Belconnen High School

Becoming a Professional Learning Community (PLC):
A Switch from Teaching to Learning
What is a PLC?

“A Professional Learning Community is a group of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLC’s operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators”

DuFour, et. al, 2006
Two Underlying Assumptions in a PLC

• All Children Can Learn
• All Children Will Learn Because of What We Do

(All children DO learn, they just do not always learn what we want them to learn)
The Task at Hand

“If schools are to be transformed into learning communities, educators must be prepared first of all to acknowledge that the traditional guiding model of education is no longer relevant in a post-industrial, knowledge-based society. Second, they must embrace ideas and assumptions that are radically different than those that have guided schools in the past.”

DuFour & Eaker, Professional Learning Communities at Work (1998), p. 34
What’s Next?
Is Change Necessary?

“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.” —*Albert Einstein*
Why is it Challenging?

• Teachers and parents were also educated as part of the previous system
• As adults our values towards education were formed by our experiences (good or bad)
• The average educator was a good student
• This means we subconsciously support the system that worked for us
• The reverse is also true
Three Big Ideas

• Ensuring that Students Learn

• Collaborative Culture

• Focus on Results
How do we Ensure our Students Learn?

4 Big Questions around LEARNING

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How do we know if they have learned?
3. How do we respond when students do not learn?
4. How do we respond when students have learned?
Is Belconnen Ready for this?

We need 2 Things:

• Cultural (Will)

• Technical (Skill)
School Culture

“School culture is the set of norms, values, and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the “persona” of the school”

Kent Peterson (2002)
Technical Change

- Technical changes are changes in learning tools or structure
  For example:
  - Collaborative time for teachers
  - Common assessments for students
  - Data
  - Educational Technology
  - Support Classes for students
The Plan at Belconnen High
It will take us Time
The plan is 5 years
Where are we up to?

2014

• Staff established a Shared Mission and Vision
• Researched and decided on our methodology i.e. we will work through the 4 Questions
• Gathered some data (e.g. no. of E grades and non-submission of work in 2013) to find out if our students are learning and if not, why not
• Formed staff groups (PLTs)
• Trialled some ideas e.g. Year 8 Maths Example, Catch-up Club in Humanities
What now

2015

● “The Teaching Cycle”
● Working on Question 1: “What do we want our Students to Learn?” – Guaranteed Curriculum
● Move to Question 2: “ How do we know our students have learnt?” – Formative Assessment
● Catch –up Club across the school
The Teaching Cycle...
What must I teach in this unit?

End-of-unit test

Teach
Determine what to teach

1. What do we expect our students to learn?

Teach

End-of-unit test

2. How do we know they have learned it?

Help?

3. How will we respond when they don’t?
Step 1

1. Determine what all students must know and be able to do and share this with students. This becomes our “Guaranteed Curriculum”
Unit Plan

What all students must know and be able to do

Share learning outcomes with students.

End-of-unit assessment
Step 2

1. Determine what all students must know and be able to do and share this with students.

2. Plan formative assessment, including one common piece, during the unit.
Unit Plan

What all students must know and be able to do

End-of-unit assessment

Formative assessment

Share learning outcomes with students.

Teach
Step 3

1. Determine what all students must know and be able to do and share this with students.

2. Plan formative assessment, including one common piece, during the unit.

3. Plan to reteach after analysing formative assessment.
Unit Plan

Teach

Share learning outcomes with students.

What all students must know and be able to do

Formative assessment

Reteach and Enrich

End-of-unit assessment
Unit Plan

More Help

1. What do we expect our students to learn?

What all students must know and be able to do

End-of-unit assessment

Reteach and Enrich

Formative assessment

2. How do we know they are learning it?

3. & 4. How will we respond when they don’t or do learn?

Teach