



Taking It To The Next Level

*A Strategic Plan for Marist College Canberra,
2007 - 2011*

**Learning and Teaching
@ MCC in 2012**

Marist College Canberra, December 2007

Printed on: 11 December 2007

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Introduction

As our boys move from boyhood to manhood and progress through the College, the type and style of education that they receive should also change. *Learning and teaching @ MCC in 2012* outlines the learning community that needs to be in existence to ensure we continue to provide the best possible learning and teaching for the boys in our care. We have set ourselves the audacious goal of having this in place by the end of 2011.

This document is the outcome of a considerable amount of research-based work that has occurred throughout 2007. It brings together the findings and results of this work to provide an outline of the type and nature of the learning community that Marist will implement to provide a well-rounded boys education in the twenty-first century. As a result it will be a learning community of excellence for boys. To assist with understanding the background to this document the following should be read:

Marist College Canberra – Charter of Learning and Teaching, 2007
Learning and Teaching Renewal, Evidence for Change - December 2007
Learning and Teaching Renewal, School Visit Reports- December 2007

Many of our students are telling us that they are not engaged in the current educational environment which has been created for them. Our students need:

- school goals that are clearly stated and honest
- a sense of belonging
- relationships between teachers and students that are fair, friendly, informal, caring, supportive, respectful and valuing of others
- participation in school decision-making
- work worthy of effort rather than routine, trivial or superficial tasks
- content that is meaningful, significant and part of the real life of young people
- learning and teaching practices that are challenging, active, deep, thought-provoking and cooperative
- decision making about the curriculum content, process of learning and assessment that is influenced and owned by students – a negotiated curriculum

To achieve this, considerable reform is required which must encompass the following areas:

- teaching and learning practices in the classroom/learning situation
- teacher learning
- curriculum and assessment
- school culture and valued learning outcomes
- school organisation for learning
- leadership learning and development

Implementation

The implementation of this plan is undoubtedly a large and complex undertaking which will result in a disruptive change to learning and teaching within the College. This change will involve: robust educational debate; detailed planning; course writing; a renewal of learning and teaching practice and a timetable structure to make the delivery of this possible. In addition, focused professional learning will be undertaken by all in preparation for the implementation of the various stages.

To implement this plan over the next four years the following timetable is proposed:

2008

- planning of framework for curriculum continuum (Years 4 – 10) using *Every Chance to Learn*
- detailed planning of Years 9 – 10 continuum and the linkage of this to Years 11 & 12
- detailed planning and writing of the Year 9 *Footsteps* program
- planning and piloting of differentiated curriculum in parts of the Junior School
- planning of framework for a new Years 4 – 6 program
- detailed planning and writing of the new Year 4 program
- planning for a new timetable required to deliver new Years 4 – 12 learning and teaching programs (final implementation date yet to be determined)

2009

- implementation of first Year 9 *Footsteps* program
- detailed planning and writing of the new Year 10 program
- detailed planning of framework for Middle Years continuum
- full implementation of new Year 4 program
- detailed planning and writing of the new Years 5 & 6 program

2010

- implementation of new Year 10 program
- detailed planning and writing of new Years 7 & 8 program
- full implementation of new Years 5 & 6 program

2011

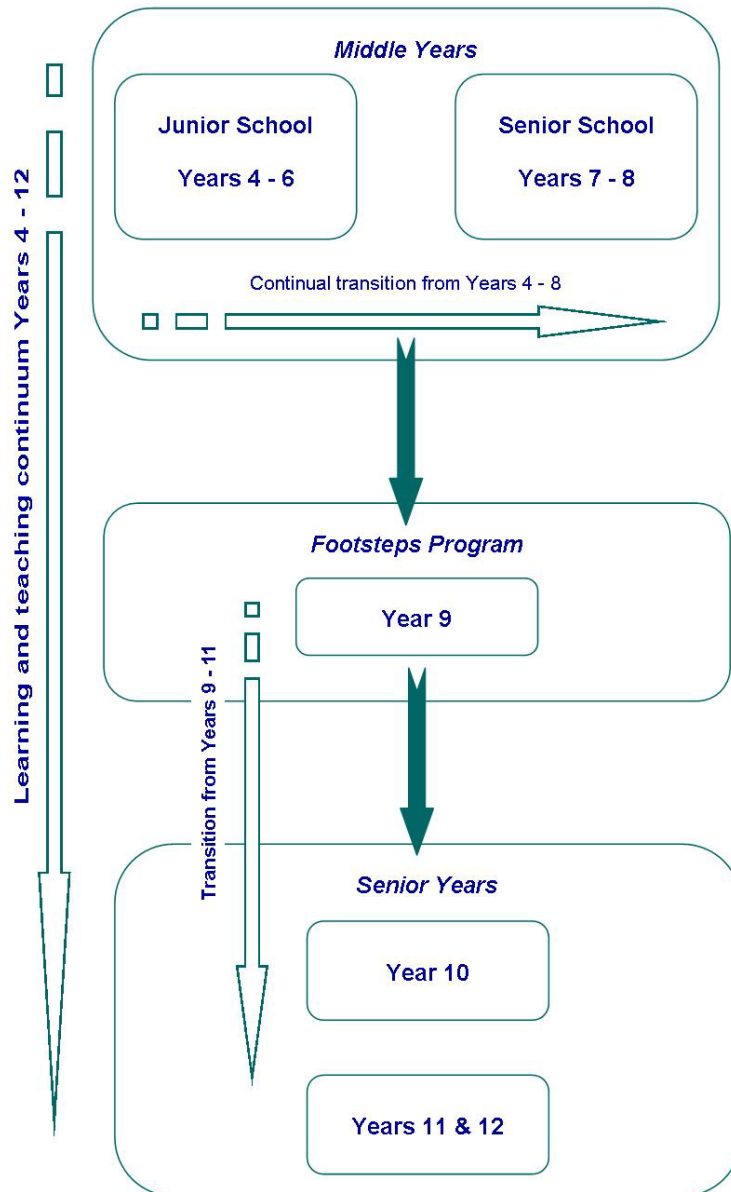
- implementation of new Years 7 & 8 program

A Seamless Curriculum

In putting forward this model of *Learning and Teaching @ MCC in 2012* it should be noted that underpinning all of this work is a plan to provide a seamless curriculum or a continuum of learning and teaching from Years 4 – 12. To achieve this *Every Chance to Learn* will be used to map a framework for the curriculum continuum to remove overlap from one year to the next, and across the current subject areas, that will be used to structure courses of study.

As boys progress through the College their learning and teaching will reflect their changing needs as they develop and mature while maintaining a structure that also reflects the needs of the students to be a part of a larger educational community. The structure is provided in the diagram below and the details of each component are given in the following sections.

The Seamless Curriculum



Middle Years

Years 4 - 8

As students progress through this part of the school they are encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning, skills development and participation at school. There is a focus on:

- learning to learn, learning to think
- a collaborative team approach – teachers and students
- building quality relationships between students and teachers; a focus on developing community
- cross-curricular, interdisciplinary & integrated learning approaches
- authentic assessment; real life contexts; contemporary approaches

Students identify, with support, their preferred learning styles and use strategies that promote learning. They monitor and describe progress in their learning and demonstrate learning habits that address their individual needs. They seek and respond to teacher feedback to develop their content knowledge, skills and understanding. They identify and explain how different perspectives and attitudes can affect learning. They negotiate learning improvement goals and justify the choices they make about their own learning. Students actively develop, monitor and refine protocols that create a positive learning environment in the classroom.

Students develop time management skills to complete short-term and long-term tasks within limits set by the teacher. They undertake some set tasks independently, identifying stages for completion. They describe task progress and achievements, suggesting how outcomes may have been improved. They persist when experiencing difficulty with learning tasks. They seek and use learning support when needed from peers, teachers and other adults. They practice positive self talk. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning within and outside the classroom. They reflect on their progress and make decisions about future improvement.

Junior School

Years 4 – 6

We make learning relevant and meaningful to the students, involving them in active inquiry, using their own experiences to assist them in gaining a greater understanding of the world. Class teachers plan Units of Inquiry integrating some of the subject areas into topics that equip students with knowledge and skills while catering for individual differences. Opportunities for enrichment are provided through critical and creative thinking activities and programs designed to challenge a child's thinking and extend their questioning capacity. Where appropriate, children with ability in particular areas work in withdrawal groups with children of similar abilities and interests.

When planning learning experiences Junior School teachers ensure that all students are catered for through differentiated curriculum and learning experiences.

Senior School

Years 7 & 8

Years 7 & 8 are the Senior School foundation years where students are offered a full range of learning opportunities to provide a transition from Junior to Senior School. These years of schooling are characterised by:

- a collaborative team approach – teachers and students
- strong focus on relationships between students and teachers; a focus on developing community
- cross-curricular, interdisciplinary & integrated learning approaches
- authentic assessment; real life contexts; contemporary approaches

A specific aspect of this is the staffing arrangement where students can have the same teacher for a number courses eg Maths/Science, English/Social Science, Science/Social Science (teachers who are capable/trained only). The purpose of this is to allow:

- a greater connectedness between courses
- a reduction in the number of teachers a student has, thus building a stronger relationship between students and teachers
- the consolidation of a teachers' load as they will meet with a smaller number of students

Courses

Courses of study will be developed in conjunction with *Every Chance to Learn* and the specific focus of successfully facilitating the final transition stages from Junior School to Senior School.

Enrichment

The enrichment program is a component of the program which is allocated an extended time in the timetable once a cycle. During this time various activities to enhance all students' learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom will be provided. (e.g. learning styles; excursions such as Art Gallery, Museums, CSIRO ...).

All activities are integrated with the curriculum and assist in providing a program of study in the classroom where disruptions are minimised.

Footsteps Program

Year 9

Firstly, it should be noted that *Footsteps* is a working title for this program and it may be changed at a later stage. This is a proposed new program for Year 9 students which explores the student's journey as he moves from boyhood to manhood. The *Footsteps* Program aims to be a significant and positive experience catering for the particular needs of these adolescents as they journey through the year. We will strive to provide opportunities for the boys to become independent and active learners through a rich and innovative curriculum that awakens, stimulates and challenges the intelligence.

Footsteps provides a more open and user-friendly curriculum aimed at maintaining and enhancing an enthusiasm for learning. We will foster the concept of a mental and physical new start and encourage student involvement. This is to be a year filled with positive experiences.

Our aim is to actively engage the boys to realise their academic potential. In so doing, the boys will develop a willingness to take up intellectual, physical and social challenges with a sense of purpose and responsibility.

All aspects of the program are delivered by teachers who have an affinity with this age of boy – this is one of the keys to the success of this type of offering. Learning and teaching is designed specifically for this age group. It will include:

- Options for student negotiated curriculum
- Connections made with the students' world
- Curriculum linked to all aspects of *Footsteps* program – including Exploration/Immersion

Courses

Courses of study will be developed in conjunction with *Every Chance to Learn* and the specific focus of providing an open and user-friendly curriculum.

Exploration and Immersion

A particular feature of the program will be the exploration and immersion components. These parts of the *Footsteps* program comprise timetabled time as well as off-site experiences over a number of days. All activities are integrated with a range of curriculum areas as appropriate. These experiences could include:

- City Exploration – Sydney and Canberra
- Mountains to the Sea Exploration – incorporating Outdoor Education with links back to the curriculum.
- Community Service – linking of self to community within the curriculum

Senior Years

Year 10

Year 10 is a transition year between Year 9 and Years 11 & 12. Students will have the opportunity to explore their options for subjects that will lead to vocational or tertiary studies. It is envisaged that students will be able to experience some of the vocational subjects in a practical way and continue with the service opportunities from the Year 9 *Footsteps* program.

An enrichment type program will also be offered in Year 10 which will link aspects of the Outward Bound experience into the program throughout the year to enhance the students' learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom.

Students will study Core and Elective subjects with the view to exploring areas that they may be considering for Years 11 & 12. The courses will be designed to prepare students for their studies in later years.

Years 11 – 12

It is envisaged that the current Years 11 & 12 structure would continue very much as it is at present. The methods of delivery of the learning and teaching experiences need to be aligned with the seamless curriculum from Years 4 – 10.

Much of the structure of these senior years of study is determined by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) and as a result is unable to be altered significantly. It would be expected that any new timetable structures would take into account the BSSS requirements while also allowing teaching staff to teach across a range of year levels including Years 11 & 12.