



# EDUCATION'S JOURNEY TO CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to capture an understanding of contemporary education viewing it through a history of learning that spans 200 years to the present in Australia. This history includes many and varied changes over the years and more recently, the introduction of the Australian Curriculum. Additionally, important to contemporary education is the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians which states that it commits *"to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens"*, (1) and to promoting equity and excellence in education. Justifiably, the Australian Curriculum will *"equip all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century."* (2)

## INTRODUCTION

Both the Australian Curriculum and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians create a backdrop to understanding the educational challenges and changes that require all those involved in education to leave behind old assumptions. It is important that we can *"reboot the school"* making it a relevant learning environment for our students today.

Such challenges require the school community to focus on an understanding of:-

- *Personalising learning and pedagogy* that recognises living and learning in a technology-rich world.
- *The learning environment* and what it looks like.
- *Visible learning through Design thinking*, a pedagogical (and business) approach which enables students to identify real-world problems within the context of the mandated curriculum.

In order to address the challenges of the twenty-first century education a quote from the website on Australian *The Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs* (MCEECDYA) Contemporary Learning Framework which explores contemporary

approaches to learning and teaching and deepen understandings of key elements of contemporary learning. *“21st century education integrates technologies, engaging students in ways not previously possible, creating new learning and teaching possibilities, enhancing achievement and extending interactions with local and global communities.”* (4)

Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century immerses our children as creative thinkers who will explore creative (multiple/varied) ways of dealing with solving problems and providing skills to adapt to jobs that do not yet exist. The paper concludes that the Catholic School’s approach to curriculum and pedagogy are deeply rooted in faith, empowering students with the essential knowledge, skills, capacities and capabilities for active citizenship and lifelong learning.

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## **HISTORY**

Catholic schools have existed in Australia for more than 200 years, beginning in NSW and expanding across the country as other settlements started. Public School systems did not begin until considerably later than this, beginning with primary level schools, then expanding into the secondary area beginning in the 1880s. Universities first arose in the middle of the 19th century, with early childhood education in the form of kindergartens and preschools lagging well behind all other sectors.

The first Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Brisbane was commenced by two lay people, Mary and Michael Bourke, in 1845 on the site of the current Myer Centre in Elizabeth Street. Since that time Catholic schooling has expanded its mission in the Archdiocese to teach over 74,000 students in over 150 schools. Twenty of these schools are owned and conducted by religious congregations and over 130 are conducted by the Archdiocese of Brisbane, most of these being parish schools. Good Shepherd Springfield Lakes will open its doors in 2013 as the newest of our Archdiocesan schools.

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Archbishop has responsibility for developing policies regarding Catholic education, regulating it and watching over it. The Catholic Education Council assists the Archbishop in planning and making recommendations about educational policies and priorities. The delivery of services, programs and resources in schools is the responsibility of Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE). BCE is headed by the Executive Director, who is supported by the Leadership Team.

During the 1960s and 1970s a major change occurred in the organisation of Catholic schooling. This was the formation of systems of Catholic schools under the oversight of our bishops. This change

was in response to the growing complexity of education, the increased cost of schooling, the need to provide extra places for a rapidly growing population, and the advent of significant government funding. This is the solid foundation upon which our Catholic schools have been built. This is the platform from which we move forward to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. (3)

## Australian Curriculum

### Intent

The Assessment, Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation years to Year 12. The rationale for introducing an Australian Curriculum centres on improving the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's education system:

- Quality – an Australian Curriculum will contribute to the provision of a world-class education in Australia by setting out the knowledge, skills and understandings needed for life and work in the 21st century and by setting common high standards of achievement across the country.
- Equity – an Australian Curriculum will provide a clear, shared understanding of what young people should be taught and the quality of learning expected of them, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school.

The development of the Australian Curriculum is guided by two key documents; the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*. Please log onto the following sites for more information:

- [The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#)
- [The Shape of the Australian Curriculum](#)
- [Validation of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum](#)
- [Phases of curriculum development](#)

### Phases of the Australian Curriculum Development

ACARA has identified three broad phases of curriculum development:

- Phase 1 – development of the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History (8)  
(F-10 published 2010; 11-12 in development) (9)
- Phase 2 – development of the Australian Curriculum for Geography, Languages and The Arts  
(in development from 2010) (10)

- Phase 3 – development of the Australian Curriculum for the remaining areas identified in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (in development from 2011) <sup>(11)</sup>

The Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History is now available online. Please [click here](#). <sup>(12)</sup>

## **GENERAL CAPABILITIES**

The Australian Curriculum is a three dimensional curriculum comprising of these core elements:

- General Capabilities
- Cross Curriculum Priorities
- Learning area (subject) content and standards

Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities, that apply across the curriculum and that help them to become lifelong learners able to live and work successfully in the diverse world of the twenty-first century.

The general capabilities included in the Australian Curriculum are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information and communication technology
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical behaviour
- Intercultural understanding.

In the Australian Curriculum, the general capabilities are addressed through the learning areas and are identified wherever they are developed or applied in content descriptions. They assist teachers to understand the nature of the learners in their class and the nature of the learning that must occur for progress to happen for each learner.

## **LEARNING & TEACHING AT GOOD SHEPHERD**

A concept underpinning contemporary education is personalised learning. There has been much research on the concept of *Personalised Learning* which consists of five core elements

1 **Assessment for learning** and the use of evidence and dialogue to identify every Student’s learning needs

2 **Learning and teaching strategies** that develop the competence and confidence of every learner by actively engaging and stretching them

3 **Curriculum entitlement and choice** that delivers breadth of study, personal relevance and flexible learning pathways through the system

4 **A student centred approach to school organisation**, with school leaders and teachers thinking creatively about how to support high quality teaching and learning

5 **Strong partnerships beyond the school** to drive forward progress in the classroom, to remove barriers to learning and to support pupil well-being. (18)

The Australian Curriculum provides our school with the content and in return the school focuses on how it will be implemented so that learning and teaching supports, enables and engages the learner in the contemporary world with a commitment to each of the following:

<p><b>Learning Opportunities:</b>  Rigorous and relevant  Rich in assessment: for, of, and as learning  Personalised  Explicit and scaffolded  Equitable</p>	<p><b>Learning Environments:</b>  Connected to local and global networks  Collaborative  Secure and safe  Flexible  Supportive of innovation  Inquiry focussed</p>	<p><b>Core knowledge, skills and understanding</b> developed through:  Reflection and planning  Thinking and working creatively  Communicating and collaborating  Exploring, experimenting and creating new knowledge</p>
<p><b>Developing deep understandings about self, others and the world</b> through:  Exploring multiple perspectives  Considering religious, social, cultural, historical, political and ethical influences  Experiencing, analysing, conceptualising, applying.</p>	<p><b>Building Relationships</b> through:  Connecting and learning with others within and beyond the classroom over time and space</p>	<p><b>Contributing to Community</b> through:  Taking responsibility for self  Taking action that matters  Committing to service and justice  Developing partnerships  Active citizenship</p>
	<p><b>Contemporary Literacies</b> that involve:  Developing culturally relevant and valued literate practices  Creating and interacting with print, non-print and multimodal texts  Engaging critically and effectively in a multi-modal world  Communicating appropriately in a range of social contexts.</p>	

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



Providing learning as described above requires agile learning spaces where teachers and students can collaborate to learn and work together. In particular the agile learning space is not just about flexibility, but also about the ability for easy and quick configurability to suit the learning need at the time. (19)

Agile learning environments use soft and hard furnishings to cater for explicit teaching, group and individual work with ready access to emerging technologies and new learning mediums.

**Pedagogy** can be defined as a combination of knowledge and skills required for effective teaching. Teachers use a variety of pedagogical practices to develop the curriculum intent to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in intellectually challenging and real-world learning experiences. These pedagogies reflect learner-centred theories of education which require learning to be: individualised and collaborative; experiential, building on prior learning; self-managed and cumulative; authentic; and directed to higher-order problem solving. (20)



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Catholic School is a sacred place where faith, culture and life are in dialogue and where learners are empowered to shape and enrich their world with meaning, purpose and hope derived from their encounter with life and the teachings of Jesus.

In this context, approaches to curriculum and pedagogy which are deeply rooted in faith, empowers students with the essential knowledge, skills and capacities and capabilities for active citizenship and lifelong learning.

Please view the following **YouTube** videos:

[http://youtu.be/YmwwrGV\\_aiE](http://youtu.be/YmwwrGV_aiE) DID YOU KNOW? (27)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ekcWQxgk3k> (28)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA1Aqp0sPQo&feature=plcp> AITSL 21<sup>st</sup> century learners

## *Powerful learning powerful teaching*

**Thank you for taking the time to read our focus on contemporary learning and teaching as well as watching the You Tubes. We look forward to sharing our educational journey with you and your family in order to create future creative thinkers and leaders.**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- (1) Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- (2) Australian Curriculum
- (3) Brisbane Catholic Education Website
- (4) The Ministerial Council for Education. Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)
- (5) Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- (6) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (7) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (8) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (9) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (10) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (11) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (12) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (13) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- (14) Reboot the School, Selemann Khan, Time Magazine
- (15) Reboot the School, Selemann Khan, Time Magazine
- (16) Assessment & Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S)
- (17) Reboot the School, Selemann Khan, Time Magazine
- (18) *Transforming a School System to Support Personalised Learning and Higher Order Thinking*  
Brian J. Caldwell Invited Feature Presentation at the 12th International Conference on Thinking, Melbourne, 8 July 2005
- (19) Understanding Virtual Pedagogies for Contemporary Teaching and Learning. An Ideas Lab White Paper. Richard Olsen is the Assistant Director of IdeasLAB.
- (20) Brisbane Catholic Education – Teaching and Learning
- (21) Brisbane Catholic Education – Teaching and Learning
- (22) Brisbane Catholic Education – Teaching and Learning
- (23) Ewan McIntosh's edu.blogs.com
- (24) Immersion from Danielle Carter on Vimeo – Brisbane Catholic Education
- (25) Immersion from Danielle Carter on Vimeo – Brisbane Catholic Education
- (26) Sir Ken Robinson – Changing Paradigms
- (27) Did You Know
- (28) Education Leadership
- (29) Photos taken from schools visited in Sydney and Melbourne.