

# TEACHING & LEARNING

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## Introduction

2010 marked the commencement of a new Directorship for Christian College. With the introduction of Directorships in English, Mathematics and LOTE, there arose a very real opportunity for this new Directorship to focus on some key transdisciplinary areas of the Teaching and Learning program. To this end it includes five key portfolios: Libraries, ICT, Special Needs and Enrichment, Assessment and Reporting and College Data Management Systems.

As the Director's role within each of these portfolios was largely focused on forward planning, program development and administration I welcomed the additional opportunity to engage in the teaching of English at the Year 9 level in addition to this Directorship. This 'grass root' involvement in an essential component of our Teaching and Learning Program contextualised many facets of the work in which I was engaged.

## Library / ICT Faculties

The year commenced with a very real vision and sense of purpose in these two portfolios. In recent years Christian College has acknowledged the changing pedagogies in education as the technological revolution and knowledge explosion have impacted not only on the manner in which we deliver programs but what we deliver and why. For our students to be equipped for the future we must provide them with not only knowledge and skills, but more importantly, self understanding, self management strategies and active social, moral and environmental consciousness.

To a significant degree, this new and critical focus in education has been necessitated by developments in technology – developments which

in all facets of life have made the world a small and fragile place. It has thus become essential that this same technology is embedded in our programs, our pedagogies and our planning for the future.

For our college this raised many essential questions such as which technology do we embrace and to what extent? How do we up-skill our teachers and students? How do we keep pace? How do we sustain our initiatives? In our quest for answers an ICT Focus Group was established late 2009 in order to address some of these questions and to establish a strategic plan for the future. This group commenced with representation from not only the Teaching and Learning staff but also the administration and IT staff. The Teaching and Learning staff gathered a significant quantity of primary data from the staff delivering programs in the Junior, Middle and Senior sectors of the college. This data has already informed strategic planning in a number of our Teaching and Learning Directorships.

The essential questions in the technology debate with respect to our Teaching and Learning programs centre on the resourcing of staff not just with hardware and software but also in terms of knowledge and skills to engage with technology in the classroom and beyond. Additionally there are the questions around the skill development of the students. Do you teach resource skills in isolation or integrate them into the central learning programs? These were core questions taken up by the Library and the ICT faculties in the first half of the year resulting in a decision to merge the two faculties into one with the new title of the LITEHOUSE faculty.

The second half of this year has seen the staff of these two faculties working towards a common purpose of auditing their programs and designing a

curriculum and pedagogy ready for implementation of LITEHOUSE in 2011. The Library and Information Technology House will focus on equipping students in Prep to Year 4 with foundational skills and knowledge in Literature, Research and ICT. In the Middle Years students will be encouraged to progressively manage their own learning and integration of Literature, Research and ICT skills. The pedagogical approach in Senior Years is yet to be developed in 2011 ready for implementation in 2012.

The LITEHOUSE concept is visionary, innovative and purposeful. A tremendous amount of energy and planning in 2010 has ensured a positive launch for 2011. Continued flexibility, development and commitment throughout 2011 should ensure that this initiative is successful and sustained into the future.

It would be remiss to finish this section without commenting on the successful work of every campus library this year as they have not only looked to the future but worked tirelessly to enrich and resource the educational programs in 2010. Every library has a different feel and air of excitement including the new and exemplary facility at Senior Campus which will commence operation at the start of 2011.

The ICT staff have also completed an excellent year culminating in a very successful Short Film Festival in October which drew a sizeable crowd of appreciative parents and delighted student presenters.

### **Special Needs**

As we are all aware student capabilities and gifts and talents lay across a spectrum; a spectrum which can look quite different depending on the area of study in focus. At Christian College we have always taken extra care to ensure that our students with special learning needs or disabilities are cared and catered for in a compassionate yet also educationally appropriate manner. Throughout 2010 our Integration programs continued to care for students with needs at all of our campuses. Learning Support programs were conducted in both Literacy and Numeracy at all campuses supported by the Federal Government Targeted Funding Program. Additional State Funding for a Secondary Schools Language Program enabled

eight middle year teachers to be trained in the identification and program support of students with language learning difficulties. In the provision of all of these programs we acknowledge the professional support of Speech Pathologists Katie McArthur and Jacqui Golden. We have also called on the professional guidance and support of a range of visiting professionals in Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Speech, Audiologists and health professionals in the areas of Hearing and Sight Loss.

### **Enrichment**

At the other end of the spectrum we have been very engaged in providing academic enhancement in all subjects for high achieving students as identified by our new Assessment and Reporting scale and Assessment Rubrics. With increasing differentiation of the curriculum, students working above and beyond the set program objectives are continually challenged to work to their potential, and assessment and reporting is accurately reflecting this effort and achievement.

In addition to the core and elective programs, students with gifts and talents are offered a 'smorgasbord' of enrichment and enhancement opportunities in the form of competitions, challenges, activities, clubs, cups, teams. Tournament of Minds, Science Challenge, Debating Competition, Public Speaking Circuit, Reader's Cup and Sprockets and Flares. These are just a sampling of what has been on offer this year.

An additional and substantive addition to our Enrichment and Enhancement offerings will be launched in 2011 after extensive research, discussion and development throughout 2010. In terms 2 and 3 next year a select group of gifted and talented students in Years 5 to 7 will be invited to participate in a new program entitled Q'ed. This program will be conducted once a week over two terms with the goal of providing an opportunity for these students to engage in thinking and learning at a higher level of intellectual function. In keeping with our college philosophy, the goals of this program will continue to be guided by a Christian worldview with a focus on action.

## **National and Standardised Testing**

It has been a very rewarding year in terms of the growth and development in the assessment and reporting practices and processes across the educational programs. As mentioned previously, the new Academic Reporting Scale has allowed us to accurately report on the achievements of our highly able and gifted students and the development of Assessment Rubrics has ensured that programs have been differentiated to support this learning.

The continued development of our Academic Reports has been placed on hold while we await the full implementation of National Curriculum and any compulsory reporting requirements this may bring. In the interim we have continued to refine our reporting package within MAZE and its access through EMAZE.

The results of the NAPLAN testing in 2010 has provided us with cause for celebration and also some very definite target areas in which we can improve. An investment in 2009 in a data analysis program has allowed us to export the NAPLAN results into this program and carry out some very detailed analysis and discussion. This information will definitely guide the program planning and development in 2011 and beyond.

Our Standardised Testing Program had a late implementation timeframe this year and as well, we engaged the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to correct and compile results for us. To this end the results are currently being imported into MAZE and are unavailable for comment. This timeframe will be amended in 2011 so that results are available midterm 4 for a variety of purposes.

Of note in 2010 was in the inclusion of Science testing in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 as well as the replacement of the Middle Years Ability Test (MYAT) in Year 5 with the ACER General Ability Test (AGAT) in Years 2, 4, 6 and 8. It will be interesting to see how our students are tracking in Science and likewise the AGAT will provide us with a measure of each student's general reasoning ability.

The College will also be implementing On-Demand testing in 2011. This testing allows teachers to

monitor student progress using a variety of on-line Achievement and Adaptive tests in English and Mathematics. This service is offered through the VCAA.

It is very reassuring that as a College we are continually improving in our efforts to create and improve our programs and our progress, based on solid data collection and analysis.

## **College Data Management Systems**

The focus of this Directorship in this area throughout 2010 has been in many areas which all converge on our central data management system: MAZE.

With respect to Curriculum management, we have again travelled through two reviews of our Term Planners to ensure their currency and relevancy. The Academic Reports have passed through rigorous review prior to each reporting phase. The development of Assessment Rubrics to support the new Assessment Scale has involved much discussion, development and management. These rubrics are not currently housed within MAZE but on an EMAZE server. The reasoning behind this is again the wait for a sense of direction with National Curriculum developments. Likewise the development of a College wide Unit of Work Proforma has seen many ongoing conversations and investigations. However, this work must also stall ahead of National Curriculum and the work currently in progress in the area of Middle Schools Review.

With respect to personal student data management we have brought a period of research and discussions to a successful conclusion with the recent investment in Scholaris. This product is initially being utilised as a parent portal through which we can update family and student details.

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