Learning how to learn, promoting character and/or concentrating on signature strengths: developing depth and breadth within a learning community

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This workshop will examine the similarities and differences between the virtues identified by Peterson and Seligman and the learning dispositions identified in the frameworks developed by Claxton, Perkins and Costa. We will argue that a focus on learning character requires a recognition that many of the 24 virtues interact with learning dispositions to develop young people who know how to learn and also what it means to be a person of virtuous character. This learning character, which draws together virtues, dispositions and ways of thinking, is best nurtured through educational learning communities. We recommend that all students be given opportunities to develop across all strengths and dispositions as they pursue their individual interests and passions.

Many schools today recognise the need to establish learning communities with an emphasis on learning about learning as well as developing disciplinary ways of knowing. Using frameworks adopted from Costa and Kallick (2000), Perkins (2009; 1995) and Claxton (2013; 2002; Claxton, Chambers, Powell and Lucas, 2011), teachers aim to build students' capacity to learn across a range of dispositions. While students have strengths and weaknesses as learners, all students are encouraged to build their capacity across the spectrum of learning dispositions.

A second popular theoretical framework for shaping teaching and learning is adopted from the theoretical work of Peterson and Seligman (2004) identifying 24 character virtues which students demonstrate in unique combinations. This approach recommends that teachers focus on students' signature strengths rather than areas of weakness. Similarly, Ken Robinson (2014; 2009) argues that people need to find their 'element' and should be encouraged to pursue these passions.

Many schools use a combination of these approaches to inform their vision and subsequent practice. In addition, most school vision statements and documents communicate an interest in developing "character" more generally. But in drawing together these different frameworks, certain theoretical and practical tensions become evident which this workshop aims to identify and resolve.

What characteristics constitute the "character" we hope our students develop? Are these characteristics innate personal qualities that, once identified, direct the individual teaching program for each student? How are these characteristics related to learning dispositions and thinking skills? The interplay between virtues, thinking and habits of mind will be discussed drawing on the framework developed by Tom Wright in "Virtue Reborn" (2010). Virtues, according to Wright, are not innate characteristics, but are evident in habits formed over long periods of time and through the renewing of the mind.

We suggest that the implementation of such a program requires the transformation of the culture of every member in the school to envisage learning in a way that changes classroom practice. This is the undertaking that defines the whole approach to learning at St Luke's Grammar School, a stand-alone school which is meeting the challenges of preparing students in the 21st Century for a constantly changing world. This workshop will look at how theory is turned into practice at our school and will present data relating to students' learning outcomes.

The Journey towards Learning@St Luke's

St Luke's Grammar School is an independent K – 12 Anglican school situated on the northern beaches of Sydney. The northern beaches area is home to around 250 000 people with an average income 25% higher than the rest of the state. It is an area blessed with beautiful beaches, national parks, lakes and lagoons – and many people on the northern beaches spend time making the most of these natural wonders. Mountain biking, surfing, sailing, boating, fishing and swimming feature highly on most people's list of weekend activities. Within our local community outdoor activities, healthy living and leisure time are significant aspects of our laid-back culture

This can present challenges for schools that are often seen to be promoting the antithesis of this idyllic lifestyle. School activities are typically indoors, require students to be sedentary for much of the time and complete set tasks in the form of class work and homework.

Furthermore, schools with an academic focus challenge this laid-back culture, encouraging students to prioritise the learning of English, mathematics and science rather than surfing, online games and other recreational activities. Historically, the school has had difficulty confronting the surrounding laid-back culture and struggled to present in an effective manner an alternative vision of the good life that identifies learning as an activity which can be fulfilling, providing students with a sense of purpose and build character. In any cultural context, the vision for learning needs to resonate with the school community, addressing concerns and providing a framework within which parents, staff and students can work together towards achieving the educational goals to which they aspire. On the northern beaches of Sydney, articulating such a vision has proved to be a significant challenge for St Luke's Grammar School which aspires to be a school with a strong academic focus.

In 2006, the school leadership team were aware of a complacency concerning the academic progress of students, particularly those students at the top end who were underperforming. The reputation of the school did not rest on its academic results; instead, parents chose St Luke's Grammar School for reasons associated with the experience of being at the school associated with the strong pastoral care program and the opportunities to engage in excursions and trips overseas. Parents in the Junior School whose aspirations for their children were specifically academic tended to withdraw their children at the end of Year 6 to attend other schools in the area with a stronger reputation for academic success. There appeared to be a lack of confidence in the Senior School's capacity to provide students with a high level, academically rigorous education.

The disappointing academic results had begun to impact on enrolments. Many students simply did not aspire to be academically successful, reflecting the values of their parents who had become successful without tertiary education. Furthermore, staff were aware of this general attitude and had adjusted their expectations accordingly - "You can't expect more, they are northern beaches kids." But there was a growing number of parents who wanted a local school that could deliver strong academic results.

The past ten years has seen a concerted effort to promote a deeper commitment amongst parents and students to achieving higher levels of academic success. At the same time, the school has remained wary of becoming a school obsessed with results, in which students feel an undue pressure to perform on high-stakes examinations. Alongside this push to improve the academic standards, the school leadership have endeavoured to honour the school's long history of being a caring school with a strong pastoral care program.

In 2007, the school implemented a program of differentiation training for staff which continued through until 2012. The intention of this change program was to lift academic results

2

and to change the attitudes of staff regarding student potential. Although the buy-in from staff was low, there was an improvement in results. This improvement was most likely due to brighter students being stretched by the differentiated curriculum coupled with an ongoing analysis of final year results.

Without the push provided by the training programs, however, the enthusiasm for adopting much of this program waned amongst staff. Despite the improved results, concerns remained about the preparedness of students for learning at university and the degree to which students were ready to be lifelong learners. The impression in Sydney is that many independent schools are very good at getting students into university. However, many students from independent schools struggle with the challenges of learning independently at university. While they were trained at school to do well in examinations, these students didn't have the learning capacities required for learning later in life.

The question in front of the school leadership, therefore, was no longer how to raise academic standards, but how to raise students' capacity to learn. While schools have talked a lot about 21st Century learning, lifelong learning and learning about learning, vision statements and school goals focused on these ideas have not necessarily included practical ways of changing what happens in the classroom.

Prior to taking up the position as Head at St Luke's Grammar School, the principal had some experience in a previous school implementing Art Costa's "Habits of Mind" framework. In that school it had been linked to the pastoral programs with a focus on what character strengths young people needed to develop which would make them more successful learners. However, the attempt to implement the Habits of Mind at the previous school was not successful. What stopped staff from being enthusiastic about this approach? Was it perhaps the failure to link the model with classroom practice, and embody the framework within the culture of the school? It seemed that learning, character and pastoral care were linked but what was needed was a framework that might bring them together.

The desired framework for St Luke's Grammar School would need to be practical and flexible enough to be incorporated in a tailored way to our context. Such frameworks such as Visible Thinking appeared too rigid for where our teachers were; any such framework needed to give teachers an opportunity to shape it and make it their own. While the emphasis on habits of thinking and making such thinking visible differ in the dispositions they focus on, both approaches, however, attempt to achieve a similar goal of giving students ways to improve their capacity to learn. In 2013, the principal took study leave to examine these different frameworks to find a unified way of doing learning and talking about learning which addressed the problem of students being passive learners, focused on achieving qualifications rather than learning and provided teachers with the flexibility to use this approach and make it work for them. As part of this research, the principal read *Building Learning Power* (Claxton, 2002) and *The Learning Powered School* (Claxton, Chambers and Lucas, 2011). The framework of Building Learning Power brought together many of the concerns that the leadership team had identified and could be adapted to suit our particular context. It was a model that could create learning experiences that weren't just academic but could prepare students for life. We have taken this approach, adapted it to our context, and called it Learning@St Luke's.

The Learning@St Luke's model currently being implemented fits within the body of approaches to education described by Claxton as "expansive education" (Lucas, Claxton and Spencer, 2013). Drawing on Yrjö Engeström's notion of "learning by expanding" (Engeström, 1987), Lucas, Claxton and Spencer identify many current approaches to education which seek to do four things. Expansive approaches to education adopt goals that extend beyond conventional achievement on examinations, expand on our notions of intelligence and the kinds of dispositions that will enable young

people to succeed at school and throughout their lives, see learning as something which takes place in many different contexts as well as the classroom and recognise that teachers also have the capacity to be ongoing, enthusiastic learners as well. There are many expansive approaches currently being implemented across different countries using a range of conceptual frameworks within which to describe the process of learning and associated ideas about intelligence, mindsets and culture. They include Project Zero run through Harvard University (Ritchhart, Church and Morrison, 2011), Art Costa's Habits of Mind framework (Costa and Kallick, 2002), P21 (Partnership for 21st century skills) (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011) and approaches focused on teaching philosophy to young children.

Building Learning Power
The model of expansive education that has been reshaped at St Luke's Grammar School is Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power (2002; Claxton, Chambers, Powell and Lucas, 2011) which identifies a range of learning dispositions that contribute to students' capacity to learn across the curriculum. It represents an attempt to maintain a dual focus each lesson on learning how to learn as well as learning how to make sense of the existing curriculum. The model identifies a range of learning dispositions that contribute to students' capacity to learn across the curriculum. As students learn about geography, science and mathematics, students are also being taught explicitly how they can become more powerful learners.

Claxton et al. (2011) describe the "supple learning mind" as one which is able to be **reflective**, **resourceful** and **resilient** and has the capacity to learn in social contexts (strong in "**reciprocity**"). In developing this approach to describing learning they suggest that the basic vocabulary of learning needs to be usable – neither too much nor too little information for teachers to generate ideas on how to change their practice. The model, therefore, begins with the four Rs, but underneath each "R" are four or five "finer-

grain learning capacities" (p40). **Reflectiveness** describes the strategic and self-managing aspects of learning and is subdivided into Planning, Revising, Distilling and Meta-learning. **Resourcefulness** is the cognitive category and includes Questioning, Making Links, Imagining, Reasoning and Capitalising. **Resilience** refers to the emotional engagement with the content a student is learning and includes Absorption, Managing Distractions, Noticing and Persevering. Finally, **Reciprocity** is the heading for the social side of learning and includes Interdependence, Collaboration, Listening/Empathy and Imitation.

Developing a language for talking about learning is a critical step towards developing a culture of learning amongst students and staff. The four categories for thinking about learning and their respective learning capacities have given students across the school from Kindergarten through to Year 12 a way of describing their own learning and reflecting on how they can strengthen their learning capacity. Furthermore, the structuring of this language into categories and sub-categories has enabled staff and students to navigate their way around a conceptual space describing learning at different levels of detail.

This raises a more general question for school leaders to reflect on. How do you take a model and use it in such a way that you and your school community can own it? Any model that schools adopt needs to be conducive to a re-imagining of what it might look like in each school's unique context with its particular community: the shift from concept to reality of the model has to support the vision of the school.

The vision of St Luke's Grammar School
As an Anglican school, whose ethos is specifically Christian our vision for our students reflects our motto, "Christ our Light," and our mission, "Equipping students to make a difference in the world". Our vision is that students become less selfish, more compassionate, better at managing relationships, more able to act ethically in the

workplace, humble, gracious and kind. It is a vision focused on character formation as well as strengthening students' capacity to make a difference. Both character and competency, therefore, are important, and any over-arching framework for learning needs to address the development of both.

One of the attractive aspects of Building Learning Power was its flexibility. Different schools across the world have developed their own language drawing on the model initially developed by Claxton (2002). They have restructured the 4 Rs, added in new Rs (such as Respect) and replaced various learning dispositions with other ideas identified by each school as valuable for prompting discussion amongst staff and students. We needed to ask ourselves the question - how do we make this model our own? How do we link it to the ethos of our school?

Restoration – a 5th R
Learning@St Luke's is based on Building Learning Power but it is also built upon a distinctly Christian understanding of the future. It seeks to make use of Aristotle's concept of virtue and character development by identifying distinctly Christian virtues that staff and students will need in order to engage effectively in a pluralistic, complex and rapidly changing world. Currently we are in the process of reflecting on how developing learning character might become the defining feature of our educational activity. This has seen the inclusion of a 5th R, **Restoration** which sits as a foundation upon which our emphasis on learning dispositions is constructed.

Restoration captures the Christian hope that one day the oppressed will be set free, the sick healed and creation will be renewed. Our participation in this restored creation will be characterised by specific virtues identified by St Paul and other writers of the New Testament. These include faith, hope, love, kindness, gentleness, self-control, patience, joy and many others. They differ markedly from Aristotle's cardinal virtues of courage, justice, temperance and prudence, but they

are described using the same framework that Aristotle developed to explain how these virtues could be developed. In Learning@St Luke's we have summarised the character of this restored world in four virtues – grace, compassion, humility and justice. While each of these four virtues are associated with key biblical themes they are also virtues more widely acknowledged as essential virtues for humanity if we are to work together to address the challenges of the coming century.

One of the questions that our model raises is how will these different competencies and virtues interact with one another? Even within the framework of Building Learning Power, the identified learning competencies do not fall neatly into a conceptual model that contribute equally to the development of learning power. They overlap with one another, sometimes describing similar aspects of learning with some being clearly more fundamental to students' development of learning power than others (such as Meta-Learning – that capacity of students to reflect on their own learning and identify areas of strength and areas of weakness as well as strategies for building up these strengths). The model is an attempt to bring together the findings of many different theoretical frameworks to promote thinking about learning within schools. It is an eclectic model in this regard, drawing ideas from a range of research programs. Furthermore, the dichotomy of competence versus character is not clearly evident in the Building Learning Power framework. All of the dispositions can be described as competencies, but some can equally be thought of as character traits (such as perseverance, interdependence, empathy and listening). We suggest that our goal should be the development of *learning character* which incorporates these character traits, but is also supported by positive learning habits such as questioning, reasoning, revising and planning.

As indicated earlier, our approach includes a 5th R which provides a foundation that informs the development of learning character. Strengthening a student's learning character represents the goal of Learning@St Luke's

through an explicit focus on certain competencies and character traits. How, then, might we describe the interplay between the additional four distinctly character traits of grace, compassion, humility and justice and our understanding of learning competencies?

Each of the learning dispositions lies on a spectrum between habits and virtues, with the learning dispositions of Claxton's original model tending towards the habits end of this spectrum. Alongside these dispositions, however, there exist virtues which are associated with the development of learning character. In an article appearing in the New York Times, Laszlo Bock from Google identified humility as a necessary fundamental virtue if someone is to be a lifelong learner (NY Times, 2014). Claxton (2012) identifies a family of character traits such as kindness, honesty and tolerance (which he places under the broader heading of "grace") as virtues that schools should consider promoting alongside learning dispositions (ssatuk.co.uk, 2015). Our approach sees virtues as foundational, informing our approach to developing different aspects of learning character.

Virtues grow out of the habits that we form over a long period of time (Wright, 2010). Peterson and Seligman (2004) set up a similar three-level hierarchy which places virtues at the apex. They argue that virtues are formed from different character strengths: these in turn are built up by *situational themes* – "specific habits that lead people to manifest given character strengths in given situations" (p. 14, Peterson and Seligman, 2004). In both Wright's framework developed from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Peterson and Seligman's model, the development of virtues begins with habits that, over time, lead to the establishment of certain character strengths which are associated with particular virtues. Hence, for each of the learning competencies identified in Claxton's *Building Learning Power*, we ask the question – how can this habit or character trait lead to the formation of virtuous character shaped by grace, compassion, humility and justice? In the example of questioning we can demonstrate

intellectual humility, recognising that our own view of the world can be shaped by the perspectives of others. We can query how different experiences either reinforce or challenge patterns of inequity and injustice in the wider world. Finally, as we ask questions, we either strengthen our sense of demanding what is rightfully ours or find ways of understanding our world to better serve those around us and be more effective stewards of the world's resources, acting from a position of grace rather than selfish ambition.

Within each competency, we can find deeper character traits that can be strengthened through these habits. But the habits themselves can serve multiple masters and as educators we need to be constantly asking the question regarding character – what virtues and character traits are we building up through the competencies and habits of our classrooms? As we consider how best to reflect on our practice, we need to return time and again to this question of character formation.

Within this discussion, there lies another question only partially answered: how do we develop virtues? What approach should we take to developing the character of our students in accordance with this vision of the future characterised by grace, compassion, humility and justice? What we see in discussions surrounding the development of character is that there are two possible ways to approach the formation of character. The first is to identify the character strengths that are important to a particular community and to put into place strategies for developing these character strengths. The second is to provide a context within which the character strengths of young people are encouraged to grow. These alternative perspectives are described on the Via Character website (2015) using two metaphors for teaching – one is of moulding people like clay, and the second is acting like a gardener nurturing the seeds of character to grow.

Identifying strengths or developing the whole person

The Character Strengths approach suggests that the best way to educate young people is to build on existing strengths, making use of the gardening metaphor. The intention is to identify the character strengths to concentrate on, building up different strengths in different students. In contrast to this approach of "playing to one's strengths" the approach of Building Learning Power and, therefore, Learning@St Luke's, views each of the dispositions as appropriate to promote with all students. Claxton et al. (2011) describe these dispositions as muscles which need to be exercised individually, but all contribute to the development of powerful learning. Similarly, we are committed to building compassion, justice, grace and humility in all of our students.

It is central to Learning@St Luke's that students be developed both as conscious, deliberate learners and young people of character who are prepared for life beyond school. All students are encouraged to become better collaborators and better at learning independently. All students have opportunities to develop their capacity to think logically and all students are encouraged to imagine new possibilities. The use of the fitness metaphor is helpful in planning and delivery of the model.

"BLP uses our knowledge of learning and the mind to create a coherent picture of the kinds of mental agility and emotional stamina the good learner has, and to make sure that schools give all these aspects the work-outs they need in order to develop" (Claxton, 2002, p.14).

"We often use the analogy of a fitness coach in a gym. Such coaches are able to construct broad, balanced and effective exercise regimes that will help people get fitter, because they have a model of what the different ingredients are that go to make up 'fitness'….They can get us to work on all those things, and gradually, in concert, they add up to improved fitness." (Claxton et al., 2011, p.45).

In fact, it is the same fitness metaphor which is adopted by Tom Wright (2010) to describe the process of character formation through habits of practice.

"Working on one or two (muscles) isn't enough: there's no point having super-fit legs while the rest of the body is flabby, for example, ….In the same way a complete and flourishing human being needs all the basic strengths of character …The "virtues" are the different strengths of character which together contribute to someone becoming a fully flourishing human being." (Wright, 2010, Chapter 2, section 3).

The activities that students engage in at St Luke's, therefore, both inside and outside the classroom, are designed to promote the development of habits, dispositions, ways of acting and thinking that can become character-forming over time. We suggest that all students should have opportunities to build their learning character whether they (or us) identify these characteristics as strengths or weaknesses. Furthermore, we argue that the virtues of compassion, grace, humility and justice should be nurtured, promoted and evident within every classroom across our school. While students might pursue their own individual interests within different areas of the curriculum and develop expertise specific to their interests (what might be described as finding their "element" by Sir Ken Robinson (Robinson and Aronica, 2009)) all students are encouraged to become more powerful learners and people committed to the project of restoring a broken world.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) make a similar case for the necessary development of virtues. They suggest that "good character" requires the development of each of the six virtues they identify from a range of cultural, spiritual and ethical traditions. But the point of difference is evident at the second level in the hierarchy – that of character strengths. Whereas Peterson and Seligman and their colleagues (2015) argue that we should cultivate the "signature strengths" of young people, our approach challenges us as teachers to give time to

promoting each of the different elements of learning character, building up the learning capacity of each student irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses.

Why we developed this approach to learning

In recent years, the school has achieved some success delivering results that provided students with a wider range of tertiary options when they left school. However, the increasing inter-connectedness across the globe coupled with rapid changes in technology, industry and global economies, present new challenges and opportunities for young people. The increasing outsourcing of different jobs and the globalisation of different industries means that in the future young people will need to be innovators (constructing new ways of knowing and doing) to replace existing ways and at a rapidly accelerating rate. Expertise limited to one device, technology or way of thinking and doing will no longer serve individuals over the course of their working life. Young people will need to be flexible, constantly learning new ways to function in a globalised workforce and networked society. This capacity to appropriate new ways of thinking and doing remains a fundamental outcome of any approach to 21st Century learning.

We know that students will need the capacity to keep on learning when they leave school. By strengthening their capacity to learn, to be flexible in their thinking and make sense of new ways of understanding the world, students will be prepared for a lifetime of change; new technologies, new challenges and new ideas.

How the model has been and is being implemented in the school

The implementation of Learning@St Luke's has involved a significant process of change across the whole school. In the next section we will provide an overview of how we have implemented this change beginning with the initial idea for change and the gradual realisation of this idea over a two-year period. Some of the key aspects of this change

process have included developing a road map for implementation and deciding when to pivot or persevere, remaining on task through dialogue with a critical friend, harnessing the energy of change agents, responding to the concerns of staff who feel there is not enough time to be innovative and seeking to develop appropriate data to assess the impact of the change.

Having identified Building Learning Power as a framework that was sufficiently comprehensive, and at the same time flexible, the principal discussed these ideas with both the Executive team and members of staff letting them know that we as a school needed to reshape our practice so that students were empowered as learners, not just test-takers. This vision was shared with the School Council identifying the need to employ someone to be the driver of this innovation - a champion for the cause who could operate with the full backing of the principal. A working party was established that included an external expert who could be a critical friend. This required the Council to commit funds to the appointment of a Dean of Professional Development and Learning and invite Simon Breakspear to be this critical friend.

Establishing a working party
At the end of 2013 the working party began to meet. It consisted of senior staff (Head of Junior School, Assistant Head of Junior School, Dean of Professional Learning, Deputy Curriculum and the Principal), with a high level of buy-in. This team of committed individuals has met regularly with Simon to initially plan the implementation strategy, to reflect on progress, to plan the next steps in order to provide and develop strategies for encouraging this change in classrooms. The model of change pursued has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary, encouraging staff to try teaching in a different way. Staff members have been encouraged to take small steps initially, with minimal expectations of staff in the first two terms.

One of the tasks of the working party was to develop a road map for change. This road map

was developed from a model that identified the different elements required to bring about change without specifying the order in which these elements needed to be implemented. The first task was to write a case for change and articulate a clear vision of the future.

The working party also quickly recognised the need to invite two other groups of stakeholders to join the conversation – students and parents. A Student Learning Group was established which has met twice a term since the middle of 2014 to receive feedback from interested students. Their input has led to innovations being tested and implemented at different points along the way.

While students continue to learn about learning in their classes, the working party also recognised the need to provide all students with some additional time to reflect on the different learning dispositions. Since the beginning of 2015, each fortnight students engage in a twenty minute discussion relating to one of the learning dispositions. Each discussion is designed to explain what each of the learning dispositions entails, some discussion of what it looks like in the classroom and outside the classroom, and how each of the learning dispositions relates to the overarching character framework of restoration.

Engaging the community
As part of the process of implementation parents were invited to participate in a forum outlining the learning framework the school would be establishing. At this forum, parents were provided with the case for change and what parents could be doing to support their children to grow as learners. This forum was run by Simon Breakspear. In addition to this forum, the Dean of Professional Development and Learning continues to write fortnightly articles for the school newsletter aimed at informing parents about the different learning dispositions and ways in which they can be supporting the learning of their children at home. At every public event mention is made of the learning dispositions students have been developing through different activities

and the need to remain focused on learning across the curriculum.

Professional development of staff
The most significant component of the Learning@St Luke's change model, however, relates to the professional learning of staff. Research suggests that the professional development of staff is the most significant factor leading to improvements in student outcomes (Robinson, 2011). Since the beginning of this process of change, we have endeavoured to create a culture of capacity building rather than accountability amongst staff (Fullan, 2014). Lucas, Claxton and Spencer (2013) agree that an emphasis on capacity building rather than accountability is critical to the success of expansive approaches to education. Schools need to reflect the same expansive approach to education in the culture of teaching and learning that is established within the school. They describe this interweaving of learning model and learning culture in the following way.

"For expansive approaches to work, schools must recognise the need to be expansive in their culture, as well as in their approach to teaching and learning, by allowing teachers to try new approaches and test out what works in the classroom. Where teachers are given permission to experiment and be researchers, as well as teachers … schools have noticed 'spectacular' improvements in engagement." (p. 178, Lucas, Claxton and Spencer, 2013)

A critical element in the building up of such a culture has been the establishment of Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) to provide all staff with opportunities to learn from one another (Du Four and Eaker, 1998). By doing so, we have encouraged all staff to travel the same journey that students are encouraged to travel towards being people defined by a certain character concerning learning.

At St Luke's Grammar School, there has been an existing expectation that all staff will be involved in professional development run by

the school. In the past these sessions have brought in a wide range of presenters addressing many different aspects of teaching practice. In 2014 all internal professional development was focused on providing staff with opportunities to think about how they could make changes in their classroom to strengthen the students' capacity to learn. At the first session on the first day of the year, the Principal again spoke about the introduction of Learning@St Luke's and the Dean of Professional Development and the Assistant Head of Junior School also set out the rationale for introducing this approach as well as looking at how it might appear in practice. This was a critical step, reinforcing the message that all staff would be required to participate in this process of change.

Professional development sessions for the whole school have been structured to provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences with the staff and for the sharing of additional ideas about implementing approaches designed to strengthen the learning of students. This included teachers working on Learning Ladders to articulate what each disposition might look like at a basic to advanced level. Students were encouraged to rate themselves on a particular disposition and to see how they might grow.

At the beginning of Term 2, staff explored how the reporting of students' progress could be done using the language of learning. Staff were encouraged, but not obligated, to use the language of learning dispositions in their formal report comments to parents at half year. Approximately fifty per cent of the staff successfully incorporated comments about students' growing capacity to learn.

Teachers commented that the language gave them a way to give meaningful feedback to students and parents.

During the fourth term, whole school professional development sessions were replaced with optional involvement in Professional Learning Groups. About one third of the staff opted to join one of these groups.

During the course of the term each group had an opportunity to reflect on a reading relating to the "teacher's palette" (Claxton, 2002) – that is, the different ways in which teachers could be encouraging students to develop into powerful learners through commentating, orchestrating, explaining and modelling learning in the classroom.

The process of building up the capacity of staff was fundamental to the implementation of this model. Using Michael Fullan's terminology, the most important resource at a school's disposal is its human capital (Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). During 2014, all professional learning was conducted as whole-school events with the whole staff receiving input from members of the Learning@St Luke's working party. However, in 2015 a different model of professional learning has been introduced which is focused around professional learning groups. The rationale for establishing professional learning groups was developed from a range of theoretical approaches including Fullan's notion of human capital, DuFour and Eaker's guidelines for establishing professional learning groups and Tom Wright's *Virtue Reborn*.

In his 2014 book *The Principal*, Fullan expands on this idea of human capital to suggest that the broader construct of professional capital has three separate components – human capital, decisional capital and social capital. Human capital refers to developing the skills that teachers have. Much of our professional development program has been designed to develop these skills. But there have been elements of this change process designed to build up social and decisional capital as well. Social Capital refers to the capacity of the group to support a common cause among the staff at the school (Fullan, 2014). It is enhanced through building interpersonal trust, a sharing of ideas, internal accountability amongst peers and teachers learning from each other what works best. The sharing of ideas throughout the first year of implementation has been a significant aspect of the approach to achieving change. Building social capital has also been a significant

aspect of the second year of implementation during which all staff have been involved in professional learning groups.

Finally, Fullan refers to decisional capital. Are teachers in the school sufficiently resourced to make good use of the human and social capital within the school? To resource teachers, a number of different forums have been established for staff to share ideas. As well as the professional learning groups that have been established this year, a fortnightly session for sharing ideas about learning has been established. We have set up a website for staff to share resources and ideas that they have come across through their external professional development. Minutes from each of the professional learning groups are shared online and each professional learning group has been given the task of observing each other's lessons.

Resourcing teachers
At each step along the way, teachers have been empowered to make decisions about what this model might look like in their classrooms. While there have been moments of frustration for some staff who would prefer someone to tell them what they should do and what it will look like, we have continued to present them with principles and ideas which they can then implement according to their pedagogical needs and specific contexts. The process by which teachers have been encouraged to implement this model, however, has been designed to build up decisional capital amongst teachers.

As Fullan argues, "(success is) …a function of the work of principals, themselves acting as lead learners, who ensure that the group focuses on a small number of key elements: specific goals for students, data that enable clear diagnosis of individual learning needs; instructional practices that address those learning needs; and teachers learning from each other, monitoring overall progress and making adjustments accordingly. All of this is carried out in a developmental climate (as distinct from a judgmental one) with norms of

transparency within and external to the school." (p. 63)

Fullan's work has been foundational to the implementation process as has the work of DuFour and Eaker (1998) who describe a number of strategies for transforming the culture of a school. Amongst these are:

a) Identifying, modelling, promoting and protecting shared values.
b) Bringing teachers together to reflect on the practices in the school and to evaluate new concepts and ideas.
c) Encouraging members of the culture to tell a new story – the culture in a school being shaped by the stories that we tell about what we do.

The establishment of professional learning groups within the school has enabled staff to undertake professional reading to inform their understanding of the values that underlie the Learning@St Luke's model. The groups were constructed so that within each group there were champions of this change who model best practice, protect the shared values of the school regarding learning and promote further thought and reflection on how staff can "get on board" with the tide of change.

Each PLG meeting has been framed around two tasks – reflecting on a reading and discussing current approaches to practice. The establishment of a habit of professional reading has been a key goal set as part of the process of change. Through the PLG meetings the reflections on these readings have given staff moments where they have realised "This does make sense" and have understood the rationale for the change across the school. These professional conversations amongst staff have been significant in arguing the case for change and reflecting on current practice.

The whole process of learning and character formation that we hope to promote amongst our students is the same process that we hope to promote amongst our staff. The intention is that the whole school will be a community of learners and this will promote not just the

rhetoric of being lifelong learners but be an example of it in practice.

Within the school community we have attempted to inform staff by promoting the reading of texts which draw on the ideas of the broader academic community and influence the stories we tell each other. As DuFour and Eaker (1998) argue, the stories we tell each other have a profound impact on our thinking about learning. We have provided forums in which stories that focus on the possibilities associated with new ways of thinking and doing are shared and given precedence over other stories that reinforce frustrations and feelings of resentment. Through the Professional Learning Groups all staff observe each other's lessons and provide each other with feedback. These practices have changed and reinforce what we value as good practice in teaching and learning. Teachers too must be resilient, resourceful, reflective and relationally competent in terms of their learning.

The lack of a more didactic approach to the implementation of the model has caused some frustration for staff. However, an open-ended approach provides them with freedom to make choices about their own situation. It does not suggest that "anything goes" – rather, through readings, through conversations with each other and through sharing their experiences more widely, each staff member understands the habits which lead to equipping the students as learners and as young people of character will make them ready to take their place in the world.

Where are we up to?

One of our goals initially in the process of implementation was to see the language being used by students and staff to describe and reflect upon learning happening in the school. Every classroom has posters reminding students and staff about the different learning dispositions. Staff members have been encouraged to use the language when reporting on student progress, and shape

lessons around explicitly identified learning dispositions.

The degree of implementation of the language in teacher talk and student reflection is evident in the responses that teachers received from students towards the end of 2014. As teachers introduced the learning activities and described the learning dispositions that they would be concentrating on strengthening an audible groan was evident from students in the senior classes. Students complained about hearing about "collaboration again" or revisiting one of the other learning dispositions. Teachers have had to be careful about the way in which they describe different learning dispositions to overcome this initial reaction from students that they have heard it all before. Students have also needed to be convinced that these different ways of thinking about learning need to be revised and strengthened through regular practice across different areas of the curriculum.

The 5 Rs which constitute our model of learning appear to have assisted students and staff to remember and use the learning framework as a way of reshaping teacher practice and supporting the process of reflecting on learning. We have found that students find the language of the 5 Rs easy to use to describe their learning and they use the language of the different dispositions when reflecting on their own learning. During the recent term, the Dean of Professional Development has met with each of the Tutors who are facilitating discussions about the different dispositions each fortnight. The feedback from the Tutors has indicated that students understand each of the different learning dispositions and what they might look like in the classroom. Teachers are having conversations with students about their learning across the curriculum and this common language has facilitated the sharing of ideas about how students can become better learners.

This language is also evident in our reports which now provide parents with a snapshot of their child's current learning capacity across

the range of dispositions as well as reporting on their areas of development as learners and how they can continue to build their learning power. For each subject in the Senior School and each class in the Junior School, students are assessed by their teacher across eight different measures of learning capacity. In addition to these, staff also comment on students' progress as a learner and provide guidance on how each student can continue to grow.

Within the classroom, there has also been a slowly evolving pedagogy focused on learning how to learn as well as what to learn. This change in classroom practice is evident in teachers being prepared to give students more choice in the classroom, providing an environment where failure is seen as normal, giving students the freedom to take risks and try new ways of learning. At the beginning of the most recent term, teachers reported their goals for the coming semester. These included "focusing on assisting students to be more resourceful", "giving students greater responsibility for their own learning", "getting students to identify for themselves where they are struggling and how they can improve in terms of their own learning", "allowing students to discover what they need to learn", "to encourage students to be more resilient, take risks and accept personal challenges", "provide students with time to reflect on their learning at the end of each lesson". While it is too early to know if staff believe they have achieved these goals, the intent to change practice is evident. Data will be presented later which suggests that such changes are beginning to take place, with students being able to identify the different learning dispositions promoted in different classrooms.

While students have been encouraged to take risks, teachers have also been encouraged to take risks. Each teacher has been required to observe other teachers teaching "unsafe" lessons – lessons which involve risk, trying new things, new ways of encouraging learning and using new technologies, rather than "safe" lessons. Observations have shifted from being a tool of accountability to ensure members of

staff are meeting minimum standards to being a process that supports the development of teacher practice.

Data collected from student surveys conducted within the Senior School reveal that these changes are not evident in all classrooms, nor are they evident in the practice of all teachers (see Appendix One). However, this data does suggest that there is a growing majority of teachers within the school across different faculties who are starting to make changes in their practice which promote the development of a wide range of learning dispositions. Furthermore, within a number of different classes, students are able to recognise that certain character traits are being promoted by staff and other students in certain classes. The plan is to survey students every semester to track the changes in teacher practice across the school.

What are the challenges moving forward?

The working group continues to reflect on how to maintain the momentum behind this process of change that currently exists amongst staff, students and the wider school community. Discussions with staff reveal a widespread acceptance of the need for change and the value of strengthening students' learning capacity across the curriculum. However, while there is general agreement about the need for change, there also exist concerns amongst staff regarding the time commitment required to bring about such change. The working group has discussed a range of strategies for keeping learning power as the primary focus of teachers across the school. These include maintaining a focus on professional reflection and development, shifting the narrative away from issues of "time" to a narrative focused on identifying what aspects of teaching are "energising", using social media to promote change, moving from a recognition of the learning dispositions to a focus on students becoming intentional learners and collecting and sharing micro-practices amongst teachers.

The first challenge is to sustain the engagement of members of staff in personal reflection and professional discussions about learning. As the group has reflected on the professional learning of staff in 2015, it is clear that one of the major drivers of change has been teachers' involvement in professional learning groups. Through the sharing of readings, learning conversations and classroom observations associated with the professional learning group meetings all staff across the school have been given the time to reflect on their practice and be encouraged by their colleagues. Hattie (2012) identifies this as one of the most effective strategies for impacting student learning. Having established an expectation (what you might call a habit) amongst staff of meeting in small groups to reflect on their practice, in 2016 and 2017 these groups will be maintained using a similar approach of providing a loose agenda which encourages staff to reflect on an educational reading and reflect and share ideas about their practice.

The second challenge the working party recognises amongst staff is the perception that there isn't enough time to embrace change. One possible strategy for responding to this challenge is to replace gradually the "time" narrative with an "energy" narrative. The "time" narrative is often communicated by members of staff who perceive additional activities associated with any process of change (such as reading about new areas of research, restructuring lessons and reflecting on practice) as burdensome and an unnecessary add-on to their teaching and other associated expectations. This narrative begins with the statement that teachers are time-poor and are already stretched by the everyday demands placed upon them: there is a limit to what each teacher can do and currently teachers are close to reaching this limit. The "time" narrative inevitably leads to the conclusion that it would be impossible to expect members of staff to consider changing practice at this point in time when they are so busy. Metaphorically, there exists a balance sheet or ledger with time as the currency. On one side of the ledger is available time (number of hours per week) and

on the other side sit the various tasks and expectations identified in terms of how much time each task is expected to take.

What will be necessary moving forward is to replace this narrative with a narrative focused on "energy". Rather than consider how much time they have or haven't, teachers will be encouraged to describe what they do in terms of how different tasks have the capacity to energise them - to look for ways to be energised by what they do rather than feeling drained. An obvious example of gaining energy from effort is when teachers teach a class that has students absorbed in learning, asking questions, engaged and able to reflect and identify what they have been learning. Such classes are energising rather than draining. Teachers with a passion for inspiring learning feel energised when they can "see" the learning in their classroom. One way, therefore, to be energised is to put more time into lesson preparation rather than less so that the learning activities are genuinely engaging. Second, teachers should be encouraged to find ways to "see" the learning that is taking place as this is energising. Third, becoming aware of our own learning and development as teachers has the potential to energise, igniting a desire to continue improving and finding new ways of achieving the goal of inspiring learning in every classroom.

This goal of shifting the narrative has led to the establishment of "PowerUp" sessions each fortnight, for members of staff to share their ideas with one another. Within the professional learning groups, the agenda in 2016 moving forward will ask staff to share their experiences, identifying what energises them in teaching, and share ways to be energised by what they as teachers do every day.

The third challenge, closely related to this second challenge, is finding ways to engage the small number of teachers who remain unconvinced about the value of investing energy in changing practice. In responding to this challenge, the working party intend to make use of various mechanisms for leveraging online sharing amongst staff to

change perceptions of "the way we do things around here". Online forums which allow teachers to see what other teachers are thinking and doing as they discuss different strategies currently being used in their classrooms allow all teachers to see what is happening in other classrooms. Sharing reports which indicate the progress each group has made towards achieving goals is another way of potentially using social media to promote change.

Fourth, as the culture of the school evolves, the working party believes that the time is right to move towards the more ambitious goal of using the shared language that has been appropriated across the school to promote intentional learning within each classroom. Currently, evidence collected from students, tutors and teachers suggests that the language is known, embedded in classroom conversations (in some classes more than others) and being used by students to describe their own learning. The next goal is to encourage students to be intentional in deciding how they will learn in different contexts, drawing on their understanding of learning dispositions and considering how they can independently develop their learning capacity and character. To achieve this goal, the working party intends to focus on how to support teachers' framing of lessons and promoting student self-reflection each lesson. The strategy moving forward will build on current practices in the school. All staff will be asked to share in a public online forum how they are currently framing lessons to make learning intentions clear, providing choice for students, giving opportunities for students to develop their own strategies for learning and assisting students to reflect on their own learning. Over the rest of this year, the focus will be on providing teachers with tools and strategies that will promote intentionality amongst students in every classroom.

These are the challenges for staff currently employed at St Luke's Grammar School. However, the working party is also conscious of the need to keep on inducting new staff and introducing new students to what it means to teach and learn at St Luke's Grammar School. The development of an appropriate induction program, as well as a suitable introduction for new students will be an area of focus moving into 2016.

From the preceding discussion it should be clear that St Luke's Grammar School is currently on a journey of significant change in terms of the practices of teachers, the language used to describe learning and the emphasis on developing both competencies and character. The evidence collected so far suggests that much progress has been made towards realising the vision of creating a community of practice within which all participants are learners who are reflective, resourceful, resilient and relational. The shaping of character, too, remains a key focus for the school as members of our community reflect on how their practices promote different habits which, in turn, lead to the formation of character. It is our hope that the activities our students engage in do indeed promote compassion, grace, humility and justice and that our students are eager to be participants in the larger, world-wide project of restoration.

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Appendix One

Questions used in survey of Senior School students

Group 1 (Resilience)
1. In this class I have opportunities to be absorbed in my learning.
2. In this class I am encouraged to manage my distractions.
3. In this class I am encouraged to notice subtle changes, patterns or details during learning activities.
4. In this class I have opportunities to become better at persevering.
5. I have opportunities to develop resilience in this class.
Group 2 – (Resourcefulness)
6. In this class I am encouraged to use questioning strategies to develop my understanding.
7. In this class I am given opportunities to see connections between different areas of knowledge.
8. In this class I am encouraged to provide reasons for my ideas.
9. In this class I am encouraged to use my imagination.
10. In this class I am encouraged to make good use of resources and people around me to help me to learn.
11. I have opportunities to become a more resourceful learner in this class.

Group 3 – (Reflectiveness)
12. In this class I am given guidance on how best to revise what we are learning in class.
13. *In this class I am given appropriate strategies to achieve my learning goals.*
14. In this class there are opportunities for me to think about how I learn.
15. There are opportunities in this class to develop my understanding by identifying the main points, concepts or ideas.
16. I have opportunities to reflect on my own learning in this class.
Group 4 – (Reciprocity)
17. In this class I am encouraged to be an independent learner who can learn from others when appropriate.
18. In this class I am encouraged to learn collaboratively.
19. In this class I am encouraged to listen to others and respect different points of view.
20. In this class, I am able to adopt effective strategies for learning which I observe in others.
21. In this class I have opportunities to become better at learning with other people.

Group 5 (General focus on learning)
22. In this class I am given advice on how I can become a better learner.
23. I think I have become a more effective learner in this class.
24. In this class I am encouraged to learn the concepts and skills, and to become a better learner.
Group 6 (Restoration)
25. In this class I am encouraged to recognise the importance of grace within the class and wider community.
26. In this class, I am expected to be a compassionate person.
27. In this class, I am encouraged to show humility.
28. In this class, I am encouraged to recognise the importance of justice within the class and wider community.
29. In this class, I recognise that what I am learning about can help me to be someone who makes a difference in the world
30. In this class, I can see how becoming a better learner will enable me to be better equipped to make a difference in the world

The graph below represents the averages for each item across the school for male and female students. For each item, the scale used was from 1 to 5 ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).
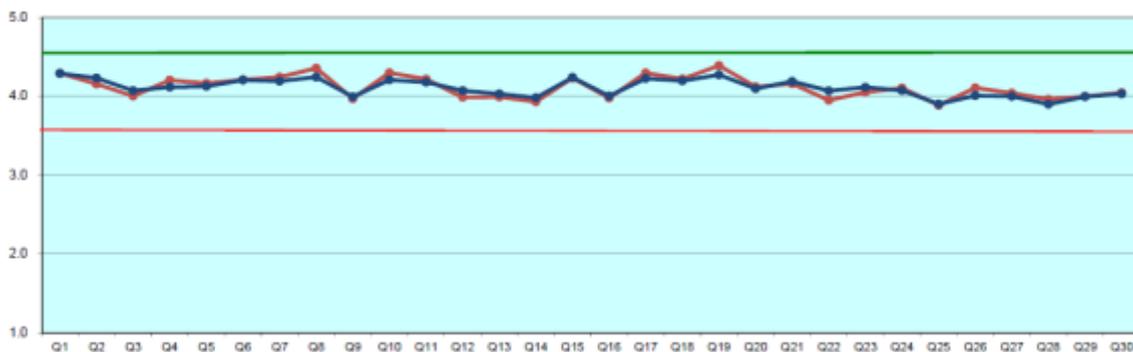
The graph represents the average for each teacher as well as the average (the thicker line) for all teachers. The very top line represents a synthesis of the maximum average achieved by each teacher representing the "ideal" for each item.