

Broadsheet of Good Practice in Integrated Schools

Editorial

Pope Francis, in an address on February 13, 2014 to the plenary session of the Congregation for Catholic Education (of Seminaries and Institutes of Study) said, "To educate is an act of love, it is to give life." He added, "today education is addressed to a generation that changes; therefore, every educator – and the whole Church which is Mother Educator - is called to "change" in the sense of being able to communicate with the young people she has before her... [Educators] must promote human and spiritual growth. Young people are in need of quality teaching, together with values not just enunciated but witnessed."

We can feel proud of our commitment to Catholic education that speaks to the lives of young people, and that responds to their changing needs, including the changing needs of their hearts and souls, as they develop their identity, values and beliefs in an ever changing world.

Our contributors in this edition give us examples of wonderful commitment to our young people, and new initiatives that speak to their changing needs. We are grateful to them for their generous and speedy response to the request to share their stories with us.

May you continue to enrich and to be enriched in your work in education as an act of love, bringing life to your students and to each other.

Susan Apáthy

Learning to Live Lives that Matter

Jon Bowen, Deputy Principal and Leadership Academy Director, St Peter's College, Palmerston North

"Dear God, You call us to live lives that matter; lives that change our world for the better. Give us eyes that see the needs of others and hearts that reach out to meet those needs. Help us, Lord, to recognise and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of those we live and work with. May Your Spirit move through each of us to strengthen and enrich our St Peter's College faith community. Amen."

This is the Prayer from St Peter's College in Palmerston North. It provides a solid foundation from which students in the Leadership Academy step out to serve in school, local, regional, national and international communities in order to meet the needs of other people. It is this prayer that provides the inspiration and words for the Leadership Academy Vision:

The Leadership Academy uses the model of servant leadership provided by Jesus Christ to encourage, equip and release students to:

- live lives that matter
- see the needs of others
- reach out and meet needs
- change the world for the better... to be the change!

"There are opportunities for everyone", says Deputy Principal and Academy Director Jon Bowen. "Students who want to serve all have the opportunity to do so. The core part of each programme in the Academy is to encourage service and in doing so to help students to step up to servant leadership - to putting others first."

Opportunities start in the Junior School for Year 7 and 8 students. This Junior Council service continues in Year 9 where Ambassadors are also appointed. They visit local primary schools to develop relationships with younger students. In Year 10 students are given the opportunity to serve in the Junior Leadership programme as the leaders of Junior School. Junior Head students are appointed along with Junior House Leadership teams during the Junior Leadership Camp which all Year 10 students attend. The aim there is to build confidence, develop relationships, and provide the opportunity for teamwork and team building.

Senior School opportunities begin with Peer Support Leadership and are followed by Peer Mentoring, which includes helping to run a homework club through term 2-4. In Year 13 students are given the chance to serve on Senior Council, as house or committee leaders. The Council is chaired by the two Head Students. Students on Council can be imaginative, creative and innovative with their service and encouragement of others in the College.

Year 10-13 students are all given an additional opportunity to partake in leadership award through participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award programme. Bronze, Silver and Gold programmes are offered at St Peter's.

The Leadership academy is working as part of the big picture partnership between the school, students and parents at St Peter's to develop empowered, self managing, lifelong learners who live the Gospel values in a changing world.

Contact Jon Bowen: bowenj@stpeterspn.school.nz

Our ICT Journey

Theresa Bosch, Deputy Principal and Director of Administration, Baradene College, Auckland

Over the last 5 years, Baradene College has moved from offering computers in labs and a few specialist classes to a 1:1 environment where all Y7-10 students have a device to use in each lesson.

On the first day of school this year all Year 7 – 10 students were asked to come to school with a device. In 2013 our Year 9 students were asked to bring the HP Envy x2 to school as a trial. The trial taught us some valuable lessons and we felt confident that we could expand this programme to include all 2014 Year7 – 9 students. Towards the end of 2013 we reviewed a number of devices and found that the Surface Pro 2 met all our requirements. Not only is it a tablet that has a detachable keyboard, it is light, runs Windows 8, it also comes with a stylus which we felt was very important for our students. The stylus enables the student to choose between typing and writing on the screen and is especially useful in Mathematics and Science. We met with our parent community towards the end of 2013 and shared information about the journey we had been on to bring us to a point where our network could sustain students bringing a device and the progress of our staff Professional Learning and Development (PLD) over the past five years. We explained why we believed the Surface Pro 2 was the device of choice and how they could go about purchasing the product. We were ready for the next stage, and are confident that our students will benefit hugely from the ICT journey we are continuing on.

We use Ultraset as our Learning Management System and our school website. We have included the link to the KAMAR parent portal on the front page of our website so that parents can access the college calendar, information about their daughters' learning and progress. On our ICT support page we have placed resources that help students connect to our wireless, print from their device to any photocopier in the college, download the Mathematics Vital Source textbook, links to typing tutor websites, instructions on how to download Office, install AVG virus protection and information about DNA marking security tracking. On our website, we have also included information and tips for parents about cyber safety and keeping their children safe online.

Under the school's licensing agreement all Baradene students are entitled to download a free copy of Microsoft Office on up to five devices. In a Year 7 – 10 assembly at the start of term students were shown how to log in to their Office 365 accounts and install the Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote etc.). At the same time they were shown:

- The process to create folders for each learning area in their OneDrive Pro accounts.
- The difference between opening a Web App document or opening a local copy on their device. We have encouraged them to use OneDrive Pro to store all their documents so that they can share their work with their peers or their teachers and access their work from any device (both at the college and at home). Students have already started collaborating and have quickly realised that the possibilities are endless.

OneNote (part of the Office suite) has been a very popular learning tool with staff and students alike because it allows students to include information in a number of formats. They can add sound/video recordings to their OneNote pages, include written text, imbed pictures from websites and snip images from their screen. They often take photos of the work the teacher has done on the board and include that in their OneNote document along with their own notes and resources.

This year we have changed our timetable structure to include Digital Literacy so that all Year 7 and Year 8 students can complete the Microsoft IT Academy Microsoft Office Suite (MOS) qualification. The Microsoft IT Academy includes training and certification in a number of Microsoft products, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. Teachers teaching the course have created courses through the IT Academy website and place the hyperlink to these courses on their Digital Literacy class pages on Ultraset. Once students click on this link they are taken to their IT Academy courses and start their training via the portal. When students have completed their course they will be shown how to access GMetrix software where they will complete a formative assessment and once proficient they will sit the Microsoft examination. IT Academy courses have also been created for Y9 to 13 students and our staff. They are free to complete the training in their own time and will be given the opportunity to complete the examinations and gain this world recognised qualification.

Our library runs a digital footprint program for all students starting with our Year 7 and 8 classes. Cyber safety and cyber bullying are hot topics and students are given strategies to stay safe on line. Our cyber safety use agreement, which all students sign before they join our college, is discussed at some length. This goes hand in hand with a talk which will be given by our community constable at our assembly, on cyber safety.

On Friday mornings we run staff Professional Development sessions. Each faculty has appointed a Faculty Lead Person (FLP) who supports the faculty in their ICT learning. FLPs offer workshops on a Friday morning and staff use OneNote to sign up to the workshops. Workshops include, OneNote navigation and use in class, Excel formulas and quick tips, Word for teacher, using USpace on Ultraset, Creating Ultraset pages, uploading surveys to Ultraset, KAMAR 101, Windows 8 basics, OneDrive Pro, e-TV, exploring the Widows 8 app store, PowerPoint basics, Photoshop and Office 365 Basics. These workshops will run for a number of weeks and will be adapted to suit the needs and requests of the staff.

Last year we were granted Microsoft Mentor School status. Mentor schools are recognised leaders who have achieved change within their own education systems. To be considered for mentor status, schools must demonstrate a commitment to innovation and the ability to overcome obstacles in preparing students to be 21st century learners. In addition, schools must have developed programmes that can serve as models for other schools. A benefit of being a mentor school is participation in leadership workshops and collaboration with other school leaders worldwide at the Partners in learning Global Forum in Barcelona. Three staff members, Paula Swan, Hannah Dhanaraj and I, will be attending this forum in March and will no doubt bring back a plethora of knowledge to share with the staff.

The journey has been rewarding, exciting and challenging. We continually learn as we go, improving on what we have done, remembering that our primary goal is to enhance the teaching and learning experience of our students. As staff we are very grateful for the support of our parent community and our Board of Trustees.

“Be still and know that I am God” Ps 46:10

Ben Gorman, DRS, Sancta Maria College, Auckland

Our days are filled with noise and chaos. Whether you need to clear your inbox of 20 emails, practise writing poetry or verify a hypothesis, stopping for some silent stillness first is highly beneficial. It was with this in mind that the *Magnum Silencio* was born at Sancta Maria College.

At noon each day a bell sounds reminding the entire school to prepare for the “*Magnum*”. Teachers finish their sentences, students put their books and pens down and silence and stillness descends upon the college. At 12.02 a second bell sounds, students open their eyes and work resumes as usual.

What is the *Magnum Silencio*?

While it may sound like a large bottle of Italian wine, it’s actually something far more valuable. In 2007 a documentary film, entitled “Into Great Silence”, depicted the everyday lives of a group of Carthusian Monks in the French Alps. The highly acclaimed 162 minute film featured no speech, commentary or sound effects. Yet in this great silence, peace and tranquillity reigned. It is this sort of tranquil great silence (*Magnum Silencio*) that the *Magnum* tries to encapsulate. For just two minutes a day everyone is transported to their own personal cloister space.

What do they do?

Ideally – they meditate. Prior to implementing the *Magnum* all staff were introduced to the theory of Christian meditation during a professional development slot (see www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz). Through Religious Education lessons students were introduced to the practice. The beauty of Christian meditation lies in its simplicity. Simply be still, silent, breath steadily and recite a simple mantra. It only seemed to take a few short sessions before most students were confident in ignoring distractions and began to inhale the Holy Spirit with each breath.

Why?

Holidays and retreats are few and far between. Research tells us student anxiety and stress is at an all-time high. Yet most are unaware of the peaceful sanctuary each can instantly access by simply closing their eyes. While two minutes in the middle of period three is sacrificed daily, increased student productivity following the *Magnum* more than compensates for the interruption. Much like a computer can get slower if it is running too many applications, the *Magnum* functions like a system reboot, returning everything to its optimum level of performance.

Lastly, stopping at noon for the *Magnum* reinforces the purpose of our morning liturgies, providing a constant yet gentle reminder that Jesus is unseen but ever-present reason for our school.

Meditation with children

Pamela Arthurs, Principal, St Peter’s School, Beckenham, Christchurch

At St Peter’s in Beckenham, Christchurch, we practise daily meditation in every classroom from new entrants to year 8. This has become a way of life in our school, one that the children expect and enjoy. Meditation occurs straight after children return to class following the lunch break and provides a timely and welcome finding again of one’s ‘inner room’.

The time spent in meditation relates to children’s ages; roughly a minute for each year of life seems about right. We begin with three chimes on a singing bowl, chimes or bell and, with eyes closed, children repeat slowly and silently, “Maranatha”. The syllabic rhyming and gentle rhythm of this word meaning ‘Come Lord Jesus’, resonates with the brain, encouraging physical and mental stillness. It is also a beautiful and simple prayer. At the end of the session the bowl, chimes or bell is rung again, children open their eyes and breathe more deeply and are then ready to begin the afternoon’s activities.

No set-up or altar is needed and the meditation can occur indoors or outdoors. In fact, meditation can happen just about anywhere!

We find that this practice enables and encourages children to connect with God in a way that doesn’t involve conscious thought about praying for anything in particular. It’s really easy to guide children through this, regardless of their age, requiring almost no preparation at all. Development of children’s spiritual awareness through meditation nurtures their understanding of that very important – yet often misunderstood – dimension of human life. It also allows them to find inner stillness – a great skill in busy lives!

We have had several parents tell us that their children teach them how to meditate, much to the parents surprise and delight. It is our belief that children need to recognise that they are “...spiritual beings having a human experience.” (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)



▲ Children meditating at St Peter’s School, Beckenham

Over the Back Fence

Geoff Wood, HOD Health, Rosmini College, Takapuna, Auckland

For the typical Rosmini College Year 12 student Over the Back Fence means they will be teaching physical fitness and movement skills for the year to St Joseph's School Year 3-6 students. These weekly classes of huff and puff, peals of glee and high fives started in 2006. The students just walk through the back fence. (Meidy Iskandar reports from the St Joseph's point of view after this report from Rosmini.)

Since 2012 the programme has added a new twist connecting the Rosmini students with students in thirty classrooms across eight countries, using skype video technology to provide short, simple health lessons. OtBF now involves about 250 primary and 150 college age students annually. The programme is expanding rapidly, and Rosmini is at the point of looking for other NZ secondary schools to join the party.

So how does the Y12 health classroom look like at 9:15 on a Tuesday morning? Three students are just connecting with the new entrant class at Mangatawhiri School in the Northern Waikato. In the corner last minute details are being added to a lesson that will taught by another group to St Clair School, Dunedin. And somewhere else three students are practising their lesson to present to students in Massachusetts. The rest of the class are running out the door with sports equipment and lining up 64 St Joseph's School Y5-6 students in their groups for warm ups and a lesson on invasive games. There is a lot going on in this class. Everyone has a job to do, and all the students, young and old are learning from each other.

Over the Back Fence is a natural: it developed out of older students teaching younger students and then a clutch of 'what if's' that matched the right people at the right time. Two chatting teachers took the initial plunge. A chance meeting on a footpath in Rotorua with Anne Kenneally, then Deputy Principal at St. Mary's, Mosgiel, took OtBF over the ditch to the South Island and from there word of mouth has linked a number of schools across the South Pacific and New Zealand with Rosmini College.

The range of connections creates positive intercultural sharing. The younger students present every fourth video lesson. Their audience could be a class in Australia, Fiji, or USA.

A year ago the Cook Islands joined in, with one teacher coordinating the Cook Islands virtual learning programme and connecting students on the outer islands. Six Rosmini students are now providing weekly lessons to 47 students at five schools across the outer Cook Islands, providing these teenagers with suitable life skills to help them transition to a fast changing world. The first lesson was on internet safety.

This whole programme is a huge responsibility for our Y12 students, but also an opportunity to really make a difference in the lives of young people.

Contact g.wood@rosmini.school.nz

The OtBF view from St Joseph's

Meidy Iskandar, Teacher, St Joseph's Catholic School Takapuna

I have been involved in the 'Over the Back Fence' project since 2010, taking part in both the physical sessions and the online health sessions. I have seen many benefits of the project (not just related to PE skills) for both the Rosmini boys and our children at St Joseph's Primary School. One of the major benefits I have seen throughout the years is that our children are able to see the mercy value of 'manaakitanga' in action. It puts the concept of hospitality and 'reaching out to others' into perspective for our children as see how welcoming the Rosmini boys are to us –not only welcoming us onto their school grounds but giving up their time to help us with our PE skills.

We have a weekly staff reflective session with Geoff Wood, offering each other feedback on what worked well and what could be done better. Geoff then goes back to his boys to tweak their planning or we go back to our children and discuss what changes we need to make (often behaviour based). It is evident that the reflections are acted on, as week by week progress is evident in the boys' interactions with the children and their planning.



Contact Details:

New Zealand Catholic Education Office (NZCEO)
PO Box 12 307, Wellington
Tel: 04 496 1739 | Fax: 04 496 1734
Email: nzceooffice@nzceo.org.nz
Website: www.nzceo.org.nz

Our Sponsors Support Us – Please Support Them

The Role of the Associate Director of NCRS

Anne Kennedy, Associate Director, NCRS

The role of Associate Director of the National Centre for Religious Studies has been created to focus on primary school curriculum and related areas. Formerly an independent agency of the Catholic Bishops Conference, NCRS is now a centre within the Catholic Institute of Aotearoa NZ (TCI). Chris Duthie-Jung is the Director of NCRS and, since October, I have worked with him as Associate Director.

Most of the projects I am working on are related to the primary schools' Religious Education programme which has been taught in the schools since the 1990s and is now in need of some updating. The Curriculum Statement is being aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum, a process that involves refinement and additions rather than any significant content change. The results of previous consultation with schools will be incorporated into the statement and into a proposed handbook intended to bridge the gap between the higher level Curriculum Statement and its on-the-ground classroom implementation.

This year the Faith Alive website for primary schools will be launched and it will include an updated (and updating) online version of the digital resource used in Religious Education lessons. The preparation of the material for the online version is a complex task which is occupying much of my time at present.

The Family Whānau book, which is the parent component of the primary RE programme, has been edited so that it will work with the children's material which was previously in book form but will also be online. The editing has been completed and the book is now available for parents to purchase through their schools.

NCRS relies on the diocesan Religious Education Advisers to keep in touch with schools so that what we do is always grounded in the reality of the school and classroom. I meet with the Advisers regularly to seek their input into the projects I am working on. I was part of this group in my previous role representing the Dunedin diocese and I am grateful for their continued support in my new role.

I am responsible for coordinating the Walk by Faith programme which is also about to undergo some revision. I recently enjoyed the opportunity to teach the first module of the Catholic Early Childhood Certificate to a group of teachers in Auckland. These are a few of the interesting tasks of the Associate Director of NCRS.

When I accepted this role a friend said to me, "It's not really a change of job: you'll have the same boss, same company, just a different branch!" That's true when you work for the Church. I am enjoying the challenges that come with this new role and the chance to meet and work with new people.