhaps, unintentional) positive practices being demonstrated.

Different Modes of Feedback Delivery

Another of Hattie & Zierer’s 10 Mindframes talks about feedback – “I give and help students understand feedback” (Hattie and Zierer, 2018). One way that COVID-19 disrupted our teaching practice is through feedback delivery. In addition to our online classrooms, which involved feedback given both verbally and typed, we introduced an asynchronous method of giving and receiving feedback about teaching and learning – online discussion forums. In a

recent article about COVID-19 and school closures (Hattie, 2020), Hattie comments on how feedback mechanisms akin to social media have been shown to promote student engagement – “[students] are more likely to [talk about what they do not know] on social media than directly to the teacher”. Having these forums available to students through our online platform gives students another mechanism to obtain feedback and to give teachers feedback – both of which are very important in making learning visible.

Maintaining the Breakthrough

As we return to normal schooling, it is crucial that we remember the strategies and practices which have worked during our response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Collaboration is critical, both in and out of the classroom. To maintain collaboration, we must ask ourselves consistently how we can draw on each other’s strengths to produce higher quality results and to save time. We must remember that we are here to help each other, and as such, observation and feedback within teams are not a threat, but a means of growing. Team-teaching can work just as it did in an online setting, but we must be cautious to avoid falling into the trap of teaching *after* each other, instead of *alongside* each other. Lastly, discussion forums are easy to maintain if we remind students that feedback through this medium is just as accessible as the other methods of feedback they have been used to historically.

Greg Whitby says that leading in a digital environment requires “considered action in a particular direction”, reminding us that “velocity is speed in a given direction” (Whitby, 2019). He also reminds us that leaders need to be resilient, acknowledging that not everything goes according to plan, but adapting accordingly when disruptions arise. Having looked back at the past, it is our job now to lead our school community into the post-COVID-19 era of schooling. We do not know what disruptions and challenges that it will bring, but we can remind ourselves that the last disruption gave us an exciting new set of practices to bring with us into the future.

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Invitational Education in Practice and Theory: Reflections as a new teacher

Monica Chamizo

Monica Chamizo is a teacher at Clarkson Community High School and specialises in teaching science. Prior to coming to Clarkson CHS, Monica taught at high schools across Perth and in London. She graduated from UWA with a degree in Science (Chemistry, Biochemistry and Genetics) and a Diploma of Education from the University of Notre Dame.

Invitational Education (IE) is a humanist teaching philosophy that is designed to summon students to see themselves as able, valuable and responsible. The intention being that in encouraging this view of 'self', the student will behave in ways which promote flourishing. For an educator to achieve this, the IE framework describes five interacting propositions for action: intentionality, trust, optimism, respect, and care. These key propositions must address more than a teacher's daily classroom interactions, with Invitational Education only being effective if it focuses on the people, places, policies, programs and processes that a school comprises. (Purkey and Novak 2008) As a new teacher at Clarkson Community High School, I have been able to observe Invitational Education in action, where a school wide approach to this framework has been implemented.

Initial Observations of Invitational Education in Practice

During my first encounter with the school, I noticed that the staff were all welcoming and helpful, with staff actively going out of their way to introduce themselves and to help me. At previous schools, I had experienced my first day as running around lost, trying to find all the information and resources I need. At Clarkson CHS there was a more intentional approach by staff in my transitioning to a full-time teacher. This was valuable as it reduced the stress of starting at a new school, while also increasing my ability to deliver well prepared lessons as soon as possible. The actions of the staff highlight the success of the IE framework, with staff being personally and professionally inviting with others.

With Clarkson CHS being in a low socioeconomic area, there are certain assumptions that are often made about student behaviour and attitudes. In my experience, at other schools with similar issues, students often possess a negative attitude towards teachers. This often does not go away unless the teacher has gained the students' respect. At Clarkson CHS, I did not experience this negative attitude, with students saying hello, holding doors open and being generally respectful in class. This attitude promoted student learning, as I could focus on teaching rather than winning over the class's respect. Over time, behavioural issues did become apparent. However, the positive attitudes of the students made resolving them more manageable. The positive attitudes within the school result in an inviting environment for both staff and students, where this inviting nature promotes more effective teaching and learning. The reasoning behind the students' positive attitudes towards teachers, I could only attribute to a flow-on effect of the staff's way of interacting with students, where staff appear to manage behavioural issues in accordance with the IE framework.

At Clarkson CHS, it is clear that teachers approach behavioural issues from a position of understanding. Where there is a more caring handling of 'bad' behaviours, with the teacher speaking to students respectfully, optimistically and with trust. Traditional views are rejected - e.g. that 'bad' behaviours arise because the student is 'bad' - with a focus being put on the reasons for students' actions, rather than simply punishing the 'bad' behaviour. Focusing on the care of the student can lead to this understanding, as students are encouraged to honestly explain their motive. This allows for the root cause of the behaviour to be addressed, while also enabling a conversation with the student about methods to prevent reoccurrence. Successfully addressing behavioural issues is more likely to be achieved, if

the student trusts and respects the teacher. This trust and respect can be gained by the teacher actively treating students with respect, as well placing trust in the student and acting fairly. Intentionally addressing behavioural issues in this more optimistic and productive manner appears to promote improved student behaviour and attitudes. While this is simply anecdotal evidence for the success of IE, the reasoning behind this conclusion is supported by our basic understanding of human behaviour.

Why use Invitational Education as a Teaching Philosophy?

To decide upon the use of a certain teaching philosophy over another, one must firstly define the end goal (telos) of the teaching profession. The end goal (telos) of teaching should be that which produces the holistic education of students, that enables them to thrive in modern society. Where a holistic approach involves the development of the student intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and morally. (Purkey and Novak 2008) We can justify this stance by comparison with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the end goal of human living is discussed. To paraphrase Aristotle, humans are social beings that aim to reach the goal of happiness, with intellectual pursuit being of highest value to achieve this. Rather than a traditional sense of happiness, Aristotle's meaning is to be understood as flourishing or living and faring well. (Ross 1984) His reasoning for this end goal as happiness, is because it is something "we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this)" (Ross 1984, 1730). In accepting Aristotle's famous ethical theory, we can support the proposed end goal of teaching. Where the holistic education of a student encourages them to reach Aristotle's end goal, to flourish and live well.

In order to achieve this holistic education of the student, a teaching philosophy must be implemented that also aims to reach this goal. By coming to this understanding, we can refute some major philosophies - the main teaching philosophies, including essentialism, behaviourism, existentialism, and humanism. Essentialism focuses on students learning the basics of academic knowledge, compared to existentialism which describes an education that relies on student choice of academic studies. Both of these philosophies can be denied by their failure to address a holistic education of the student. Behaviourism explains a philosophy with the key idea that knowledge and understanding is learned, with a focus on the impact of external stimuli, whereas humanism is based on self-actualisation, with students' human needs being met in order for them to maximise their potential. (Sanders 2006) While behaviourism provides a valid point, it wrongly focuses on how we learn in general, rather than how to promote learning. It is assumed that teachers understand how students learn, the practicality of this is what needs to be addressed. Humanism focuses on the promotion of learning through the student becoming a self-directed learner and thinker. This philosophical theory of teaching most fully promotes the flourishing and holistic education of the student. Invitational Education is a framework that can be aligned with a humanist philosophy of education, with support for the implementation of IE found by virtue of this connection.

Humanist educational theory endorses learning through the self-actualisation of students. However, if we are to focus on the student's 'self', this also requires the promotion of a student's authenticity and individuality. In doing this, students are shaped in such a way that encourages them to hold value in their own thoughts and opinions. This promotion of individuality in schools and in the community is becoming more prominent as our society progresses. While individuality of thought is of obvious worth, it can produce some educational issues. For example, where a student's value in their own opinions means they are more likely to question a teacher's authority or judgement. This is a problem for traditional teaching practices, as respect towards the teacher's authority is assumed. To combat this, Invitational Education principles can be used, which intentionally encourage the formation of respect, through the teacher acting with trust, optimism, respect and care towards the student. This allows for an understanding that respect must be developed, if we

are to also endorse student individuality. While it is likely that this was not a direct intention of the framework, it highlights the value of IE as a tool that accounts for student motivation.

The IE framework is a valuable model for teachers to navigate educational issues in modern society, where its successful implementation can be observed at Clarkson CHS. Surface observations of positive student attitudes reflect the outcomes of IE in practice.

Comparatively to other educational philosophies, IE as a humanist theory more effectively supports the holistic education of the student - an end goal of teaching which aims to promote a student's ability to 'live well' once they finish schooling.

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Shifting Sands: What can we learn from the educational response to COVID-19? Steven Laing

Steve Laing began his high school teaching career at Clarkson Community High School in 2018, and now teaches Maths, Science and career skills. He has worked in industry since the early 90s after completing a PhD in Microbiology, and in parallel taught as a sessional lecturer teaching employability skills from 2010-2019 at Edith Cowan University in the School of Business and Law). He has extensive skills in team-based working, problem solving, working in change environments, and in self-awareness development.

One of the salient aspects of life is its ability to evolve – to adapt to changes in the environment, either genetically over many generations, or behaviourally in the existing one. COVID-19 has elicited such a change in human behaviour, sparking survival instincts within individuals, families and communities, in turn impacting societal customs, such as school education, in ways not experienced in Australia since the last quarantining for polio in the early 1950s (Romensky, 2020). Whilst the impact has been significant, it may also give us an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of our classroom practice, and determine what positive changes might be made that can be retained going forward.

DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2008) published lists of possible cultural shifts in professional learning communities, and whilst at the time of writing, we are yet to collect data on the impacts on student learning from this disruption, we can certainly look at how this change in direction impacted on the work of teachers at Clarkson Community High School in the final two weeks of Term 1, when classroom teaching time was significantly reduced, and instead transferred to preparing for a remote teaching paradigm for Term 2.

It is universally recognized that organizational change is challenging. Many people feel that change is threatening, and often go to great lengths to undermining change initiatives. Many change programs either fail, or don't achieve the originally intended benefits, for this reason.

The main change in focus that DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2008) foresaw for teachers was moving from "isolation" to "collaboration" (which is somewhat ironic given the main driver for the change being prepared for), suggesting that many teachers are unwilling to give up their classroom independence, and being protective of their own teaching practices.

Evidence witnessed from those last two weeks of Term 1 at Clarkson 1 certainly appeared to dispel this preconception. Despite what, from my own project management experience, I would describe as a reactive management approach to preparing for what is quite a fundamental change in teaching practice, it was highly evident that teachers, certainly in the applied science and technology department, naturally snapped into collaborative work patterns, rapidly becoming productive in their preparations for the new term, whilst simultaneously supporting many ad hoc requests from students (and parents) already trying to learn in a remote environment, as well as piloting, assessing and then documenting practice of the potential effectiveness or otherwise of technologies that might aid such remote teaching.

After two weeks of preparation, staff were, by and large, ready to start remote teaching for student cohorts with and without appropriate technology in Term 2. With limited direction: staff divided responsibilities; worked collaboratively with their co-workers to determine how and what would be taught; shared materials and ideas for re-engaging students who were

already working remotely; considered how assessment strategies would have to be adapted; and gave and received feedback from colleagues in an open and honest manner.

This experience suggests that teachers are naturally collaborative given the right environment. The Hawthorne Studies, a series of experiments that studied worker productivity and morale conducted between 1924 and 1933 at the Hawthorne Works, a plant owned by the Western Electric Company, revealed the importance of worker attitude in increased productivity (Burke, 2018), with the key factors being: more freedom on the job; no boss; setting their own work pace; smaller group; the way they were treated.

Teachers in the public system have generally enjoyed a higher degree of autonomy than in many workplaces, though the lower level of supervision experienced means opportunities to learn from feedback are decreased. Interestingly in the new “remote paradigm” staff quickly determined that “co-teaching”, whether having two staff creating explanatory (and entertaining!) videos to explain a Year 10 Maths concept, or recognizing the value of having multiple staff run online conference sessions with students covering a complete year group rather than individual classes, was not only easier, but far more manageable, than attempting to do that task independently. Staff quickly recognized that for remote teaching to be effective, trying to simply recreate the classroom environment in a home setting was not only impossible, but unrealistic, and entirely misses some of the opportunities that can be gained through the changed paradigm, namely giving students more choice as to what tasks they should tackle in which order, and thus building new skills often not available in the somewhat regimented classroom setting where the timetable sets the agenda.

Indeed, having taught both in class and remotely as a sessional university lecturer, I have been somewhat bemused by the push for academic Year 12 students to return to the classroom, given that almost all modern universities rely heavily on remote working for many of their courses. What better way for school students to prepare for working in a learning environment reliant on self-motivation, self-management and good organizational skills? Indeed, would there be a better way for universities to pre-determine out who is most likely to be successful?

Our evidence somewhat debunks the oft-intimated notion that teachers desire for autonomy, to be masters of their *own* domain, prevents a move to a collaborative practice. So what is holding this back? I suspect the reason is far more mundane – it is lack of *opportunity* to work in this manner. And by lack of *opportunity*, I don't mean that we are short of teaching issues that we could bring our collective approach to address, but we lack time where teachers can work together; either because DoTs, or duties, rarely overlap, or because the time required for lesson preparation, marking, reporting etc can be so overwhelming that the necessary bandwidth required for productive team working is rarely available. Having significant prior experience in team based working environments, I know that a lot of investment is required to discuss, share ideas, and solve problems, but also to bond and build the necessary trust that underpins productive teams. An hour's meeting once a week or a training session twice a term isn't enough to build the new habits, or the mindset required. It is interesting to note that middle school teachers in Finland spend over 25% less classroom hours compared to those in Australia (Walker, 2015). How much of this additional time outside the classroom collaborating with colleagues might contribute to the academic outcomes of Finnish compared to Australian students? (OECD, 2018)

Without more direct evidence, determining whether improved academic outcomes could be achieved through increased capacity for teacher collaboration is entirely conjecture. However, if our experience is anything to go by, it certainly wouldn't be due to a preference of teachers to work in isolation.

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The Power of Three: Effective partnerships between parents, teachers & students

Evelyn Kiddie

Evelyn Kiddie joined Clarkson Community High School as an English teacher in 2007 and has moved on to teach HASS as well. Evelyn is a life-long learner, a lover of language and knowledge. She works to invite students to develop, or discover, the same sense of wonder and enquiry in their lives.

Biomimetics, is defined as the copy-cattng of ingenious ideas in the natural world. One borrowable concept is the power of three, exemplified in geometry's shape, the triangle: "...fundamental to...our environments, both physical and virtual...they are exceptionally strong." (University of Cambridge 2016, p 1) At quantum level, the Rule of Threes is an: "effect that requires three components...to 'act like' Borromean rings, an ancient symbol of three interconnected circles...if any one of the rings is removed...the structure falls apart. (Ritsch 2014, p. 1) Figuratively, this could link to the power of a strong partnership between parent, teacher and student. The current pandemic has flung this relationship into the headlights, requiring empowerment, empathy and effort to create an unbendable bond.

The COVID-19 Effect

Author Hugh Mackay, in discussing Australian society, talks about, "the last straw syndrome" where: "...even quite minor upsets can feel like one thing too many." (Magrath & Edwards 2009, p. 205) If minor upsets are triggering exaggerated reactions, how much more so must the current crisis, the effects of which will reverberate for generations. In this context, the strengthening of relationships that offer solidarity and solace is urgent; therefore, parents need to know their value.

Empowering Parents

William W. Purkey states that, "...nothing is more important in life than people." (Purkey 1992, p.5) This is true in the microcosm of the family, where parents need to understand their value as educators. Paul Jennings suggests to parents, "Go look in the mirror," (Jennings 2003, blurb) in order to find their child's best reading teacher. That parents are the first educators, teaching core concepts to their infants, is axiomatic; and professionals agree: "...parental engagement in learning in the homes is associated with increased cognitive abilities in the early years." (Desforges and Abouchaar, cited in Emerson & Fox 2012 p. 45) Sometimes, parents forget this, 'handing the reins' to strangers because they may feel that teachers know best. The truth is that parents, working in partnership with teachers, will strengthen the student's chances of succeeding in an increasingly complex society. Rafe Esquith advises parents to remind their children that a broad education, "...does not end at 3.00." (Esquith 2007, Appendix E) Involved parents will help their children see the value of knowledge beyond a narrow skillset; this can only enhance the learning accomplished in the classroom. The Research Spotlight comments that, "The role of teachers in communicating with parents to support student learning is more critical than ever." (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2020, p. 10)

Especially, now, as society navigates the world of COVID-19. Effective communication has to be worked at; it has at its heart, the quality of empathy.

The Role of Empathetic Communication

Author, Susan Scott, declares: “The conversation *is* the relationship.” (Scott 2004, p. 97) Excellent dialogue doesn’t come easy; especially in a stressful environment. The dynamics of teachers – as perceived experts, versus parents, who may feel defensive – is entering deep waters, where empathy is the life-jacket. Empathy is defined as the “capacity” to share and understand another’s “state of mind, or emotion.” (Ioannidou & Konstantikaki 2008, p. 1)

It is a tool in the toolbox of emotional intelligence that is essential to hone: “The ability to understand...to disconnect from your personal feelings...is particularly important in creating effective and constructive relations.” (ibid, p. 119) Covid-19 has caused Australian schools to ‘turn on a dime’, entering a new dynamic with parents faced with teaching their children at home. This has opened a door of dialogue that needs to be wedged open permanently. Parents have voiced a “new-found respect” for teachers; they’ve had a glimpse of the complexities of teaching the modern child, transfixed by gaming and other technologies.

The Teacher’s Role

This brief glimpse, will soon be clouded-over by burgeoning anxieties, for example, “The ICRC is concerned that the Covid-19 pandemic may *increase stress* exponentially.” (International Committee of the Red Cross 2020, p. 1) Teachers are under pressure from angry parents - way beyond the ‘last straw’. It takes great effort to stay calm and objective under fire; the biblical adage is that, “A mild answer turns away rage.” (Proverbs 15:1) Kind, well-chosen words can smooth over anxious feelings and misunderstandings. If the conversation is the relationship, then the words need to *engage*, not *enrage*. Dale Carnegie described a man, ruffled by a word:

“You fool! You mail me a cheap letter...then you have the gall to ask me when I am worried about the mortgage and the hollyhocks and my blood pressure...to acknowledge your letter... “promptly.” Don’t you know that I am just as busy as you are...And while we are on that subject, who gave you the lordly right to order me around? (Carnegie 1969, p.45)

Humorous, but true; teachers need to be equal partners; not assume the senior partner position. Carnegie advised: “...let your friends excel you...when we excel them - that gives them a feeling of inferiority...” (ibid p. 137) Acknowledging parental skills will keep the relationship balanced, rather than weighted by the power of bureaucracy. John Hattie speaks of the “IKEA effect”, noting that people highly value items that they have built themselves. (Hattie & Zierer 2018, p.135) When parents are invited to be a partner in constructing the piece of art - the adult of the future - they’ll value the partnership. The third side of the triangle is the students.

The Student’s Role

Students have felt the significance of uncertain times; they’ve seen the impacts on family and finances; some have returned to school with a new outlook. Suddenly, the three R’s take on a whole, new urgency. Students have benefitted from the heightened communication between home and school; they’ve seen a partnership develop between parents and teachers - that compels them to work harder; this is *far too valuable* to relinquish now. Students who ‘buy into’ the partnership will complete the unbendable bond.

The Power of Three

The Rule of Threes, encapsulated in the Borromean rings, where each ring supports the other two, is a fitting metaphor for the power of relationships, and the concept of a triangle, the strongest geometric form is worth a little biomimicry - in a figurative way. If parents see their value and teachers invite parents in as partners, then students will be compelled to increase their own commitment to future successes, strengthening them for the challenges ahead.

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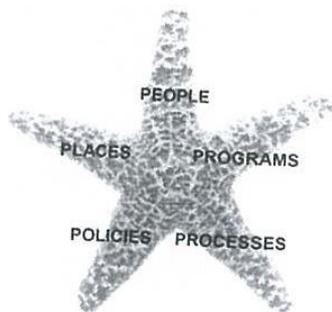
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The Starfish is a Survivor

Patricia Hughes

Patricia Hughes is the Senior School Psychologist at Clarkson Community High School. With an extensive experience of teaching before being a psychologist, Patricia has a Bachelor of Arts, a Masters of Education and a Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties.

In 2015 the Principal, Mr Young wrote 'It is fundamentally important to me that students are invited to flourish and that we provide students with opportunities and means to grow as individuals. A key element of our vision is a focus on Invitational Education.' He further stated that Invitational Education was adopted at Clarkson Community High School as a simple and easily understood scaffold for school improvement. It has become the principle behind education at Clarkson Community High School and is in a sense the 'brand' for service to the students. The starfish analogy is easy to remember and creates an awareness of the importance of consideration of people, places, policies, programs and processes that should underpin all planning and improvement of student outcomes of the school. Invitational Education is underpinned by the fact that self-concept determines all actions. Self-concept is learned and if it can be learned, then it can be taught. Invitational Education provides the best strategies for this.



Students from Clarkson Community High School are largely from disadvantaged homes and Invitational Educational is an educational philosophy that aims to provide improvement for all students (Inder 2018) According to the Productivity Commission (2020), disadvantage in Australia needs to be assessed against these three metrics: relative income poverty, material deprivation (inability to afford life's essentials) and social exclusion. Children experiencing these metrics can include those living in very low Social Class contexts, children in jobless house-holds, children with special needs, children with language other than English backgrounds and refugee populations. Recently, low digital inclusion has also been added to this list. Australian children living in poverty may experience extra risk as a consequence of the COVID-19 school interruption. Clarkson Community High School students may have a decrease in individual protective factors provided by the school'

At the beginning of the school year in 2020, no one could have predicted the devastating effect COVID-19 would have on the global community. Consequently, disrupting the momentum of 2020 at Clarkson Community High School. Disadvantaged students need school more than any other student group (Young 2015), academically and pastorally. The aim of the school during the pandemic has been to "put our students first and not just to survive, but to thrive". This has been carried out by continuing with the ethical principles of I-CORT embedded in the school' s strategic plan. These principles are, intentionality, care, optimism, respect and trust. During the first week that students were given the choice to return to school, over two thirds of students attended and were obviously pleased to be back.

Adam Marshall (2020) in his article in The Western Australian newspaper, writes that the first stage in recovery from a crisis for 'brands' for goods and services is to remove customer anxiety. In order to have children safely return to school in 2020 government directives have been followed.

Examples of these are: the employment of extra cleaning staff to ensure that extra cleaning takes place, the use of hand sanitiser, the promotion of personal hygiene habits such as extra care with hand washing, social distancing and the lessening of visitors on the school grounds. Anxious students are helped by all staff to allay their fears and those requiring extra help are referred to student services staff. A happy positive invitational tone is evident all through the school.

The second stage mentioned by Marshall is 'help'. At school it is a priority to make sure that every student is helped to achieve their potential. During the non-school attendance time students and parents received on-line learning help or hard copy workbooks to complete at home. Teachers were available for consultation. Those students who did not stay home received help in their classrooms by the provision of lessons based on the theory of Individual Education. When teachers planned for student improvements, they began by asking, 'What are we trying to improve here?' Then it was a decision as to which of the 5Ps would be most relevant to what was to be achieved. Quite often it was the processes that needed to be monitored in the classrooms. What worked best for each class had to be decided on.

For parents, advice was offered by the Department of Education, in Parenting During COVID-19 a Parenting Guide, and a Top Ten Tips two-page poster was offered by Triple P Parenting. A new parenting guide has been released by internationally recognised parenting expert Professor Matt Sanders and other (Triple P positive parenting Program) Tips include: how to be a positive parent while managing financial stress, working from home, changing circumstances, and helping your child cope with their feelings and stay emotionally resilient. Beyond Blue also launched a new service (April 2020), Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service which includes: Managing your mental health-taking control in uncertain times, how to look after your mental health when working from home, ways to reduce stress during the coronavirus pandemic, finding a place inside that feels calm and safe, tips for getting a good night's sleep, how to check in with someone, general tips to support your child's wellbeing and from toddlers to teens how to talk about the coronavirus.

It can be seen that plenty of advice is available to parents but how accessible is this advice to those families that are in the low digital inclusion category for disadvantage?

Stage three in Marshall's article is "Vision" What is planned for the future? Hope is needed in these times. Invitational Education philosophy is all about the hope that each student will be invited to flourish and provided with the opportunities and means to grow as individuals. This philosophy has underpinned Clarkson Community High School since 2012 and is now more important than ever in this era of the pandemic.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), positive psychological change or 'post traumatic growth is experienced by a large number of trauma survivors as a result of their struggles with highly challenging life circumstances. In our newspapers there have been several letters to the editor and feature articles by journalists and parents saying how much more they now appreciate the work of teachers. They - since home schooling experiences now know how hard teaching can be. Hopefully students will now have a better appreciation of just how much their schools offer them. The very young girl interviewed who said 'my teacher is not allowed to growl at me, but my mummy, is', had obviously learnt to appreciate her teacher's patience. Some comments from parents and students interviewed by The West Australian (May 2020) have been, 'I feel like a failure. It's survival mode here' and "I thought I was going to be super mum with lists on the fridge and a schedule. I set up the dining table as a home-school station. I did really well for about three weeks and then the wheels fell off" and

from a student, (not from Clarkson). "This isolation has heavily affected my mental health, I am so used to seeing my friends and the school counsellor almost daily. I am now realising how important my friends and family are."

According to Clinton (2020) Australian children living in poverty may experience extra risk from school interruption. It is probable that there will be interruption to learning, lack of access to support for health and wellbeing, a decrease in the development of individual protective factors, and a lack of surveillance systems that school provides. Clinton fears there may be an increase of the equity gap because of the coronavirus. This means it is more important than ever to provide every student with the chance to flourish at school.

In 2010, Bonanno also found that resilience among adults is common and can be attained by multiple sometimes unexpected routes. Seven potential areas of growth have been reported as arising from adversity. These are: a greater appreciation of life, a greater appreciation and strengthening of relationships, increased compassion and altruism, the identification of new possibilities or a purpose in life, greater awareness and utilisation of personal strengths, enhanced spiritual development and creative growth. Hopefully some of the soon to be adults at school, parents and staff members will demonstrate these areas of growth.

Stage four of Marshall's article deals with 'Rebirth'. In the future of the world's new normal, trust will be vital. In the beginning of 2020 there was a start of implementing the future vision for Clarkson Community High School as written in the Strategic Plan which seeks to serve the school community by fostering a safe learning environment underpinned by Invitational Theory. Over the past few months, because of COVID-19, the school has followed government directives to respond to the pandemic. We are now in the process of reintroducing students back into standard schooling. Clarkson Community High School will continue with the vision of putting students first by adopting the ethical principles of I-CORT embedded in the Strategic Plan - intentionality, care, optimism, respect and trust.

The school's 'brand' or philosophy will take us into the final rebirth stage described by Marshall, that of rebirth. This is a return to the new normal. This is the beginning of post COVID-19 life. The educational philosophy of Clarkson Community High School will continue to develop new trust and emotional bonds with our students. As stated by Fretz, (2020), developing trust, dependable relationships and respectful schools is simply based upon 'listening for and acknowledging the feelings and needs of others, sharing our own feelings without blame or judgement and inviting relationships to discover beneficial solutions'. Fretz, also recommends the modelling, teaching, practicing, and applying of specific behaviours that will help us reflect on and choose beneficial words and actions which lead us to develop desirable qualities of character. She is in favour of using the work of CASEL (2020), who provides a competency chart of skills to be attained.

Byrne (2020), the president of The State School Teacher's Union writes that the Union is aware that managing this pandemic has been far from easy and involves a constant balancing of health, social and economic considerations. She reports that 71% of teachers in a survey, (April 2020) indicated their preference for face to face teaching if student numbers made it safe to do so. Thus the question of schools continues to be a vexed one in all states and territories. In this 'rebirth' stage the Union pledges to continue to work for their members.

As Marshall stated, in the 'Rebirth' stage, the brands that have protected their clients throughout this crisis will survive. All of the staff members have worked hard to provide for the wellbeing of Clarkson High School students and will continue to do so under the overarching philosophy of Invitational Education. The starfish will survive and students will thrive.

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Class Half Full

Ellie Hoyer

Ellie Hoyer is a third year teacher who specialises in Visual Art and English. This year, Ellie has embarked on her first English teaching experience since she completed her studies at Edith Cowan University. This experience has pushed Ellie to extend her learning and passion in teaching. Her personal art practice has developed further as she develops her understanding of creative flow.

grit

/grɪt/

courage and resolve; strength of character.

It is no doubt that uncertainty plagues many people during this time. COVID-19 is what Covey would describe as a 'No control' problem (Covey., S. 1989, pg. 86). The problems we face fall into three categories: direct, indirect and no control. In this instance we have no control over our situational reality, namely, the current pandemic. This problem involves taking responsibility by accepting what has become and moving forward. As educators, we are "response-able"; we choose our response to the current situation to provide a better outcome to students (Covey., S. 1989.Pg. 89).

A Class Half Full Approach

The Class Half Full Approach aims to change from the inside-out. To 'be' different in order to effect positive change in hardships (Covey, S. 1989). In this instance, it is our obligation as educators to determine how we can behave during this crisis to be part of the solution. This is paramount in ensuring the success of the students in our care. This was evident in the outstanding efforts by staff at Clarkson to deliver content online for students. When faced with unforeseen circumstances, teachers modelled: adaptability, perseverance and grit.

It is prudent to look at education from a psychological perspective, now more than ever. How do educators help build resilience and grit in students? While research is still limited in building grit not only for our students but ourselves. Growth Mindset becomes the most obvious candidate for developing grit. Introducing students to research about the brain's growth and responses to challenges, has increased the probability for students to persevere when they fail. This is due to the belief that failure is not a permanent state (cited in Duckworth, 2013). Duckworth highlights "We need to be gritty about getting our kids grittier." (2013). While being positive helps develop grit, the quintessential characteristic is perseverance during hardship.

It is important that classrooms are 'safe spaces' for children to decrease suffering and promote recovery (cited in Clinton, 2020, pg.17). Teachers will need to make a conscious effort to welcome students and establish normal routines upon the reopening of schools. In this instance the inside-out approach would be: to 'be' more inviting, to 'be' more welcoming, and to 'be' more caring.

While COVID-19 may have devastating effects on many, a "class half full" approach may be beneficial to nurturing growth mindset in children. Dweck notes "in a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a

resilience that is essential for great accomplishment” (cited in The Great Schools Partnership, 2013). When teachers were required to learn online platforms to accommodate the pandemic, learning was inevitable and intense. More professional developments were organised, and learning became a part of everyday life during those weeks of uncertainty. It becomes clear then, that the path out of adversity is through learning. This is true for not only teachers but also students. Through learning, students will recover and heal from hardships. Consequently, learning needs to be qualitative and relevant.

To nurture the growth of students, teachers must also be learners. Learning needs to be meaningful to have long lasting impacts on teachers and students. The question becomes; How do we apply our learning from the pandemic and integrate it into our lives now? Online learning can become seamlessly incorporated into education moving forward. This has been particularly useful in English where multiple teachers are teaching the same content. This way there will be unified delivery of similar tasks. For those teachers untrained or unfamiliar with the subject, this creates confidence in the delivery of content. Experienced teachers have been able to guide less experienced teachers to ensure optimal outcomes for students. This arrangement has not only created a more organised environment, it has also given less experienced teachers ideas about content, and content delivery. This learning has been meaningful and beneficial to the future of teaching. This practice has also created a more team centred approach and deprivatized teaching practices. This system has opened up communication, thus creating more instantaneous feedback on teaching practices. It has also allowed the team to see how other teachers organise explicit lessons. The load must be shared among teachers to ensure the team is effectively functioning and for learning to be made accessible to all.

This ‘no control’ problem has created mass productivity and learning for teachers. The Class Half Full Approach focuses on looking at our reactions to the situation to improve outcomes for all. We can do this by reflecting on our practice and how we could improve to better support students. The goal becomes clear:

To be ‘grittier’,
To be more welcoming,
To be more intentional,
To be more adaptable.

Covey notes this “dramatic paradigm shift” is confronting for many people. It is much easier to blame the situations, other people, or conditions for our own stagnation. But we are responsible for controlling our lives, and influencing our circumstances for better outcomes (Covey, S. 1989. Pg. 89).

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Social and Emotional Learning to combat the 1.5 metre physical barrier and educate the whole child

Louise Hall

Louise Hall grew up in England where she completed a BSc Science and Education and went on to work as a Science teacher, teaching mentor and examiner for Edexcel. In 2014 Louise relocated to Perth with her family, continued to work as a Science teacher and Year coordinator whilst completing an MEd Leadership and Management. In 2018 Louise obtained Level three classroom teacher status whilst working at Clarkson Community High school. At the start of 2019 Louise undertook the exciting opportunity of Deputy Principal at Clarkson Community High school. Currently Louise is in overseeing Year 8,10,12 where she endeavours to create opportunities for students to be actively involved in the school I-CORT values.

Over the space of a few months, the world, social practices, and schooling have changed dramatically. A handshake has now been replaced by a 1.5 metre gap, celebrations and community events have been held online over hundreds if not thousands of physical miles between participants. In a time when mental health issues are soaring and people are physically apart how do school cultures support students to feel connected to the school community. There is no textbook of curriculum that covers the changes that have come about.

Education and educators are in an exciting time, a time where the first-aid of education can be rewritten. If deliberate opportunities are found to build student prosocial behaviours positive intellectual outcomes (Dipema and Elliot 1999) will be maintained or improved over time. During online lessons and preparations, educators have acknowledged how easy it is to move to an online curriculum, teach interactively, and prepare curriculum packages for students. What has been ripped at the seams is pastoral care, how much some students value school as their haven, and the lack of adaptive resilience of young adults.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a vast topic that is loosely added into a school curriculum. However, if it is not embedded in the school's culture through collaborative learning teams in schools then it will never reach its true potential. Practitioners must now reflect on their experiences during COVID-19 to learn and make changes (Dewey, educational psychologist) Schools can reduce anxiety and disengagement while promoting a better positive sense of self-worth in the next generation. The purpose of this article is to explore how SEL can be taught explicitly in schools and understand how to encourage educators to embrace the challenge with students, stretch boundaries, implement effective change, and model proactive social and emotional skills. It must also be noted that SEL must first be acknowledged and learnt by educators, then taught to students before branching to families and the community. Clarkson Community High School will explicitly teach SEL with the support of the Invitational theory and practice.

SEL offers the ability to teach students self-regulation and promote sustained positive attributes. Education of the whole child through an inviting school is paramount in the post-COVID-19 recovery period in education.

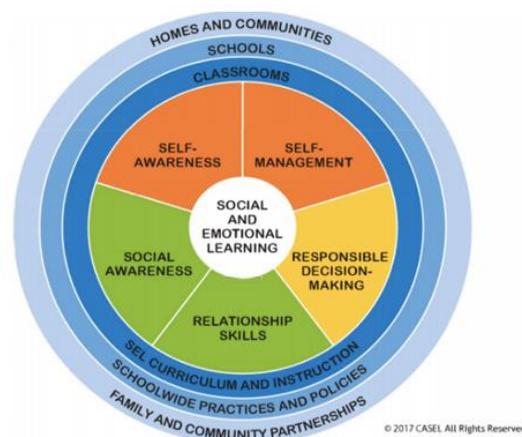
What will education have to show for the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020?

Clarkson Community High school (CCHS) like every other school has seen the ramifications of lockdown and separation have been apparent for the school community. The context of CCHS exacerbates the vulnerability of students as many are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The invitational education vision of the school is enabling optimism to build resilience to find a responsive and successful recovery. CCHS works as a community to invite student involvement every day through an I-CORT lens. Staff and students have trust, optimism, respect, and trust (Purkey) in all facets of school life. The most important characteristic for any person, place, policy, program, or process is how each is perceived by stakeholders as "doing school with me". This notion has already led to a positive collective response by the professional learning teams to provide a successful model to move into the new normal (Cleveland, Clinton, McShane)

Social-emotional learning

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) define social-emotional learning as to how children and adults manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, form positive relationships and make responsible decisions. The challenges currently being experienced can be combated through explicit SEL teaching and learning to reduce emotional distress and improve a positive attitude toward self (Durak et al 2011). SEL, when taught explicitly, can support student wellbeing in times of change and increased anxiety in times such as formal summative examinations, and over school holidays. Looking for authentic opportunities to promote positive conversations and utilise CASEL's five SEL competencies (Figure 1) increases individuals' ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviours.

Figure one represents the fundamental workings of SEL. As a leader at CCHS, I have led the professional learning communities to embed SEL into CARE (Noddings) for the remainder of 2020. Each morning students work through brain breaks, mindful activities, and resilience activities with a specific teacher. Through explicit teaching and learning students and staff will build upon skills. Based on the results of these sessions a curriculum will be built, specific to the context, to begin in 2021 in line with the school's strategic plan. This is a huge step toward the community involvement at the school. Figure one represents the need to incorporate all areas of a person's life to be able to effectively teach CASEL's facets of SEL. In CCHS's recovery plan post-COVID-19, community involvement in pastoral care at the school is the forefront of the vision. When restrictions lift, it is hoped that while student involvement is already encouraged an effort will be made to extend this further into the community and welcome them back to share in the positive culture at the school.



School-wide culture

Social-Emotional Learning has been cited as an important psychosocial support to improve social and emotional resilience (Winthrop and Kirk) they are specific, sequentially taught behaviour skills that equip people to respond positively to social and emotional challenges (Fretz). Covid-19 has offered an abrupt shift in thinking and existing for everyone. Optimism has enabled staff at CCHS to understand that SEL is the key to successful student performance as they adapt to students' emotions and heightened anxious state. However, staff cannot successfully teach SEL competencies and skills without reflecting on their behaviours and interactions with others. As a result, CCHS, in line with the school strategic plan, will use professional development opportunities for all staff to develop their intentionally positive communication skills (Fretz).

Community involvement

The seismic shifts in uncertainty have surfaced fear and affected everyone and heightened the necessity for strong school-community relationships. Children have spent more time at home, observing the way their caregivers have dealt with the threat of Covid-19. Dan Siegel's valuable work hand model of the brain recognises that everyone is triggered by threatening situations (Fretz) and it is important to practise resilience in times of trial. Students have been at home with their parents for a prolonged period tackling unprecedented times coupled with navigating online schooling platforms and conflicting advice. This will have led to increased anxiety in homes and school support is vital to keep a sense of connectedness and togetherness in the school community.

A positive, collaborative relationship between schools and parents is now even more important than before. Teaching parents SEL skills to implement at home will support and provide optimism for students and families. While it is unreasonable to think everyone will instantly change the way they communicate (Fretz) families will discover different ways to communicate and this will become part of the school-community culture. When schooling moves into a new normal these practices will become the norm for students and will lessen the impact on achievement in stressful times moving forward.

The outlook

It is with trepidation that society moves forward as restrictions are peeled back. Academic literature shows that in natural disasters people help others in a sense of shared humanity. That has been evident from the tireless hours teachers have spent, checking in on their students and their families all over the world. However, this sense of shared digital community cannot be forgotten. Schools must learn from the impact covid-19 has had on students and harness SEL into all parts of the school so that everybody's emotional trauma is not ingrained but schools are safe spaces with explicit SEL practices. Before Covid-19, 93% of teachers want SEL taught in schools (CASEL). This number will have certainly risen as students return and the effect of lockdown is played out in classrooms. CCHS will be at the forefront of this recovery inviting students back to educate the whole child as now, more than ever, mental health and positive school culture where all members are resilient and possess self-regulation skills are paramount.

More Than A Feeling: A case for introducing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to a school like Clarkson

Steven Laing

Whilst on one hand I'm delighted that our students are now back at school and nobody has succumbed to COVID-19, as someone who sees such events as opportunities to capture interesting and useful data, a part of me is a little disappointed that our chance to find out how well a remote learning model might have worked effectively stopped before it even started.

However, given the limited evidence we have collected, that is probably a very good thing! Whilst the movement of students from being in the classroom to being at home was initially dictated by parental concern, in a learning environment that was not officially supported other than on a best endeavours basis by individual teachers; followed by an early shut-down of Term 1 where remote schooling was also largely unsupported (and with an intimation that this was extended holidays, rather than remote learning); and finally this term, where remote packages were available, but without significant teacher support; the amount of work that our students appear to have completed at home has been disappointingly low.

The date of the decision regarding how term 2 would be taught was communicated, determined that for the first two weeks there was limited opportunity to develop a different set of lessons for those in class as those working remotely. However, this would hopefully mean that when students did eventually return they would be on the same page as those in the classroom. As a scientist this provided us with a very useful controlled variable – differences between our classroom and remote cohort during this time could not be due to the content or how it was delivered. And the difference was stark. Even some of our most capable students failed to complete the work at home that their "in class" peers easily managed to.

So if it wasn't the work, what was the difference? The obvious difference is environment – however if I was given the choice of where I wanted to do some focused work, a Clarkson classroom would probably only come just above the deck of a ship in a force 10 gale, and certainly much lower than working at home. And whilst the homes of a number of our students might be far from conducive to remote working, the effect on productivity of those working at home was largely consistent. Access to technology? Certainly, this would have some impact, but like the home environment, the evidence doesn't suggest that those who were technologically well equipped were any more diligent than those who weren't.

Which leaves the other clear difference being teacher "presence". In the regard of data collection, (as against student productivity), it is unfortunate that we didn't have the opportunity to run remote teaching that was fully teacher-supported for a period, and as such it will be interesting to compare our experience with those of similar schools in states like Victoria who have been running more fully teacher supported remote arrangements, to see whether we can further pin down more precisely whether, and if they did, *how* teachers helped maintain student learning.

But despite the lack of support, and the generally good rapport I have with my students, the fact that so few of them made any effort to contact me regarding what they were supposed to do, or to get assistance or direction with the assigned work, underlines that perhaps our most important role as teachers in schools like Clarkson is that of motivator. Without our encouragement and our role in keeping students accountable, they quickly go off task. This lack of self-motivation is perhaps their biggest disadvantage as students, and if not

addressed, will likely continue to impact their future success beyond the school environment. Are teachers (within the current curricular framework) providing a motivational crutch when instead they should be intentionally building motivational ability in their students?

Over the last 30 years or so, the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has increasingly become recognised as perhaps the key factor in successful leadership (Goleman, 2004). The ability to recognise and control one's own emotions, to recognise the emotions of others and modify one's behaviour appropriately, and finally, self-motivation, make up the five key capabilities that define EI. Whilst at first self-motivation may seem an odd add-on to the list, when you consider the importance of emotion as perhaps the key motivating factor, it does make more sense. Emotions are triggered by the amygdala, a primitive part of the brain that from an evolutionary perspective predates the cortex, the reasoning part of the brain. Emotions are intrinsically linked to survival and reproduction – they stimulate actions in the organism that ensure the continuation of our genetic material, whether that's fight or flight, or "my, these berries are tasty, I want to eat more". And as such, these emotional responses often occur before our cortex has even recognised the stimulus is, whether logically that response is actually in our long-term best interest, and often their effect prevents the cortex functioning to make that rational decision. Fundamentally, our emotions drive our motivation – we do things because we want to be happier, less fearful, more secure, in love, less harassed, satisfied, content – the list is endless, but when you strip motivation down to basics, the key factor is emotional.

But unlike IQ, EI isn't fixed. Older people often have greater EI, simply because they have more experience of life. And we know that unlike IQ, we can develop our EI. So we've established how vital emotions are, and that Emotional Intelligence can be built. Which then begs the question – given all the other things educationalists consider important, why don't we teach it explicitly in schools?

In fact, a number of schools are doing just that. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) originated in the US in the 1990s, but had roots in studies conducted in the 1960s where ways to improve academic performance in young people with a low SES background were being conducted. As well as academic success, behavioural issues decreased, and led to the development of the "Comer Process", after the original researcher James Comer (Dunham, 2020). A key factor is creating "a school environment where students feel comfortable, value and secure" (Coulter, 1993), not unlike the objectives of our I-CORT values.

SEL, or Social and Emotional Learning, "is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2020).

Where SEL differs is that various organisations have taken the intentions of SEL and built specific programs that help students develop emotional skills "in a sequential, developmental order, every year, to every student, in every grade" (Fretz, 2020); from listening and respecting others, making good decisions, standing up to social pressure, building self-confidence, dealing with bullies, and many more. Teaching these topics *intentionally* and *explicitly* rather than as aspects of other subjects (much like the General Capabilities are incorporated into, but not the specific focus of, our subject matter teaching), helps students recognise how important these skills are, not just at school, but at home, and beyond, and unlike the focus on subject matter, which many students see as irrelevant for their future. As such they are more likely to be invested and their school success is not simply dependent on "academic" capabilities, such as IQ, numeracy, literacy, or memory skills, which they may be lacking. When it comes to motivation, we expect students to invest their time and effort, when the rewards may not be achieved for years – essentially delayed gratification – yet recent studies reveal that children who have been brought up in environments where promises are frequently broken are less likely to buy into the promise of future benefit for

effort now (Kidd, Palmieri & Aslin, 2013). How many of our cohort have been brought up in an “unreliable” environment? And what is the impact of this on our promise that working hard now will have benefits in the future?

In the introduction to her article on SEL, Dunham (2020) uses a quote from poet W.B. Yeats to set the scene “Education is not the filling of a pail, but rather the lighting of a fire”. Emotions are the fire. They drive our actions. Perhaps it’s time we teach our students how to effectively harness them to their ongoing benefit.

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The COVID-19 Classroom

Georgia Meyers

Georgia Meyers is a Health and Physical Education teacher at Clarkson Community High School. She is a sport enthusiast with a long history of involvement in the Surf Life Saving Industry as a competitor, coach, lifeguard and surf communications officer. Georgia's goal as a teacher is to make school as enjoyable and beneficial for her students.

When COVID-19 hit, there was an initial period of uncertainty. For us, it was the uncertainty of what would happen with education. How would this look at our school? How would we deliver lessons? As a practical teacher, how was I going to transition to a strictly online platform? An unnerving time for many. Luckily for us, we were able to recommence face-to-face teaching with minimal interruption compared to what was seen in other parts of the world. However, I reflect on this period of COVID-19 and recognise all the positive aspects that came from it, and elements of my teaching that changed as a result.

There are many things that I will carry forward with me and embed in my practices that I learned and changed during this time. My transition to a 'COVID-19 Classroom' was a chance for me to reflect, refresh and revamp what I was doing, whilst continuing to ensure I was adhering to the Invitational Theory principle that underpins our school's vision, and my personal teaching philosophy.

The things I have taken away from this pandemic at our school:

- Innovative pedagogy – the power of online resources and platforms for engaging and invitational learning
- Collaboration – amongst the staff at CCHS
- Our students' need for education – how valuable school is for our disadvantaged students to feel safe and supported, and how impactful our relationships with them are

So, what did my 'COVID-19' classroom look like? This stress of figuring out how to transition to online was eased with the help of a few key players within our staff. The way the staff came together with ideas, tips and open minds surrounding online practice was admirable. It made the whole process easy - and dare I say - enjoyable. This collaboration wasn't just within departments, but across the whole staff. The feeling of being out of our comfort zones put everyone on the same level, and we showed support for one another. I have learnt a lot from my colleagues during this time, and I hope the collaborative environment we have shaped continues to develop.

With the help of my department, we discussed strategies to move our practical based subject online. Once we dived into the web, we found a plethora of platforms and resources to use. I thoroughly enjoyed exploring options to run classes, activities and assessments online. My Year 10 Outdoor Recreation class completed part of their 'Camp Expedition Assignment' online. We found ways for them to complete practical camp activities at home and submit them using video, photo and online presentation methods. We used interactive learning platforms that provided staff with feedback from student responses. Incredibly, many students who I thought were disengaged had some of the highest scores on a particular learning program that tracked the time spent learning and the amount of work students completed. This shows that these new, innovative methods of delivering lessons were engaging our students.

Some of the tools that I will continue to use allow students to learn at their own pace, adjust content to be delivered at different reading and comprehension levels, test for understanding, and quiz students in fun and interactive ways. All these methods and tools

have resulted in extremely positive feedback from my students. They have served the purpose of exposing students to platforms they are likely to use in employment after school, as well as making students more accountable for their own learning. The self-paced aspects and ability to extend their learning has seen an improvement of self-management skills amongst students. More importantly, the introduction of these online resources and tools and a new way of learning has strongly encouraged our invitational learning strategy and is giving students the ability to practice real world skills.

On return to school in Term 2, there was an overwhelming feeling of relief and utter joy from students to be back. We are aware that the pandemic, and the extended time spent at home would have been very difficult for many students and families, especially for those with limited or no access to the internet. They would have been feeling disconnected from their peers and teachers, as well as having to deal with added pressures on family life at home. As mentioned in the introduction to this Learning Journey, we as a staff focused heavily on supporting our students and their families as best we could during this pandemic. Even so, the need for a safe and supportive school environment has become even more apparent. Our invitational stance has harbored a positive school environment and created a safe haven for many students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. For these students, we need to continue to employ invitational learning to ensure they are re-engaging in the school community, with their education, with their peers and their teachers. We do an excellent job of this at Clarkson CHS. The relationships we build with our students are pivotal in ensuring they reach their full potential and encouraging their growth as positive contributors to the broader society.

This has been a trying time for many of our students, which is why it is more important than ever to continue modelling, teaching, and practicing social and emotional skills with students. As Joan R. Fretz discusses in '3 Keys to Improving School Climate', just like learning to read and write, there are specific behavioral skills that help us deal positively with the social and emotional challenges in our daily lives. Equipping our students with these skills will help them not only with their education but to gain characteristics to help them remain resilient during challenging times like these.

In the midst of a pandemic; a time of worry, uncertainty and stress, I believe our staff thrived, and worked hard to ensure we continued to meet the key focus areas of our 2020-2022 School Strategic Plan: **high-quality teaching**, providing a safe, supportive and invitational **learning environment**, demonstrating **leadership**, and continuing to build quality **relationships** with not only students, but each other. I applaud the leadership that was shown by our leadership team during this time; under their guidance, all of this was able to happen. While some look at this time as large setback, I believe it is important to remember the good that has come from it, reflecting and refreshing our practices and continuing to provide a safe and supportive environment for our students.

Education In Isolation: Learning cycles & learning curves

Geraint Davies (featuring work by Steven Bishop)

Geraint Davies is an experienced school leader who has taught and led staff in country WA and metropolitan Perth schools since 2002. Geraint taught in Albany, Fremantle and Kalamunda before joining the Clarkson team in 2005. After four years at Clarkson in the mid-2000s, Geraint left education in 2008 and worked as an Intelligence Analyst for the Federal Attorney General and later WA Police in the Internal Affairs Unit. Geraint returned to education in 2010 joining the team at Clarkson as Head of Middle School and later HOLA of Applied Science and Mathematics. In 2017, Geraint joined Churchlands SHS as Head of Student Services for Year 9 and then in 2018 Head of Middle School at Belridge Secondary College. Geraint returns to Clarkson in 2019 with a greater breadth and depth of experience having worked at Churchlands and Belridge.

Geraint possesses is committed to inviting student involvement and is a firm believer of excellence, engagement and ethics in education. Geraint's focus for 2019 is to build staff capacity in using data rather than opinion and thus improve equity for the students at Clarkson when compared not only to similar schools, but those with advantage due to their geographic location.

Steven Bishop is a Senior Teacher who has taught at various Wheatbelt schools before returning to Perth and teaching at Ashdale Secondary College in 2014 before beginning at Clarkson CHS in 2015. Having started as a Maths Teacher Bishop obtained a Graduate Diploma in Design Technology as he now spends his time teaching in both areas.

Bishop finds it advantageous teaching the two subjects concurrently as they both complement each other by providing practical applications for the theory. Bishop's enthusiasm for the subject of maths has led him to create the Bishdogmaths YouTube channel as it allows him to imbed customised content to his curriculum as he likes to keep processes as simple as possible.

Clarkson Community High School (Clarkson) is an outer-metropolitan low ICSEA/SES senior high school with a student population of around 350. Motivation to learn and to do so with only delayed gratification for the work the students do is a constant battle for teachers in any school, not just at Clarkson. Covid-19 however provided us with somewhat of a silver lining, the time and opportunity to think outside the box and do things differently. This is our story.

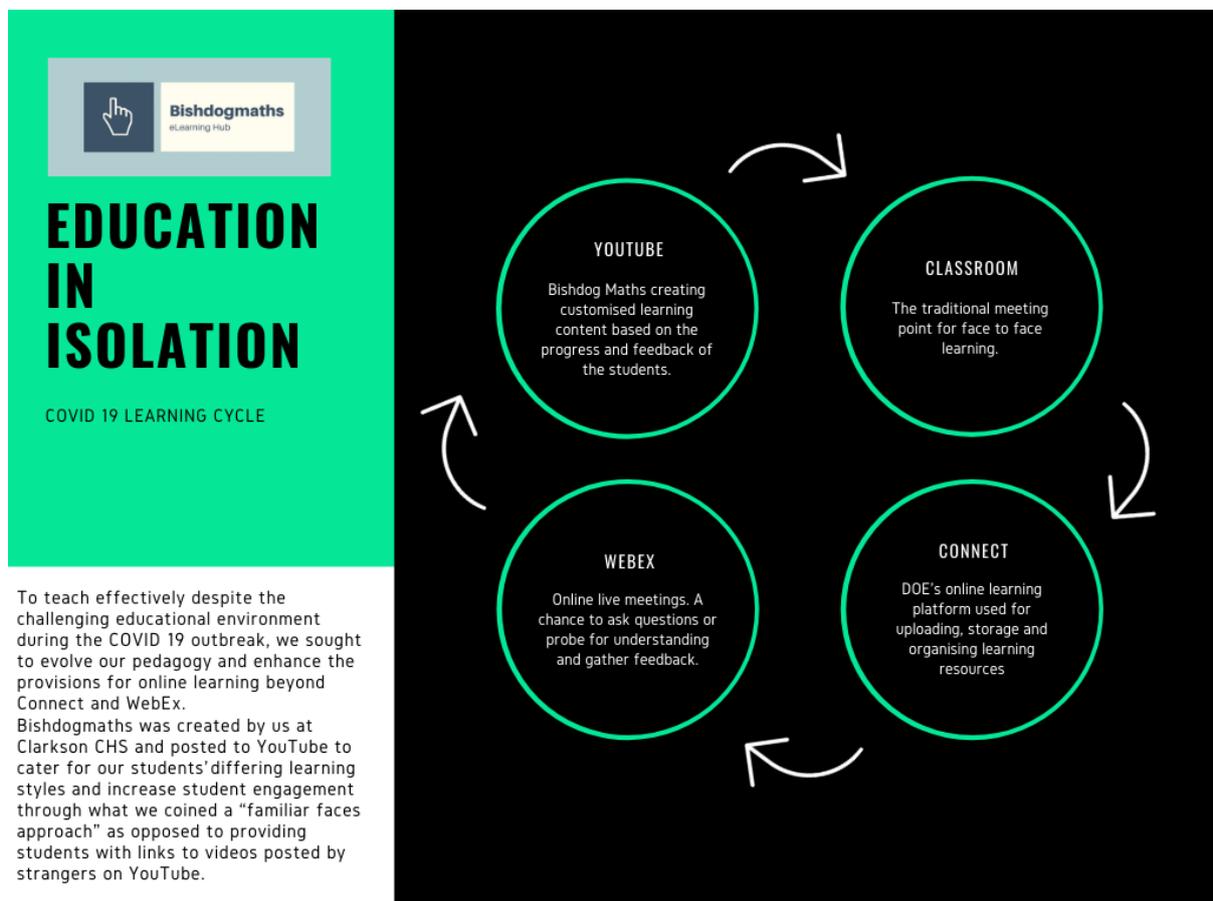
The use of online learning as a tool for education more broadly is for many students across Australia something of a luxury for those with access to technology and a fast internet connection and in many cases something of an annex or bonus to what happens in the classroom. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we view the world of online learning. For those like me who love a whiteboard marker and a room full of students, the collapse of the regular school time table signified a cataclysmic shift from business as usual to a new world order in education.

The problem however for many of our families at Clarkson Community High School (CCHS) an outer-metropolitan low ICSEA/SES senior high school, is a lack of access to devices, in some households there may be only one device per family, often exacerbated by a lack of a Wi-Fi internet connection that many Australians take for granted. With this in mind, we set about planning our response to what was effectively school closures (at the very least not business as usual in schools) and how we would not only communicate with our students,

but more importantly (and something that appeared to be forgotten about in the remote learning debate), engaging students in the teaching and learning process remotely, which is challenging enough at the best of times.

Taking into consideration the journey into uncharted territory we were embarking upon, the obvious first step for us at Clarkson was to use the familiar tools such as the notoriously under-utilized Connect system through the WA Education Department's (DoE) Portal. Connect is similar in function to the way Facebook or other online communication platforms operate and at the very least is a great tool to create an online repository of work for students to access. The limitations of Connect and with similar platforms is the lack of face-to-face interactivity between student and teacher. DoE also has another license to use Cisco WebEx, an online group video-conferencing platform. We found that WebEx was great to gather feedback from students about the work they had completed and areas that they found challenging, it is however flawed as a teaching and learning tool in our context as it is difficult to actively listen to multiple students concurrently in terms of the dialogue that would usually be generated in a usual classroom setting. Trying to communicate with 30 students through a computer screen and teach a traditional lesson was fraught, particularly when dealing with potentially poor internet speeds, drop-outs and the inevitable off task student behaviour, often exacerbated by technical problems.

The challenge was the ability to teach the finer details and intricacies of mathematics concepts and with that realization we immediately thought of YouTube as a suitable platform and the great work of Eddie Woo, arguably one of the most successful teachers turned YouTuber teacher, who's incidentally employed by NSW Education Department. We viewed his lessons on the platform and decided to add a few links onto Connect for our students; great work we thought! The results however, were surprisingly poor in terms of the number of hits on the link in Connect. "Why?" we thought. Then it dawned on us, in a time of crisis and social upheaval, maybe our students would like to see us make a fool of ourselves on YouTube!



To support my argument regarding engagement (and more importantly, the relationship between students and the teacher in a Mathematics classroom), a colleague shared an article with me. Hinz, Walker and Witter (2019) undertook a study into the characteristics of Australian Mathematics teachers and found that teachers who establish and maintain strong connections with their students appeared to be a higher-order factor for what they deemed 'great mathematics teaching'. They elaborated in the analysis of their study to assert that Top Teachers, through forming these strong connections, were laying the foundation for creating engaging lessons, determining the extent of individual student understanding and were able to identify supports for extension and deeper understanding in mathematics.

With this in mind we knew we needed to be innovative and think outside the box, so we launched ourselves and our whiteboards onto YouTube, creating a number of videos to teach key mathematical concepts based upon feedback we had sought through Connect and our WebEx sessions through a YouTube channel known as [Bishdogmaths](#). The results were surprising, students were accessing Connect and YouTube, liking our videos and subscribing. Some students who had claimed they had no internet access had miraculously commented on our videos. The need for a tablet or laptop to keep up with the teaching and learning had been diminished, the students could collect work packages from the school then access our YouTube channel, watch our demonstration of the mathematical concepts on a smart phone, and have a laugh at our expense which ultimately engaged our students and spurred repeat custom.



Graphing Fahrenheit and Celsius Part 1

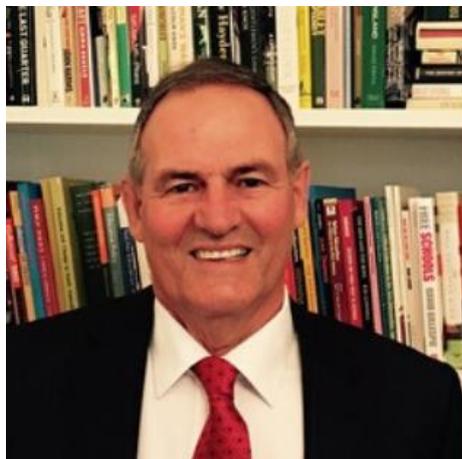
Graphing Fahrenheit and Celsius. Source: YouTube; Steve Bishop (L) and Geraint Davies (R).

Below is a list of what we have learned from our experience in engaging our students in the new world of Covid-19 and why YouTube added a layer which was in our experience, seldom explored by teachers across the education system in Western Australia as a whole.

- 1) The lack of time to train students to use the technology such as Connect and WebEx which is exacerbated by student willingness to 'log in' to these platforms once the face-to-face teaching was diminished.
- 2) Poor or non-existent student home access to technology and in some cases even an internet connection beyond a mobile device. I would assert that our assumptions were wildly inaccurate in this regard when we assumed most could access Connect and WebEx from a computer at home.
- 3) Largely due to the two previous points raised, having to trial and prepare both tech based and non-tech based solutions concurrently added an extra layer of complexity, particularly with regard to having an equitable assessment regime as per the SCSA Principles of Assessment 1-6 for example.

I'd like to round off by hosing down any suggestion that what we have done at Clarkson is extraordinary in any way. I'd be drawing a long bow to claim any expertise in the production of educational videos or system-wide strategies for remote learning in the COVID-19 paradigm, however if you'd like to see our lessons I'd welcome your feedback at [Bishdogmaths](#) on the YouTube platform. The videos won't claim a BAFTA or Academy Award, nor are they special in any way, other than to our students at Clarkson Community High School, for whom **Bishdogmaths** was their connection to their Mathematics teacher, a few laughs and some normality through what has been an uncertain time for students across the country and indeed the world.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the work of colleague Mr Steve Bishop (pictured left above), the creator of **Bishdogmaths** and for whom the accolade for creating the videos should fall upon.



When the Covid 19 crisis physically separated Steven Bishop and Geraint Davies from their students, they tried to plan on-line learning experiences which connected with and engaged their students. This article demonstrates that some of the fundamental aspects of teaching and learning – good personal relationships with students, humour, linking content to student interests, and so on - must be attended to, no matter what is taught and where the teaching takes place.

Professor Emeritus Alan Reid, AM
University of South Australia

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The Post-Pandemic Professional Learning Community

Thomas Jones

Thomas is Head of English Learning Area and Level 3 Classroom Teacher at Joseph Banks Secondary College in Banksia Grove, Perth and was former Head of Learning Area at Clarkson. He takes a keen interest in rigorous student-centred curriculum, the role of data in producing equitable student outcomes and building high trust cultures. He has strengthened his leadership acumen through completing the Masters of School Leadership degree at the University of Western Australia and the Growth Coaching International (CGI) Accredited Coach qualification. Thomas was a member of the Department of Education's 2019 Leadership Strategy Advisory Group to review the implementation of the WA Public School Leadership Strategy 2018 – 2021.

After the tumultuous few weeks, Western Australia can proudly declare its range of measures and restrictions shielded the state from a catastrophic COVID-19 scenario. We now incredibly find ourselves in the enviable situation where schools can proclaim, 'we are open for business'.

In this essay, I share and unpack my reflections as English Head of Learning Area at Joseph Banks Secondary College and explore how the crisis may reshape how teachers work together. Instead of a collective capitulation, the pandemic stimulated ingenuity and forged true collaboration within teaching teams. I attribute the effectiveness of our response in the paper to the power of WebEx Teams, OneNote, collaborative lesson planning and how evaluating our impact through data will play a greater role in our post pandemic school.

What is a Professional Learning Community?

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey of 107,000 teachers across 34 countries in 2013 found that teachers who work together on at least a weekly basis had more belief in their capacity to execute the skills needed to improve student learning than those who worked together less frequently. It also had the added benefit that they were more satisfied with their jobs (OECD,2014). Promoting a professional learning community through the collaborative work of professional learning teams not only contributes to collective efficacy in the school, but also the perceived efficacy of individual staff.

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) represents a collective effort to enhance student learning, promotes and sustains the learning of all professionals in the school, builds knowledge through inquiry; and analyses and uses data for reflection and improvement (Bolan, R, 2005). Essentially PLCs underpin their practice through true collaboration which involves a 'systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyse and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results' (DuFour, R., DuFour, R., & Eaker, R, undated).

Collaboration involves a mindset where school staff can and should learn from one another in a structured environment. The collaborative team continually processes reflection, research, debate, discussion, and problem solving. A collaborative team may describe a PLC as 'our daily work, not an add on'.

March 2020: A Crisis and a Catalyst

The Government COVID response directives instantly stunned school operations and teaching structures. Schools reorganised and restricted access to the children of essential workers. Many school staff with compromised immune systems, aged over 60 or Indigenous colleagues over 50, immediately worked from home. Conjecture was ubiquitous and media and union messaging stoked the fear and anxiety fires. School leaders acted as the conduit from Central Office as the fluid situation often meant communiques changed within a day.

By and large, school staff remained resilient and focused on the goal of continuity of student learning. Hyper adaption was the only game in town.

The tools were there, but how could they be used effectively? The ability was there, but how could it be harnessed broadly? Within the crisis, staff instinctively knew what to do and worked closer than ever before.

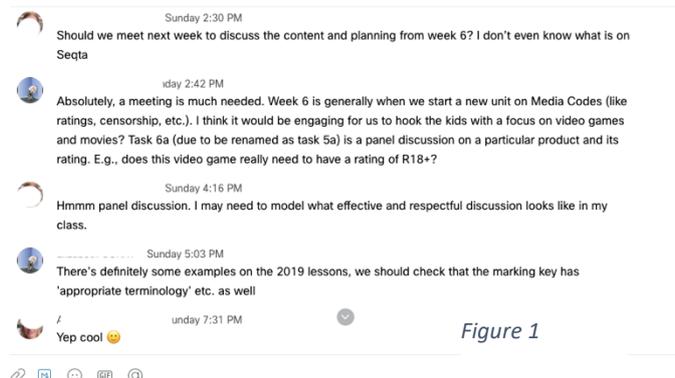
The Aftermath

In Week 5, Term 2 and at the time of writing, Western Australia has 10 zero active COVID - 19 cases and many Department of Education Schools record attendance data on a par with pre-crisis data. As our school begins to look and feel like how things were before, from my vantage point, there were tangible differences in the way the English team operated. The nineteen strong English team at JBSC understands the importance of reducing the variability between classes. JBSC is a PLC school so subject teachers are positioned around the school in learning communities. The staffing structure promotes deeper discussion about students and learning as your office colleagues teach the same students you teach. Effective lines of communication are therefore crucial in our system.

The team understands that if lessons are collaboratively planned, the team can produce a higher number of quality lessons. Since 2016, our team meets frequently to plan lessons for students and parents to access on the SEQTA learning management system. Teachers possess discretion over lesson delivery; however, if four teachers have contributed to a curriculum aligned and differentiated series of lessons, then when all classes employ a resource, every Year 7 child for instance, accesses the best learning material. This reduces instructional variability.

Interestingly, the collaborative model can creak or slip at times when workload spikes. We quickly realised we required additional tools to strengthen communication when we could not meet face to face.

As the number of coronavirus cases spiked in late March, the JBSC ICT staff introduced [Webex Teams](#), a tool for teams to communicate in professional chatroom context for staff to keep in touch as they worked from home. Our early career teachers immediately hooked into the medium, even using GIFS to signal mood or feelings.



At the time of writing and at most times of the working day, Webex is still alive and used powerfully. English staff communicate intensely about the literacy of a graphic organiser, the rigour of a rubric or who would like a coffee from Maccas. We still use email; however, Webex teams present a professional informality that streamlines communication and builds trust.

Microsoft OneNote offered another way to make our teams connect. OneNote is a digital notebook for free-form information gathering and multi-user collaboration. Notes can be shared with other OneNote users via link or adding them as collaborators to the notebook. The tool was widely adopted for weeks of anticipated online learning. Fast forward to June, and the tool continues to be used by teachers. Three classes for example, recently collaborated on OneNote documents to enable students to access a wider range of peer thinking.

Accelerating Student Learning in a Post Pandemic World

The risk taking and agile decision making executed in the final weeks of Term One has not been in vain. With the collective efficacy high, we must ensure we measure and evaluate the impact of our actions. At the core of a high-performance culture is a process about how teachers will be involved in evaluating their own teaching and the impact it is having on their students. Kane (quoted in Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013) notes that, *'If we want students to learn more, teachers must become students of their own teaching'*. *Highly Accomplished* teachers work with colleagues to use data from student assessments to evaluate learning and teaching, identify interventions and modify teaching practice (AITSL Standards 2017). The Joseph Banks Secondary College English Learning Area just commenced the five-week data review process to capture timely information about student progress. As HoLA, I share cohort data every 5 weeks to compare our grade distribution to *Like Schools* and promote discussion about the faces behind the data. In addition, four teachers participate in the *Evaluating My Impact Project* through recording their class data on a single 'anywhere' Microsoft OneDrive excel data document to examine their classes' progress with colleagues or to engage with their HoLA in coaching conversations to explore how we can accelerate student learning.

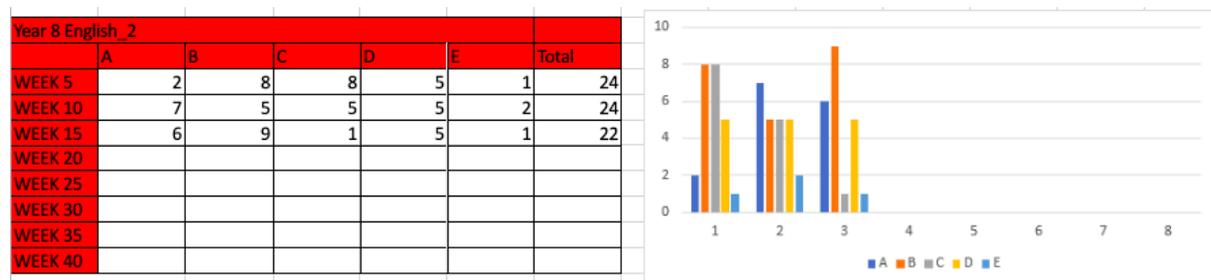


Figure 2

The Integral Driver of Leadership

The integral driver in how fast well we can push away from the crisis is how we strengthen and distribute leadership over the coming months. I witnessed the best type of leadership over the last couple of months that represented personal integrity, commitment and honesty to develop stronger and more trusting relationships with teachers. School leaders working in a culture of trust empower teachers and draw out the best in them (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). My experience at Clarkson Community High School between 2018 and 2020 taught me much about the 'invitational stance' to education and in particularly the five domains that exist in practically every environment and contribute to the success or failure of each individual. This involves the people, places, policies, programs and processes. There is now a strong case for the five "Ps" to occupy a more prominent place in our school leaders' thinking, as they forge a new reality where teachers work together innovatively to enhance student learning in a post pandemic world.

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PANIC! And AFL: Assessing student achievement during and after a global pandemic

Carys Hurcom

Carys Hurcom, Acting Head of Learning Area of English and HASS has recently stepped back into the role after being Head of English and later Head of English and HASS from 2012 until the end of 2016. A brief sojourn from the role to explore other career options, including university and heavy metal music journalism, the inextricable pull of Clarkson CHS drew her back, especially considering she completed her entire high school education at Clarkson CHS.

With the global COVID-19 pandemic, teaching has been under media and parental scrutiny, more so than usual, and rightly so. Students continuing their education whilst in a home setting has not only given parents a glimpse into what teachers are faced with, but has forced all teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their own practice, including their ability to use Assessment For, Assessment As and Assessment Of Learning to gather evidence and make judgements about student achievement. This is amplified within lower socio-economic areas, where access to internet, computers and regular contact with teachers become more of a challenge. As Clinton states “Australian children living in poverty will experience exacerbated risk as a consequence of the COVID-19 school interruption.” (Clinton, 2020, p 4).

Luckily, Western Australian school aged children missed less face to face contact time with teachers than those in other states and countries, but it is how we help those students transition from living with uncertainty to returning to post-coronavirus normal that will alleviate some of these risks.

One of John Hattie’s key components of Visible Learning is to “Know Thy Impact: the primary role of an educator is to evaluate impact on learning and use evidence to inform decisions that will advance learning.” As COVID-19 became a reality, and schooling transferred online, the first goal for us, at Clarkson CHS, was to review and reflect on the programming in place and whether students could effectively complete the tasks at home. This required staff to know students and how they learn, as outlined by AITSL Standard 1 as well as evaluate and improve teaching programs (AITSL Standard 3.6). It also required teachers to use evidence about students’ knowledge, understanding and skills to inform how best to move forward with online education, which underpins Assessment For Learning. Programs were overhauled, some fine-tuned, others scrapped entirely. All work uploaded online has clear learning intentions for the activities, which is a key component of the Assessment For Learning approach, work samples, which inform students what success in the task looks like, and frameworks and graphic organisers to assist students in engaging with their education.

Explicitly stating what it is you want the students to learn, and providing worked examples, allows teachers to clarify “the learning objective, then demonstrate what students need to do to acquire new knowledge and master new skills.” (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training, 2019, p8). This high impact teaching strategy with an effect size of 0.57, allows students to not only have a clearer understanding of what is required from them, but to also take responsibility of their own learning. If they know what to do, and can see what they need to do, they can reflect and assess whether they are able to complete the activity. This Assessment As Learning gives the students more autonomy over their education.

This autonomy also manifested through correspondence with teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online Cisco WebEx classrooms allowed students to ask questions about their learning, also a key feature in Assessment As Learning. By engaging directly with the teacher, students were able to take control over what and how they were learning. It also led to discussions among their peers, and allowed the teacher to clarify and provide feedback on how the students were progressing, all practices that yield desired effects according to Hattie. Online WebEx classrooms were not the only form of communication between staff and students, as Assessment For Learning is inclusive of all learners, and phone calls, emails, work packages were made, sent and undertaken during this time. "Personalised school communications can improve children's learning... Communication between home and school needs to establish strong relationships that can be nurtured during the phases of recovery." (Clinton, 2020, p18). In the case of Clarkson Community High School and the English and HASS learning areas, examples of discourse that occurred during this time included: a conversation held between a parent and a teacher, in which the teacher stepped through the parent in how to access resources on Connect, where all our online learning is; a teacher organised a hard copy of a work package and sent it via mail due to the challenges that particular family had in picking up work at school; a series of emails between a parent and teacher clearly stating the expectations of the teacher in regard to the student's work after a parent raised some concerns about too much work being set; a teacher calling a student directly to provide a mini lesson over the phone, due to the students learning needs. This communication not only meets AITSL Standard 7.3 "Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/ carers about the children's learning and wellbeing" but reflects the ideas of Assessment As and Of Learning.

By Term 2, with students coming to school more frequently, teachers need to provide a safe, normal space for students to continue with their learning. "Young people we live and work with often have a strong drive to be 'normal'; to feel 'normal', and to be treated as 'normal'" (Bath, 2016, p6). The best way to get back to normalcy is by re-establishing connections with students to support them through the next stage of their education, including summative assessments, or Assessments For Learning. Hattie (2009) demonstrates that teachers are the key variable in a student's education. "It is teachers that most can make the difference to student learning. This is particularly important for those children living in vulnerable contexts." (Clinton, 2020, p17) Vulnerable contexts, such as a global pandemic!

For some students the challenges of the pandemic itself were insurmountable and posed too many issues to engage with online learning. This is where a response to intervention is required, an approach where targeted and individualised instructions for students is undertaken. This is what is currently occurring as Term 2 2020 progresses. Working with students one-on-one or in small groups to catch them up on work missed, and to deliver explicit, direct instructions and frameworks (0.60 size effect) allows for students to feel a sense of empowerment and pride that they can do the work, and therefore they are able to provide evidence that they are able to complete the Assessments For Learning.

Moving forward, it is vital that we as a school take on board the lessons we have learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic: regularly review and update teaching-learning programs and assessments, create activities that model and support exemplary practice, regularly communicate with parents and students, and encourage ongoing and open dialogue, and establish and build positive connections with and between students. This embraces the underlying principles of Assessment As, Of and For Learning, and in turn provides a platform for student success. One of the biggest impacts on student learning, as outlined by Hattie is Collective Teacher Efficacy, (effect size 1.57), if we collectively believe that our ability as practitioners can positively affect our students, even in the face of a pandemic and the

ensuing consequences, we can actually make a difference in the lives of our students. And isn't that why we became a teacher in the first place?

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Education Hand-In-Hand With Creativity

Jasmita Jeshani

Jasmita started to work at Clarkson Community High School in 2018. During her time at Clarkson she has worked with the Student Council and is now making her third appearance in the Learning Journey series. She is passionate about the student voice and the arts.

Creativity is important

People often understand creativity as creating art, music, or making something new, but there is more to it than that. “Creativity implies more than simply involving imagination or fancy” (Sucui, 2014). Creativity helps build outcomes, teach empathy and help with problem-solving skills. There are two types of people: imaginative and creative people, “while the imaginative person is a dreamer, the creative person moves the world forward.” (Sucui, 2014)

In 2019, the Clarkson Community High School (CCHS) student council organised an awards assembly, where the focus was on performance and not academics. When organising the assembly with my colleague, Steven Laing, he proposed that we base the subject awards on *Educating Ruby* by Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas. In a nutshell, it is about “how teachers, parents and grandparents can cultivate confidence, curiosity, collaboration, communication, creativity, commitment and craftsmanship in children” (Waterstones, n.d.). To simplify things, we called them the 7 C’s.

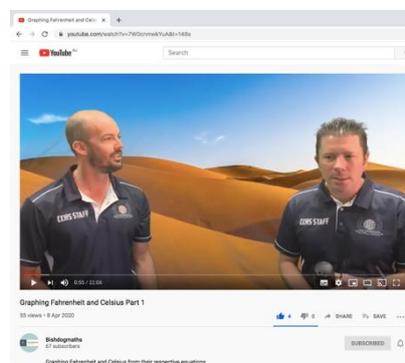
Laing allocated a subject to each of the 7 C’s, and to my surprise, he allocated Maths to creativity and supported it with the following explanation: “Creativity – another area where humans beat machines hands-down is with creativity, better known in this context as problem solving rather than being artistic or musical” (Laing, 2019).

This got me thinking that creativity is not limited to the arts but can be applied in non-arts subjects. But how do we do it? This question was answered during the COVID-19 when staff members used innovation and creativity to ensure that the students of Clarkson Community High School got the best of their online learning. In this article, I will talk about how CCHS demonstrated creativity in teaching Maths online, teaching students about empathy and using creativity to raise the community spirit.

Creativity in places other than the Arts

Our brain has two hemispheres - left and right. One is logical and the other is creative. The left brain is linked with logic, language, numbers and analytical thinking, whereas the right brain is linked with creativity, expression, emotional intelligence and imagination. The idea that you are either logical or creative can be challenged because creativity also requires critical thinking, numbers and language. Likewise, logic requires emotional intelligence and creativity.

Teachers of Maths, Steve Bishop and Geraint Davies, combined Maths and YouTube. They did this by creating a series of YouTube videos to teach mathematical concepts whilst being creative with how they show the content to the students. The episodes were posted under username “Bishdog Maths”. In the episode “Graphing Fahrenheit and Celsius Part 1”, they employed a creative use of green screen to show the difference between Fahrenheit and Celsius in different



locations. This episode challenges the notion of the classroom teacher as “among the professionals who oppose novelty” (Sucui, 2014). So, when COVID -19 and teachers had to adapt their learning to be online teachers where able to be creative on how they deliver the content, “the vocation of innovation [was] fundamental”. However, the teacher delivering the content first needed to be passionate about delivering the content.

Creativity and Empathy



During the Great Depression, Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936) was a film that dealt with the reality of The Great Depression – poverty, unemployment, hunger. The film was a success with the audience because it allowed them to be confront the realities of great depression (Stokes, 2016). Over the years, the arts have played a huge role in society and confronting the audience with reality.

Like *Modern Times* taught us, it is important to use creativity to confront what is happening in our society. This was demonstrated at CCHS, when the Year 8 students created thank you cards for essential workers. Prior to creating the cards, the students brainstormed all the different essential workers and the students identified workers such as police officer, supermarket workers, pharmacist, nurses and doctors. This was then followed by a discussion of the roles that these workers play in our society and why it is important to thank them.

Before creating the cards, they needed inspiration and visualisation of their final product. The researched some ideas for what types of card they can make with the limited resources provided. This gave the students a visualisation on what type of card they would like to make for the end result of the project. In this case, the visual inspiration is the remote control where the student can control what they would like to see - “the remote control is in your hand: you can stop the projection whenever you want, you can resume the movie and remake it” (Sucui, 2014) - allowing the students be in control of their creative freedom. During the creation, students were given a range of resources to use to create a card, with some music playing in the background to further stimulate the creative thinking. This process not only taught the kids empathy, but also the creative process of creating work.



Conclusion

It takes a pandemic to change the way we teach a class. The innovation of using YouTube was successful as suggested before. This was demonstrated through innovation by Steve Bishop and Geraint Davies, using YouTube to continue students’ education for online learning. In the meantime, with the remaining students in school, creativity was used to teach students empathy by making cards for all the essential workers in their local community. A creative person is not only a dreamer, but is a doer, where they can find ways to solve problems and think critically.

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Strong Foundations: Building with social and emotional learning

Lara Goss

Lara Goss has been a Special Needs Education Assistant at Clarkson Community High School since March 2019. She has a background in psychology and counselling. She is also a parent of children with special needs. Lara enjoys supporting and spending time with all the students!

When asked to answer the question, “What fundamental building blocks would you use to rebuild [a new] education system?” my immediate answer is a foundation of social and emotional learning for all. It should be in every school, not just some. Every student should have access to the same program with an allowance for modifications based on need. It must have continuity and be consistent.

From the moment a child enters school, they should encounter social and emotional learning embedded into the curriculum. As that little one learns colours and numbers, he or she needs to be exposed to what their emotions are and how to regulate them. School climate consultant, Joan R. Fretz, stresses that social and emotional skills must be taught to all students in co-ordinance with each stage of children’s development, year by year. The lessons build on each other step by step so they need to be in order. Ms Fretz goes on to say that SEL means “modelling, teaching, practicing and applying specific behaviours that will help us reflect on and choose beneficial words and actions which leads us to develop those desirable qualities of character.”

Within a lesson, there is discussion about difficulties in life, students practice a skill that corresponds with solving the problem. A very relevant, interpersonal scenario is played out where a student labels their feeling and without condemning, they state why the other person’s behavior led to that feeling. A different solution is then explored. There are similar lessons that can be brought home and shared with parents.

Relationships built on caring, optimism, respect and trust are forged between students and with the teacher. Likewise, relationships with parents can be strengthened.

Foundational SEL learning can serve as a fantastic preventive strategy. Strong character, self-confidence and social awareness can create a resilience that will make it less likely one turns to bullying, drugs or crime.

The regular, explicit teaching of SEL for students with autism and ADHD would be phenomenal. With SEL in schools early on, some students could make so much progress they won’t need EA assistance once they reach secondary school.

Since many families cannot afford regular therapy or any at all, SEL in schools would be a godsend! Consider the long waiting list for diagnosis and then treatment. Then, there are the parents who don’t recognize or refuse to accept that their kid could benefit from a diagnosis. Another benefit is that neurotypical children will learn how to better communicate with and accept their neurodivergent peers.

Being an EA in a high school, exposes me to a wide range of class dynamics, teaching styles and age groups. I love all the opportunities to explain concepts for students, support the teachers and come along side hurting kids. I look for the reasons behind the behavior. I

get to utilize skills from my counselling background as I work with students on self-management, perspective-taking and problem solving. I love that students find me approachable and trustworthy which is so important for relationship-building.

It is so fantastic when teachers effectively employ social and emotional skills. The student had been frequently disengaging during class and, at times, just walked right out of the room. After a lesson, the teacher gently asked the student some probing questions in hopes of discovering what was going on. Their discourse led to the teacher sharing how he could relate with what the boy was going through. Together, they made some goals for moving forward in a positive direction.

Another example is of a teacher guiding her student towards emotional regulation. There was encouragement for the child to step out of the room to calm down and reset. This is a great tool to help students bring their emotions under control, avoid physical lashing out and getting on with their schoolwork.

Unfortunately, not all teachers use those same approaches. So, the other foundational building block I propose is for all educators to receive SEL training as well as specialized support.

With the myriad of issues that the children bring, their teacher, sometimes the only stable authority figure in their lives, must be skilled up to effectively guide and nurture these vulnerable souls. It would be fantastic if they had a counselling unit in their degree program. Developing the skill of active listening greatly aids clarification and helps the student to feel heard. All teachers would agree that conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques are valuable assets. Consider the difference teachers could make in the lives of suffering young people, by already having youth mental health first aid as well as suicide awareness and prevention in their toolkits.

With all that's on our teachers' shoulders, more comprehensive support is sorely needed. A debriefing buddy or group would help decrease stress levels. This needs to be an intentional, regularly scheduled meeting where the colleagues vent, console and share ideas. Instruction on work-life balance and proper self-care would be ideal. Let's not forget the fun too! Social get-togethers for staff should be scheduled without fail for at least once a term to strengthen bonds and something to look forward to.

With the building block of better support and training for teachers, the vision behind Invitational Education is more likely to be realized. Their tanks will be closer to full than empty. They will have more energy to prepare creative, engaging lessons. I'm betting a bit more humour would be thrown in as well. With a well-maintained invitational school, the impact on lives can be extraordinary!

It's all well and good to envision what foundational building blocks could be put into place for the future. However, time is of the essence! More must be put into place to support our students and teachers now. Let's get social and emotional learning happening in all schools. Send out more material on these concepts to teachers now. Send it to parents too. Let's get a meeting and a PD on the calendar to really unpack it and get the ball rolling. Let's model it to the students and each other. Let's do all we can to get a grass roots program started at the very least. We can start with small groups practicing these skills right away. When it's deemed safe to do so, let's have volunteers and mentors come assist. I would love for the government to see the need in schools (regardless of numbers) and give the necessary funding for primary and secondary school SEL training like PATHS and Friendly Schools nationwide. Could the government now give us back more mainstream and special needs EAs?

We must never forget that school really is a major training ground for life. Therefore, education must be taught from a holistic perspective much like psychologist Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs from his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" reveals. The physical, mental and emotional aspects of our being are all intertwined. When one is lacking, the others are affected. If our emotional and social needs are not being met and nurtured, then our mental (academic) ability will not reach its full potential.

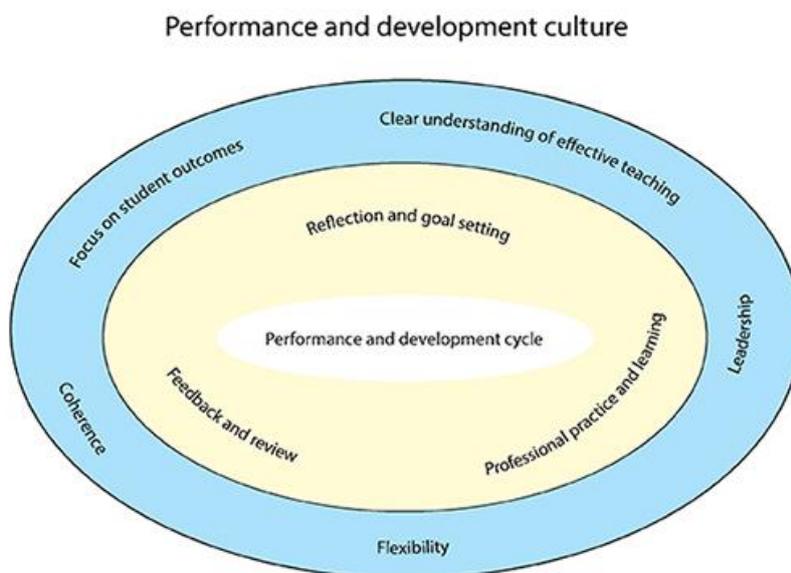
We must rebuild with the foundational building blocks of social and emotional learning for all our students and teachers. Schools will shine as even brighter beacons of light for their communities.

To the teachers, the unsung heroes, especially during this Covid-19 crisis, you are amazing! You were expected to go on during the scariest moments to hold things together and you did. You are doing a great job!

Enhancing Clarkson Community High School's Performance Culture in 2019

Thomas Jones

This article was published in the Term 1 edition of Education Today. Although it was written before COVID-19 took its toll on Western Australia, this article offers an insight into the thinking at Clarkson CHS leading up to the pandemic.



What is a performance culture?

An authentic performance culture sees all teachers take collective responsibility for high quality teaching and sustained poor performance by any individual teacher is addressed ethically and professionally. This involves creating a set of norms where there is enough trust, ownership and openness for all teachers to consider how their teaching might be improved. School leaders can sharpen the focus on teacher performance through acquiring skills to create a performance culture throughout the school.

The National College for Teaching and Leadership in the UK explains the dominant factor in securing consistent and sustainable high- performance culture is the personal performance of the middle leader and her or his focus on the performance of the team and the individuals in that team. Modelling high performance seems to be one of the most compelling and credible leadership approaches available to any leader. There seems little doubt that the language and behaviour of middle leaders are also significant variables in creating a high-performance culture.

A basket of methods

There are multiple ways to create an environment for professional growth and for the assessment of individual teacher's effectiveness. Different sources of evidence have been identified and preferenced in schools but essentially no method is without flaws. Each of the evidence sources on its own provides only partial information about how well a teacher is teaching. Various combinations used in a system designed in collaboration with teachers

and modified in the course of implementation, can provide a sound basis for providing feedback on a teacher's classroom performance.

The Grattan Institute's (2012) report acknowledges that each method provides incomplete information about how well a teacher is teaching.

The report lists the following sources of evidence for teacher appraisal:

- Student performance data
 2. Peer classroom observations
 3. Line manager classroom observations
- Student feedback
 5. Teacher self-assessment
 6. Parent feedback
 7. External classroom observation
- 360-degree feedback

Evaluating our impact at Clarkson

At the core of a high-performance culture is a process about how teachers will be involved in evaluating their own teaching and the impact it is having on their students. The Framework's first factor that contributes to a performance and development culture is the focus on student outcomes. Kane (2013) notes that, 'If we want students to learn more, teachers must become students of their own teaching'. Highly Accomplished teachers work with colleagues to use data from student assessments to evaluate learning and teaching, identify interventions and modify teaching practice (AITSL Standards 2017). The CCHS English and HaSS Learning Area engage with a school-wide five-week data review process to capture timely information about student progress. In Term One, I created a single 'anywhere' Microsoft OneDrive excel data document for team members to examine their classes' progress and the grade composition of other classes. My Year 8_2 English class data from the OneDrive document (Figure 2), represents an example of how I and the team can reflect on student performance collectively.

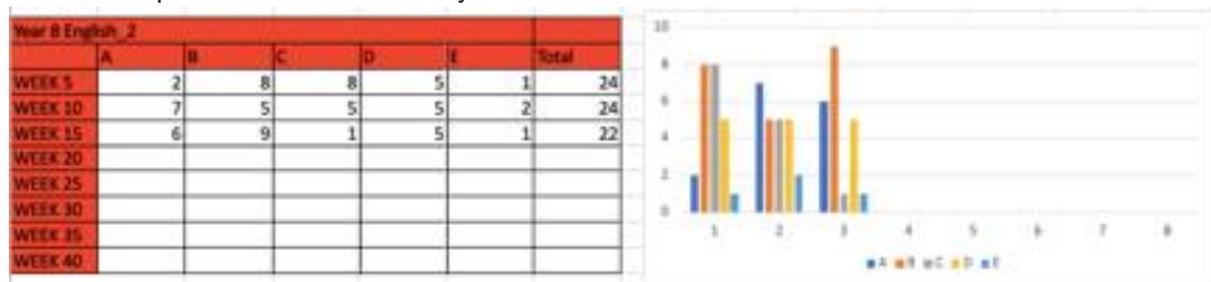


Figure 2

This approach has proven to be successful with HaSS teachers approaching their English counterparts and vice versa to 'face the data'. The formal and informal dialogue to discuss our impact on classroom practice enables us to intervene quicker and collectively find solutions to learning deficits. If there are five more A grades in my English class than the HaSS class with the same students, my HaSS colleague and I need to examine assessment rigour, differentiation practices, moderation and student profiles. Staff at Clarkson CHS employ the 5 Week Data Review to examine their impact and use data, not opinion to communicate practice.

De-privatising practice

School leaders' subjective assessments of teachers are often effective predictors of student achievement. Jacob and Lefgren (2005) found that '...assessments of teachers predict future student achievement significantly better than teacher experience, education, or actual compensation....'. As a Head of Learning Area conducting classroom observations, I need to acknowledge the timing and frequency, level of trust and my own skills in giving feedback. The AISTL website has proved invaluable to support my own skillset. When implementing a process of classroom observations, it is important to consider that teachers will not accept a performance appraisal system that is seen to 'manage' them. The lesson learned from the 2014 introduction of a new teacher appraisal scheme in Victorian public schools provides us with a case study for continual reference. 'Rather than being done with and for teachers, many measures advocated and being hastily and poorly implemented in the quest to improve teaching and learning, are essentially being done to teachers and without their involvement, almost guaranteeing resistance, minimal compliance and inefficiency' (Stephen Dinham, 2013).

In Implementing a Performance and Development Framework, Jensen and Reichl (2012) note:

'Appraising others' performance, being appraised, providing feedback – none of these things are easy. They come naturally to some, but to the majority they are learned skills. To most in the teaching profession they are foreign and intimidating prospects.' (P.11)

In Term Two, we launched a whole school peer observation initiative to supplement formal line manager classroom observations that take place at the beginning and end of each year. Peer observation involves teachers observing and providing feedback to other teachers. The success of this as a method for providing teachers with information about their teaching depends on the school climate, clarity of purpose, level of trust and a host of other factors relating to the way the system is implemented. Peer observation is an important and effective way of changing the culture of a school from one where staff operate in isolation or in 'silos' to a more open and collaborative one. In our recent General Staff Meetings, the peer observation groups shared their de-privatisation stories with other groups to inspire staff to engage further with the process. The project has supported the sharing of practice and built awareness about the impact of my colleagues' own teaching and developed a clear understanding of effective teaching in order to affect change.

All perspectives are valuable

'The average student knows effective teaching when he or she experiences it' (MET 2012, p.1)

Clarkson's school ethos is underpinned by Invitational Education; a practice to create, maintain and enhance human environments that invite people to realise their potential. Democratic practice underpins the theory to promote the idea that everyone in an organisation has a perspective that is valuable and needs to be incorporated into schoolwide discourse.

Research findings indicate that student voice, agency and leadership have a positive impact on self-worth, engagement, purpose and academic motivation (Quaglia, 2016), which contribute to improved student learning outcomes (Figure 3).



Figure 3

Clarkson has built a culture where teachers and students work together and student voice is heard and respected. Teachers and school leaders receive valuable feedback that can lead to improved teaching practice and contribute to school improvement. Students feel more positive and connected to their school and see themselves as learners and better understand their learning growth. Our school's Student Council led by Teacher of Media Jasmita Jeshani and Dr Steve Laing exemplifies democratic behaviors through the collection of evidence about teacher performance and student sentiment toward learning. The MET Project Policy and Practice Summary (2012) confirms student survey results correlate as strongly with predictions about student learning as classroom observations do, and that they prove a more reliable measure than observations alone. The student council should acknowledge that students can report on teachers with a high degree of reliability, however the validity of the survey results depends on the instrument used (Goe, 2007).

Some commentators like Goe claim that student perception surveys are more likely to measure teacher popularity than effectiveness. The evidence, however, suggests that a properly constructed survey instrument can provide valid and reliable information as one part of a suite of measures. The more frequent the surveys, the more useful the information. The age of students also affects how the surveys should be designed. In particular, it is important to note that primary students tend to rate teachers more generously than older students.

Trust and leadership traits

While trust in leadership is significant, we cannot underestimate the evidence about the importance of trust between teachers. If teachers don't trust their colleagues, the atmosphere required for successful collaborative work will not exist (Harris et al,2013).

Hattie (2012) believes that trust is essential to the effective implementation of the 138 'influences' on learning and explains that 'professional discussions (amongst teachers) must be conducted in an atmosphere of trust more than an atmosphere of accountability'.

He gives particular attention to the association of trust and willingness to make errors and treat them as opportunities to learn. He believes that to get better teachers need to be comfortable about making errors and trust is essential for this.

'...In order for us to build the high-performance culture, leadership must cultivate the environment for trust.'

Leaders who demonstrate personal integrity, commitment and honesty are reported to develop stronger and more trusting relationships with teachers. (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). Their view is that school leaders working in a culture of trust empower teachers and draw out the best in them.

Successful school leaders improve student outcomes in their school through who they are – their values, virtues, dispositions, attributes and competencies – as well as what they do in terms of the strategies they select and the ways in which they adapt their leadership practices to their unique context. The AITSL publications Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2014) and Leading for impact: Australian guidelines for school leadership development (2017) refer to the following attributes under the leadership requirement category Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills:

- Emotional intelligence
- Empathy
- Resilience
- Personal wellbeing
- Self-management
- Self-awareness
- Trustworthiness
- Environmental awareness
- Social awareness
- Cognitive capacity
- Openness to feedback

In order for our school to enhance our performance culture, our leaders must exhibit attributes that will enhance levels of trust across the school. The Principal Performance and Improvement Tool has building productive relationships as one of the six key leadership practices of effective principals. The literature suggests we can strengthen school culture by listening to staff concerns; encouraging staff to show initiative; expressing interest and care for staff; having honest two-way conversations; showing respect for all members of the community; and being 'out and about' in the school and at school events.

Conclusion

Excellent workplaces make sure that every individual receives continuous feedback on their performance and areas for improvement, both positive and negative. These workplaces also prioritise data over opinion.

As we strive to implement an exemplary performance and development culture across our school, it is particularly important that school and team leaders are trained in how to appraise and provide feedback and to have difficult performance conversations where that is required.

When we establish a peer observation culture, school leaders need to work with staff to agree on protocols and procedures and involve staff in the planning process. School leaders must support staff to provide improvement focused feedback that is based on evidence and early career teachers to learn from more experienced teachers.

Young people who find their own voice in supportive school environments are more likely to develop a confident voice, a capacity to act in the world, and a willingness to lead others. By empowering students, we enhance student engagement and enrich their participation in the classroom, school and community. We help students to 'own' their learning and development, and create a positive climate for learning (Amplify, 2018).

Finally, in order to enhance our performance and development processes at Clarkson where teachers access continuous feedback, we must consider the school climate.

The leadership and culture at the school level determines whether we adhere to policies and run processes to improve outcomes. Hattie (2012) reinforces the notion, "Without a level of trust, teachers will 'close ranks', 'put up shutters' and retreat to the old and tried methods behind a closed classroom door".

Leaders at Clarkson CHS have an obligation to empower teachers and draw out the best of them. Their personal integrity, commitment and honesty establish stronger and more trusting relationships among teachers and sustain a school climate where excellence can flourish.

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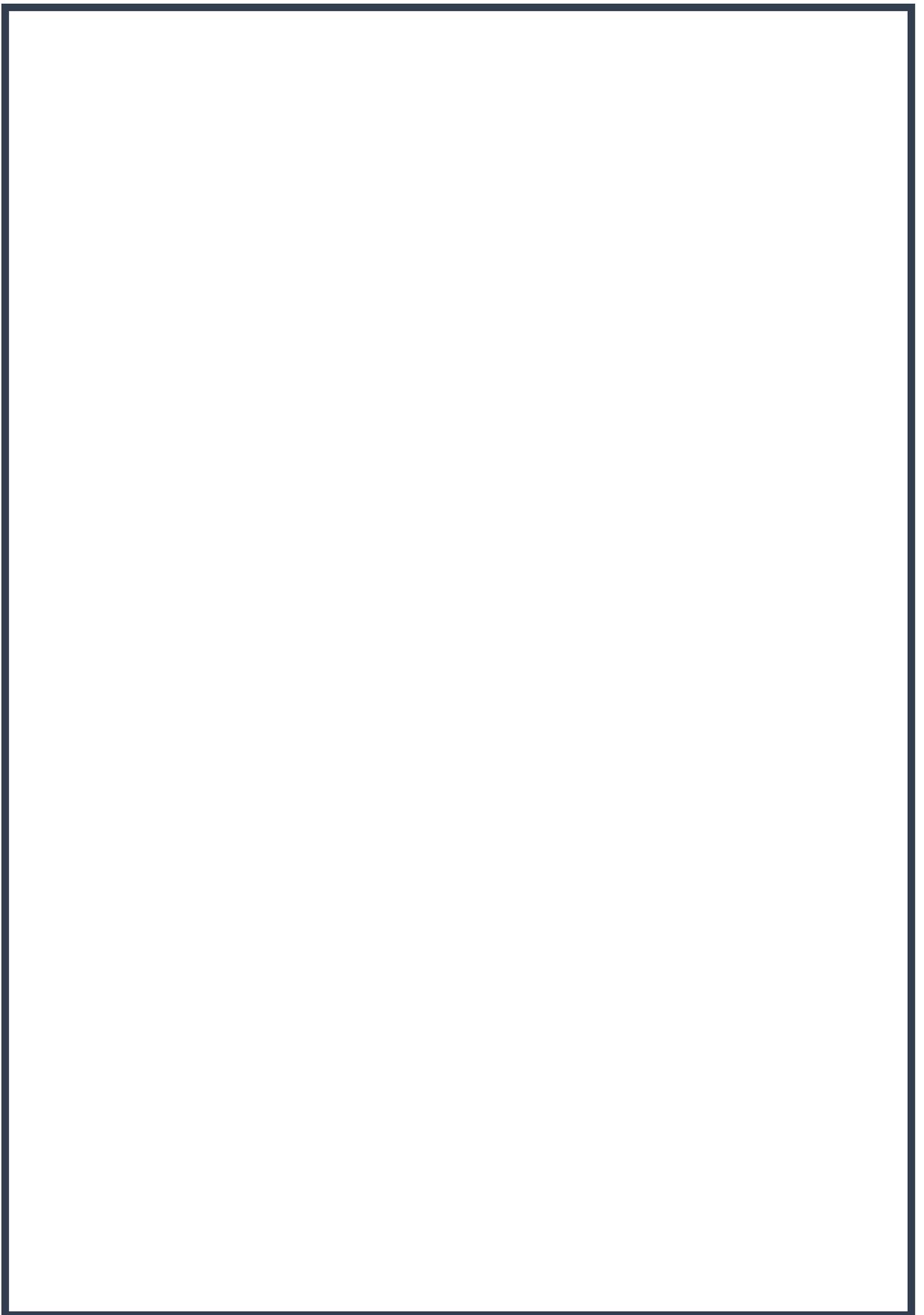
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Learning Journey 5:
The Path Beyond The Pandemic

