



CO-TEACHING IMPROVES STUDENT OUTCOMES

CLAREMONT COLLEGE
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT





SCHOOL

Claremont College, Randwick

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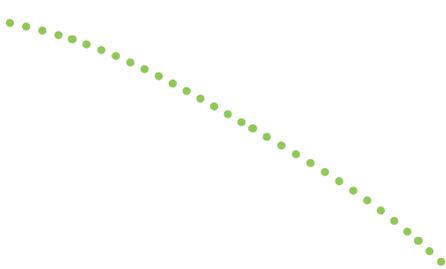
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INTRODUCTION

“Co-teaching is two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of students. Another way of saying this is that co-teaching is a fun way for students to learn from two or more people who may have different ways of thinking or teaching. Some people say that co-teaching is a creative way to connect with and support others to help all children learn. Others say co-teaching is a way to make schools more effective. Co-teaching can be likened to a marriage. Partners must establish trust, develop and work on communication, share the chores, celebrate, work together creatively to overcome the inevitable challenges and problems, and anticipate conflict and handle it in a constructive way.” (Cushman, 2013, p3¹)

¹ Cushman, S. *What is Co-teaching?* (2013). In Nevin, A., Thousand, J., Villa, R. (3), *A Guide to Co-Teaching* Thousand Oaks: Corwin (pp. 3-10).

THE AIM OF THIS ACTION RESEARCH

The purpose of Claremont College's research project has been to determine the relationship between co-teaching and student outcomes. We believe this to be a very relevant and meaningful line of enquiry to explore as there are many schools within Australia and beyond, that are knocking down walls, literally, or building new learning spaces within their school grounds but have no road map to consider the pedagogy behind bringing two or more classes together, into a co-teaching model. Inspiration to build these spaces can now be found in educational and architectural journals, and our school is one such place of inspiration.

Heppell, Heppel and Heppell² explain why it makes sense to build new flexible learning spaces:

All round the world new agile spaces, with zones and nooks and new approaches to seating and organisation are appearing because they make better spaces and places for creating engaging learning.

However,

While it's true that the learning space is never a substitute for quality instruction, agile spaces provide opportunities for teachers to engage in the kind of planning and teacher learning that is most effective in improving student learning.(Whitby)³

² Heppell S, Heppell J, Heppell M, (n.d.), *Agile Learning Spaces: A User's manual for Teachers and Students*, http://rubble.heppell.net/media_forum/wesley_spaces2.pdf , title page

³ Whitby G, (n.d.) *The Facts About Educational Fads*, <https://bluyonder.wordpress.com/tag/agile-learning-spaces/> ,para 6

OUR RESEARCH QUESTION IS:

DOES CO-TEACHING IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES?

CURRENT RESEARCH

There is very little research or information of any kind available to tell us if co-teaching does improve student outcomes. There is some information about the benefits of co-teaching between a classroom teacher and a learning support teacher, but we have not found any solid research where two or more classroom teachers co-teach, and the benefits or challenges of this. However, Sharratt and Fullan (2012) have looked at co-teaching cycles and they feel “co-teaching...is the most powerful way to improve teaching practice and to implement... changes. It pushes professionals to make their practices transparent and public in order to become more skilled, reflective, and thoughtful”⁴.

We believe our research is cutting edge, as there are numerous schools building their flexible learning spaces now, some because the school leaders are choosing to do so, some because their boards or councils are making these decisions and some because these decisions are sector based. But, there are no manuals available to tell us what to do with these new spaces. Because of this we hope that our journey will help to inspire other schools. Our narrative is one that follows an action research approach, where:

*Action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/or refining his or her action. (Sagor, 2000)*⁵

To determine if co-teaching can improve student outcomes, we need to define what co-teaching is at Claremont College and we also need to question, what student outcomes can be improved through co-teaching.

Put simply,

Co-teaching is where two or more teachers teach alongside each other to deliver and facilitate learning for the whole year group at the same time.

Co-teaching has many different models for the delivery of learning, and the model chosen will vary a number of times each day as this will depend on the choice made for the most appropriate model for each lesson or block of lessons. Co-teaching occurs when a team of teachers co-plan, co-teach, co-debrief, and co-reflect, to achieve student outcomes (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012⁶). For co-teaching to be successful it has been important for us to develop our own definitions for the various aspects of co-teaching. This can be found in Table 4.1, Claremont College Co-Teaching Models.

Our set of co-teaching models has evolved since its introduction in 2012, when we felt we needed to be sure we were all talking about the same thing when we spoke about co-teaching. Regardless of prior experiences with co-teaching (sometimes called team-teaching), we needed to be sure we were all aiming for the same goals

⁴ Sharratt L, Fullan M, *Putting Faces on the Data*, Corwin & Ontario Principal’s Council, 2012, pp118-119

⁵ Sagor, R, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100047/chapters/What-Is-Action-Research%C2%A2.aspx> Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2000

⁶ Sharratt L, Fullan M, *Putting Faces on the Data*, Corwin & Ontario Principal’s Council, 2012, pp117-120

for students and using the same set of structures for staff. Together we researched best practice to improve our teaching and learning models, so that students would be exposed to structures where their learning is maximised through co-teaching (e.g. The 'One Lead/Other Support' model should be used the least because it is essentially teacher-directed learning).

Co-teaching is not a way to combine the whole year group together (in our case 2 classes) so that a teacher is working with the whole grade on their own. It is not a means of finding additional 'release from face to face' teaching time for staff. Co-teaching should not be entirely new for staff as all staff will have used the various models from time to time, the difference now being that there is a team who work together to achieve the models and the models are used all day, every day.

Co-teaching is where staff members are no longer working in isolation, they are able to draw on group expertise. In addition, Cushman states, "Partners (and teams) must establish trust, develop and work on communication, share the chores, celebrate, work together creatively to overcome the inevitable challenges and problems, and anticipate conflict and handle it in a constructive way" (2013, p4)⁷. Claremont College staff model themselves on this principle.

We are finding co-teaching to be a means of achieving improved collaboration, transparency and accountability, and ultimately improved student outcomes. Co-teaching is a method of looking after our students' learning and welfare, and co-teaching is a way of improving staff development and staff welfare. Our experiences of how co-teaching enhances teaching and learning for both staff and students are discussed in detail throughout this paper.

Claremont College has always placed a strong emphasis on improving student outcomes. Prior to the commencement of the project, we knew we already had strong NAPLAN data so we knew for certain that it was important that we maintain these results. We hypothesised that because we now have all of the students in one grade together, there would be greater

expectations of cooperation, collaboration, resilience, independence and self-directed learning. We knew we were giving the students improved classrooms to learn in, so we anticipated this would make the students happier in their 'workplace'. We knew we were allowing more visitors to walk throughout the school and we hoped this would not disrupt student learning, but we did not know how this would eventuate. Regardless of the aspects of student learning that we anticipated might improve, we did not know for certain what to expect, what to measure or how to measure the more intangible aspects of student learning; that is, the aspects of student learning that are so important for 21st century learners. Therefore, this action research aims to measure the almost immeasurable aspects of student learning (such as cooperation, collaboration, resilience, independence and self-directed learning), while keeping an eye on the core academic skills.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS RESEARCH PAPER

The structure of this research paper is somewhat chronological as we begin with the transformation of the learning spaces, followed by the cultural changes that needed to occur, and then we focus on the co-teaching models and finally the various aspects of job-embedded professional development we planned and participated in together. All of the elements of this story overlap and evidence that supports one element often supports another, however this paper attempts to sequence the events in the order they occurred for us. There was no road map for our journey, our staff have been learning and finding our way together.

Each section of this paper is a part of our narrative, where the reader will find a critique or summary of any relevant research that helped us, interlinked with our school's journey. Each section provides the reader with the *inputs* (from research and other sources), *processes* (how we processed the information and details of our journey) and the *effects* (the outcomes). These are our experiences across five years of co-teaching which include two years of action research.

⁷ Cushman, S. (2013). What is Co-teaching? Nevin, A., Thousand, J., Villa, R. (3), *A Guide to Co-Teaching* (pp. 3-10). Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

FIGURE 1.1: THE STRUCTURE OF EACH CHAPTER



This action research project begins with the new learning spaces, followed by the cultural changes that needed to occur. The professional development section is the most substantial section because working with and supporting our staff has been and will continue to be paramount to improving student outcomes through co-teaching. The professional development sections include Co-Teaching Models, Courageous Conversations and Professional Dialogue, Working in Teams, Best Practice at Claremont College, and Walkthroughs.

Following the professional development section, we talk about the voices of our stakeholders and the opportunities that have been afforded the staff because of the transformation of Claremont College. Finally, you will find a summary of our findings, the appendices and a bibliography.

METHODOLOGY

The methodologies used for this action research have been a combination of qualitative and quantitative enquiry. The reason for choosing an action research approach for us has been synonymous with the purposes suggested by Sagor (2000)⁸:

1. To build reflective practitioners;
2. To make progress on our schoolwide priority (of co-teaching); and
3. To build the professional culture of our school.

As a result, all of the members of our teaching teams are now reflective practitioners, they are not simply bystanders on the bus heading to co-teaching, they are driving that bus. By driving the bus, our staff truly own our school priorities, and there is ample evidence of this throughout this paper. Our journey has given our staff professional

opportunities, and now we have a professional learning culture where all staff are committed to aligning co-teaching with improved student outcomes.

Our school's action research utilises both Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research as described by Wyse (2011)⁹:

Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/ observations. The sample size is typically small, and respondents are selected to fulfill a given quota.

Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than Qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys – online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and kiosk surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations.

⁸ Sagor, R, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100047/chapters/What-Is-Action-Research%C2%A2.aspx> Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2000

⁹ Wyse SE, <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/> 2011

EXAMPLES OF OUR QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE INCLUDE:

- Our exploration of our school culture;
- The formation of our school's co-teaching models;
- Staff videos about various aspects of co-teaching;
- Student discussion groups;
- Walkthrough observations; and
- Observations from visitors to our school.

EXAMPLES OF OUR QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE INCLUDE:

- Staff surveys;
- Student surveys;
- Student and parent exit surveys;
- Surveys about cultural shifts;
- NAPLAN data;
- Walkthrough data; and
- Enrolment numbers.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Our literature review is not a separate section of this research paper, it is embedded within each aspect of the Claremont College journey, throughout this paper. It was not possible to treat the literature separately, as it has been instrumental in forming our road map from single teacher classrooms to co-teaching within flexible learning spaces.

Our choices of literature have been based on aspects of leadership, change management, effective teams, and teaching and learning. In short, literature that we felt was a 'good fit' for our school and the direction it was heading. With almost no specific co-teaching research or articles available that examine two or more class teachers working together, to give us a starting point, we began reviewing the work of experts in change management. They have included Peter Kaldor, Richard DuFour, Anthony Muhammad, Lyn Sharratt, Beate Planche and Andy Hargraves, just to name a few. We then moved onto educational experts who could give us insight into 'best practice', practices that we could envisage to be enhanced by co-teaching. These authors and consultants include but are not limited to CJ Simister, James Nottingham, John Hattie, Carol Dweck, and Richard DuFour and his colleagues.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

There are two sets of words and phrases used interchangeably throughout this paper. They are:

- Open planned classrooms/flexible learning spaces/new learning spaces/agile learning spaces/new classrooms – all refer to the same thing, our new open planned classrooms; and
- School-based professional development/in-house professional development/job-embedded professional development – these all refer to the same concept, the professional development that we have created at our school, to enable us to learn from each other.

SUMMARY

In summary our school has moved to a co-teaching model across the whole school by opening up and redesigning all of the classroom spaces to whole grade learning spaces. This process began with intentionality and early planning in 2011, and managing and leading this change along the way has been very exciting and challenging at the same time. We hope that by sharing our journey we can help and inspire other schools, and in addition we want to learn from other schools and be a part of the narrative of like-minded educators.

This is by no means the end of a journey for us at Claremont College. It is now important for us to continue to:

- Promote and develop the professional learning school we have established;
- Continue to find ways to support each other;
- Learn to work smarter not harder;
- Develop confidence and inspire each other;
- Share our practices with the wider educational community;
- Communicate well with our stakeholders; and most of all,
- Explore ways to improve student outcomes.

The conditions we have created at Claremont College for our professional learning and professional culture evolve around co-teaching, and

The professional development that is gained from the communication between co-teaching colleagues brings coherence to ideas and enriches one's desire to expand his or her knowledge of pedagogy. (Graziano & Havarrete, 2012, p120)¹⁰

In the words of DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many:

Professional learning communities set out to restore and increase the passion of teachers by not only reminding them of the moral purpose of their work, but also by creating conditions that allow them to do that work successfully.(2010, p264)¹¹

¹⁰ Graziano, K. J., & Navarrete, L. A. (2012). Co-teaching in a teacher education classroom: Collaboration, compromise, and creativity. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 21(1), 109-126. Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ986819.pdf>

¹¹ Du Four R, DuFour R, Eaker R & Many T, *Learning By Doing, A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*, Solution Tree Press, 2010, p264



NEW LEARNING SPACES

In 2011 when the School Principal, Doug Thomas, began to visualise what Claremont College could look like in the future... he had a dream to transform Claremont College into a school that would prepare its students well, for the challenges they faced now as children and as young adults, and for their life beyond school. Claremont College had some very old somewhat dysfunctional spaces that needed refurbishing, so in some ways we had a clean pallet, with the heritage restrictions that come with buildings that are over 135 years old. We knew in 2011, that we, and all schools, were and are preparing our students for a future with jobs that don't even exist today and therefore a future we can only imagine. We knew we had to think beyond the old style of classrooms as we moved forward with our refurbishment, and the Principal's dream.

The noun 'dream' is used intentionally, as the vision came later, after we began to fill the gaps. From the words of Shirley in Hargraves, Boyle and Harris,¹

When Martin Luther King Jr. stood before the Reflecting Pool in Washington DC on a late August day in 1963, he did not declare that he had a strategic plan. He didn't list a set of key performance indicators or specify any targets for meeting them. Dr King, as we know from his passionately delivered speech, had a dream...(an) Inspiring dream is one of the very first factors that come into play when creating something... Dreams describe an imaginable future to hope and strive towards.

Change is occurring so quickly in schools, in society and in life beyond school, all around the world. Robert Peal wrote in 'Scenes From The Battleground'², "for many, school is still a place where you go to have your head filled with 'certainties', a core knowledge base which grows increasingly irrelevant to the world we live in. According to New Brunswick Department of Education, Canada, the top 10% of jobs last year (2014) didn't exist in 2004! Is the best way to prepare our youngsters for this level of uncertainty to continue feeding them a diet of shallow learning experiences dictated by political presumption?"

So while we began to prepare for the structural changes that were definitely needed, we also began to plan for learning spaces that could give our staff the physical spaces that would allow for greater flexibility to ensure our students would be exposed to deeper learning experiences. We knew we needed to:

- Prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist;
- Use new and constantly changing technologies;
- Give our students the skills to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet; and
- Create classrooms that inspire learning and positive relationships.

We need to 'future-proof' our students... adding some paint and keeping the same structures of our old classrooms was not going to be the solution.

In the early stages of our journey to transform our classroom spaces and align our teaching practices to these new flexible spaces, it was important to determine the impact learning spaces might have on learning. We knew that it feels far better to be in a bright, open, light, well ventilated, cheerful classroom, than in a small, dark, dull classroom each and every day, even though obviously the learning space alone would not determine improved student outcomes. The Centre for Research In Educational Futures and Innovation produced a paper titled, "The connection between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places?"³ This literature review was interesting at the time of publication in 2011, in that it did not draw clear conclusions, but we were able to ascertain that the learning space, together with other factors, could contribute to improved student outcomes.

Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O'Mara and Aranda (2011, p3) detailed their theoretical position as,

Learning spaces mediate the relationship and social practices of teaching and learning, and are only one factor among many in the complex relationships of teaching that inform learning outcomes (Oblinger, 2006)... learning spaces do produce conditions and mediate relationships that can improve student learning along a range of indicators (physical and mental wellbeing, as well as cognitive).

In their summary of learning outcomes and how these link to built environments, Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O'Mara, and Aranda (2011, p4) note,

Difficulties arise in particular around learning spaces and built environments in determining the factors that actually contribute to student learning. Physical wellbeing, affective, cognitive, and behavioural characteristics of individuals are pre-conditions that can impede or enhance learning. They are also desirable learning outcomes. Built environment is one factor of many impacting on student learning outcomes.

¹ Hargraves A, Boyle A, Harris A, *Uplifting Leadership – How Organisations, Teams and Communities Raise Performance*, Jossey-Bass, 2014, p17-8

² Peal R, <https://teachingbattleground.wordpress.com/2015/05/27/a-myth-for-teachers-jobs-that-dont-exist-yet/>

³ Blackmore, J, Bateman, D, Loughlin, J, O'Mara, J & Aranda, G, 2011, *Research into the connection between built learning spaces and student outcomes*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, East Melbourne, Vic., The Centre for Research In Educational Futures, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University, 2011, <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30036968/blackmore-researchinto-2011.pdf>

On the other hand, Professor Blackmore and her colleagues (2011, p4) note,

Poorly designed and maintained schools, often found in areas of lowest educational achievement, can also have a detrimental impact on teacher and student morale and engagement, and impact negatively on aggregate student outcomes (Filardo, 2008).

Collectively, these factors impact on teachers' work, attitudes and behaviours, and in turn have flow on effects on student learning.

We at Claremont College feel the same way; it is the behaviour and attitudes that contribute to student learning and outcomes, that are most impacted by the physical learning environment. This is hard to measure, but we receive feedback and observations from the many visitors to our school. Here are just a few of their thoughts about our new interiors:

I am impressed by the way the physical spaces have been transformed whilst retaining an acknowledgement of the rich school history. Love the subtle themed rooms. AP, Stonefields, Auckland, NZ

Fluid nature of the classes and excellent placement of educational materials. Teacher, St Joseph's Primary, Rockhampton

Loved the open learning spaces, challenged to de-clutter our rooms. AH, St Joseph's Primary, Rockhampton

I am impressed by the creativity, colour and the purpose for the space. AH, Picton High School

The flexibility of learning spaces is great as is the clear understanding of staff of pedagogy for the spaces. Y7 Teacher, Picton High School

I am impressed by the spaces within classrooms for learning and the use of technology. Y5 Teacher, St John's Lutheran School, Jindera

I like the opportunities for flexible grouping or individual space and the creative use of space. Year 4 has a great use of space and furniture to create an inspiring work area. President, APPA

The spaces change according to the age and stage. Loved the use of colour and embracing the history of the school. Evidence that you can turn perceived inflexible spaces into very flexible spaces, turning challenges into opportunities.

Better architectural outcomes leading the better learning spaces as a result of the constraint. DP, Kelburn Normal School, Wellington NZ.

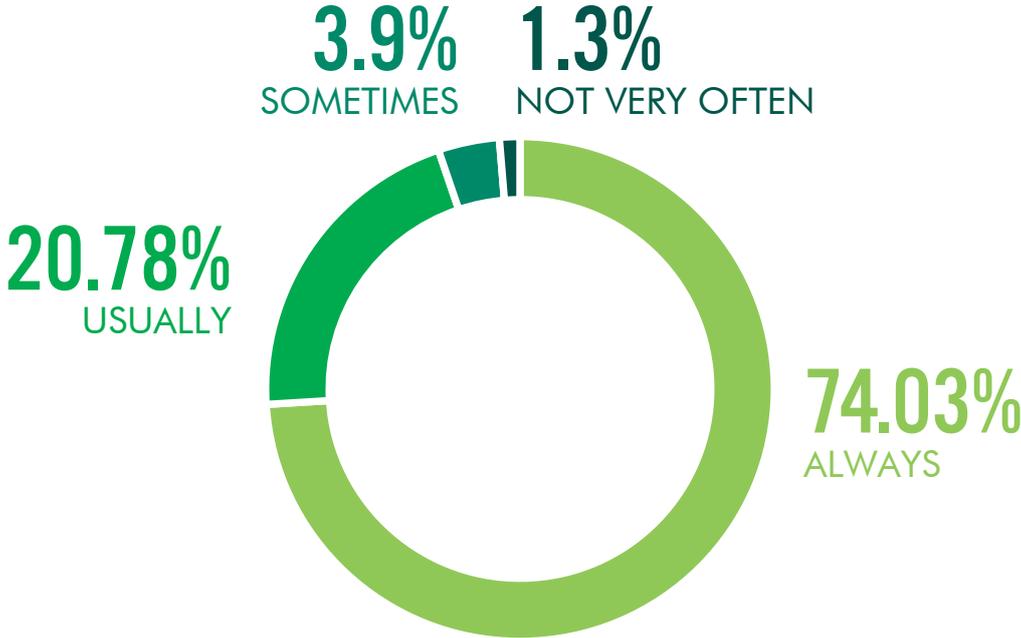
Claremont College’s application for funding for this research project proposed that we would find evidence that co-teaching could improve student outcomes. Co-teaching in its format as practised at Claremont College would not be possible without open planned and flexible learning spaces. At the beginning of this research project we could not anticipate what outcomes would improve, but we anticipated improved resilience to be one. This is primarily because we would be putting all students in one grade into one learning space together; students would

learn to work together, parents would hopefully begin to intervene less and students would be expected and encouraged to work cooperatively and collaboratively each and every day with all of the students in their grade.

In our student voice survey from the end of 2015, we asked our senior students if they like it when their whole grade works together (these students have recollections of being in classrooms with one teacher), and here is a summary of what they had to say:

FIGURE 2.1: STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION OF ENJOYMENT WHEN THE WHOLE GRADE IS TOGETHER (N=77)

I ENJOY IT WHEN OUR WHOLE GRADE WORKS TOGETHER, RATHER THAN WHEN WE USED TO BE IN SEPARATE CLASSES.



This data shows us we are well on the way to achieving complete buy-in, but not quite there yet.

It is now worth looking at the learning outcomes identified by Professor Blackmore (2011, p5)⁴ and her peers, as their studies looked for the connection between learning and built environments through tangible and intangible measures among other things.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND USE OF LEARNING SPACES...

is thus mediated by tangibles (e.g. quality of air, light, spatial density) and intangibles (school and classroom culture, sense of belonging and self-efficacy) as well as teacher-student relationships among other mediating variables.

LEARNING OUTCOME INDICATORS ARE:

- *Attainment as measured by standardised test scores and teacher observations;*
- *Pedagogical effects as indicated by improved engagement in learning (proxies such as time on task, self-management);*
- *Social in terms of perceptions of improved quality of student/teacher, teacher/teacher and student interactions, and evidence of increased levels of student interpersonal competencies, engagement and team work;*
- *Affective as indicated by individual's perceptions as to a sense of belonging and inclusion, self esteem and self confidence;*
- *Wellbeing in terms of physical comfort, health, and sense of safety; and*
- *Behavioural changes related to engagement, retention, vandalism, absenteeism, suspensions, expulsions, disciplinary incidents, violence, disruption in class, lateness, racial incidents, and smoking.*

This list gives us a broader and more expansive set of achievable outcomes, even though some still fit into the category of being almost immeasurable. They are however achievable, and are an excellent set of outcomes to aspire to realise, when opening up or creating new learning spaces to achieve improved environments to teach and to learn in.

Our attainment in standardised tests has remained strong and is discussed in the section about 'Best Practice'. We have seen improvement in pedagogical effects such as student engagement. Our students have developed socially as their relationships across their whole grade have improved. There is definitely a sense of belonging, within each new learning space. The wellbeing of our

⁴ Blackmore, J, Bateman, D, Loughlin, J, O'Mara, J & Aranda, G, 2011, *Research into the connection between built learning spaces and student outcomes*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, East Melbourne, Vic., The Centre for Research In Educational Futures, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University, Literature Review, Paper #22, 2011 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/infrastructure/blackmorelearningspaces.pdf>

students is being catered for because of the physical comforts in each classroom. And behaviourally, our students display more resilience toward their school work and toward each other. These observations are discussed throughout this paper.

The work of Kotter, in *'Leading Change, Why Transformation Efforts Fail'*⁵, offers a step by step guide to the stages of change. While there are other guides available from various authors, this guide most closely aligns with our journey. In hindsight this step by step process would have been an excellent document for us to follow, but without this particular document, we actually followed this process with varying degrees of success and attention to detail. Kotter says, "To give your transformation effort the best chance of succeeding, take the right actions at each stage—and avoid common pitfalls." His "ideal in practice" stages are:

FIGURE 2.2: 'IDEAL IN PRACTICE' STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION'



It is worth noting that the aspects where we were 'detail-lite', we needed to go back and improve. For us in particular, our vision was too vague to begin with and we needed to work on that; our communication with all stakeholders was too brief to begin with and we needed to improve that as well.

To digress a little, we need to look at how Claremont College is being transformed from the physical spaces or pre-2011, to the open planned classrooms of 2016. Shirley in Hargraves, Boyle and Harris⁶, is quoted as saying, "Dreams are most powerful when they are held collectively by a community...The following three elements of inspiration are especially integral to uplifting leadership:

- *A broad and inspiring dream extends far beyond numerical targets (Element One).*
- *The dream's inclusive nature expresses a sense of collective identity (Element Two).*
- *The dream is made up of a clearly articulated relationship between what has been and what will be (Element Three)."*

From our Principal, Doug Thomas' dream we developed a vision, albeit 'lite' on detail in 2011. We began to gather knowledge from a number of sources...research, schools locally and internationally, architects, our own staff, and our Principal's own creative thinking. Using the three elements of Shirley, to summarise the process, we will look at how this dream became a reality.

ELEMENT ONE:

We began with some very old single-teacher classrooms and some small 'withdrawal' spaces for learning support, that needed to be refurbished first. Some of these older spaces were barely functional any more, students and staff were sandwiched into small spaces that were dark and uninviting, and they were simply embarrassing to show to prospective parents as they visited the school to determine if they would send their children to Claremont College. So it was for very practical reasons that this dream was born.

At this time there were only a small number of Australian schools that had moved to open planned classrooms to draw inspiration from, so the Principal joined a group of educators who travelled to Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom to better understand classroom design, open-plan spaces and principles of innovation, creativity and school leadership.

⁵ Kotter JP, *Leading Change_Why transformation efforts fail.pdf*, Harvard Business Review, p2

⁶ Hargraves A, Boyle A, Harris A, *Uplifting Leadership – How Organisations, Teams and Communities Raise Performance*, Jossey-Bass, 2014, p17-8

It is now recognised that most of the failures of open plan classrooms came from poor designs, poor acoustics, and little or no preparation or professional development for teachers. It also became evident:

New pedagogical models are necessary and certainly we have to change the learning environments of our schools, making them more flexible. Architecture can play a very important role in the new schools of our century, the 'open plan' ideas that were rejected by many that did not have the proper conditions to implement them, could now be considered as one of the solutions that can easily incorporate the new technologies, especially because of the flexibility that these open spaces permit, it's much easier to change the learning environment in an open plan school than in a 'traditional' classroom. (Martinho, 2012, p324)⁷

Visualising what the new classrooms or learning spaces would look like, was a part of this early process within this first phase of the journey. The Principal gained inspiration from many sources, including ideas from 'The Third Teacher' (2010, p89 & p118)⁸, with these thoughts:

- *Imagine like a child, visualise a proposed school from a student's perspective – the poignancy of that point of view may help transform a proposal into a built project; and*
- *Make classrooms agile, a learning space that can be reconfigured on a dime will engage different kinds of learners and teachers.*

Our students love their new learning spaces. There is 'a feel' that you encounter when walking through the school. This feeling cannot really be measured, but it is evident nonetheless, and here are some adjectives collated in a student voice survey from our Year 6 students (2015) who recall the old spaces and are now in the new spaces:

WHAT ADJECTIVES BEST DESCRIBE THIS SCHOOL?

EDUCATIONAL . LEARNING .
KIND . WELCOMING .
ENCOURAGING . EXCITING .
FRIENDLY . AWESOME .
FUN . AMAZING . MODERN .
COLOURFUL . CREATIVE

⁷ Martinho M, http://www.academia.edu/2778474/Classroom_of_the_Future_-_Using_the_Open_Plan_School_Model 2012, p324

⁸ OWP/P Architects, + VS Furniture + Bruce Mau Design, *The Third Teacher*, a Collaborative Project, Abrams, 2010, p 89 & 118

WHAT ADJECTIVES DESCRIBE THE NEW LEARNING SPACES (CLASSROOMS) AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE?

AMAZING . EXCITING . FUN .
BIG . COLOURFUL . AWESOME

Broad and inspiring dreams can extend far beyond numerical targets. Sometimes we feel some changes do not need to be measured, but they can be captured.

For example, here are some of our Year 6 students from 2015. <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>



ELEMENT TWO:

The second phase of planning and achieving our new learning spaces was 'engaging the troops', inviting everyone into the planning process to ensure the new spaces achieve a sense of collective identity. It would be remiss not to admit that at the early stage we did not have a lot of 'takers' who wished to be involved in the planning. It was still early days and there was still a lot of scepticism.

This process of invitation, with reluctance to be involved began in 2012, and now in 2016 as we prepare for our final block of classrooms to be refurbished, our staff are excited and honoured to be included in the process of designing the new learning spaces; to quote one of our new staff members (2016):

Who would have thought that in my first year at Claremont, I would be asked to be included in the design process of our new classrooms, this is amazing, I feel so honoured.

It took a little while to build trust in the process, trust that everyone's voice would be heard, trust that everyone could make a difference, and trust that this was not another crazy idea that would go away as soon as another idea came along.

ELEMENT THREE:

"Clearly articulat(ing the) relationship between what has been and what will be", has been a simultaneous process along side of Element Two (gaining collective identity), for us. It could be said that the process from 'dream' to 'clearly articulating the vision' moved very quickly at Claremont College, but things often do move quickly in schools. Using Kotter's first stage of transformation, 'create a sense of urgency', we can reflect back now and say we certainly achieved this.

Clear articulation was really not possible to begin with, as we had to start with what we already knew about flexible learning spaces and co-teaching, and develop the vision from there. The downside of not being able to clearly articulate our vision was palpable.

- There was increased anxiety among staff, and the 'Fundamentalists' (Muhammad, 2009, Ch6)⁹ were creating pockets of toxicity around the school... our 'Believers' (Muhammad, 2009, Ch3) had even stopped going to the staffroom because they didn't want to be cornered into a negative conversation.
- There was panic (no this is not an exaggeration) among the parent body, particularly within one particular year group, where we lost 18 students within a six month period because of our move to co-teaching.
- We had to hold our nerve and our belief that we were heading in the right direction for the school and for student learning.
- We were constantly seeking to find research to back our vision for the future of Claremont College, to prove to our staff and our parents that 'we were not just a pack of hippies making it up as we went along' (a quote from a staff member from Northern Beaches Christian School).

⁹Muhammad A, Transforming School Culture, Solution Tree Press, 2009

- A small number of our staff who struggled with the changes, moved to other schools to continue their careers in more traditional settings.
- We needed to clearly define and articulate the vision.

The upside of this express route to achieving our vision:

- We achieved what we set out to do within a relatively short period of time;
- We might have lost our nerve if we had taken the process slowly, or if we anticipated the many challenges we were to face;
- When employing new staff and/or with new families starting at Claremont College, they know we are a co-teaching school, they are not struggling with preconceptions about Claremont College's learning spaces and co-teaching methods;
- Our new learning spaces are a definite draw card for new families and students;
- The student numbers have increased after a dip at the end of 2013 because of our new learning spaces and co-teaching;
- We now have a supportive staff who appreciate their new learning spaces and feel privileged to work in them; and
- We became better at articulating the vision for our school's move to open planned learning spaces and co-teaching.

The first graph indicates our dip in enrolments at the end of 2013 where most of the losses came from parents who were anxious about our move to co-teaching. The second graph suggests we lost 10 students at the end of 2013 from the Year 4 group, when we actually lost 18 students, but picked up 8 new students to begin 2014. This was an unusually high amount of students to lose at the end of Year 4, and the majority of these families cited their concern for their child in an open planned classroom.

FIGURE 2.3: YEAR 5 ENROLMENTS, 2011 TO 2016

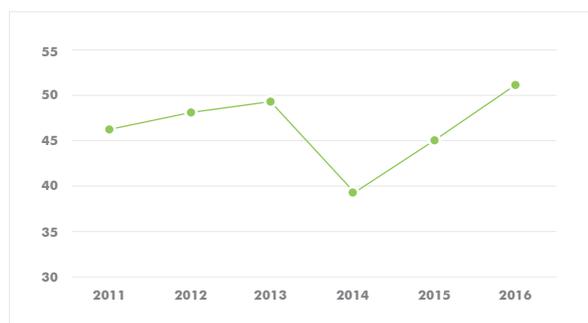
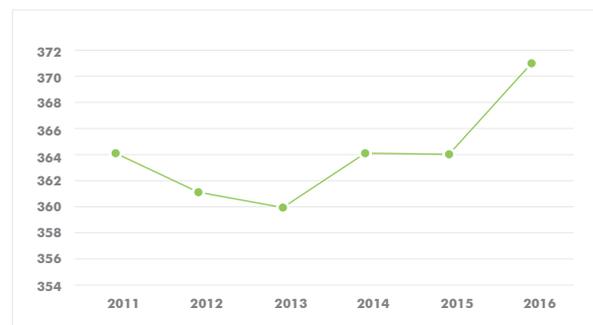


FIGURE 2.4: WHOLE SCHOOL ENROLMENTS, 2011 TO 2016



We are now very proud of our new learning spaces, <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html> and it is now a privilege to show visitors and prospective parents around our school.



Claremont College has been the recipient of two awards for its new spaces:

- 1. CEFPI Awards 2014, Renovation/Modernisation Under \$2m Commendation, for our Y4 & 5 learning spaces; and
- 2. CEFPI Awards 2015, People's Choice Award, for our Y2 & 3 Learning spaces.

Anecdotally, we now know we have achieved improved student outcomes just because of the new learning spaces. We also have some improved student outcomes just because of co-teaching. And we have some improved student outcomes because of the combination of new and improved learning spaces, and co-teaching. It is hard to put numbers on these improvements, often it is just a feeling, as we did not gather baseline data because we did not anticipate all the improvements listed...

FURTHER DETAILS THROUGHOUT THE PAPER, HOWEVER IN SUMMARY, IN 2016 OUR STUDENTS:

- Enjoy coming to school and being in their new learning spaces;
- Are working with improved cooperation and collaboration because of the fluidity of the learning spaces and the increased opportunities for them to do so;
- Display improved engagement...they remain on task when there are visitors in their rooms, they remain on task during group and independent work simply because of the increased expectations within the flexible spaces, and;
- Demonstrate improved resilience while working with their whole grade...they are expected and encouraged to work with all students on a variety of tasks, because of the flexibility of groupings they are expected and encouraged to persist to solve problems, there is less need or opportunity for their parents to intervene to try to solve friendship problems at the beginning of the year, and there are less instances of students being 'sent to the Deputy' because of inability to work with one another, friendship issues or behavioural issues such as attention deficit, fidgeting or distractibility.

OUR STUDENTS TALK ABOUT THEIR NEW LEARNING SPACES:

- *You have the ability to sit anywhere and sit with others and collaborate in groups or if you want to work independently you can find a seat by yourself.*
- *The co-teaching rooms are more bright and really colourful, you can move around, its more appealing and it makes you feel better. Our new rooms are more comfortable.*
- *You can sit anywhere and can collaborate with others and groups when you couldn't do this in the old classrooms with a designated desk.*
- *You can change the tables around or sit at the kitchen bench, and it makes it feel more like home.*
- *It can be challenging if it gets to be quite loud so you have to find somewhere that is quieter to work and with people who are not so loud.*
- *You don't get stuck on one table, you get to move around.*

(Year 6 Students, 2015)

THE EFFECTS OF NEW OPEN PLAN LEARNING SPACES

- The effects of our new open planned learning spaces for Claremont College have been overwhelmingly positive.
- Learning for students and staff in creative and innovative environments is uplifting. The voices of our students and the visitors to our school confirm this.
- Making sure these spaces are utilised to gain the maximum benefits possible is explored throughout this paper, especially within the 'Professional Development' section.
- Our students learn in award winning spaces.
- Our students are more engaged in their learning, their social skills across the grade have improved, their physical comforts are catered for, they are more resilient, and they have a sense of belonging in their new learning spaces.



Our Take-Home Messages

BE CREATIVE.

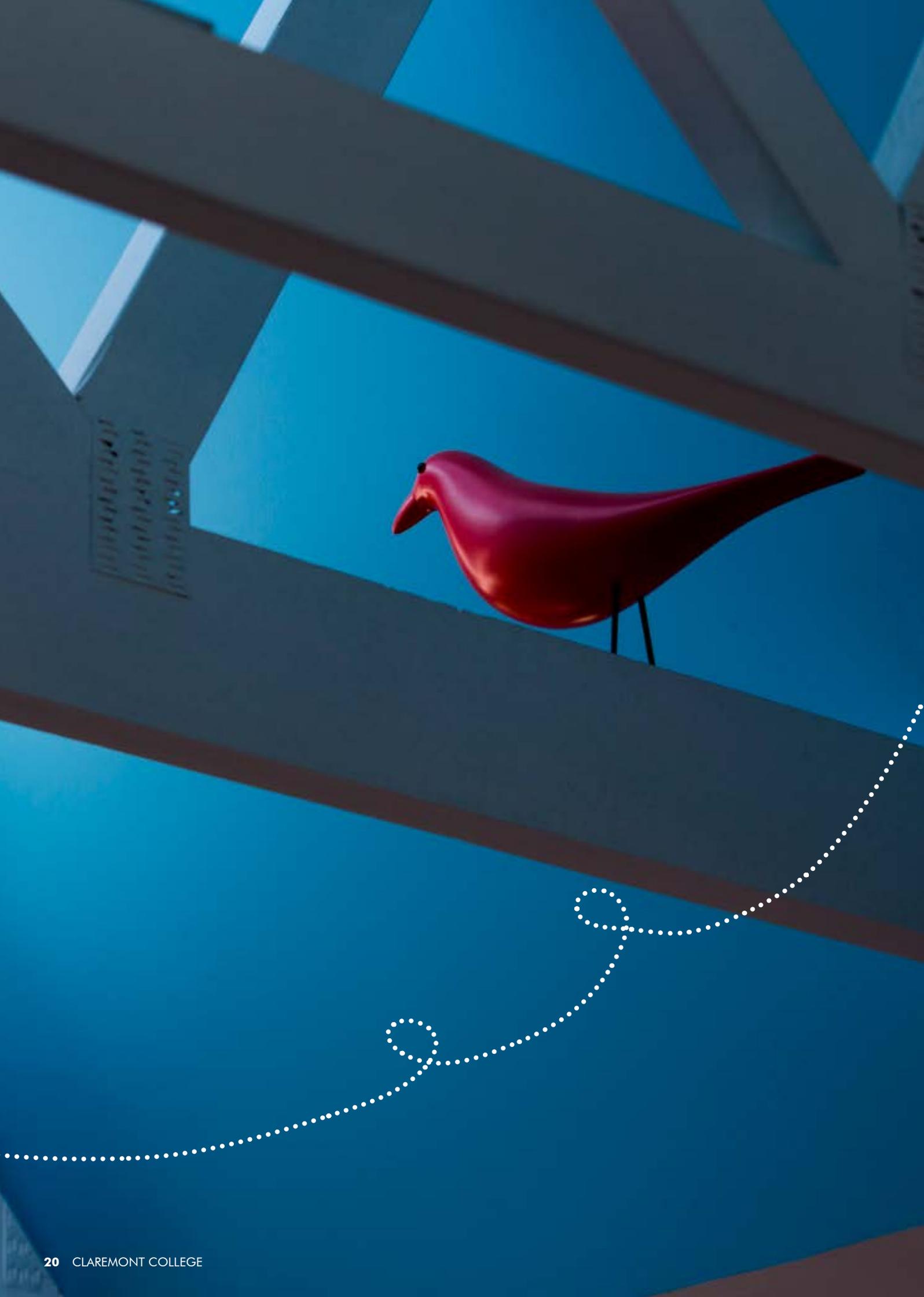
**HOLD YOUR NERVE AND STAY FOCUSED ON THE VISION
EVEN IF THE VISION IS NOT FULLY REALISED.**

**CREATE A VISION THAT IS NOT TOO COMPLICATED AND
COMMUNICATE IT WELL TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

**ACCEPT THAT YOU MIGHT LOSE SOME STUDENTS AND SOME
STAFF WHO WILL BE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE CHANGES.**

**ALLOW FOR, OR CREATE, SOME SHORT TERM
SUCCESSSES TO CELEBRATE ALONG THE WAY.**

**CHANGE TAKES TIME, BE PATIENT WHILE
STAYING FOCUSED ON THE END GOAL.**



CULTURAL CHANGE

Some of the most significant changes to impact student outcomes at Claremont College, have been the cultural changes that have been taking place. It must be said, that while we anticipated there would be challenges in regard to changing the culture of our school, we had no clear indication of how many changes would need to be made or how much resistance there would be to change, and how long it would take us to achieve a culture that was very different from the culture we started with.

This is not to say that there was anything wrong with the original culture at Claremont College, it was just not a culture that was fully open to embrace change.

There have been two key contributing inputs for us to achieve cultural change. The first has been our work with a group called New River Leadership Consultancy and their work 'Lead with your Strengths – Making a Difference Wherever You Are'¹, and the second has been our participation in and study of Anthony Muhammad's research, 'Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division'². Both of these have contributed significantly to the cultural changes achieved at Claremont College. Therefore, it is worth summarising the input and impact of both at Claremont College.

¹Kaldor P, & McLean J, *Lead with your Strengths – Making A Difference Wherever You Are*, NCLS Research, 2009

²Muhammad A, *Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009

NEW RIVER LEADERSHIP CONSULTANCY: ‘LEAD WITH YOU STRENGTHS – MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEREVER YOU ARE’

In early 2012 we met, by chance or divine intervention, one of the authors of ‘Lead with you Strengths – Making a Difference Wherever You Are’, and soon realised our small leadership team of two, would benefit from additional advice and intervention. We had an Executive Team as well, but the plan to become a complete co-teaching school was being incubated between a small number of staff (the Principal, the Deputy Principal and one classroom teacher). Therefore we felt we were going to need some leadership guidance to move this forward. With so many stakeholders involved, students, staff, parents, the school’s reputation... we had a lot of people to consider, to look after, and to take on this journey.

The consultants from New River listened to us and began to develop a plan to grow our leadership, to expand our leadership, to realise the human capital already within the Claremont College community, to prepare a collaborative approach to change, to align our vision with

the school’s core values, and to recognise the uncertainty and fear that comes with change. For example, in the very first meeting with staff where New River and some of our school’s leadership team met to talk about the vision for our school, we opened up the discussion to allow staff to voice their fears and concerns. The New River consultants involved on this day, still recall it as a ‘very gutsy and powerful’ way to ensure that all staff knew their thoughts were valued from the very beginning.

We grew our individual leadership by meeting in groups and individually with members of the New River team. Individually we identified our strengths and set goals to improve our weaknesses as leaders and as a group “we explored some important qualities that can make leadership teams effective”³.

We were encouraged to look at Management VS Leadership⁴ models to improve our leadership such those explained in Table 3.1:

TABLE 3.1: MANAGEMENT VS LEADERSHIP

MANAGEMENT	LEADERSHIP
<p>PLANNING AND BUDGETING</p> <p>Establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving results, and allocating the resources necessary to make things happen.</p>	<p>ESTABLISHING DIRECTION</p> <p>Developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, and strategies for producing the changes needed.</p>
<p>ORGANISING AND STAFFING</p> <p>Establishing structures for accomplishing plans, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating monitoring systems.</p>	<p>ALIGNING PEOPLE</p> <p>Communicating directly by words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed. Creating teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity.</p>
<p>CONTROLLING AND PROBLEM SOLVING</p> <p>Monitoring results in some detail, identifying deviations, and then planning and organising to solve these problems.</p>	<p>MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING</p> <p>Energising people to overcome major political, bureaucratic and resource barriers to change by satisfying basic but often unfulfilled human needs.</p>
<p>PRODUCES A DEGREE OF PREDICTABILITY AND ORDER</p> <p>Has the potential to consistently produce key results expected by various stakeholders (e.g. customers/clients, being on time, being within budget).</p>	<p>PRODUCES CHANGE</p> <p>Often to a dramatic degree, and can produce extremely useful change (eg new products, new approaches to [staff] relations, that help make a [school] more competitive.</p>

³ Kaldor P. & McLean J, *Lead with your Strengths – Making A Difference Wherever You Are*, NCLS Research, 2009, p144

⁴ Kaldor P. & McLean J, *Lead with your Strengths – Making A Difference Wherever You Are*, NCLS Research, 2009, p31

We expanded our leadership model to a distributive leadership model as opposed to the top down leadership model that had been the traditional model of many years prior. When this concept was first introduced by New River in 2012 to our staff, it was met with cynicism... we knew we had some work to do. Put simply we began with a triangular model, and ended with a circular model with student learning as its centrepiece.

FIGURE 3.1: TOP-DOWN LEADERSHIP MODEL 2012

IN 2012...

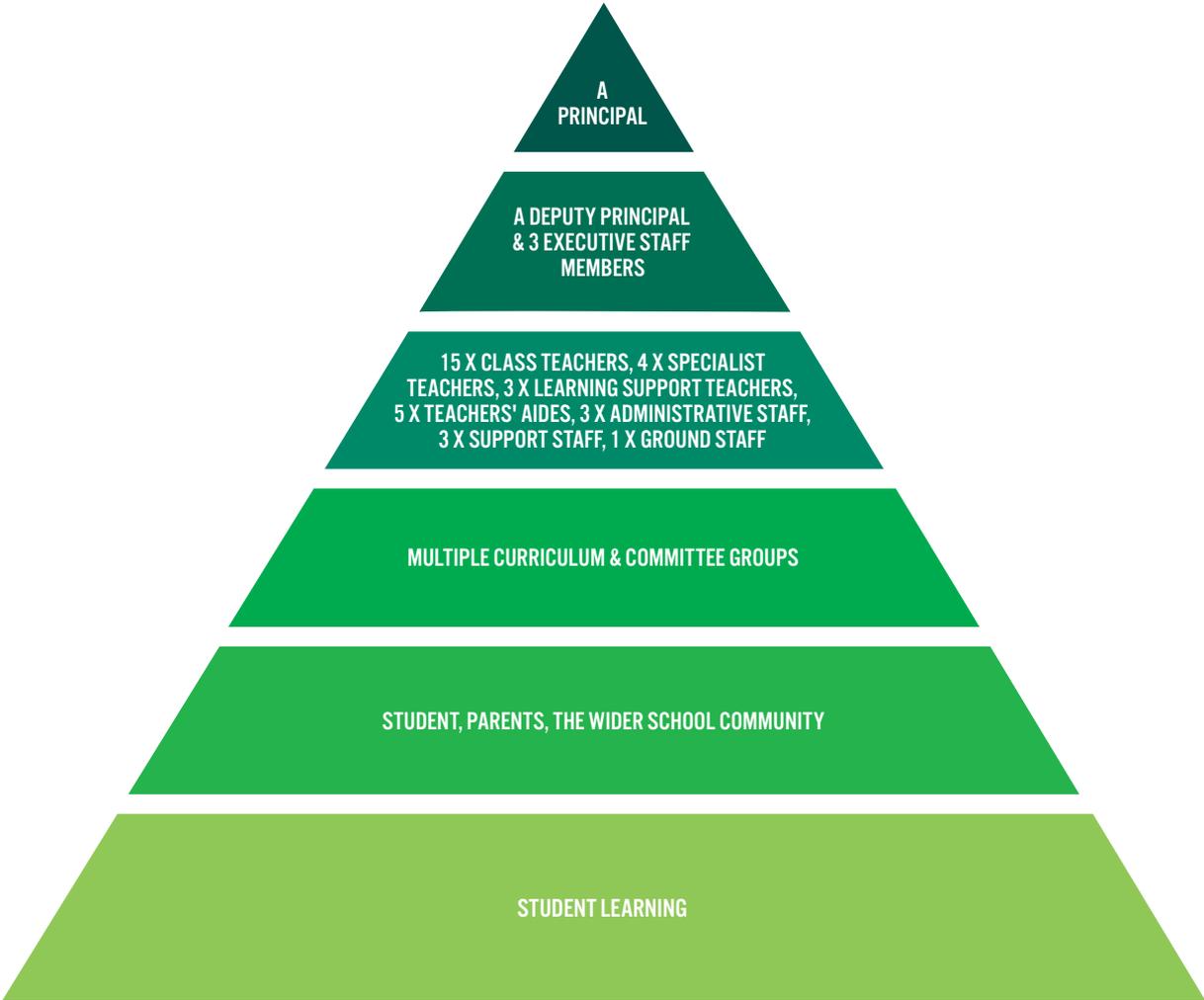
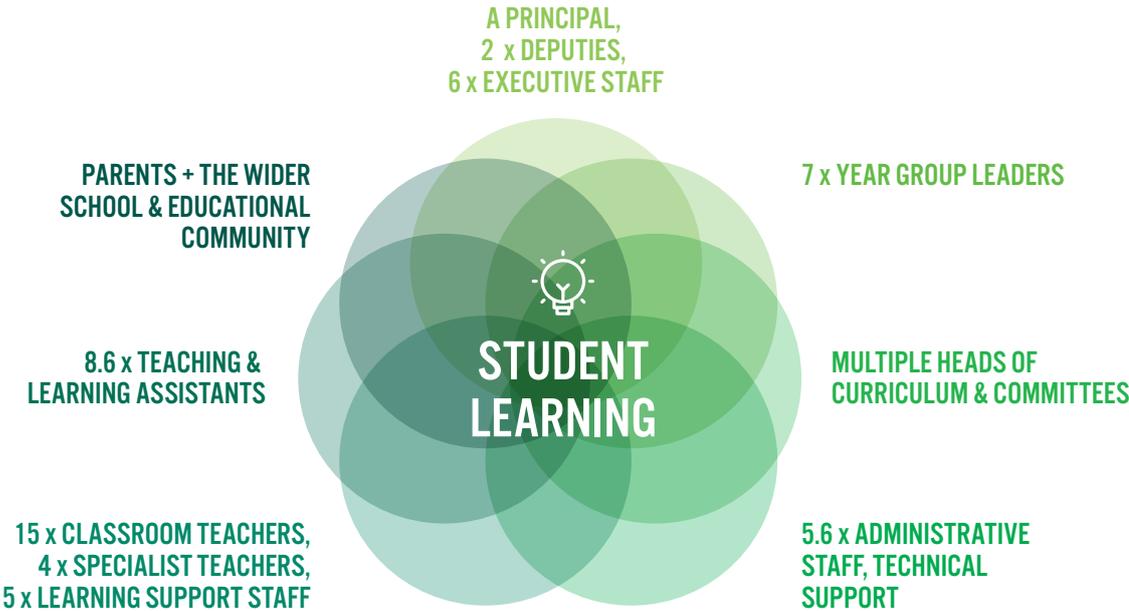


FIGURE 3.2: DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP MODEL 2016

IN 2016, WITH STUDENT LEARNING AT THE CENTRE OF THIS MODEL...



We encouraged and realised the human capital within the Claremont College community by identifying our 'Believers' (Muhammad, 2009, Ch3) and helping them to develop their knowledge of co-teaching and we encouraged them to take risks, make mistakes, and share their co-teaching experiences with other staff. At Claremont College, co-teaching initially began with one year group, who trialled and found success from 2010 to 2011 in two classrooms with a concertina door that could be opened to achieve one big space. It would be fair to say they did this on instinct, because it made sense to combine their teaching skills and expertise across their year group. The research and rationale came later. In 2012, a second year group began to use co-teaching as much as they could, even though they were restricted by two old single teacher classrooms. They too were

beginning to have success, and began to share their experiences, which included student outcomes and in particular, student behaviour and therefore student engagement.

We took notice of the staff who were beginning to share the vision, encouraged them and strategically placed these staff with others so that they could lead by example. There was conflict among staff during this period, and we realised with the help of New River, that we needed a committed team to keep moving forward, and that we had to hold our nerve and belief that we were making the right changes for the right reasons...student learning. Generally speaking, the conflict was born out of fear of change and anxiety surrounding what that would mean for each individual.

We needed to align our vision with the school's core values to ensure that we were not just adding another layer to the already complex structures within the school. Our school has a proud history of over 135 years and we wanted to be sure that the core values of Claremont College and firm foundations that the school was built on, remain intact. In the words of Hargraves, Boyle and Harris⁵,

FEW SUCCESSFUL LEADERS START WITH A BLANK SLATE. THERE IS OFTEN MORE TO THEIR PREDECESSORS AND WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THAN IMMEDIATELY MEETS THE EYE. SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS OFTEN COMES ABOUT BY NOT ERADICATING PRECEDING LEADERS FROM HISTORY OR MEMORY, BUT BY CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENTS THAT THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.

With the help of the New River consultants we found that we did not only need to align our vision and values, it was time to consolidate our core values. We did this through a systematic set of workshops and meetings to ensure that all stakeholders were considered. We met with staff, parents, students, and school council, on a number of occasions over a 12 month period, to make sure all voices were heard, and to ultimately 'build collective responsibility for student learning' (Kramer, 2015, p8)⁶.

By safeguarding the fundamental purpose of learning throughout this process we were able to eliminate or minimise, over time, personal agendas, personal fears or reservations, system agendas and ill-conceived expectations of the school. We combined a set of core values that aligned the historical significance of the school, 21st century learning, and Christian values. Our revised School Values can be found attached. <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>

We recognised the uncertainty and fear that comes with change by acknowledging that every staff member will have some anxiety especially in those early stages of our journey. We held workshops to discuss these fears, to legitimise these feelings, and to determine

where some of the anxiety may be coming from. To be honest 95% of our staff had uncertainty and fear during the early stages of our journey, when we held our first whole staff professional development with New River in October 2012, and now in October 2016, less than 10% of our staff have anxieties in relation to co-teaching. The most common fears identified in the early days, and some at times still resurface as new staff join Claremont College, are:

- A fear of being judged by others when co-teaching;
- Anxiety relating to managing the numbers of students in a whole grade even though there are always other staff with you;
- A fear of making mistakes in front of your peers;
- Anxiety relating to the expectations of collaboration and cooperation;
- Anxiety relating to accountability;
- Pressure of the organisational strengths needed to work in a co-teaching environment;
- No more 'winging it' when preparation was not as it should have been;
- An initial lack of trust that this 'new idea' was going to be followed through by the school leadership team; and
- A scepticism that staff would get the support and training they needed to understand how co-teaching should work.

⁵ Hargraves A, Boyle A, Harris A, *Uplifting Leadership – How Organisations, Teams and Communities Raise Performance*, Jossey-Bass, 2014, p150

⁶ Kramer SV, *How to Leverage PLCs for School Improvement*, Solution Tree Press, 2015, p8

We no longer see fear and anxiety, wherever it may come from, or as a barrier, but as an important step in managing change. Change is "not about hard work or effort...it is about doing the right work that will result in learning for all students. Principals and teachers are hard working individuals"(Kramer, 2015, p4)⁷.

Wadell and Sohal concur with this thinking, in their paper, 'Resistance: a constructive tool for change management'⁸:

As our understanding of resistance has become increasingly clear, it has also become apparent that people do not resist change per se, rather they resist the uncertainties and potential outcomes that change can cause.

As such, resistance plays a crucial role in drawing attention to aspects of change that may be inappropriate, not well thought through, or perhaps plain wrong. Either way, it is the organisation's method of communication, therefore attempting to eliminate resistance as soon as it arises is akin to shooting the messenger who delivers bad news.

ANTHONY MUHAMMAD'S RESEARCH, 'TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE – HOW TO OVERCOME STAFF DIVISION

In 2014 we first encountered the work of Muhammad, even though we were already well aware of the work of his mentor Rick DuFour and his program, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Muhammad's research contextualised the work we had begun with New River, because Muhammad's research was based in 34 schools and therefore was specific to schools and the personalities within schools.

We used the work of Muhammad to up-skill our Executive team to understand how to transform school cultures, and the knowledge of different people in a school organisation, and why they are who they are, "Dr Muhammad uses the research of Karl Weick to examine the different reasons people resist change... then offers specific strategies for addressing each of these reasons", and he also reminded us that "for far too long we have tinkered with the structures of our schools and focussed on projects or goals that have no impact on student learning" (DuFour in Muhammad, 2009, p2-

3)⁹. These were both important messages for us, the first to understand the reasons people resist change, and the second to maintain our focus on student learning throughout a period of change.

Muhammad (2009, p11) says,

According to Kent D Peterson... "School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the persona of the school". Petersons explanation is functional and accurately describes how the unseen human factors of a school affect the day-to-day practices and behaviours within a school. Peterson categorises school culture into two types: positive and toxic. He describes a positive culture as one where "there's an informal network of heroes and heroines and an informal grapevine that passes along information about what is going on in the school...[a] set of values that supports professional development of teachers, a sense of responsibility for student learning, and a positive, caring atmosphere". On the flip side Peterson describes a toxic culture is one where teacher relations are often conflictual, the staff doesn't believe in the ability of the students to succeed and a generally negative attitude prevails".

At Claremont College, in the early days of transforming our school into a school where co-teaching exists in every grade, we definitely had staff on-site who epitomised the staff described as contributing to a positive culture. We also had staff who were resisting change, and (I believe) not because they felt that all students could not succeed, but because they each had a personal conflict with the direction the school was taking, and these staff members were creating pockets of toxicity within the school community. Yes these comments seem harsh, however, the work of Muhammad, in helping us to understand the underlying reasons why people resist change (not because they are bad people but because of their prior experiences of change), helped us to understand this and transform the school culture across the whole staff. Our method of learning from Muhammad was to take the whole Executive Team to a 2-day workshop, then to submerge ourselves into his book, *Transforming School Culture*, chapter by chapter, week by week, so that we all could gain deeper meaning and practical guidance, as a group.

⁷ Kramer SV, *How to Leverage PLCs for School Improvement*, Solution Tree Press, 2015, p4

⁸ Waddell D and Sohal AS, *Resistance: a constructive tool for change management* pdf, Department of Management, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, p1

⁹ Muhammad A, *Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009, p2-3

SCHOOL CULTURE IS THE SET OF NORMS, VALUES AND BELIEFS, RITUALS AND CEREMONIES, SYMBOLS AND STORIES THAT MAKE UP THE PERSONA OF THE SCHOOL.

(PETERSON IN MUHAMMAD, 2009, P11)

We used Muhammad's definitions of the four types of educators to better understand our staff to be able to appreciate where they were coming from. We tried to ensure they were each getting the support they needed to embrace change.

For anyone reading this document and looking to achieve cultural change, we can highly recommend the time you

will spend reading and discussing Muhammad's book¹⁰ over a period of time with your colleagues. However, for this research article, summarising Muhammad's four types of educators, how to help each of them, or risk their divisive impact on school culture, will give the reader some context to the 'titles' given to staff on a number of occasions throughout this paper.

¹⁰ Muhammad A, Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009

THE BELIEVERS (MUHAMMAD, PP27-35, CH3)

THEIR ORGANISATIONAL GOAL IS ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR EACH STUDENT.

Believers are educators who believe in the core values that make up a healthy school culture. They believe that all of their students are capable of learning and that they have a direct impact on student success, academically, socially emotionally. They work with all other willing stakeholders in multiple arenas to accomplish this goal. They have a strong presence on school improvement teams, curriculum initiatives, and voluntary committees. Change is not foreign or threatening to them, in fact they embrace any change that they feel would improve student

outcomes. Believers are actively engaged in a constant battle of ideas with another group, the Fundamentalists.

There are two types of Believers, active and passive. Believers tend to speak out and challenge others only when something overtly intolerant is exhibited. Believers as a whole appear to be passive and permissive of others. If schools are going to effectively create positive and productive cultures, the Believers have to become more active and aware of the day to day assaults on the very belief system to which they adhere.

THE TWEENERS (MUHAMMAD, PP37-45, CH 4)

THEIR ORGANISATIONAL GOAL IS ORGANISATIONAL STABILITY.

Tweeners are educators who are new to the school culture. Their experience can be likened to a 'honeymoon period' in which they spend time trying to learn the norms and expectations of the school's culture. Their primary goal is to find stability and to work out how they fit in. They end up in the middle of the war of ideas between the Believers and Fundamentalists.

Tweeners are important for two reasons:

One: Schools cannot gather momentum without organisational memory, something a Tweener will not have. Administrators need to position Tweeners

with someone who has organisational memory where possible, so they become connected to long term plans for improvement.

Two: Tweeners are important to the evolution of a school and its culture as they present the best opportunity for growth of the Believers.

School leaders cannot leave new teacher development to chance. Leaders must be proactive and put time and resources behind the support and development of Tweeners, to methodically create positive school cultures.

THE SURVIVORS (MUHAMMAD, PP47-51, CH 5)

THEIR ORGANISATIONAL GOAL IS EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL SURVIVAL.

Fortunately this group is not widespread. They are the small group of teachers (<2%) who are burnt out (or going through a particularly difficult time in their personal life). They can be so overwhelmed by the demands of the profession that they (can) suffer from depression and merely survive from day to day. Teaching may not be the best profession for them. According to a study from Smith et al in Muhammad (p48) “workplace burnout isn’t the same as workplace stress. When you’re stressed

you care too much, but when you’re burnt out you don’t see any hope of improvement”. Survivors should not be ridiculed or demeaned, their condition is real and they require help.

When teachers burn out and succumb to daily stress, neither they nor their students (nor their co-teaching partner/s) benefit. The residual effects of both effective or ineffective teachers are measurable two years later.

THE FUNDAMENTALISTS (MUHAMMAD, P53-69, CH 6)

THEIR ORGANISATIONAL GOAL IS MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO.

Fundamentalists are staff members who are not only opposed to change, but organise to resist and thwart any change initiative. They can wield tremendous political power and are a major obstacle in implementing meaningful school reform. They actively work against the Believers. An organisation that does not embrace change and evolve does not improve. It is important to note that Fundamentalists enjoy practising as professional educators...it is irrational to expect people who benefited from a system (since they were 5 years old) to be the catalyst for changing that system. Fundamentalists collectively long for the way that schools used to operate. A Fundamentalist is not an ineffective teacher by virtue of his/her stance, their values make it very difficult to promote a healthy school culture.

There are four levels of Fundamentalists:

Level 1 – People who persist when they are given no clear reason for change. They need clear communication;

Level 2 – People who persist when they do not trust the person who tells them to change. They need to develop relationships, not to be ostracised;

Level 3 – People who persist when they view the alternative as more frightening. They need support and training to increase their capacity to be able to consider the context; and

Level 4 – People who feel that change may be admitting failure. They need to be monitored strongly and there needs to be a system of accountability implemented.

The cultural changes we have seen at Claremont College include:

- A move to shared or distributive leadership;
- Altering the original structure of our classrooms;
- Prioritising student learning;
- Transforming the way teachers work with each other;
- Creating teams who take responsibility for the whole grade;
- The use of data to develop programs for individuals and for the whole grade;
- Prioritising job-embedded learning where whole school and team-based learning occurs; and
- Working with the wider educational community to share our experiences and to learn from each other.

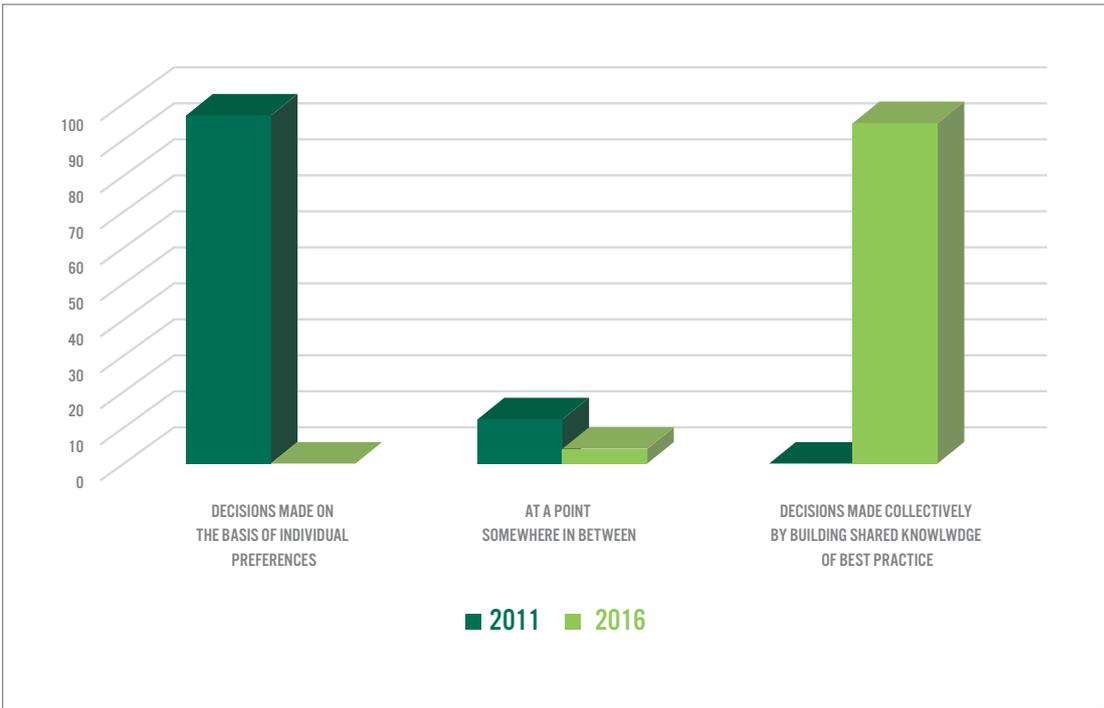
The most significant of the cultural shifts at Claremont College identified by our staff, and using 'Cultural Shifts in a PLC' from DuFour, DuFour & Eaker¹¹ are 'The Shift(s) in The Work Of Teachers'. It is worth noting that we looked at this document at the end of 2014, and while it provided us a road map for the possible cultural shifts outlined succinctly, the number of changes we were facing was too overwhelming to consider at that time. This list was shelved so we could work together on smaller tasks

rather than everything at once. We began to look at this list again in Term 2 of 2016, to find that we have achieved quite a number of these shifts, in a relatively short period of time. To begin with, we looked at 'The Shift In The Work Of Teachers':

- From decisions made on the basis of individual preferences to decisions made collectively by building shared knowledge of best practice;
- From 'collaboration lite' on matters unrelated to student achievement to collaboration explicitly focussed on issues and questions that most impact student achievement;
- From an assumption that 'these are my kids' to an assumption that 'these are our kids'; and
- From teachers gathering data from their individually constructed tests in order to assign grades to collaborative teams acquiring information from common assessments on order to (1) inform their individual and collective practice and (2) respond to students who need additional time and support.

Our data, represented in Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6, reflects the percentage of the respondents of Teaching Staff and Teaching and Learning Assistants who were with us in 2011 and could reflect on culture of that time, and the percentage of all the respondents in 2016.

FIGURE 3.3: A SHIFT FROM DECISIONS MADE INDIVIDUALLY TO DECISIONS MADE COLLECTIVELY (%)



¹¹ DuFour R, DuFour R & Eaker R, Professional Communities at Work – Plan Book, Solution Tree Press, 2006, pp6-7

FIGURE 3.4: A SHIFT FROM 'COLLABORATION-LITE' TO EXPLICIT COLLABORATION FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (%)

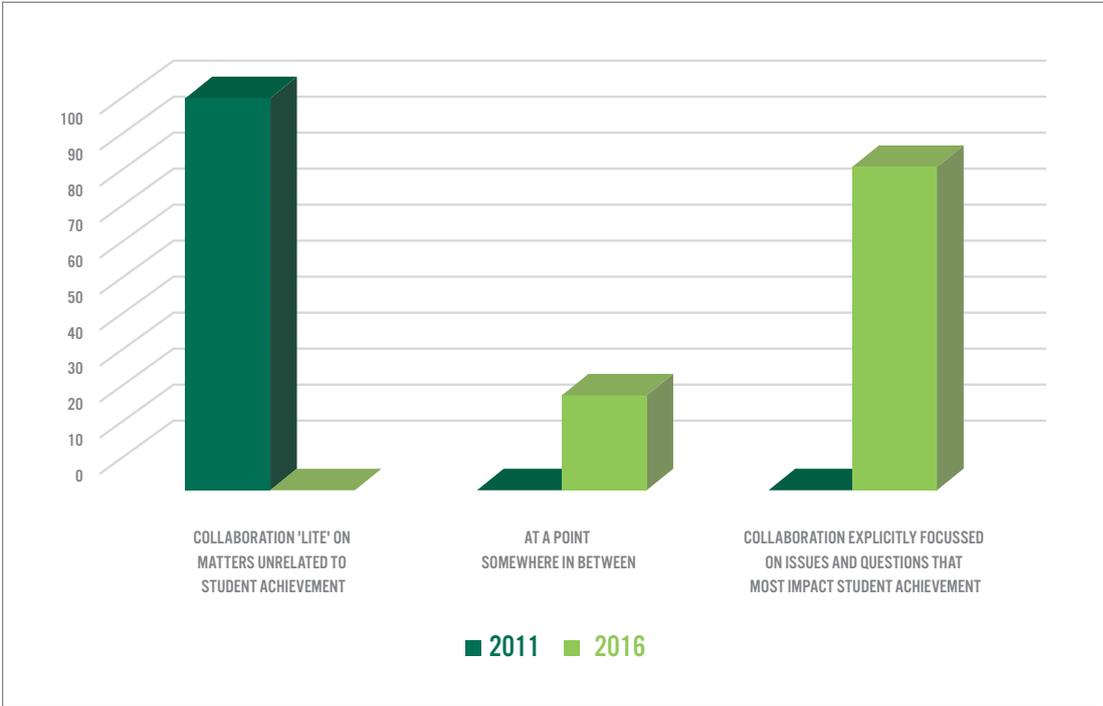


FIGURE 3.5: A SHIFT FROM AN ASSUMPTION THAT 'THESE ARE MY KIDS, THOSE ARE YOURS' TO AN ASSUMPTION THAT 'THESE ARE OUR KIDS' (%)

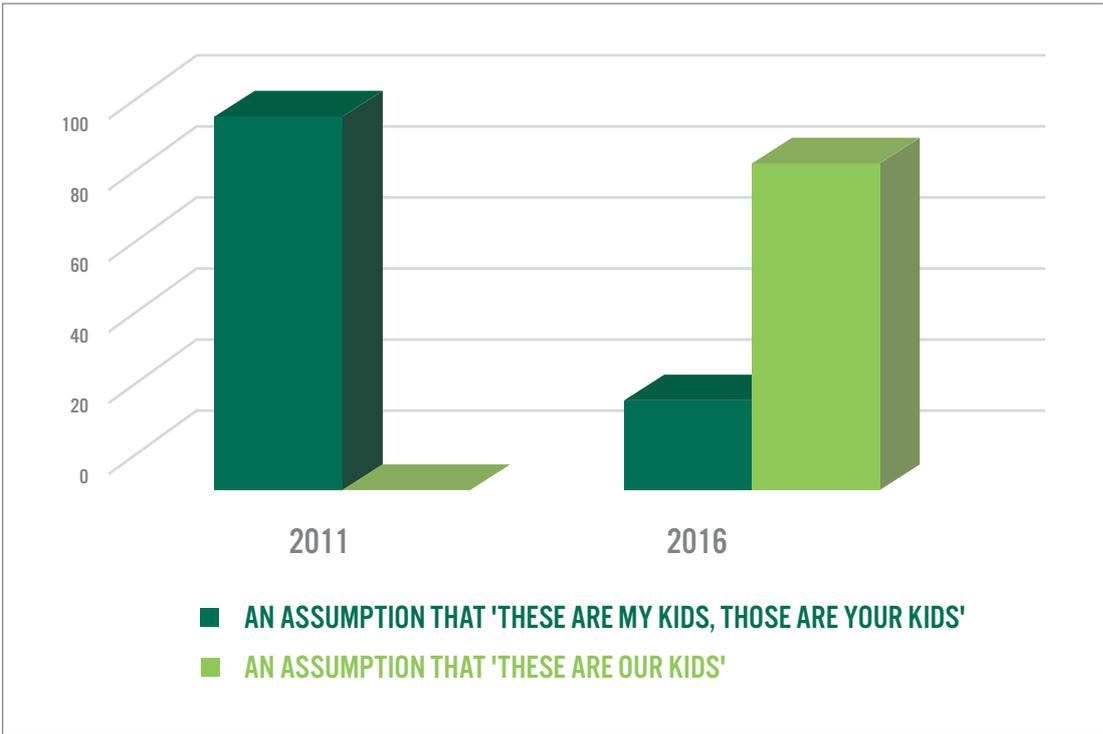
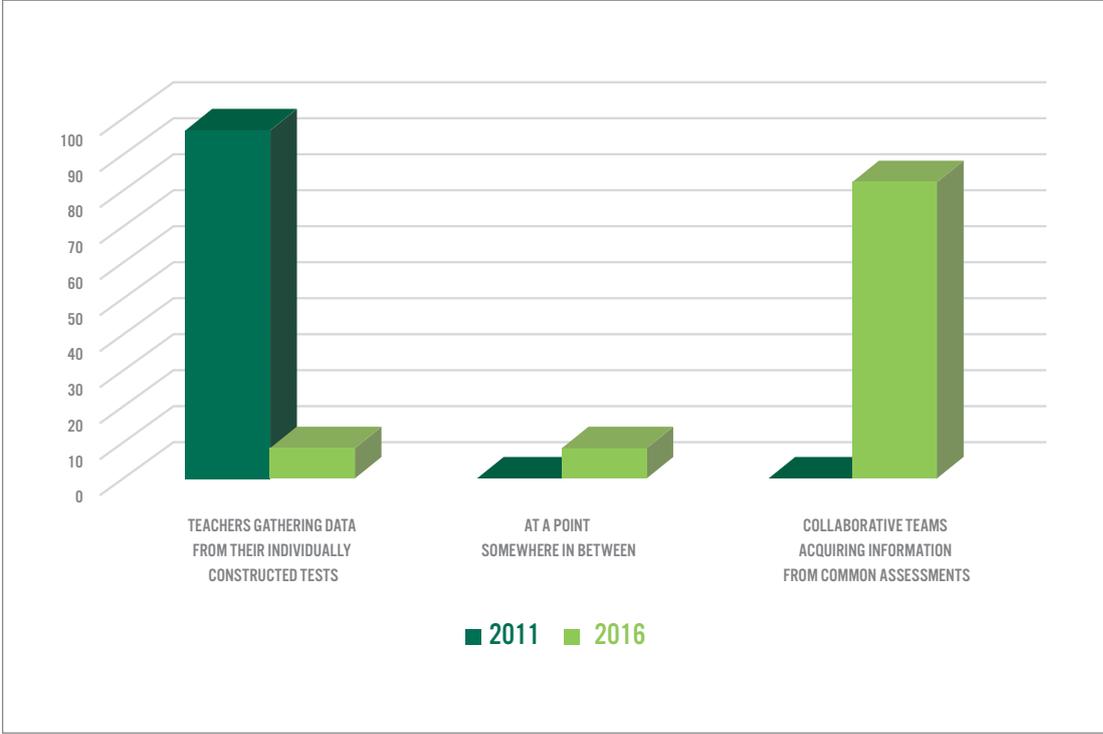


FIGURE 3.6: A SHIFT FROM TEACHERS GATHERING DATA INDIVIDUALLY TO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS ACQUIRING INFORMATION FROM COMMON ASSESSMENTS (%)



As mentioned earlier, we have given and continue to give, our staff time to become highly effective co-teaching practitioners, so that these cultural shifts could take place. We have moved from a school where much of the teaching and learning was done in isolation to one where all of the teaching and learning is done in collaboration, with the exception of our Specialist Staff.

[The Specialist Staff primarily work in isolation because there is only one of each for each of the specialist areas of Music, PE, Indonesian/Chinese or Library, and these staff provide the class teachers with release from face to face teaching (RFF). On a number of occasions in the past our Specialist staff have co-taught units of work, and at the time of writing, our Specialist Staff are working together to co-teach units of work with a common theme to be used across stages, when the timetable allows them to work together.]

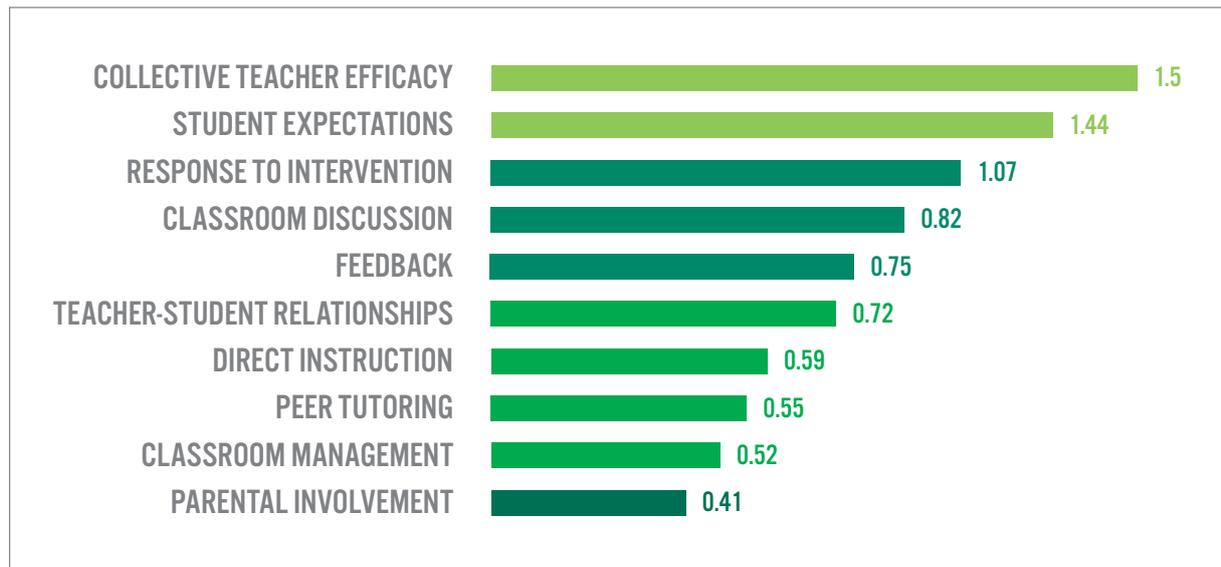
Our focus on the time given to our teachers and their learning is invaluable. Nothing is more important to achieving improved student learning than the quality of teachers. Hattie in ‘Visible Learning For Teachers – Maximising Impact On Learning’¹² says,

Teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning...when teachers meet to discuss, evaluate, and plan their teaching in light of the feedback evidence about the success or otherwise of their teaching strategies and their conceptions about progress and appropriate challenge.

¹² Hattie J, Visible Learning For Teachers – Maximising Impact On Learning, Routledge, 2012, p22

In this image from Hattie's¹³ research, collective teacher efficacy stands out as the most influential factor in student learning. This image is just the very top of Hattie's rankings of achievement.

FIGURE 3.7: WHAT MATTERS MOST IN RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (HATTIE, 2016)



Debora Masters in her article, 'Know thy impact: 4 questions to help you pin down what children are really learning'¹⁴, clearly articulates the collective impact teachers can have:

When everyone in a school believes that together they can make a difference, the impact on student attainment can be almost quadrupled (Eells, 2011¹⁵). This notion of collective efficacy across the school is a powerful precursor to student success. Combine this with having a collective and collaborative focus on teachers evaluating their impact and the results on student attainment can be even greater.

From another perspective, Blackmore et al.¹⁶ looked at curriculum, organisational culture and space to find connections to improved student outcomes. They state,

Collaboration and team teaching is, from the professional learning literature, likely to lead to improved student outcomes (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2002), but only with significant teacher professional development and supportive school cultures. Collaboration is not without issues—loss of autonomy, tension over work allocation, greater communication and interdependence among teachers and responsibility to others (York-Barr, Ghore & Sommers, 2007). Overall, in York-Barr et al. (2007), the teachers felt that the advantages of team teaching outweighed the disadvantages.

¹³ Hattie J, Image derived from Visible Learning Advertisement, 2016

¹⁴ Masters D, <http://visiblelearningplus.com/content/know-thy-impact-4-questions-help-you-pin-down-what-children-are-really-learning>

¹⁵ Eells, R. (2011). Meta-analysis of the relationship between collective efficacy and student achievement. Unpublished Ph.D., Loyola University of Chicago

¹⁶ Blackmore, J, Bateman, D, Loughlin, J, O'Mara, J & Aranda, G, 2011, *The connection between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places?*, The Centre for Research In Educational Futures, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University, <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30036968/blackmore-researchinto-2011.pdf>

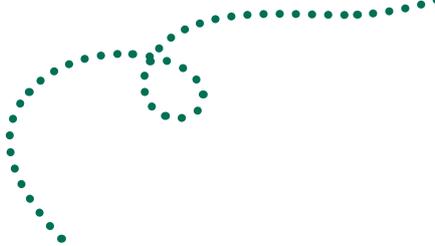
THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL CHANGE AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE

Our staff experiences align with all aspects of this summary from Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O'Mara and Aranda:

- Co-teaching and collaboration are more likely to bring about improved student outcomes;
- This can only be achieved as it is at Claremont College, through significant job-embedded professional development, and a supportive culture;
- Co-teaching takes time to adjust to because of the loss of autonomy, the increased need for communication and collaboration, and tension because of change; and
- The advantages of co-teaching for students far outweigh the disadvantages.

Through discussion with staff we have identified the following key points where co-teaching has brought about this dramatic change for students and their learning:

1. Two or more staff co-teaching, equates to students more likely to stay focused;
2. Improved staff to student ratio with one Teaching and Learning Assistant with every grade;
3. Improved opportunities for learning as all Teaching and Learning Assistants are now upskilled to work with small groups, especially in Literacy and Numeracy;
4. Greater support within each teaching team because when a child needs learning or behavioural support, it is far easier for one staff member to take a child aside to speak to them or settle them down, while the learning continues with the other staff in the room;
5. Greater flexibility of groupings because of the number of staff at any one time, and across the grade rather than within a class;
6. Improved spaces where students can find a place they like to work in;
7. Increased expectations that students will stay on task regardless of where they are working, and with whom they are working; and
8. Improved collaboration and communication which lead to improved student outcomes.

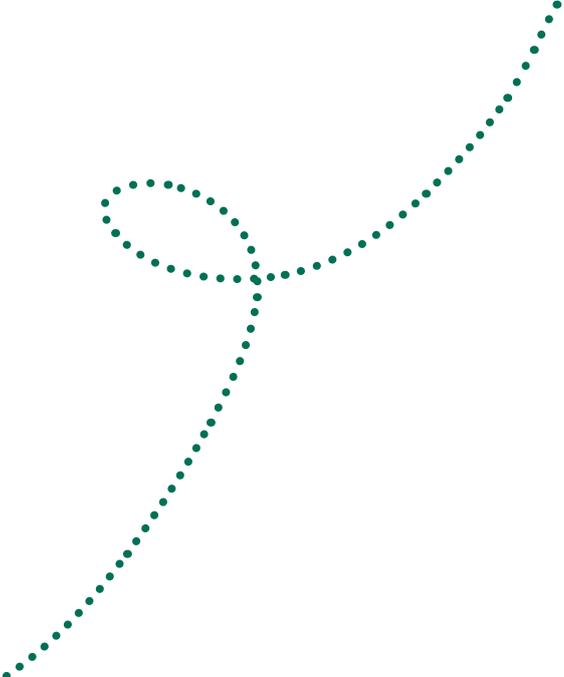


Our Take-Home Messages

ENSURE A DEDICATED STAFF MEMBER AND AN ACTION LEARNING TEAM DRIVE THE INITIAL STAGES OF CULTURAL CHANGE IN YOUR SCHOOL, GIVE THEM THE TIME AND RESOURCES TO DO THIS WELL.

IN BUSY PLACES LIKE SCHOOLS, WE RECOMMEND YOU ENGAGE A CONSULTANCY GROUP TO SUPPORT YOUR TEAM. THE TIME AND INVESTMENT WILL WORTH IT.

CULTURAL CHANGE IS CHALLENGING TO ACCOMPLISH AND TAKES TIME.





PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Claremont College journey has and continues to include a specifically targeted implementation of school-based professional development. This came about very early in our journey because there simply was not any professional development available for us to explore best practice in co-teaching, in Australia or even beyond our shores. Throughout this paper the terms, school-based, in-house and job-embedded are used interchangeably and all mean the professional development was created and occurred at school, led by staff within the school and is designed to help staff to embrace and embed the cultural and pedagogical changes needed to make co-teaching successful.

OUR YEAR 4 TEAM (2016) AGREE WITH THE RELEVANCE OF JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“The co-teaching walk-through day was inspiring and encouraging. We thoroughly enjoyed visiting the other classrooms throughout the school and learning from our fellow colleagues. It was also beneficial to be given the time to reflect on our own team, focusing on what we are doing well and what we can improve on. Moving forward, we think it would be useful for staff to be able to spend the whole day in classrooms - perhaps choosing specific KLAs/lessons they would like to see in action e.g. Guided Reading, and how other classes do it. We feel we will learn the most from our colleagues, and therefore the more opportunities we have to see how teachers are using the co-teaching environment, the better :)”

We began our commitment to in-house professional development believing ‘the answer to be in the room’, an expression used by Sarah Martin, the Principal of Stonefields School in Auckland. This has meant that with all of the expertise within the staff, together we could find the pathway to ensure our co-teaching models result in improved student outcomes. Our instincts and experiences have been backed up by various researchers including Barber et al, in DuFour & DuFour¹:

The research on effective professional development advises that simply sending educators to workshops will not change their practice unless they return to a school that provides multiple opportunities to practice their new skills and receive timely and precise feedback and ongoing support. Researchers agree professional development is most effective when it is job-embedded (occurring in the workplace rather than in workshops), collective (engaging a group rather than an individual), systematic (specifically aligned to the goals of the school and team), and ongoing rather than episodic.

Our staff agree with the importance of these last points especially, which capture our school’s professional development as:

- Job embedded;
- Collective;
- Systematic; and
- Ongoing.



¹ DuFour R & DuFour R, The School Leader’s Guijujumde to Professional Learning Communities At Work, Solution Tree Press, USA, 2012, p55

OUR YEAR 1 TEAM (2016) TALK ABOUT THE RELEVANCE OF JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Agenda & Content:

- *Well balanced and 'pre-conversation' was a good space to explore what we do as a school and how we can improve*
- *Good content in reading and great to read the Research Report*
- *Open and non-judgmental discussion*
- *Time to sit and talk about our practice was good*
- *Time to talk at lunchtime was helpful*

Relevance: The day was very relevant and was clear enough to know what we are achieving but open enough that we could make it personal to our situations.”

DuFour & DuFour in Muhammad² “note that ‘PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators’”. Our primary goal at Claremont College is improved student learning and outcomes, through co-teaching together because of job-embedded learning.

All educators know there are a plethora of programs, strategies, theories and examples of exemplary teaching practice, all with value in their own right. Therefore, it has been important for us to keep our focus on only the aspects of teaching and learning that we believed should be the right fit for Claremont College. The challenge for us was to align aspects of our teaching and learning that we already believed we were doing well or were committed to continuing to do well with only those where co-teaching could, we anticipated, enhance the program and hence the student learning. For Claremont College three of our programs that we needed to keep were CJ Simister’s Thinking & Learning Skills³, our programs for students who need Independent Programs, (IPs), implemented with the assistance and funding from the Association of Independent Schools, and The Learning Pit.

I make this point because all schools are doing amazing things and achieving success within their schools, and change does not mean throwing out all of these existing programs. Keeping all of the structures and programs that already work for you, while being selective about what you introduce to achieve change, in this case the change to co-teaching.

Through our combined efforts and experiences we have developed a number of aspects of our job-embedded professional development at the time of writing this paper, and each of these are explained in detail in the following pages of this section.

These include:

1. The co-teaching models - What co-teaching looks like;
2. Courageous Conversations to Professional Dialogue;
3. Working in Teams
4. Best Practice in a Claremont College Co-Teaching Classroom; and
5. Collaborative Professional Development – Walkthroughs.

² Muhammad A, *Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009, Ch6 p80

³ Simister CJ, *How to Teach Thinking & Learning Skills – A Practical Program For The Whole School*, Paul Chapman Publishing, 2007

With time, it has become evident to us that each aspect of our job-embedded professional development must be revisited regularly. Each year new staff join us, new teams are formed and relationships change. Many visitors to our school ask how our staff arrived at the point where co-teaching is part of the culture of Claremont College. We believe it is through our school-embedded learning, where we are all learning from each other while finding value-added ways to improve student outcomes, our culture has changed and developed. Our school has focussed on staff wellbeing and relationships during this time, so we are suggesting continuous job-embedded learning while considering the needs of the staff.

While we now employ new staff who know we are a 'co-teaching school', and it is a given that they will be co-teaching, the reality of co-teaching all day, every day, can still come as an enormous change for some new staff members. However, it is not only the act of co-teaching that can be overwhelming, it is the constant relationship building that needs to occur with the members of each team, that takes time to adjust to. As noted in the section about cultural change, teachers are conditioned to working alone the majority of the time, so working with others and constantly being on display takes time to adjust and time to become comfortable.

“GOOD TEACHERS HAVE ALWAYS BONDED WITH THEIR STUDENTS; NOW THEY ARE BONDING WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES AS WELL.” (FISHER ET AL., P161⁴)

TIME IS SO IMPORTANT.

We have now initiated a number of strategies to give our staff the time and skills they need to become highly effective co-teaching practitioners. These have included:

- Time to focus on and reflect upon where we were when the project started;
- Time to spend with grade partners to plan what co-teaching will look like for each team every year;
- Time and skills factored in to have courageous conversations and to understand the difference between these and professional dialogue;
- Time to learn from one another through job-embedded professional development, walkthroughs, staff meetings dedicated to co-teaching;
- Time to develop trust and allow teams to work through co-teaching at their own pace;
- Time to learn from other schools;
- Time and skills to learn about managing change, and to understand the differences between structural change and cultural change;
- Time and permission to laugh with each other and to make mistakes and to learn along the way; and most importantly;
- Time and skills to consider our impact on student outcomes and to maximise all of the positive influences co-teaching can provide.

Each of the six aspects of professional development at Claremont College will now be explained in greater detail, with reference to current research embedded, stories about our experiences, relevant data, and take home messages about each.

⁴ Fisher D, Frey N, Pumpian I, *How to Create a Culture of Achievement - In Your School and Classroom*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2012, p161

OUR TIMELINE FOR INTRODUCING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 2011** → Plan to move to co-teaching is hatched
→ Pit Thinking and Thinking and Learning Dispositions are already embedded into curriculum
- 2012** → 2 x year groups trialling co-teaching
- 2013** → All grades co-teaching at some level
→ Job-embedded professional development began with co-teaching models introduced and skills to have courageous conversations discussed
→ Co-teaching Walkthroughs began
- 2014** → All staff teams engaged in co-teaching walkthroughs
→ The use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria introduced
- 2015** → Focus on team harmony, relationships and staff wellbeing
→ Co-teaching walkthroughs continue with teams involved in job-embedded professional development
- 2016** → Ongoing consolidation of team harmony, relationships and staff wellbeing
→ Ongoing job-embedded professional development
→ Fine tuning co-teaching with existing staff and up-skilling new staff

4A.

THE CO-TEACHING MODELS - WHAT CO-TEACHING LOOKS LIKE

There are a number of sets of co-teaching models available online and within research articles but these are all related to how a Learning Support Teacher co-teaches with a Classroom Teacher. However, these are a good place for any school to start their co-teaching transformation. In fact, your teachers soon realise they already use some of the models every week in some Key Learning Areas, and this initial realisation for the Claremont College staff was a relief... we were not introducing something that was entirely new.

We began by using the models found in *Co-Teaching In The Classroom*¹ <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html> written by Rosario, Coles, Redmon and Strawbridge, and originally found online. We soon discovered a number of shortcomings in these models for our school (because this document was written to help Classroom Teachers and Learning Support Teachers work together) and now have adapted these models to suit our context. The Claremont College models that focus on Classroom

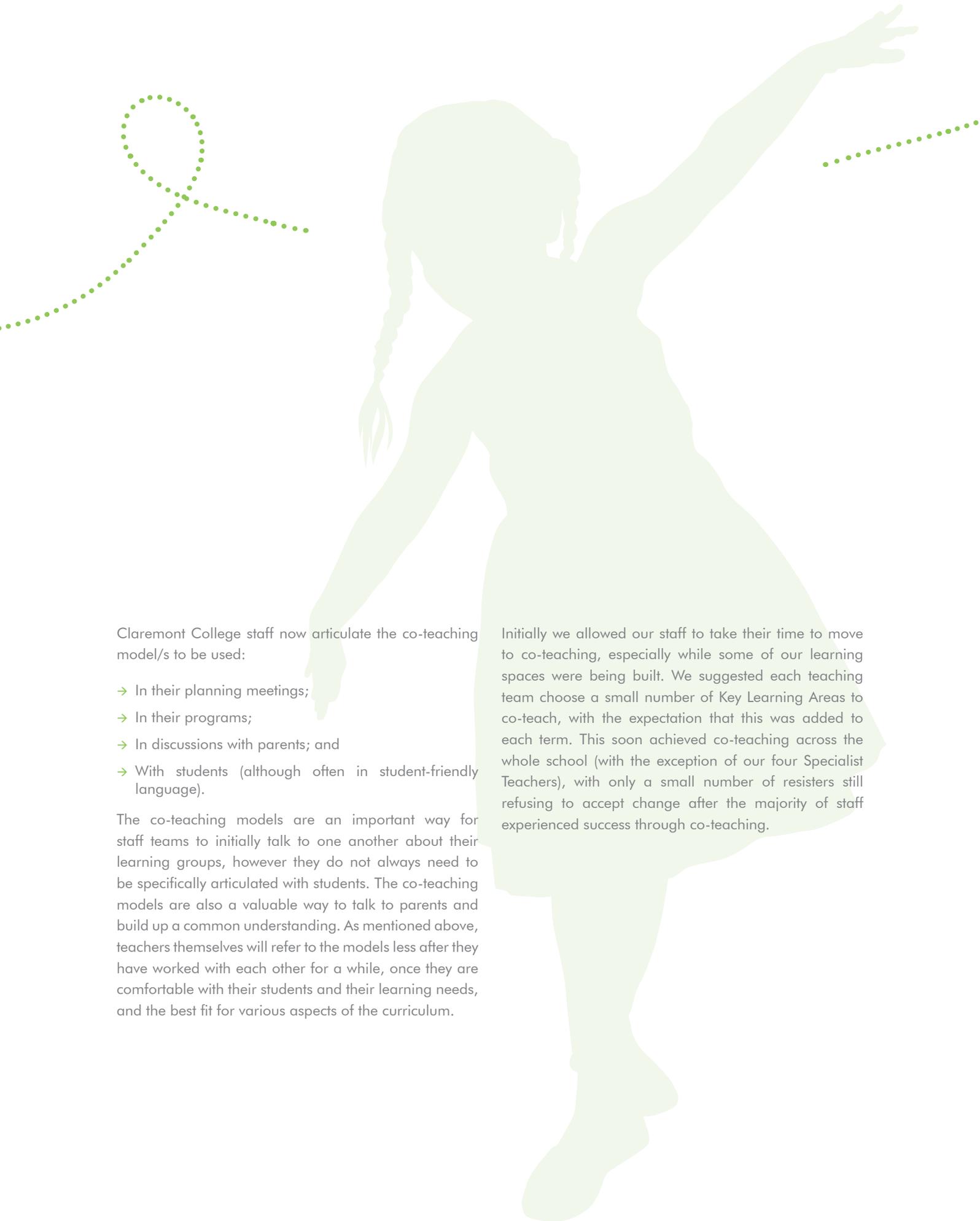


Teachers working together, along with Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants, are outlined Table 4.1.

These models have come together because of a consultative process where groups of staff worked together to determine the strengths and challenges of each model. As well as this, our staff have read and discussed all of the models and have been given the opportunity to add to and/or fine tune the details within the document, so that it encapsulates co-teaching at Claremont College.

For us it has been important to revisit these models each year as new teams form. It has also been essential for us to have the expectation that the language of the co-teaching models is being articulated, and it is important that consideration is given to the models every day so that all members of each team are aware of the configuration to be used and why. Once there is clarity about how co-teaching can look across the school day, the need to be specific and explicit becomes less relevant.

¹ Rosario B, Coles C, Redmon P, and Strawbridge J, CoTeachingInTheClassroomREVMAGPresentation.pdf, Prince George's Public Schools Region IV



Claremont College staff now articulate the co-teaching model/s to be used:

- In their planning meetings;
- In their programs;
- In discussions with parents; and
- With students (although often in student-friendly language).

The co-teaching models are an important way for staff teams to initially talk to one another about their learning groups, however they do not always need to be specifically articulated with students. The co-teaching models are also a valuable way to talk to parents and build up a common understanding. As mentioned above, teachers themselves will refer to the models less after they have worked with each other for a while, once they are comfortable with their students and their learning needs, and the best fit for various aspects of the curriculum.

Initially we allowed our staff to take their time to move to co-teaching, especially while some of our learning spaces were being built. We suggested each teaching team choose a small number of Key Learning Areas to co-teach, with the expectation that this was added to each term. This soon achieved co-teaching across the whole school (with the exception of our four Specialist Teachers), with only a small number of resisters still refusing to accept change after the majority of staff experienced success through co-teaching.

TABLE 4.1: CLAREMONT COLLEGE CO-TEACHING MODELS

Co-teaching is where two or more teachers work together to present the same lesson – each equally participating in the instruction. However, variations to this model will occur throughout every day and within lessons, in the following ways:

ONE LEAD – OTHERS SUPPORT/ASSIST/PROMPT (SAP)

(May also be called Team Teaching)

One teacher is the lead presenter in the lesson while the other staff comment, encourage students, ask questions, model, demonstrate and prompt both the lead teacher and the students, and support student engagement and the flow of the lesson.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A number of staff bring their combined expertise to the lesson → Builds and models good relationships for the students → Can model staff learning from each other, and/or making mistakes and learning from these → Encourages professional growth → Staff are able to support each other → A number of pairs of eyes to encourage student engagement and appropriate behaviour → Time can be used for presentations of student learning (e.g. stories, experiments, projects) → Good for introducing lessons, learning intentions, success criteria before moving to groups or individual learning tasks → Builds positive year group culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The time given to whole grade instruction or learning should be minimised, because of the size of the group and the learning is often lessened with teacher-directed learning → Can challenge the authority of the support/prompt staff → Letting go of ownership and/or perfectionism for some staff → Student perceptions of who is the 'lead' teacher – need to ensure the Lead Teacher is equally shared or one teacher may be seen as the better teacher → The Lead Teacher needs to encourage input from other staff → The other staff need to feel comfortable on their support/prompt role → Can be difficult to implement when a Casual Teacher is on the grade

DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING

Teachers present the same lesson (with the same theme) to different groups of students within the same grade, however, the learning intention and the material is presented in different ways based on the needs of the students.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Targets students at a particular point of need → Teacher can focus on planning for one particular group's needs → All teachers have ownership and status → Smaller group instruction for students to maximise learning → At least two staff have input into student progress → Groups can be of different size according to need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All staff align learning intentions with the theme, according to the group → Groups may still have very diverse ability → Assessment tasks to be aligned → Greater communication needed between staff → Students can be labelled by being in a certain group → Parents understanding of the flexibility of groupings

PARALLEL TEACHING

The grade is divided into two classes (Years 1-6) or three classes (Kindergarten), with all teachers planning the instruction together and teaching the same lesson with the same learning intention, at the same time to heterogeneous groups. This model is rarely used or encouraged at Claremont College.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lowers student to teacher ratio → Allows for more student interaction than whole class instruction → Allows the teacher to get to know and monitor the students in their home group → Less confronting for new staff to co-teaching → Useful early in the year, prior to parent interviews → Can be useful when a casual teacher is on the grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → It is more difficult for the Learning Support Teacher and the Teaching and Learning Assistant to work across the grade → Reduces the number of eyes working with each class → Can increase parent comparisons of teacher expertise → Staff more vulnerable when working alone with a group → Noise levels need to be considered

STATION TEACHING

Teachers divide instructional content into several segments and present the content in separate stations around the learning space. Each staff member may be assigned to a group or might move between groups, and some groups may work independently.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lowers student staff ratio → Allows increased student to student and student to staff interaction → Effective assessment model as allows staff to monitor student progress within a small group → Easy to use for differentiated groups → Encourages different styles of learning → Encourages cooperative and collaborative learning → Encourages independent learning → Staff preparation focusses on a smaller share of the stations → Will allow learning for groups within groups → Effective when a casual teacher is on the grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Planning time must be factored in → Communication between staff is essential → Pacing for groups needs to synchronise → Noise levels will need to be considered when planning the activities → Transition times between activities need to be kept tight to maximise learning time → Students need to be taught the skills of independence, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and responsibility for their own 'possessions'

PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL)

Students work individually on their chosen projects, while the Teaching Team assist/support/encourage students as required.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Students have freedom to choose what they want to research → The emphasis is on the process and the learning rather than a final product → The focus is on the process and the learning: team work, problem solving, independent thinking → Students have an active role, student directed learning → Hands on experiences with research → Model can be changed/scaffolded to fit students' goals and needs → Students find this learning more enjoyable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Staff find it difficult to let go of their control of the teaching and learning → Need for flexibility and allow students to be in many different points in their PBL → Parent communication needs to be increased to help them adjust to this kind of learning → Can lead to poorer performance initially, especially final products → Sometimes resources are limited → Learning can be frustrating for students who are used to traditional methods of learning → There may be conflicting information at times

“WE FEEL THE WORKLOAD HAS DEFINITELY INCREASED AND WE FEEL LIKE WE ARE MOST LIKELY THE BEST TEACHERS WE HAVE EVER BEEN”. AJ 2015

A brief summary of each and the strengths and challenges of each model, as we see them at Claremont College, are included in the table. The fluidity and flexibility of the models should not be new to exemplary teaching practitioners. For example:

- One Lead – Others Support/Assist/Prompt is best used for introducing a lesson to the whole grade, but should not be used for long periods of time;
- Differentiated Teaching is perfect for Literacy and Numeracy groups when student learning is differentiated according to learning needs;
- Station Teaching allows staff to divide content and learning intentions into several sections;
- Parallel Teaching allows staff to divide the grade into the class groups or home groups so that the teacher can work with the group that they are pastorally responsible for (such as reporting, liaising with parents, preparing independent learning plans); and
- The Project Based Learning Model is used when students are to work independently on their individual projects (this could also be considered Station Teaching with every child having a ‘station’, or Differentiated Teaching, where staff roam between individuals rather than groups).

Sadly, “we’ve heard some describe co-teaching as a model that allows one teacher to have a coffee break while the other is involved with students. Nothing could be further from the truth”² (Kumuma-Powell & Powell) (2015, p63). And nothing could be further from the truth with the majority of our staff at Claremont College. Initially our staff like they had never worked so hard, and in their words, primarily because there was no more ‘winging it’, no more turning up with little preparation; the planning must be done, the conversations about the learning intentions must be had, and the preparation must be completed beforehand, because we are not working in isolation any more. This is not a suggestion that previously our staff were slack in any way, they were not, but they can see now that we are all better teaching practitioners.



To get a better understanding of co-teaching from the voices of two of our staff, both in their second year of co-teaching when they gave their presentation, click on Co-Teaching In Action, a presentation made to an AIS conference in 2015. <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>

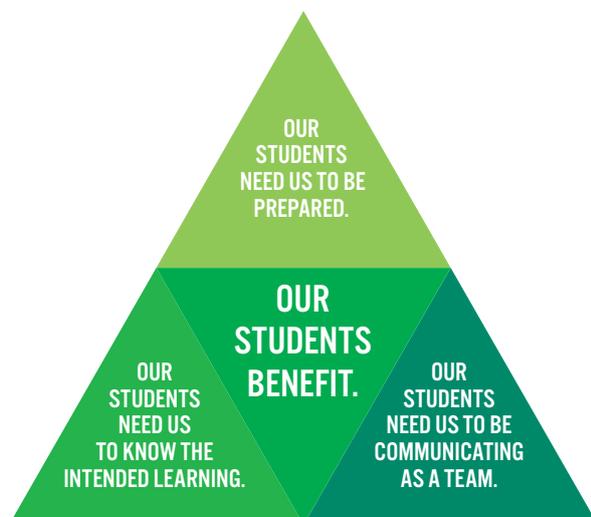
² Kusuma-Powell O, Powell W, Lifting the Status of Learning Support Teachers – The equal status of co-teachers within schools is key to fostering learning, in Co-Teaching – Making It Work, Educational Leadership, Dec 2015/January 2016, Vol 73 No 4, p63

“WE FEEL LIKE WE HAVE BEEN THE BEST TEACHERS WE HAVE EVER BEEN IN OUR CAREER BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIATED AND TALKED THROUGH.” JP 2015



Our teaching teams now need each of us to be better prepared, and importantly...

- Our students need us to be prepared;
- Our students need us to know the intended learning;
- Our students need us to be communicating as a team; and
- Our students benefit.



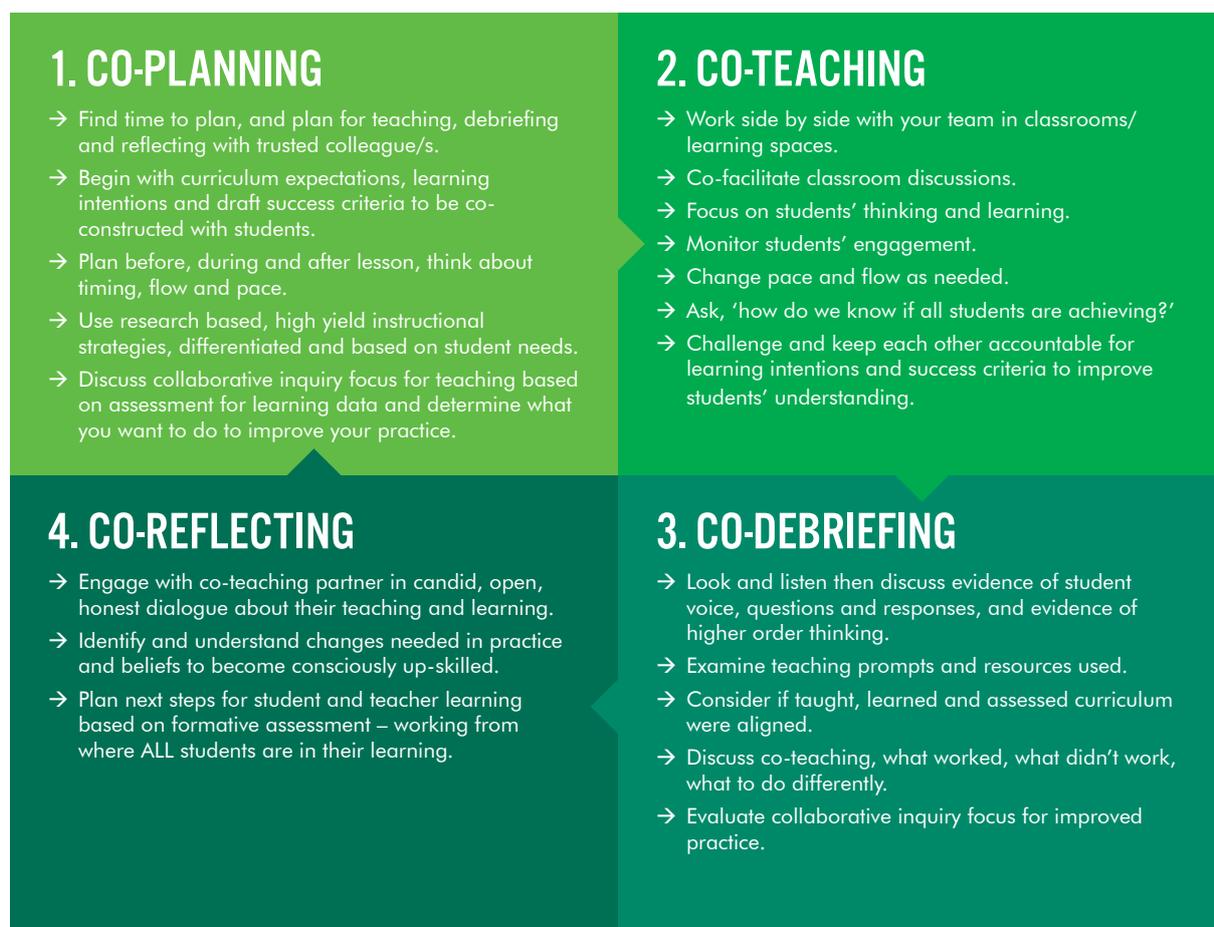
Initially, the change from a single teacher in a classroom to a co-teaching model took time and adjustments. Many aspects of planning and organisation that were once held in the head of the single teacher now need to be communicated with others, and often not just the co-teaching partner, there is also the Teaching and Learning Assistant, and often the Learning Support Teacher to speak to. Good communication takes time, and time needs to be factored into the preparation of classes. The amount of time, for communicating and relationships, was one of the unexpected elements of our move to co-teaching. Staff often talk and plan through their morning tea break, their lunch break, and naturally their release from face to face teaching time. This in itself is not unusual but it needs to be acknowledged that communication with your team takes a lot of time.

Sharratt and Fullan, in *Putting Faces on the Data*³ talk about a co-teaching cycle of ‘co-planning → co-teaching → co-debriefing → co-reflecting’ as ‘the most powerful way to improve teaching practice and to implement the changes in assessment and instruction that we’ve studied, observed and discussed... It pushes professionals to make their practices transparent and public in order to become increasingly more skilled, reflective and thoughtful’. Their table, The Co-Teaching Cycle, pulls together the aspects of co-teaching that occur before and after the teaching, the things that take time, and also the things that improve teaching practice.

³ Sharratt L, & Fullan M, *Putting Faces On The Data*, Corwin, 2012, p118-120

**TABLE 4.2: THE CO-TEACHING CYCLE
DEEP AND DELIBERATE REFLECTIONS ON AND CHANGES IN PRACTICE WITH TEACHING PARTNERS**

(adapted for Claremont College from Sharratt L, & Fullan, 2012, p120)



Professor Blackmore⁴ and her colleagues, in 'The connection between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places?', talk about the adaptations teachers need to make when they begin to work in open planned spaces:

There is a possible dissonance between how teachers and students anticipate and then experience these new spaces. Literature indicates teachers enjoy novel spaces, and are usually encouraged to experiment with student organisation (e.g. individual, groups, whole class) within specific types of physical spaces. Yet there is little recognition of the preparation required for teachers and students to effectively transition into using new learning spaces in terms of pedagogies, as well as setting realistic expectations and contingency

planning. If teachers are not well prepared and given leeway for risk taking and failure, particularly if disruption is ongoing, they may revert to 'default pedagogies' or 'the way we used to do things' rather than explore innovative pedagogies (Thomson, 2009 in Blackmore et al, 2011, p15)

We have seen evidence of these 'default pedagogies' when visiting some other schools, and from time to time in our own school, in the early days. The importance of good communication, courageous conversations (at times), and job-embedded professional development cannot be underestimated, and in particular a plan for sustained and achievable methods of ensuring the move to co-teaching is successful.

⁴ Blackmore Prof J, Bateman D, Loughlin J, O'Mara J, and Aranda G, *The connection between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places?*, The Centre for Research In Educational Futures, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University, <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30036968/blackmore-researchinto-2011.pdf>

THE EFFECTS OF CO-TEACHING MODELS AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE

- The Co-Teaching Models gave us a sense of direction and a pathway to guide our common language of the structures required to work with the whole grade.
- The models we developed also gave us a vehicle to discuss what each staff member of each team is required to do to improve student learning.
- The Co-Teaching Models allow staff to plan in teams using the best model for each Key Learning Area.
- Having a set of Co-Teaching Models ensures that assumptions are not made about the structure of a lesson as staff are involved in planning.
- The Co-Teaching Models can develop and change to ensure they reflect the best structures for student engagement and student learning.
- The Co-Teaching Models provide ongoing professional development as each member of the teaching team is continually learning from the other members as they teach and assist.

Our Take-Home Messages

GIVE YOUR STAFF SOME CO-TEACHING MODELS TO WORK FROM, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT THE SAME CO-TEACHING MODELS YOU END UP WITH ACROSS YOUR SCHOOL.

MAKE SURE YOU ALLOW YOUR STAFF TIME TO ADJUST TO THE CO-TEACHING MODELS, BUT BE VERY CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE NO GOING BACK TO WORKING IN ISOLATION.

CHANGE TAKES TIME, BE PATIENT.

4B.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS TO PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

At Claremont College our staff began to speak about 'courageous conversations' a couple years prior to our move to co-teaching, so it was useful for us to be able to use these skills as we embarked on our co-teaching journey. Courageous conversations need to be had from time to time at every level within a school; our challenge was to encourage and nurture courageous conversations so that they became a part of our culture, and then to evolve into the professional dialogue needed to improve our practices and our culture.

We have been trained and encouraged to have these conversations from a professional level. JP 2015

Having time to get it all out (through a courageous conversation), shifted our relationship completely where we both now understand each other and we both know a bit more about how each other work. JH 2015

It certainly is a much safer place (to work because of courageous conversations). LV 2015

For us, the courageous conversations we would need to have with one another, to change from working in a one-teacher classroom to working in a multiple staff learning space, were multi-faceted as they included many aspects of our move to co-teaching such as personal fears, prior experiences, sharing of knowledge, and even refusal to change, just to name a few. Staff needed to feel encouraged to speak up, to listen to one another, to contribute to and problem solve challenges, to share successes along the way, and to embrace failures and to learn from these. The change to co-teaching occurred easily for some, but was very difficult for others and we recognised early the need to encourage professional dialogue. We needed to provide the infrastructure and time to support our staff, to enable this dialogue to happen.

For example, the types of infrastructure Claremont College used/s:

- a) External consultants (New River) to facilitate conversations with individuals, in small groups, and as a whole staff;
- b) Time set aside within staff meetings;
- c) Team meetings structured so that expectations were clear; and
- d) 1:1 discussions with an executive staff member or a mentor are encouraged.

We knew in theory what we needed to achieve, our consultants (New River) encouraged us to improve our professional dialogue, we knew we needed to be



courageous and have 'difficult' conversations with one another, but this was all easier said than done, as we were not a group of people who found this easy. Some deeper soul searching needed to take place because as a staff we were very good at telling each other what we were good at, but avoided telling each other how to improve. We recognised that we were not only inefficient and ineffectual at giving constructive feedback, we were not good at receiving constructive feedback, and we would often take feedback personally. This culture, albeit very positive on the surface, needed to change.

Over time, we have discovered that we now need less courageous conversations, because our communication skills improved, and the conversations between colleagues have become professional dialogue that use positive discussion focussing on student learning and outcomes. Having said this, we still need to remember this aspect of relationship building must be reintroduced and refreshed each year with new teams, new staff, and even teams who have worked together previously. This is a good time to look at the video of two of our staff who explain how their difficult working relationship was improved because of 'an event', where they courageously talked to each other about how they individually were feeling, and how they worked through their differences for their own benefit and of course for the benefit of their students. <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>



There are many resources to help us to have courageous conversations, to empower us to speak up, to ensure we keep our professionalism, to help us to be the recipient of a courageous conversation, and to be a good listener, but all are easier said than done. Change takes time. However, we all need to start somewhere, and at Claremont College we very quickly realised that we were engaged in professional dialogue and rarely having courageous conversations.

You will be in a much better place to have a courageous conversation if you have already built up an emotional bank account of positive interactions with the person you want to speak to, prior to having a courageous conversation.

The Claremont College tips for having courageous conversations and professional dialogue (adapted from 'Ten Tips For Courageous Conversations In The Workplace'¹) and knowing the difference are in the following table.

WE VERY QUICKLY REALISED WE WERE ENGAGED IN PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE AND RARELY HAVING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS.

¹ Ten Tips For Courageous Conversations In The Workplace, <http://www.enforbusiness.com>

TABLE 4.3: TEN TOP TIPS FOR COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

ADAPTED FROM TEN TIPS FOR COURAGEOUS
CONVERSATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE,
[HTTP://WWW.ENFORBUSINESS.COM](http://www.enforbusiness.com)

- 1 • Be clear about what you are trying to achieve. Often when something is worrying you or you are feeling anxious about talking to a colleague, you lose sight of the problem and what you are actually trying to achieve.
- 2 • Make sure you are really listening to the other person. Sometimes we are so focussed on what is troubling us that we do not accurately hear our colleague's point of view. Once you have outlined the problem, listen first to their perception. There might actually have been something you could have done earlier to avoid this situation, for example, has the incident occurred previously and nothing was said, is the colleague new and could not know the organisational history of expectation, could professional development have been offered before now? However, do not avoid a conversation by thinking it is too late now, 'better late than never' is a good expression in this instance.
- 3 • Understand what gives you the right to initiate the conversation. If you need to have a conversation about student learning for example, state this so that the issue can be addressed and hopefully resolved. Expect a resolution before the conversation has ended. If you want to ask your colleague to resist from taking personal phone calls during your meeting time, do this because your meeting will be more productive and you will not run over time – the same expectation will be made of you, of course. Keep the reason work-place related, not personal.
- 4 • Give thought to how you can have your conversation kind-heartedly. Not everyone receives criticism well, no matter how big or small, and sometimes you will be unprepared for this. Your honourable intention may find you on the back foot, so package it with positives, share the blame and solve the problem together, but do not fob off the intent of the conversation as you will find that you will avoid difficult conversations in the future. Leave your pride at the door, before entering.
- 5 • Give thought to how you will set up the meeting. Most situations or circumstances require no planned meeting, especially after you and those you work with are comfortable with giving and receiving feedback, however, some courageous conversations do require thought and planning, so make sure the recipient does not feel ambushed. You may even need to consider the time of day or week.

- 6 • Look for the positive in a situation. Package your conversation with positive reflections of other workplace matters. Look for positive ways you might help the recipient. Be open to making changes yourself, and look for ways to make compromises; no one wants to feel they have had to make all of the changes or adjustments – they will feel they have lost and you have won.
- 7 • Do not become defensive. Stay calm, breath, respond slowly and offer reassurance. There is an art to building and maintaining a work place relationship while trying to convey information or a perspective that the other person might find hard to hear. Think about an opener such as “I feel this conversation may be difficult, but I am confident it will benefit both of us” or “I need to have a courageous conversation with you as I need to know how you feel about a situation”.
- 8 • Be honest about the effect on you. Authenticity, humility and integrity tend to produce better responses in others. Say something like, “to be honest I feel embarrassed when...” or “I feel proud of our team when...”.
- 9 • Use descriptive language not evaluative language. Stick to the facts, avoid exaggeration.
- 10 • Look forward to solutions, not backwards to blame. Move as quickly as possible to the next stage where you can work productively, in a way that is acceptable to all parties.

Hopefully all of these tips will not be needed often, but it is important to remember that co-teaching requires a whole new skill set than when working in isolation. Jason Flom in ‘An Administrator’s Guide to Co-Teaching’² says in his article, ‘Sometimes You Need Couples Therapy’,

The nice thing about teaching alone is that you have autonomy; you can make decisions without having to talk through everything. In co-teaching, you need to make room for shared discussion. It’s like coming up with a future plan with a spouse or significant other – you have to take time, be patient, listen and be willing to compromise.

Relationship building is something we now work on far more than we did prior to our introduction to co-teaching. To help build positive relationships, the following sentence starters can be useful. These come from Jennifer Abrams³, an international education consultant.

Sentence Starters:

- “Tell me more about what makes you say that.”
- “I’m not willing to agree with that generalisation.”
- “Do you think that’s true generally? Do you have a specific student or example in mind?”
- “Some of the words you just used make me uncomfortable.”

² Murawski WW & Bernhardt P, An Administrator’s Guide to Co-Teaching, Co-Teaching, Making It Work, EL Educational Leadership, Dec15/Jan16, Vol73, No4, p32

³ Abrams J, <https://www.aims-mi.org/uploaded/Abrams90minHHC.pdf> 2013, p11

"I don't agree with what you just said. Could you please share more about what you mean?"

"That makes me feel uncomfortable. Can we talk about it?"

"That seems unfair to me. Do you really feel that way?"

"Could you explain that to me please?"

"Tell me more about what makes you say that."

"I have a different opinion, but I'm willing to listen and share."

"Here's an example of how I feel differently."

As mentioned previously, our fear of having conversations with our peers soon moved to professional dialogue as 'par for the course' so that we are usually now more able to talk about what is normal or expected in any given circumstance. Our staff quickly learnt what to say, and to hear what is intended, during colleague feedback.

'Saying what you mean without being mean – How to give colleague feedback that will both promote change and preserve your professional relationship'⁴ by Marceta Reilly, has some useful tips about a Reflective Feedback Frame, to consider:

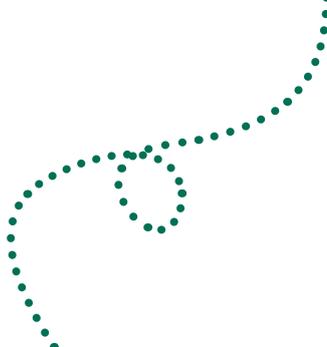
1. Offer a clarifying statement or question connected to your colleague's practice or co-teaching;
2. State the value of the person you are talking with or the idea under consideration; and
3. Pose a reflective question or a possible action to stimulate thinking.

This kind of feedback is specific and builds on people's strengths.

THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING THE SKILLS TO HAVE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

- Job-embedded professional development provides a gateway for staff to open up about their insecurities around giving and receiving professional feedback.
- These skills needed to be learnt and have empowered our whole staff to engage in courageous conversations, transforming the depth of the professional culture of our school.
- Ensuring that courageous conversations are about student learning rather than personal incompatibilities has enabled this cultural change to occur.
- Courageous conversations soon became every day professional dialogue for our staff so that now it is rare to need to have a courageous conversation.
- Courageous conversations and now professional dialogue, have improved planning sessions, meetings and general staff morale.

⁴ Reilly M, Saying what you mean without being mean – How to give colleague feedback that will both promote change and preserve your professional relationship, An Administrator's Guide to Co-Teaching, Co-Teaching, Making It Work, EL Educational Leadership, Dec15/Jan16, Vol73, No4, p36-40

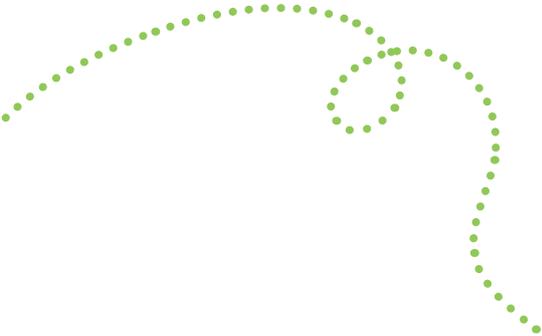


Our Take-Home Messages

**DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF
HAVING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH
YOUR STAFF AND GIVING THEM THE SKILLS
TO GIVE AND TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK.**

**DE-PERSONALISE THE FEEDBACK – WE ARE IN
THE BUSINESS OF STUDENT LEARNING SO KEEP
THE FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING.**

**CHANGE TAKES TIME, AND THE TIME USED FOR THIS
ASPECT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS VALUABLE.**



4C.

WORKING IN TEAMS



The third notable focus for Claremont College has been the focus on our teaching and learning teams. This is, the year group teams that include all Class Teachers for the grade, and a TLA (Teaching and Learning Assistant) dedicated to each year group. It should be noted here that the role of our Teaching and Learning Assistants has moved from a primary focus on administrative

duties and support for high needs students, to a primary focus of supporting students within each year group, no matter what their individual or group needs. The TLAs now spend the majority of their days within the learning spaces which is having an immeasurable and profound effect on student learning and engagement.

Mrs J and Mrs L (Teaching and Learning Assistants) always seem to know when to help me when I am not sure what to do, they don't make a fuss or make me feel like I am a bother.

Mr B helps me to be calm when I get angry and he helps me to think about how to be nice to people.

The TLAs help keep the classrooms neat and tidy and they help supervise groups that are not working with a teacher.

It's good to have a third opinion and a third person to help.

If the teacher is in the front of the class and you feel a bit lost the TLAs always seem to know you feel a bit lost and they come over and help you.

There is always someone there to help you, they can always help with problems that are not to do with school work, it is easier to hand in notes or to look for things.

They know the whole classroom so if you need to find something you can go to the TLA.

We do a lot of work together in groups so you can ask the TLA for help without disturbing the rest of the class or the lesson.

Year 6 students thoughts about our TLAs, 2015





Each team is also supported by the Learning Support Team who assist with the teaching, the planning and coordination of Individual Programs/Plans (IPs) and the data collection for the year group. This is an excellent example of collective teacher experiences and knowledge. Stephanie Hirsch wrote in, *Michael Fullan Affirms the Power of Collective Efficacy*¹, "collective efficacy is the new winner. Once again, we have evidence that harnessing the power of the group rather than relying solely on the individual is key to unlocking the full potential of educators and students in schools". Further details of the work of our Learning Support Team can be found in Section 4.D.iii, 'Learning Enhancement Through Support and Differentiation'.

Our school has drawn a lot of inspiration from DuFour and his colleagues, and their work with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the United States of America.

In DuFour's article 'Work Together But Only If You Want To'², <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html> he says, "We cannot waste another quarter century inviting and encouraging educators to collaborate". He explains the paradigm shift that needs to take place from a situation where:



Teachers work in isolation from one another. They view their classrooms as their personal domains, have little access to the ideas or strategies of their colleagues, and prefer to be left alone rather than engage with their colleagues or principals. Their professional practice is shrouded in a veil of privacy and personal autonomy and is not a subject for collective discussion or analysis.

We researched the value of teachers working in teams and how effective communication will help us to become improved teaching practitioners.

From Hattie³ in DuFour:

The most comprehensive study of factors affecting schooling ever conducted concluded that the most powerful strategy for helping students learn at higher levels was ensuring that teachers work collaboratively in teams to establish the essential learnings all students must acquire, to gather evidence of student learning through an ongoing assessment process, and to use the evidence of student learning to discuss, evaluate, plan, and improve their instruction.

¹ Hirsch Stephanie, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2016/04/michael_fullan_affirms_the_power_of_collective_efficacy.html

² Du Four R, *Work Together But Only If You Want To*, kappammagazine.org, 2011, V92N5, p57-61

³ Hattie J, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, NY, Routledge, 2009

At Claremont College, we are not just working in teams and then moving into classrooms to work in isolation, our co-teaching involves working in a team, every day.

The National School Improvement Tool⁴, <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html> outlines how to achieve an 'outstanding level' for an expert teaching team, and this is something we aspire to, and something that co-teaching can facilitate:



In team meetings there is an emphasis on the joint analysis of student work and on teaching strategies for improving student learning. Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver and review the effectiveness of lessons.

Using some lessons gained from DuFour's work with Professional Learning Communities (2012, p28)⁵, we began to look at our meeting times for each team. From examination we decided to dedicate at least one meeting time to be set aside each week, either within a

block of release from face to face teaching (RFF), or a mutually agreeable time before or after school, where all individuals in each team meeting aim to:

1. Utilise the Release from Face to Face teaching times where staff are off class at the same times.
2. Keep the planning time sacred, including beginning and ending times;
3. Focus on student learning, while fully supporting each other's efforts to do this;
4. Listen respectfully to each others' contributions and encourage each other to speak honestly;
5. Contribute equally to the workload, and this includes the conversations to be had;
6. Maintain a positive attitude at all times (no complaining allowed, solution forced); and
7. Have individual team rules such as, staying focused with no interruptions, coming prepared, no phones, and no excuses for not staying on task.

Having a set of mutually agreeable meeting rules or expectations gave and continues to give all members of the team the basis for building mutual respect.



⁴ Masters Prof G, *The National School Improvement Tool*, State of Queensland and The Australian Council For Educational Research, 2012, p15

⁵ DuFour R & DuFour R, *The School Leader's Guide to Professional Learning Communities At Work*, Solution Tree Press, USA, 2012, p28

Fisher, Frey and Pumpian in 'How To Create A Culture Of Achievement' (2012, p163)⁶, talk about the importance of members of each team being truly present and engaged,

The absence of members of the (team) diminishes the value of the (team), as those who dutifully attend feel resentful and unable to make decisions without full participation. Others may attend in body but not spirit...they grade papers, check their cell phones, and watch the clock...

At Claremont College, genuine cultural shifts have taken place and are still taking place. Team meetings happen with agreed rules and agendas, and an expectation that everyone is truly present and engaged.

Our focus on building strong teams has meant that our staff support each other more than ever by:

a) Working collaboratively to plan and program for the year group;

b) Contributing to IPs, even if they are not the staff member responsible for the particular students pastoral care needs;

c) Attending parent/teacher meetings together on many occasions to demonstrate the team approach to teaching the individual student and to support each other at a professional level;

d) Taking responsibility for leading particular Key Learning Areas to share the planning and teaching load; and

e) Being visible within the learning space.

Some significant shifts have occurred in the work of teachers at Claremont College. By using 'Cultural Shifts in a PLC' from DuFour, DuFour & Eaker (2006, pp6-7)⁷, we surveyed all of our Class Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants to determine where we are positioned now, and we surveyed those who were with us in 2011 to look back at where we were before we began to become a co-teaching school. Our results show significant cultural shifts.



⁶ Fisher D, Frey N, Pumpian I, How to Create a Culture of Achievement - In Your School and Classroom, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2012, p163

⁷ DuFour R, DuFour R & Eaker R, Professional Communities at Work – Plan Book, Solution Tree Press, 2006, pp6-7

FIGURE 4.1: A SHIFT FROM DECISIONS MADE ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES TO DECISIONS MADE COLLECTIVELY BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE OF BEST PRACTICE (%)

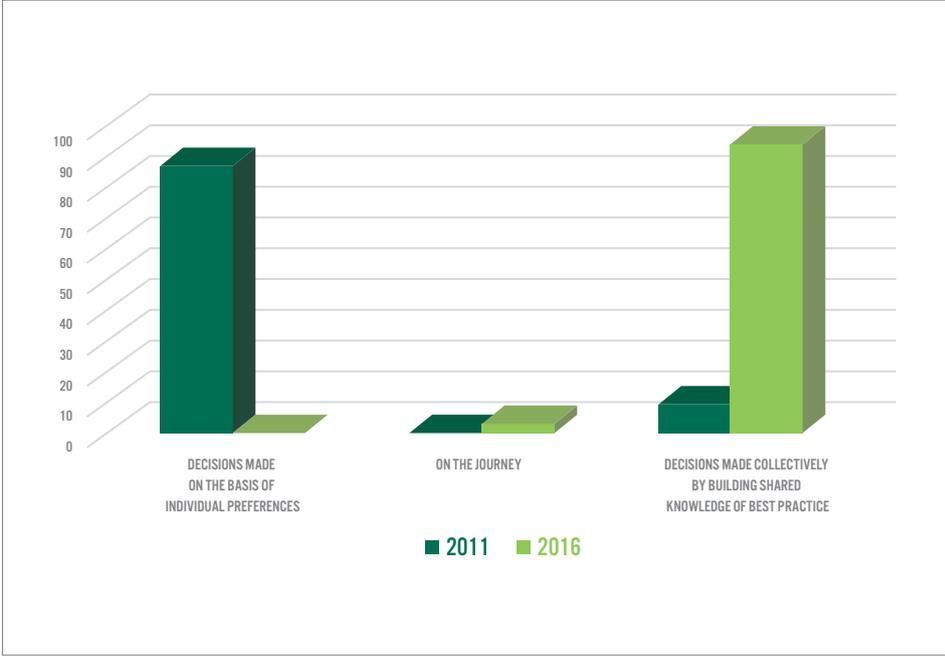


FIGURE 4.2: A SHIFT FROM INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS DETERMINE THE PACE OF THE CURRICULUM TO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS AGREE ON COMMON PACING (%)

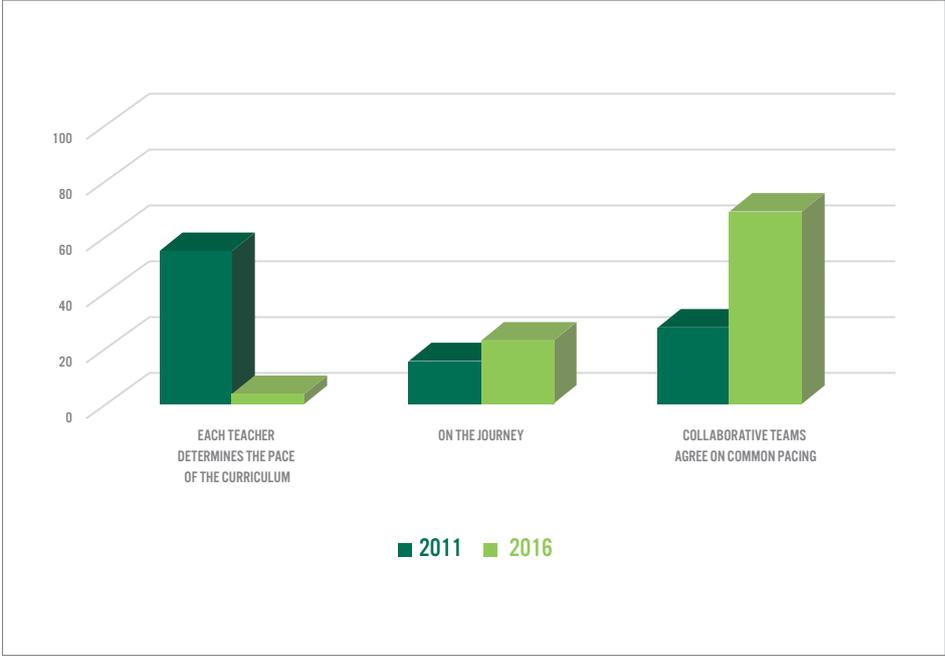


FIGURE 4.3: A SHIFT FROM INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE RESULTS TO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS OF TEACHERS HELPING EACH OTHER IMPROVE

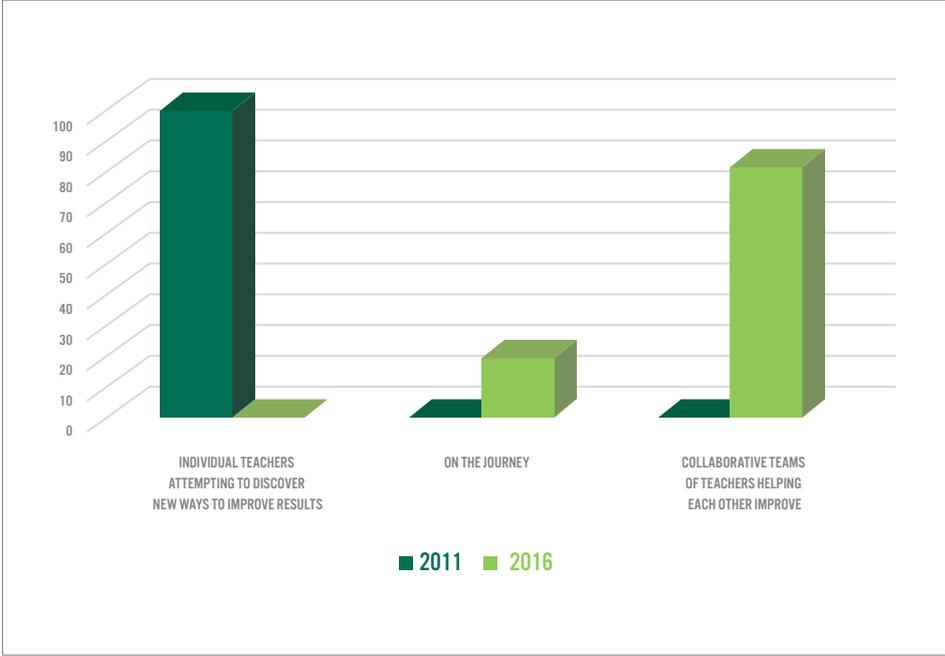


FIGURE 4.4: A SHIFT FROM PRIVATISATION OF PRACTICE TO OPEN SHARING OF PRACTICE (%)

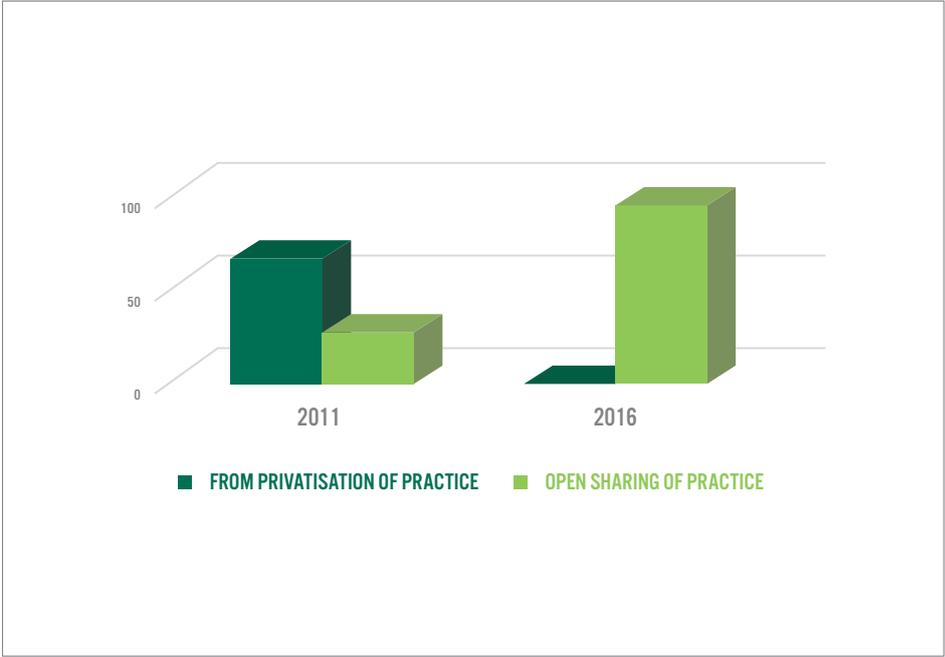
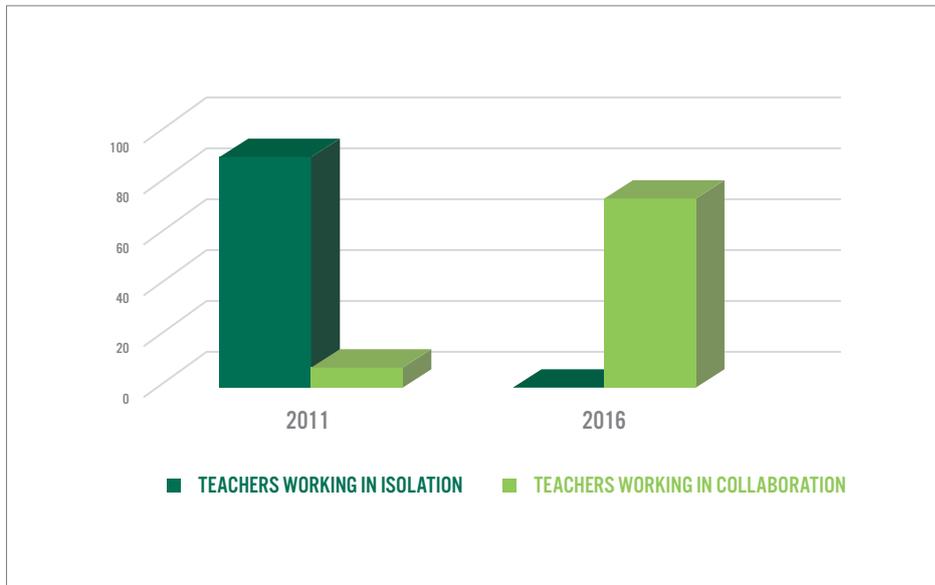


FIGURE 4.5: A SHIFT FROM TEACHERS WORKING IN ISOLATION TO TEACHERS WORKING IN COLLABORATION (%)



THE EFFECTS OF WORKING IN TEAMS AND BUILDING TEAM CAPACITY

Over the past five years, significant shifts have occurred at Claremont College, in the work of teachers, including:

1. The changed role of the Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs);
2. Teachers and TLAs work in teams;
3. The creation of team meeting norms and expectations;
4. A shift from decisions made on the basis of individual preferences to decisions made collectively by building shared knowledge of best practice;
5. A shift of individual teachers discovering new ways to improve results to collaborative teams of teachers helping each other improve;
6. A shift of teachers working in isolation to teachers working in collaboration;
7. A shift from individual teachers determining the pace of the curriculum to collaborative teams agreeing on common pacing; and
8. A shift of privatisation of practice to open sharing of practice.

Our Take-Home Messages

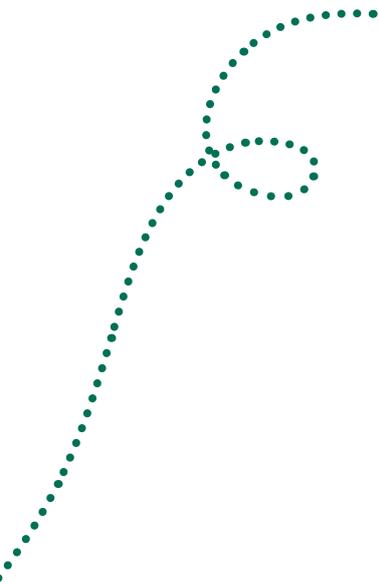
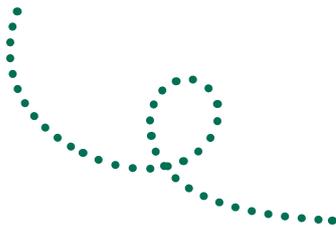
NURTURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR TEAMS.

SHARED AGENDAS AND SHARED RULES PLACE EVERYONE ON THE SAME PLAYING FIELD.

REVISIT TEAM EXPECTATIONS AT REGULAR INTERVALS, AND FOLLOWING STAFF/TEAM CHANGES.

DEVELOPING YOUR TEAMS IS GOOD FOR STAFF MORALE AND WELLBEING.

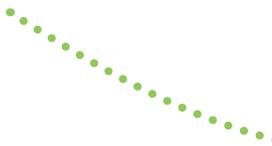
CHANGE TAKES TIME.





4D.

BEST PRACTICE IN CLAREMONT COLLEGE CO- TEACHING CLASSROOMS



The key priority of improving student outcomes, for us, has been and still is our approach to developing our teaching practices, using select principles from various exemplary methodologies, that fit well within our co-teaching environment. We especially believe in the use of collective teacher experiences and knowledge, while utilising increased communication and accountability, to achieve improved student outcomes. We are a school that uses research, evidenced-based principles, and a good dose of gut instinct to channel our school's direction.

Jenni Donohoo in her article, 'Collective efficacy, together we can make a difference'¹ summarises the value of teacher collective efficacy:

When teachers believe that together, they and their colleagues can impact student achievement, they share a sense of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy refers to "the judgments of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students" (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004, p.4). Collective efficacy is high when teachers

believe that the staff is capable of helping students master complex content, fostering students' creativity, and getting students to believe they can do well in school. When efficacy is high, educators show greater persistence and are more likely to try new teaching approaches. Educators with high efficacy encourage student autonomy, attend more closely to the needs of students who are not progressing well, and are able to modify students' perceptions of their academic abilities (Ross & Bruce, 2007).

At Claremont College, our teaching and learning priorities have developed over a number of years, both prior to our move to co-teaching and since, incorporating a number of programs. Every one of these programs are achievable in a single teacher classroom, but we believe all are improved and enhanced in a co-teaching environment, because it is important that all members of each team is on the same page, and each member is able to work with their colleagues to improve student learning. The following quotes come from staff who were with Claremont College, at the beginning of the move to co-teaching.

¹ Donohoo, J, <http://corwin-connect.com/2016/04/collective-eficacy-together-we-can-make-a-difference/>



I feel like I am so much more accountable to produce quality lessons because there is always somebody watching. AJ 2015

My professional practice is lifted because of explicit feedback and also a culture of high expectations because you are with other people who are working hard for a goal and you don't want to let anyone down. LV 2015

On the flip side, if our staff do not work well together, if they do not communicate well, if they are not on the same page, if they are not accountable, then it would be possible for staff to divide up the teaching and learning and virtually do their own thing. This would not be productive for them and their work environment and it certainly would not be good for the students' learning.

The first piece of key data most educators expect us to include in this research paper, when we talk about improving student outcomes through co-teaching, is our NAPLAN data. However, this is not what we intended to improve, because we have always had strong NAPLAN results, and we felt that making NAPLAN results our key area for growth would be out of sync with our aim of providing open planned and flexible learning spaces to prepare students for the 21st Century.

Yes, we have been keen to maintain our students' strong NAPLAN results but to focus on this end product alone, which essentially tests basic skills, but does not test process, problem solving, perseverance, flexibility, creativity, curiosity, collaboration, cooperation, reflectiveness...just to name a few important 21st Century learning skills, would be inconsistent with our aims.

Nonetheless, we know that NAPLAN data has some relevance to teaching and learning, particularly because we find out where our students sit in relation to state and national results, and the data is important to the wider school community. Our parent body, in particular, were initially very concerned that the firm academic foundations a Claremont College education is known for, would be lost in our new creative spaces and our new, untested teaching models. We knew we needed to at least maintain, if not improve our school’s NAPLAN results, to enable some of our key stakeholders to be able to trust us and to begin to look at what we might achieve beyond basic skills.

Our grade averages (compared to the Association of Independent Schools and the State Schools) across the five years since we began co-teaching, remain exemplary, and are provided in the following graphs. There are some year groups that achieve better results than other year groups, but the relevance of this data is the consistency across five years, or we would not have been able to maintain (and in most cases increase) the high standards we were achieving prior to our move to co-teaching.

FIGURE 4.6: YEAR 3 NAPLAN: AVERAGE SCALED SCORES ACROSS 5 YEARS (FROM 2012 TO 2016)

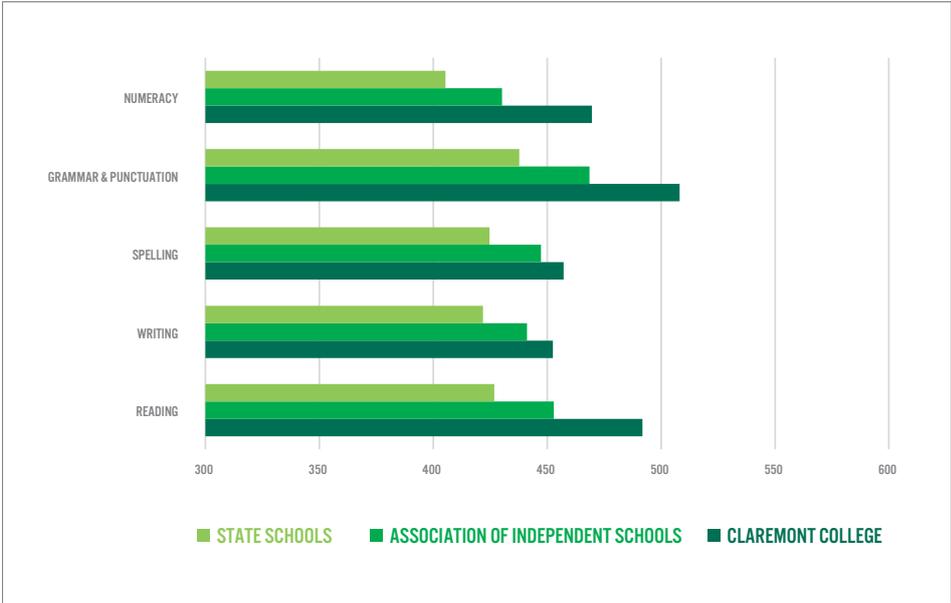


FIGURE 4.7: YEAR 5 NAPLAN: AVERAGE SCALED SCORES ACROSS 5 YEARS (FROM 2012 TO 2016)

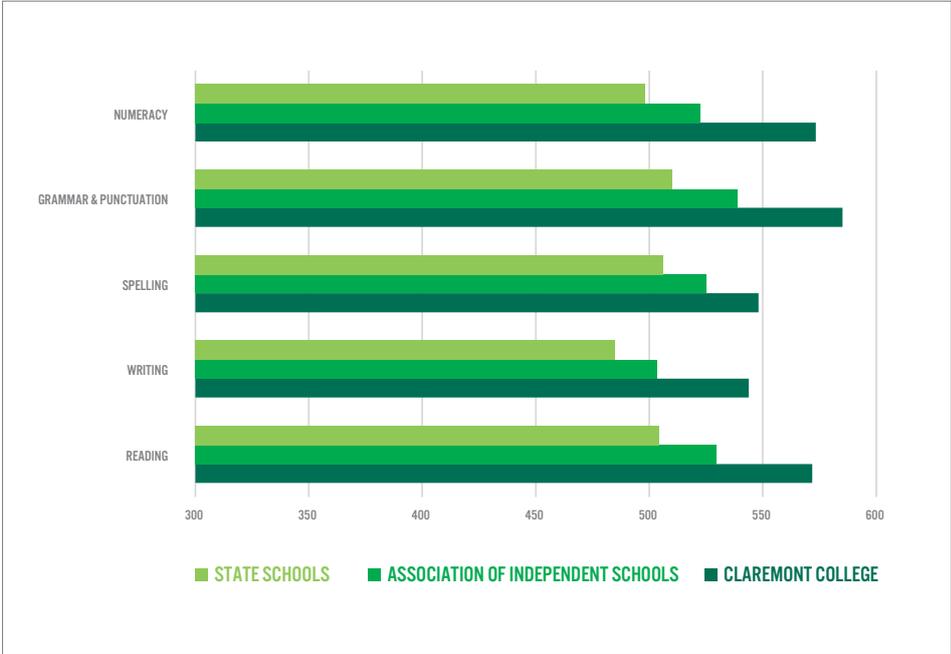
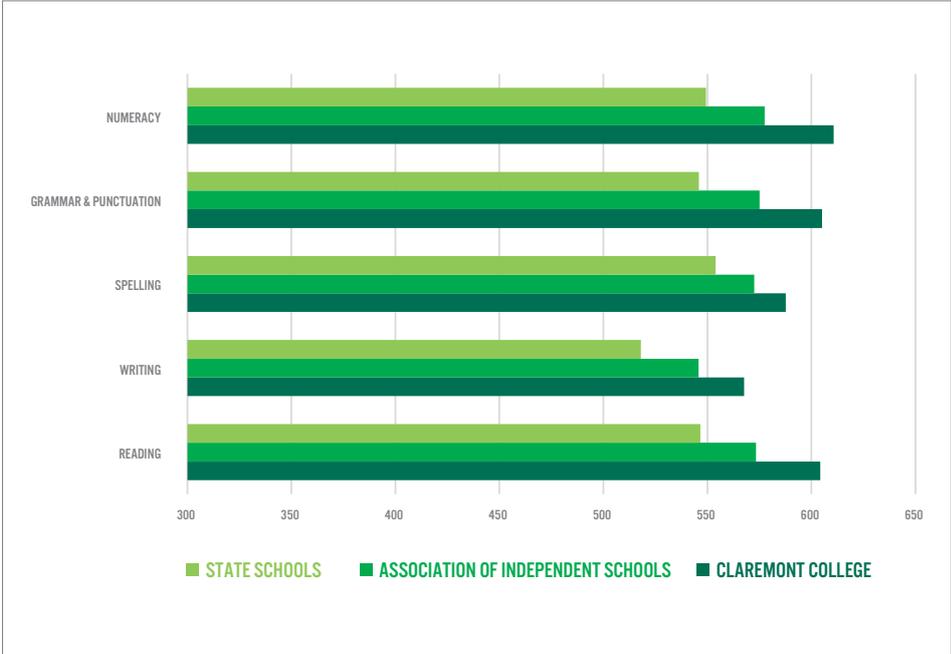


FIGURE 4.8: YEAR 7 NAPLAN: AVERAGE SCALED SCORES ACROSS 5 YEARS (FROM 2012 TO 2016)



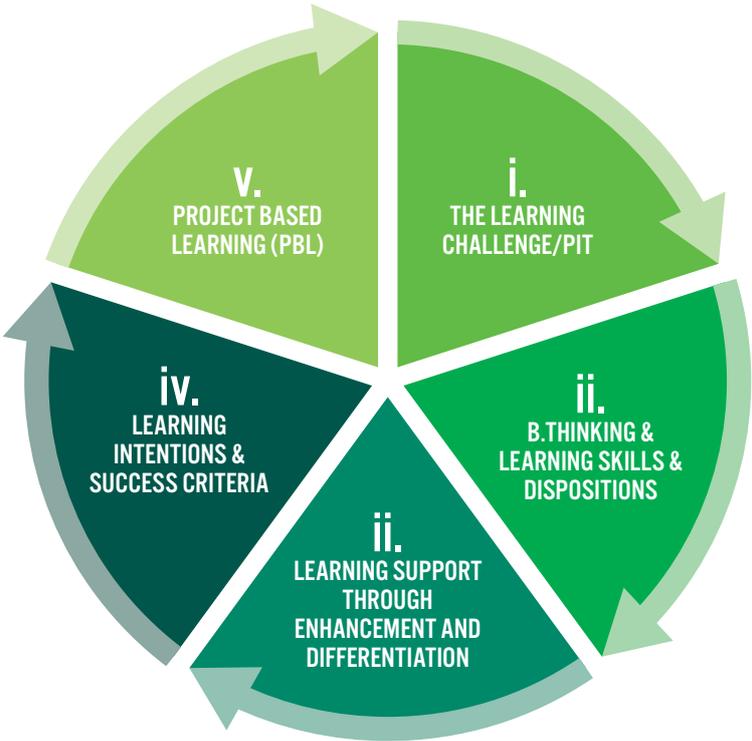
We naturally still recognise the importance of each child's academic progress, but we want to ensure they have so many more life-long skills. To do this we have used the professional development research from a number of prominent educators, as outlined in the following pages, to guide the choices we have made to improve our teaching and therefore students' learning, within a co-teaching environment.

WE HAVE ALSO LISTENED TO OUR STAFF, TO HEAR WHAT THEY BELIEVE HAS THE GREATEST IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING, AND ULTIMATELY WHAT SHOULD BE OUR PRIORITIES AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE.

Each school might choose a different set of models or structures to improve student learning and will already have some of these in place. Moving to co-teaching does not mean you throw out the programs that are working for you and start again.

FOR US, WE CHOSE TO:

- i. KEEP** THE LEARNING PIT, AND
- ii. KEEP** THE THINKING AND LEARNING DISPOSITIONS, AND TO
- iii. IMPROVE** LEARNING SUPPORT THROUGH ENHANCEMENT AND DIFFERENTIATION, THEN
- iv. ADD** LEARNING INTENTIONS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA, AND
- v. ADD** PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL), TO PROVIDE A COHESIVE CO-TEACHING ENVIRONMENT, WHERE WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME PAGE, IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING.



i. THE LEARNING CHALLENGE OR LEARNING PIT

The Learning Challenge or Learning Pit is where “the challenging teacher explores with children, usually through dialogue, what they might be able to understand with help that they cannot necessarily understand at the present time. And, although they may struggle, the struggle itself leads them to strengthen attitudes, develop skills and acquire knowledge that they can use in coping with future challenges” (Nottingham, 2010, p51)².

Our staff were fortunate to have James Nottingham work with us in the years prior to our move to co-teaching when he introduced The Learning Pit (which Nottingham has more recently renamed ‘The Learning Challenge’) to us.

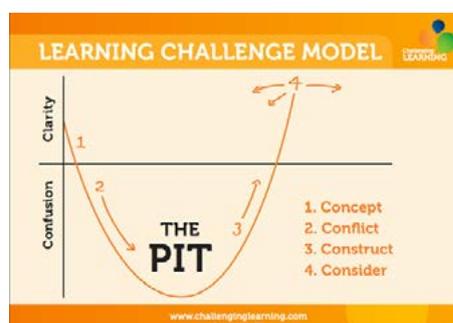
The Learning Challenge (learning pit) is one way to make challenge more appealing to learners. It gives a frame of reference to talk about learning. It also helps with planning, reviewing and metacognition.

At the heart of the Learning Challenge is “the pit”. Learners are said to be “in the pit” when they are in a state of “cognitive conflict”. That is to say when learners have two or more ideas that make sense to them but which on reflection, are in conflict with each other³.

Nottingham draws on the work of Carol Dweck, relating to fixed and growth mindsets, as ‘a growth mindset is far more likely to improve learning, and thus help children learn⁴.

The work of Nottingham has remained an integral part of Claremont College as both staff and students know they are most likely to learn when you are in the pit, as visually represented in the images from ‘The Challenging Learning’⁵ website such as the model with the 4Cs...

FIGURE 4.9: THE LEARNING PIT (NOTTINGHAM)



or this representation from one of our Year 3 (2016) students...

FIGURE 4.9: THE LEARNING PIT (NOTTINGHAM)



Our purpose when introducing the Learning Pit to our students was and is to help develop metacognitive skills, so the students understand their learning and they understand that being challenged helps you to learn. We also want our students to be able to articulate their learning. Our Year 6 students understand ‘pit thinking’ or ‘being in the pit’ and why it is good for them.

² Nottingham James, Challenging Learning, Hawker Brownlow, 2010, p51

³ <http://www.jamesnottingham.com/learning-pit/>

⁴ Nottingham James. Encouraging Learning, How you can help children learn, Hawker Brownlow, 2012, p63

⁵ <http://www.challenginglearning.com/media/2444/pit-1-original-learning-challenge.jpg>

Being in the pit means you are stuck on something but it's good, this is when you try your hardest. Your aim is to get out of the pit which is to understand what you are supposed to do.

It's a place in our learning where we are going to feel uncomfortable, that's when we use our growth mindset to help us and to learn from it.

When you are in the pit you are thinking hard, you are engaged in your learning step by step to get out of the pit, it's like problem solving.

Sometimes when you stay in the pit too long you have a fixed mindset that you won't get out of it, so you need a growth mindset and it will guide you.

When I go down into the pit, that is when my standards are raised.

It is like jail – you can get out of it but you have to escape the security guards. Sometimes you deserve to be in the pit because you think something is easy but it isn't. In jail you make mistakes – you need to work your way out.

Quotes from Year 6 students, 2016

THE EFFECTS OF EMBEDDING 'THE LEARNING PIT'

- By embedding a school wide approach to the Learning Pit, while keeping focused on the desired outcomes, a Claremont College student leaves Year 6 with an understanding that being 'in the pit' or being challenged, is good for them, as they will improve their learning.
- Our students understand, without prompting, the link between fixed and a growth mindset, the dispositions they need to climb out of the pit and the benefits of being 'in the pit'.
- Co-teaching enhances the use of this program, simply by accountability, and because knowledge and enthusiasm within the teaching teams is infectious.

ii. THINKING AND LEARNING SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS

Over the past eight years Claremont College has embedded a program of thinking and learning skills from CJ Simister, called 'How to Teach Thinking and Learning Skills – A Practical Program for the Whole School'⁶. This program and in particular its use of dispositions to improve thinking and learning, has easily become part of the school culture. Our staff find this program an extremely useful tool that gives us the language of how to talk about the characteristics of good learners, and how to explicitly teach learning dispositions and therefore to help our students improve as learners. Simister's work also ties in well with Dweck's research on growth versus fixed mindsets, because your dispositions as a learner are not fixed.

Jane's parent evening was inspirational. It provided so many opportunities for parents to connect with their children on so many levels. I loved the 'I wonder', 'just suppose' and 'impossible dilemma' questions for parents and children. I also raise Jane's messages about raising children to be future smart and not just focussing on the academics and scores in many of my IP meetings. Many of the parents agreed wholeheartedly. Jane has given so many of our parents hope that their child is special, and has a bright future just like every other child.

Brenda Dalheim, Head of Learning Support, Executive Staff

Working with Jane was simply inspirational! Seeing the examples and the ease that Thinking Skills can be built into lessons and the language used to support and extend students learning has changed the way I approach teaching. Most significantly, I have actively included Thinking Skills into the Success Criteria of lessons, which has allowed an opportunity for all students to feel success, even in lessons where the content is challenging.

Carrie Grieve, Kindergarten Teacher

⁶ Simister CJ, How to Teach Thinking and Learning Skills – A Practical Program for the Whole School, Sage, 2007

One of the most basic beliefs we carry about ourselves, Dweck found in her research, has to do with how we view and inhabit what we consider to be our personality. A “fixed mindset” assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are static givens which we can’t change in any meaningful way, and success is the affirmation of that inherent intelligence, an assessment of how those givens measure up against an equally fixed standard; striving for success and avoiding failure at all costs become a way of maintaining the sense of being smart or skilled. A “growth mindset,” on the other hand, thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as a heartening springboard for growth and for stretching our existing abilities. Out of these two mindsets, which we manifest from a very early age, springs a great deal of our behavior, our relationship with success and failure in both professional and personal contexts, and ultimately our capacity for happiness. (Popova, 2014, p17)

Jane Simister's sessions at Claremont College were incredibly beneficial not just for our school and students as a whole but for me personally as an educator too. Jane's enthusiasm and clear instruction on how to integrate learning dispositions into my classroom is inspiring. The students are enjoying exploring how they can show these dispositions in lessons and how this will help them for life after Claremont College. These sessions were outstanding.

Lynn Divers, Lead Teacher, Year 5

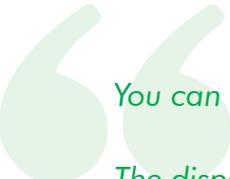
Like Dweck, Simister believes that your dispositions as a learner are not set, you have the ability to improve those dispositions that are holding back your thinking and learning. We at Claremont College also feel that the dispositions can be taught and encouraged, and are essential to facilitate learning. We use the dispositions in conjunction with Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, where students are encouraged to bring certain dispositions to their learning. For example, in a Mathematics lesson where students are working in groups they may be asked to bring collaboration and cooperation to their learning; in a writing class in English, they could be asked to bring independence and creativity to their learning; or in Drama they may be asked to bring courage and humour to their learning. Students who demonstrate the identified learning dispositions show that they have achieved some of the success criteria.

Working with Jane was an absolute joy. Her ability to instil in us as staff an urgency to appreciate and value the learning dispositions not only in our students, but also in ourselves as adult learners. She thoughtfully and supportively prompted us to challenge what we value in learning and collaboratively helped us to come up with tangible and practical ways to go about this in the classroom setting.

Steph Affleck, Lead Teacher, Year 6

⁷ Popova M, <https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/29/carol-dweck-mindset/>, 2014 p1

OUR STUDENTS, BY THE TIME THEY LEAVE CLAREMONT COLLEGE, UNDERSTAND THINKING AND LEARNING DISPOSITIONS AND HOW THESE INCREASE OR HOLD BACK ONES THINKING AND LEARNING. HERE IS WHAT SOME OF OUR YEAR 6 STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY:



You can use your strengths when a problem occurs with a project.

The dispositions help you to know your strengths and weaknesses, you can work on your weaknesses, when an important task comes along you can apply your strengths to it.

Our weaknesses are not fixed we can learn to develop them.

You can work on your weaker dispositions and they can become your strengths.

The learning dispositions are like your strengths and if you say you are not good at collaboration for example, you can try and work on it by using the learning dispositions you have.



Co-teaching enables staff to challenge each other, by asking what dispositions will be needed, and staff because of working within the same space, can help each other be accountable. This aspect of thinking and learning is added throughout the day and integrates well across all Key Learning Areas. We have now added these to our walkthrough observations to give staff an opportunity to reflect on how they personally use these. We have added the dispositions to our student voice surveys, particularly for older students, so we can see how the students see themselves as learners, and to enable us (the students and the staff) to know what dispositions we may need to focus on more.

In July 2016, CJ Simister spent three days working with our staff and parents, providing professional learning around her updated research on learner qualities. An outcome of the training was the decision to adopt Simister’s new set of fifteen dispositions for ‘intellectual character’⁸:

- Ambition
- Collaboration
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Flexibility of Mind
- Focus
- Good Judgement
- Initiative
- Humour
- Originality
- Reflectiveness
- Resilience
- Persistence
- Risk Taking
- Self Assurance

⁸ http://www.cjsimister.com/FutureSmart/Educational_Consultancy.html

One of the many inspiring aspects of Simister's program is that it is flexible, changing and developing with the current needs of the students.

We believe that some of our greatest successes, have been in the way our students have developed these dispositions, and have deepened their own knowledge about themselves as learners, as evidenced in the quotes from students and staff.

Can we link the thinking and learning dispositions to student outcomes? We believe our students' self-discipline,

engagement and concentration have improved since the introduction of co-teaching. It is difficult to specify exactly what has caused this change, but we have confidence it is the explicit teaching of thinking and learning skills to enable the students to better understand themselves and their dispositions as learners.

Why do we teach thinking and learning skills? We do this "to boost morale and motivation...and to encourage children to take a more active role in their own education".⁹ (Simister, 2007, p9)

THE EFFECTS OF TEACHING THINKING AND LEARNING SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS:

- Our students are better prepared for the 21st century, at school and beyond their primary schooling, because they know themselves better, they understand their own thinking and their own strengths and weaknesses as a learner;
- Our students can articulate their own strengths and weaknesses as learners and they are empowered to develop these;
- Our students are happy and confident knowing who they are because of their knowledge of thinking and learning dispositions; and
- Thinking and learning skills "encourage children to take a more active role in their own education".

⁹ Simister CJ, How to Teach Thinking and Learning Skills – A Practical Program for the Whole School, Sage, 2007, p9

iii. LEARNING ENHANCEMENT THROUGH SUPPORT AND DIFFERENTIATION

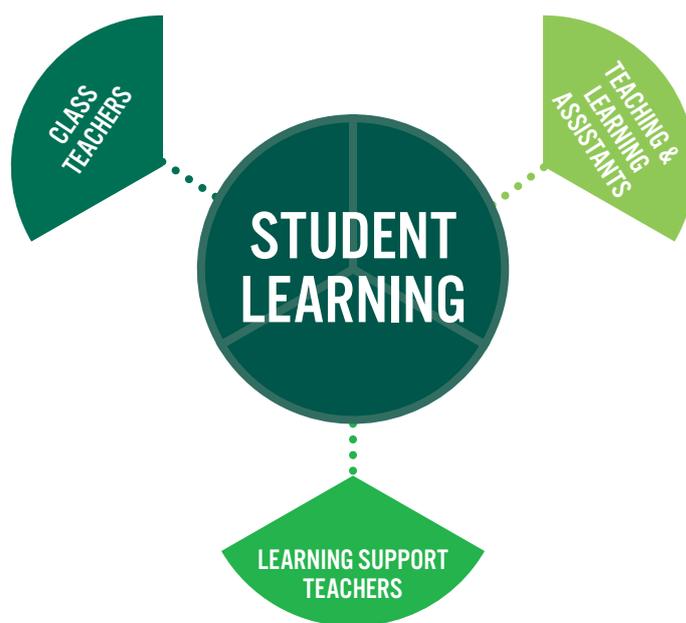
Another key aspect of our use of Teaching and Learning Models, is that the learning enhancement achieved through support and differentiation occurs within the same learning space as the core of the year group. Students are not withdrawn, rather they are grouped according to their needs, and the stigma of withdrawal not longer exists.

The staff who work with each year group are referred to as Teaching Teams, and each member of the team is essential to the learning for the year group. It is not unusual to see 4 or 5 staff members working in the learning space at any one time, for the equivalent of 2 classes (or a maximum of 60 students). All of the members of each team, plan, program, deliver, assess and reflect on the success of the learning for their particular year group.

As mentioned in the section, 'Working In Teams', Teaching Teams are comprised of Classroom Teachers (generally two in each grade), a Learning Support Teacher (working across two grades in a day) and a full-time Teaching and Learning Assistant [TLA]. Teaching and Learning Assistants (formally called Teacher Aides), were renamed as part of the planned move to redefine the role. Originally the time spent by TLAs on clerical support (photocopying, preparing teaching resources) was anecdotally well over 60% of the Teacher Aide's day. Now clerical work is approximately 18% and teaching/supervision of students has risen to over 80% of a TLA's daily tasks. Utilising both Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants in the classroom has meant that learning at Claremont College is focused on genuine integration. Students are no longer withdrawn and taught in isolation of the classroom curriculum, via programs disconnected from the syllabus by a teacher external to the students' regular classroom. Students with additional learning needs have been welcomed back into the classroom as a fulltime member of the grade, participating fully in classroom life.

HAVING LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF AND TEACHING AND LEARNING ASSISTANTS IN ALL THE CLASSROOMS HAS MEANT THAT LEARNING SUPPORT AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE IS ABOUT SUPPORTING THE LEARNING OF ALL STUDENTS ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONTINUUM OF LEARNING.

It is not just about providing support to struggling students. All teachers in the team monitor and assess the levels of learning of ALL students across the curriculum. Students are then supported to learn, at their point of need, via flexible groupings and differentiation. This means that students move in and out of groupings and receive support, in the classroom, from Classroom Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants. All available staff work together inside the classroom and teach across the learning levels within a grade.



The additional staff allows differentiated instruction to groups of students who access the same classroom curriculum by the provision of entry points, learning tasks, and outcomes that are tailored to students' needs (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003)¹⁰. It is not a single strategy, but rather an approach to instruction that incorporates a range of strategies. In the classroom we can differentiate content, process, product and learning environment according to student characteristics (readiness, interest and learning profile) through a range of instructional and management strategies (Tomlinson, 2001)¹¹.

When we differentiate the content we change the material being learned by a student. For example, if the Learning Intention is that students will be able to subtract using renaming (tens into ones), some of the students may be learning to subtract 2-digit numbers, while others may be learning to subtract larger numbers in the context of word problems. Same year level – same task – same learning outcome – different student outcome (product).

When we differentiate the process we change the way students' access materials. One student may be working in a small group with a teacher, another may be working with a partner in shared reading, while another student may be working on the same or a similar task, accessing information via the web. Differentiation of product refers to the way in which students show what they have learned. For example, to demonstrate understanding of a geometric concept, one student may solve a problem set, while another student builds a model.

Our flexible learning spaces mean that the learning environment can and does offer students choice according to students' learning needs.

¹⁰ Hall, T., Strangman, N., & Meyer, A. (2003). Differentiated instruction and implications for UDL implementation. Retrieved 19 April, 2008, from http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/DI_UDL.pdf

¹¹ Tomlinson, C. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, (2nd, Ed.) Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

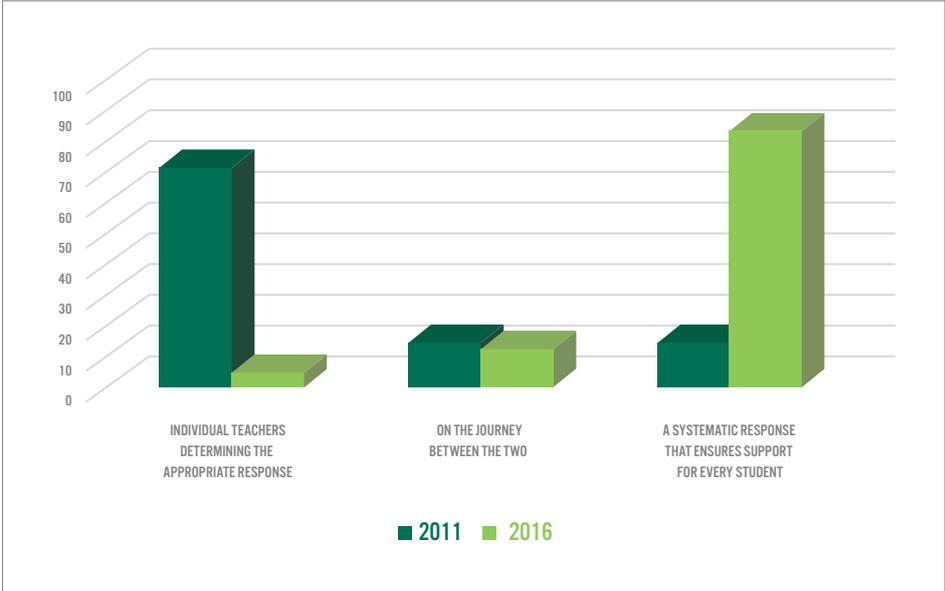
Teachers incorporate different instructional strategies based on the assessed needs of their students. Throughout a unit of study, teachers assess students on a regular basis. This assessment can be formal, but is often informal and can include taking anecdotal notes on student progress, examining students' work, and asking the student questions about his or her understanding of the topic. The results of the assessment could then be used to drive further instruction. In this model, it has been important for all teaching staff to be involved in the collection of evidence of student progress and recording data in a central location, on Google Drive. This has been an important part of the process in a co-teaching model with up to 4 and possibly 5 educators in one grade for any given lesson.

By providing flexible learning and differentiation across the curriculum through a co-teaching model, Claremont College teachers are able to cater for the varying needs and interests of all our students within the classroom. We have brought the expertise into the classroom.

Some significant shifts have occurred in the work of the Learning Support Teachers at Claremont College. By using 'Cultural Shifts in a PLC' from DuFour, DuFour & Eaker¹², we surveyed all of our Class Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants to determine where we are positioned now, and we surveyed those who were with us in 2011 to look back at where we were before we became a co-teaching school. Our results show significant cultural shifts (in percentages of respondents):

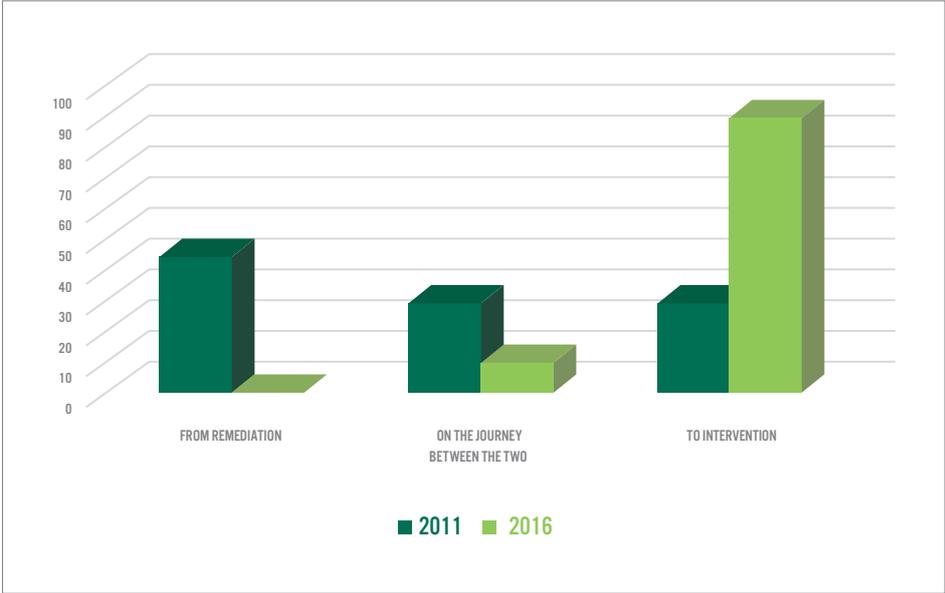
- From a focus on remediation to intervention; and
- From Individual teachers determining the appropriate response for Learning Support to a systematic response to learning support needs.

FIGURE 4.11: A CULTURAL SHIFT FROM INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS DETERMINING STUDENT NEEDS TO A SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS (%)



¹² DuFour R, DuFour R & Eaker R, *Professional Communities at Work – Plan Book*, Solution Tree Press, 2006, pp6-7

FIGURE 4.12: A CULTURAL SHIFT IN THE RESPONSE FROM REMEDIATION TO INTERVENTION (%)



THE EFFECT OF LEARNING ENHANCEMENT THROUGH SUPPORT AND DIFFERENTIATION IN A CO-TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

- Claremont College students’ learning is enhanced while working within the year group as evidenced by our systematic, integrated approach to Learning Support;
- Staff, students and their families are supported;
- The changes achieved through co-teaching include a cultural shift from individual teachers determining student needs to a systemic response to student needs; and
- A cultural shift in the response from remediation to fully supported intervention.

iv. LEARNING INTENTIONS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

We introduced 'Learning Intentions' and 'Success Criteria', from the work of John Hattie, after we began our co-teaching journey, because through research, we could see that this was an aspect of our teaching and learning that was missing at Claremont College. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are expected to be a part of every lesson, because learners learn best when they understand what they are learning and what is expected of them. We felt that introducing the use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria would enhance our co-teaching, and help the members of the teams to be unified as they work together, with the ultimate aim of improving student outcomes. This was a new inclusion for all of us, we have been learning together.

We are already experiencing how co-teaching is keeping each member of the teams accountable, and we also can see how Learning Intentions and Success Criteria will be extremely important because of the number of staff working with any year at any one time. We use Hattie's research to guide us in the use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to improve student learning:

Good learning intentions are those that make clear to the students the type or level of performance that they need to attain, so that they understand where and when to invest energies, strategies, and thinking, and where they are positioned along the trajectory towards successful learning. (Hattie, 2012, p52)¹³



John Hattie has many YouTube videos to enable staff to hear from Hattie himself. We have used this video¹⁴ to help initiate staff discussion. Hattie says of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria,

"Learning intentions without success criteria is hopeless"
<http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>:

When we introduced the expectation that our staff use Learning Intentions across the school, one of our 'Fundamentalists'¹⁵ who opposed any and all changes at school, argued that the use of Learning Intentions could be introduced in any classroom so why did we need to push co-teaching – it was not the learning intentions they disagreed with, it was the co-teaching. This staff member was right of course, but our focus and intent of introducing Learning Intentions into a co-teaching environment was to ensure and support accountability. All staff need to know the Learning Intention not what the activity is, and all students would come to know that everyone in the learning space knew what is being learnt, as opposed to what is being done.

Learning Intentions are a very important step to achieve co-planning and team understanding of what the learning intention actually is, rather than making an assumption that everyone understands what is being learnt from the activities in front of them.

We have made some noticeable shifts in our practices and again by using 'Cultural Shifts in a PLC' from DuFour, DuFour & Eaker¹⁶. We surveyed all of our Class Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants to determine where we are positioned now. We also surveyed those who were with us in 2011 to look back at where we were before we began co-teaching.

¹³ Hattie, J, *Visible Learning For Teachers – Maximising Impact On Learning*, Routledge USA, 2012, p52

¹⁴ Hattie J, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvzeou_u2hM

¹⁵ Muhammad A, *Transforming School Culture – How to Overcome Staff Division*, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009, Ch6 P53-69

¹⁶ DuFour R, DuFour R & Eaker R, *Professional Communities at Work – Plan Book*, Solution Tree Press, 2006, pp6-7

Our results show significant cultural shifts (in percentages of respondents):

- From a focus on teaching to a focus on learning; and
- From each teacher clarifying what students must learn to collaborative teams building shared knowledge and understanding about essential learning.

FIGURE 4.13: A CULTURAL SHIFT FROM ONE TEACHER MAKING DECISIONS TO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS MAKING DECISIONS (%)

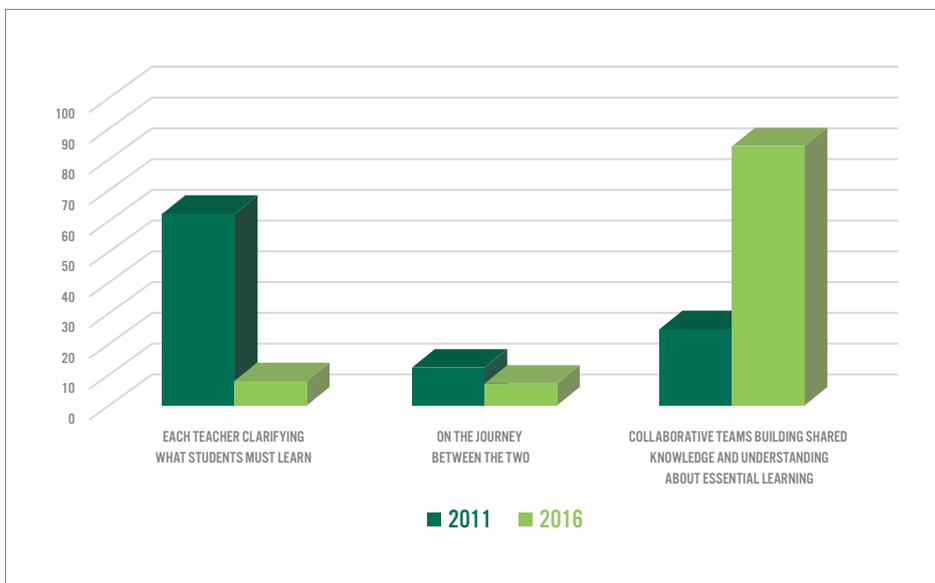
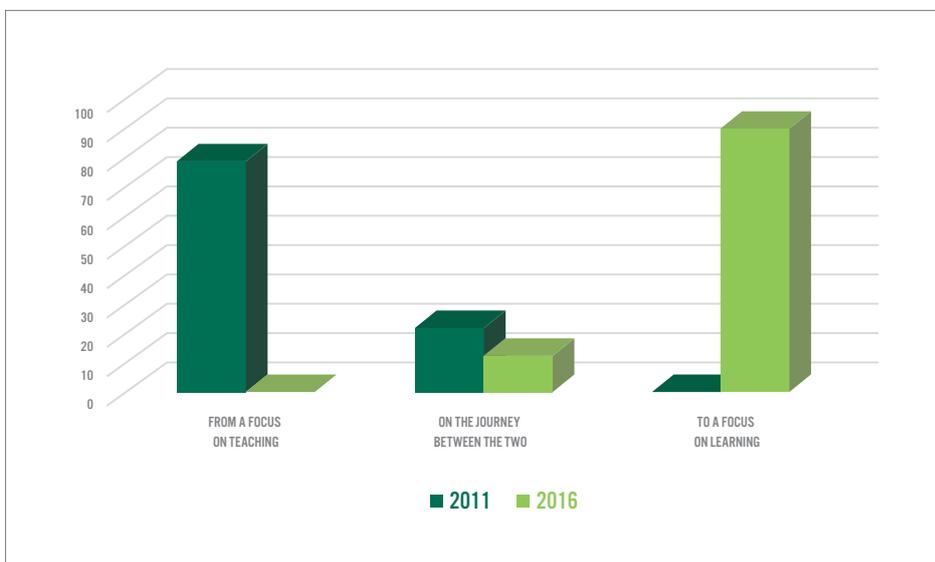


FIGURE 4.14: A CULTURAL SHIFT FROM A FOCUS ON TEACHING TO A FOCUS ON LEARNING (%)



Our teachers and parents are now more likely to ask students, 'what did you learn today?', rather than 'what did you do at school today?', which now elicits a response focused on learning. The following images were created from the feedback from students, during 'walkthroughs' in 2015, when they were asked:

FIGURE 4.15: 'WHAT DO GOOD LEARNERS LOOK LIKE?'

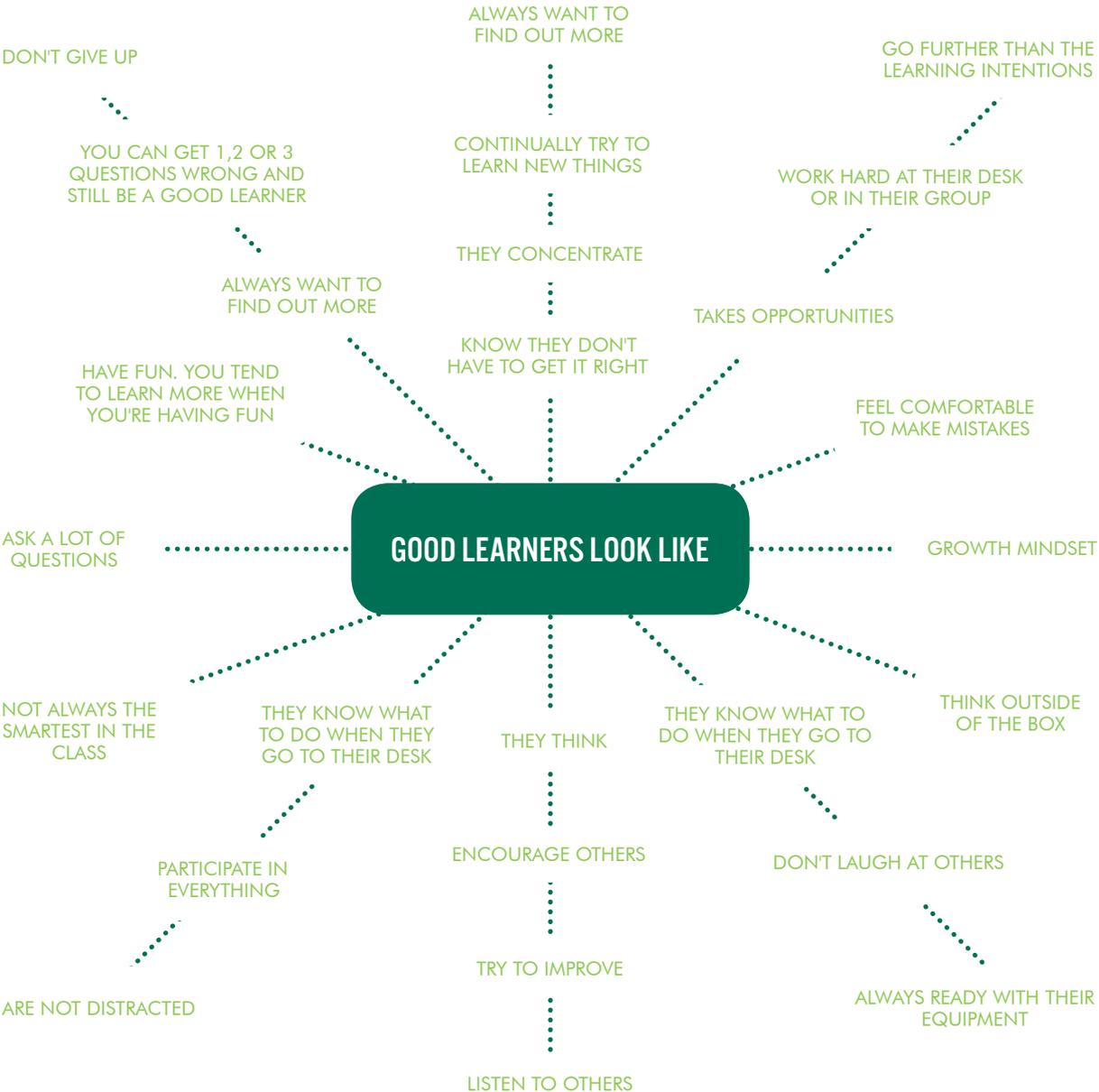
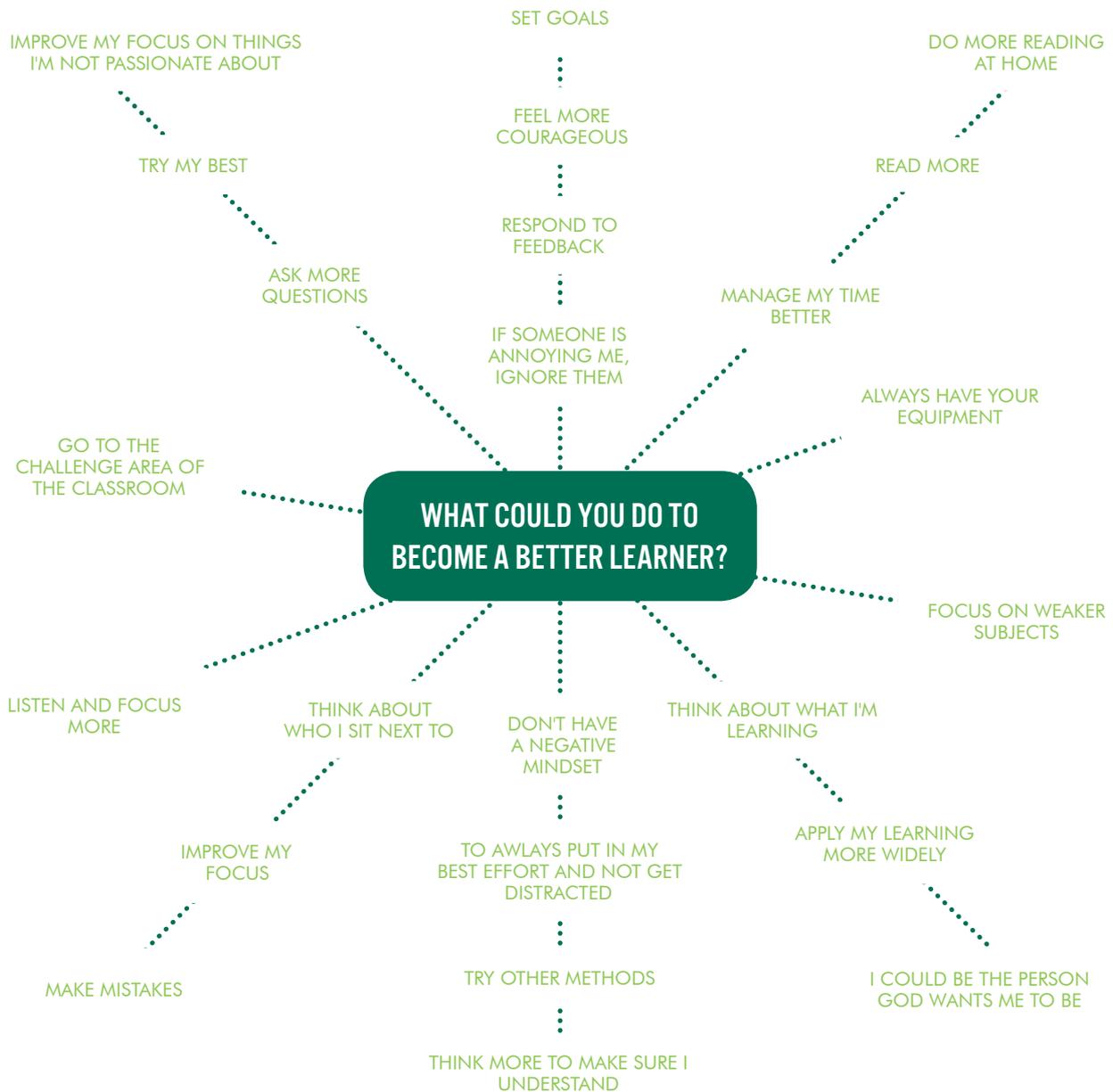


FIGURE 4.16: 'WHAT COULD YOU DO TO BECOME A BETTER LEARNER?'



FROM TWO OF OUR STAFF IN THE VIDEO (2015) LINKED:

The Learning Intentions have really changed the lessons – we are really clear about what we are trying to get the kids to learn.

Learning Intentions are really helpful for students who struggle with changes, they like to know what is happening, what is coming next.

Now we find the kids look for what we are going to learn by having the Learning Intentions up on the whiteboard for the day.

From a programming perspective, it has changed what we are doing to what we are learning, it has made the lessons more student focussed.

We are having a lot of conversations about Learning Intentions but also having to unpack what the Success Criteria is for the differentiated groups.



The 'Introduction of Learning Intentions' <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>, is a short video of two of our staff talk about their early experiences of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

The data we have collated shows that we need to continue to improve how we use Learning Intentions and in particular Success Criteria, however, over time we are getting better in this aspect of our teaching and learning.

OUR WALKTHROUGHS HAVE IDENTIFIED THIS IS STILL A GROWTH AREA FOR ALL OF US AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE.

Through our walkthroughs we have gathered data to determine how often and how well we, across the school, use Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. Within our walkthroughs we observe and investigate where and when we are embedding Learning Intentions and Success Criteria into every lesson, throughout the day. In hindsight we made the mistake of beginning with Learning Intentions and introducing the importance of Success Criteria later, and the data in the following graphs demonstrates that we have been slow to take up the inclusion of Success Criteria. This was new for all of us, we were learning together.

The following graphs come from our Term 2, 2016 'walkthroughs' that show the walkthroughs predominately occurred during the middle of a lesson, the learning intentions were visible more often than not, however still only 42% of the time, and the Success Criteria was rarely evident.

DATA GATHERED FROM PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WALKTHROUGHS, SEMESTER 1, 2016

FIGURE 4.17: PHASE OF LESSON (217 RESPONSES)

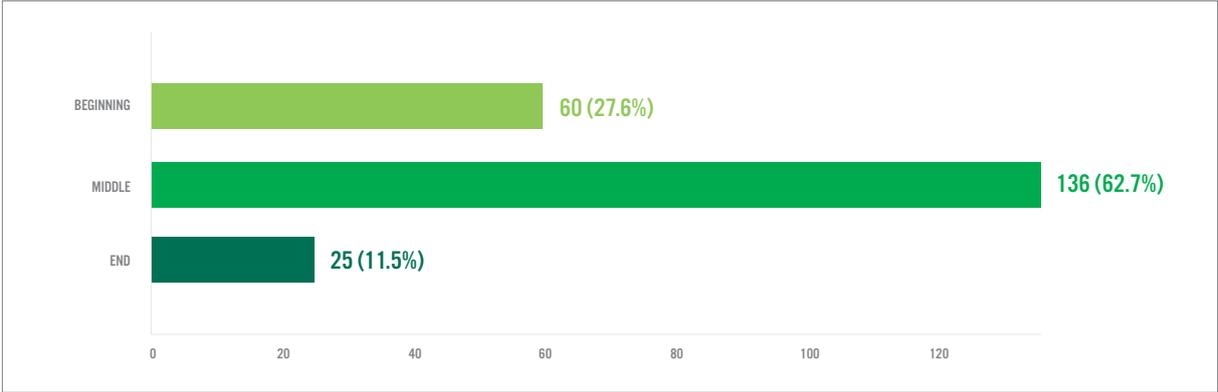


FIGURE 4.18: EVIDENCE OF LEARNING INTENTIONS (210 RESPONSES)

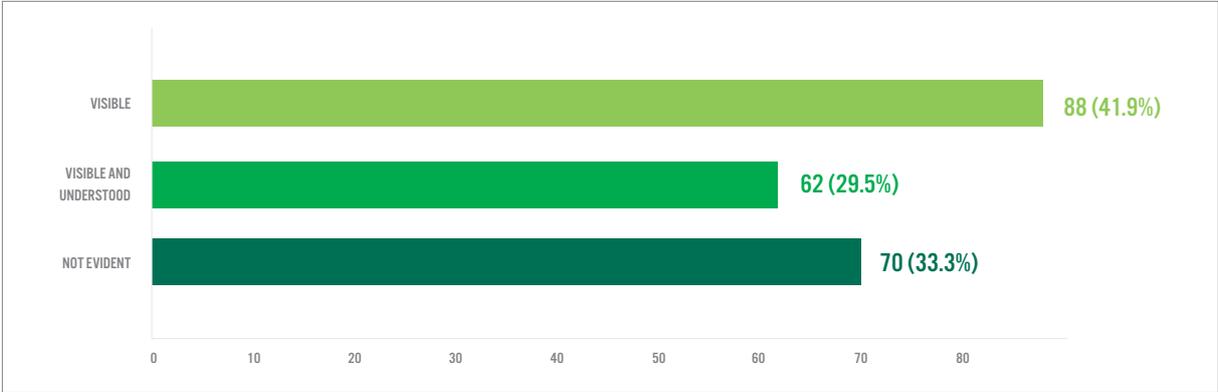
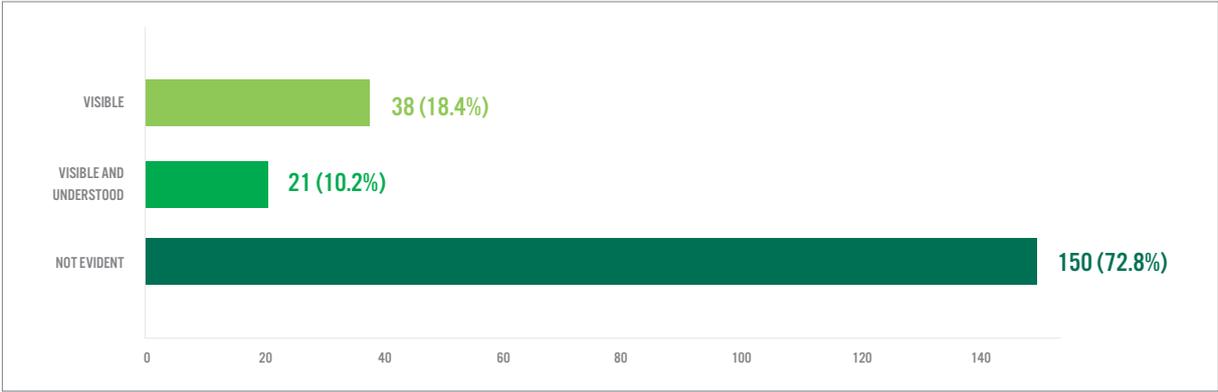


FIGURE 4.19: EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS CRITERIA (206 RESPONSES)



Using data from our walkthroughs to guide our teaching practices has become an accepted aspect of the way we learn from each other. However, change takes time. At the time of writing, we as a school team have begun to use Learning Intentions reasonably well. We are finding that we have been slow to commit to the inclusion of Success Criteria. This is still a growth area for us, however we are making inroads...

- Major cultural shifts have occurred in five years,
- Our students now talk about their learning, as opposed to only talking about what they are doing, and
- Our staff are working toward including success criteria together with learning intentions so that they are embedded into the teaching and learning in every lesson, every day.

HAVING SAID THIS IS STILL A GROWTH AREA FOR US, THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVE FROM THE MANY VISITORS TO OUR SCHOOL, TELLS US THAT VISIBLE LEARNING TO OUTSIDERS, IS EVIDENT:

Learning intentions are clearly displayed.
St Joseph's Primary, Rockhampton

Engaged learning is visible. WALTs and expectations visible. Pacific Hills Christian School

The WALTs are everywhere and very clear. A very clear focus on student learning.
Victory Lutheran College

Evidence of learning intentions on whiteboards and peer assessment.
Stonefields, Auckland

Learning intentions on display and in workbooks. Trinity College Albury

I saw lots of WALTs around each room that were being used by students across the years. Trinity College Albury

WALTs and WILFs clearly displayed in every classroom. Students could articulate learning intentions clearly. Trinity College Albury

Learning intentions/success criteria visible in every room and in workbooks. Oran Park Anglican College

In all the rooms I visited I saw learning intentions and success criteria. St Joseph's Cairns

WALT in every classroom and through conversations with children about what they are learning. St Joseph's Cairns

All through the learning spaces there was evidence of criteria/why the children are learning and learning intentions. St Joseph's Cairns

THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING INTENTIONS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria compel our teachers to be more explicit in their co-planning, co-teaching, co-debriefing, and co-reflecting, and therefore produce improved teaching practice, which will ultimately lead to improved student learning.
- Using Learning Intentions and Success Criteria make the learning explicit and consequently are an important method of ensuring all staff within each teaching team, are on the same page at the same time.
- Co-teaching provides a structure where teams of teachers are transparent and accountable, in their use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.
- Students are more engaged in their learning, they are now looking for the Learning Intentions.

v. PROJECT BASED LEARNING

The fifth aspect of what we consider to be the core structures that fit together to make Claremont College unique, and the second program to be introduced across the school since our move to co-teaching, is the introduction of Project Based Learning (PBL). At the time of writing we are in our first year of Project Based Learning at Claremont College.

We are working in partnership with staff from the University of Technology (UTS), Sydney, who are helping our staff to understand and implement Project Based Learning into all grades throughout 2016. Each grade has the opportunity to work with a UTS lecturer while they and their students adopt Project Based Learning for the first time. Having said this, there has been some aspects of PBL throughout the school over the past few years, but we are now embedding PBL, while developing a school based scope and sequence for the coming years.

We see Project Based Learning as a natural progression for our flexible learning spaces and co-teaching practices, and to make the most of the learning opportunities for our students.

From *Implementing Project Based Learning*¹⁷ (Boss and Krauss, 2015, p7) we can see that we 'can make the most of the learning opportunities that PBL affords, by keeping in mind the following core ideas (from Boss and Krauss, 2014):

1. *The inquiry project, framed by a driving question, is the centrepiece of instruction. It's not an add-on or hands-on activity wrapping up a unit of study. Instead, the project is designed with specific learning goals in mind.*
2. *Students get involved in real-world problem solving, applying the strategies and tools used in authentic disciplines and, often, engaging with outside experts.'*
3. *Students share their work with authentic audiences.*
4. *Technology is used as a means for students to collaborate, communicate, and make discoveries they wouldn't otherwise gain.*

Our staff at Claremont College, can already see the benefits and some of the challenges ahead, as we embark on a teaching and learning technique that changes the roles of the teacher and the student. The advantage of Project Based Learning using the co-teaching approach is because of the value of having a number of staff in the learning space at any one time. The more staff the more resources the students have available to them, as opposed to a single teacher classroom. Krauss and Boss, in *Implementing Project Based Learning*¹⁸ 'document several changes that teachers can anticipate:

- *Learning goals: Reconsider what you expect students to know and do.*
- *Ways of talking and engaging with students: Interact with your students in different ways. Get comfortable with messier learning, with students working more autonomously (and not necessarily doing the same thing at the same time).*
- *Classroom management style: Help students better handle their own growth.*
- *Physical classroom arrangement: Reposition the classroom fixtures to enable teamwork and collaboration.*
- *Assessment thinking: Re-evaluate what you take note of during the lesson process and adjust your teaching plan based on what you notice.*
- *Collective materials: reconsider which learning artifacts you preserve.*
- *Communication with parents and colleagues: Defend the thinking behind the 21st century project approach, and encourage parents and other community members to find ways to support project work. For example, they might provide audience feedback, share their expertise, or help with the logistics of field research.*

¹⁷ Boss S, and Krauss J, *Implementing Project Based Learning*, Solution Tree, 2015, p7

¹⁸ Boss, S, *Implementing Project Based Learning*, Solution Tree, 2015, p3

HERE ARE SOME THOUGHTS FROM OUR YEAR 3 (2016) STUDENTS, TALKING ABOUT THEIR PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL) EXPERIENCES, AND WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNT ABOUT THEMSELVES, SO FAR. THERE IS ALREADY EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH SIMISTER'S THINKING AND LEARNING DISPOSITIONS IN THE YEAR 3 STUDENTS' ANSWERS.

In life there are going to be lots of problems so you need to be aware of them so you can fix them. I was happy with my problem fixing.

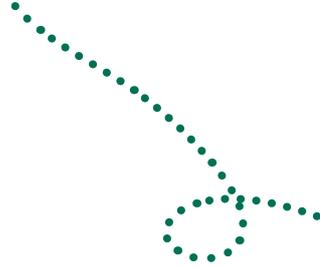
I learnt that there are always problems, you are not going to get it right the first time. I have learnt a lot about perseverance.

I learnt that I am good at learning by myself. Sometimes when I am working with another person I get carried away and off task, so I learnt that I am better working by myself.

Next time, I think I should have some back up ideas just in case something doesn't work.

I need my research to be clearer. It was hard because I wasn't researching the right words.



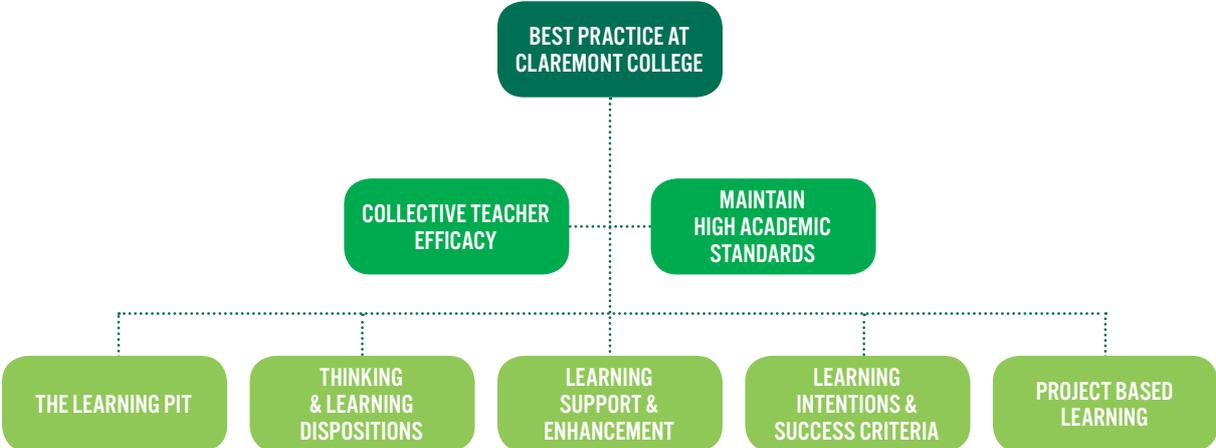


THE EFFECT OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING:

- Project Based Learning is still in its infancy at Claremont College, however, we are already seeing students engaged in this form of learning, and able to reflect on the processes and their own learning.
- Our first year working together on PBL is giving us a school-based scope and sequence to work from.
- Our first year working together on PBL has given us an opportunity to talk about the strengths and challenges so far.
- We are looking forward to exploring PBL further and to align PBL with student outcomes.

IN SUMMARY, THIS CHAPTER, BEST PRACTICE AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE, PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THE INPUTS AND PROCESSES, AND THE EFFECTS THESE INPUTS AND PROCESSES HAVE HAD ON OUR STUDENTS' LEARNING IN THE SHORT TIME SINCE WE INTRODUCED CO-TEACHING TO CLAREMONT COLLEGE.

FIGURE 4.20: BEST PRACTICE AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE





Our Take-Home Messages

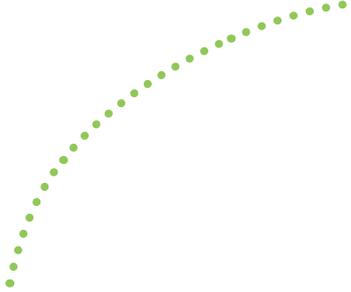
**KEEP THE PROGRAMS THAT ARE ALREADY
WORKING IN YOUR SCHOOL.**

**ENSURE THE PROGRAMS AND QUALITIES THAT YOU
ARE KNOWN FOR ARE NOT LOST IN THE CHANGES.**

**ADD ONLY THOSE PROGRAMS THAT WILL PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO A CO-TEACHING STRUCTURE.**

**TAKE CARE OF ALL OF YOUR STAKEHOLDERS
ALONG THE JOURNEY.**

ACCEPT THAT CHANGE TAKES TIME.



4E.

COLLABORATIVE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

– WALKTHROUGHS



We are all mentors to one another, in some form, at Claremont College. Through our co-teaching journey we have become a school where our staff are comfortable when learning from each other, coaching each other:

As a coach you don't need to have all the answers, but you should know where to look for them. Coaches are fortunate to visit so many classrooms and should always be on the lookout for outstanding practice, trying to discover teachers' brilliance and talent in order to share it with others. Each teacher has different strengths and needs. Your job is to help teachers recognise these – to celebrate their strengths and connect them to the keys that will release their untapped potential. (Sandstead M, Cutting Watermelon p80)¹

After the first term of conducting walkthroughs at Claremont College in 2013 to observe classroom practice, group, class or grade structures, furniture placement, and use of classroom spaces, it became evident that gathering random observations was a good method of beginning conversations about co-teaching, but was not particularly helpful for gathering data, and it was not providing the format to provide effective feedback to the whole staff. This was particularly evident

because all our staff were not involved at this early stage of walkthroughs. We had a top-down model of conducting walkthroughs, and this had to change.

This initially led to discussions and research to ensure we were creating the best possible walkthrough format. From these readings and discussions we formalised structures with articulated intentions. The article, 'What Research Says About ... /Classroom Walk-Throughs'² explains the intention of the walkthroughs:

The idea behind walk-throughs is that firsthand classroom observations can paint a picture to inform improvement efforts. These observations typically involve looking at how well teachers are implementing a particular program or set of practices that the district or school has adopted.

Furthermore:

Teachers observing teachers provides opportunities for the teaching staff to (1) note useful practices other than the ones they use; (2) ease the fear of trying something new; (3) feel motivated to improve their craft; (4) identify possible areas for their own professional development; (5) identify areas of practice for reflective dialogue with colleagues; and

¹ Sandstead M, Cutting Watermelon - Lessons In Instructional Coaching, An Administrator's Guide to Co-Teaching, Co-Teaching, Making It Work, EL Educational Leadership, Dec15/Jan16, Vol73, No4, p80

² http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec07/vol65/num04/Classroom_Walk-Throughs.aspx



(6) accelerate improvement in student performance. Walkthroughs are another way for teachers to become responsible for their own professional growth and are an excellent complement to traditional professional development. (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2013, p3)³

In our case we initially needed to focus on co-teaching models, learning intentions, how we were improving learning and how we were using the spaces, as these for us were the focus areas to improve teaching practices and student outcomes and the source of relevant data to share.

On the Education World website, 'What To "Look-For" in Classroom Walkthroughs'⁴ provides some simple guidelines to follow and a good starting point, for anyone embarking on walkthroughs for the first time.

The common elements of a classroom walkthrough are as follows:

- Informal and brief;
- Involving the principal and/or other administrators, other instructional leaders and teachers;
- Quick snapshots of classroom activities (particularly instructional and curricular practices);

- NOT intended for formal teacher evaluation purposes;
- Focused on "look-fors" that emphasize improvement in teaching and learning;
- An opportunity to give feedback to teachers for reflection on their practice; and
- Having the improvement of student achievement as its ultimate goal.(from Kachur DS, Stout JA, Edwards CL, Classroom Walkthroughs to Improve Teaching and Learning).

This seemed achievable, so the first structure was trialed on one year group to see if they would find the information useful, then edited and used as the basis of our first set of walkthroughs.

From this, the walkthroughs were formalised to provide systematic feedback and to enable the collection of data. However, setting up transparent observation and data collection initially, still did not help some staff to feel comfortable with the walkthroughs, as some of our staff still felt threatened. Their fears came from the notion that they personally were being judged every time a staff member, and in particular a senior staff member, entered their room. A history of working in isolation contributed to this sense of being observed personally.

³ Kachur DS, Stout JA, Edwards CL, Engaging Staff in Classroom Walkthroughs, ASCD, 2013, p3

⁴ http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/classroom-walk-throughs.shtml

This point does not suggest these were ineffectual staff, in fact they were most often our perfectionists; they were coming from a place based on their prior experiences, and change was scary and threatening. Therefore, conducting walkthroughs made the data collector feel like he/she was walking on eggshells, in the rooms/spaces where they knew the staff were anxious. We needed to be patient and help these staff through the early stages of walkthroughs.

Simply conducting walkthroughs also did not automatically change teaching practices. We began to develop a system of learning from each other within a comfortable and accepted cultural environment.

During the second set of walkthroughs, further research and advice from our research mentor, encouraged us to involve all of the staff in the walkthrough process.

AT THIS POINT OF TIME, THERE WAS STILL SOME SKEPTICISM SURROUNDING THE VALIDITY OF THE WALKTHROUGH PROCESS, INCLUDING A SENSE BY SOME, THAT THEY WERE PERSONALLY BEING JUDGED.

Our leadership team found it useful to bounce ideas off teaching colleagues, especially those who were ‘active believers’⁵ not afraid to give constructive criticism at the same time as believing in the trajectory of our school:

If schools are going to effectively create positive and productive cultures, the Believers simply have to become more active and aware of day-to-day assaults on the very belief system to which they adhere. (Muhammad, 2009, p34)

HAVING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF STAFF ANXIETIES TO ADOPT NEW PRACTICES, HAS BEEN VITAL TO MOVE EVERYONE FORWARD, ALBEIT AT A DIFFERENT PACE TO ONE ANOTHER.

While at this point our move to co-teaching across the whole school had been progressing in earnest for over two years, some staff were still holding on to their autonomy, believing that working alone with their class is the best way for students to learn, primarily because of past experiences and fear of the unknown. Moss & Brookhart (2015, p13)⁶, suggest:

This theoretical framework (Formative Walkthroughs) confronts the “privacy of teaching” by making the formative walkthrough an intentional learning process that illuminates what is actually happening to improve learning and achievement during a lesson.

Sharratt and Planche in *Leading Collaborative Learning*⁷, when talking about ‘Learning Walk and Talks’ say, “we know the impact of having protocols to direct our collaborative work in order to stay focused”. They used the following guidelines to set structures and protocols for walkthroughs.

⁵ Muhammad, Anthony, ‘Transforming School Culture – How To Overcome Staff Division’, Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009, p34

⁶ Moss CM & Brookhart SM, *Formative Classroom Walkthroughs – How Principals and Teachers Collaborate to Raise Student Achievement*, ASCD Books, 2015)

⁷ Sharratt L, & Planche B, *Leading Collaborative Learning – Empowering Excellence*, Hawker Brownlow, 2016, pp84-90

LEARNING WALK AND TALKS

(SHARRAT AND PLANCHE, 2016, PP84-90)

- The protocol for Learning Walks and Talks includes:
 - Leaders (teachers and students, too, if appropriate) walk in classrooms to listen and observe;
 - Leaders do not interrupt the lesson; and
 - Walks are 3-5 minutes in length in each classroom.
- They focus on:
 - What the students are learning;
 - The challenge of the tasks in which students are engaged;
 - Evidence of deconstructed curriculum Learning Goals/ Intentions, co-constructed Success Criteria, and Descriptive Feedback based only on Success Criteria; and
 - Evidence of staff Professional Learning and/or the School Improvement Plan.
- If it does not interfere with the learning, walkers may ask individual students five key questions below.
- Walkers exit quietly and later ask the teacher a question or two directly related to observations they made and an authentic question they may have.

THE FIVE KEY QUESTIONS

The answers to the five key questions tell all. Asking students the five key questions during each Walk and Talk unlocks the mystery of knowing what learning is occurring without ever having to interrupt the teaching. If whole group instruction is not happening, then walkers quietly ask a student

1. What are you learning?
2. How are you doing with this?
3. How do you know?
4. How can you improve?
5. Where do you go for help?

Another phenomenon that came into place at Claremont College at the same time, was the numbers of visitors coming to the school, conducting informal walkthroughs, initially to look at the learning spaces, but more recently to learn about the co-teaching journey. This has inadvertently meant that our staff quickly became accustomed to visitors coming into their classrooms, and more importantly our students remain engaged in their learning with the interruptions from visitors. Further details and data from these visits can be found in Section 5b. In addition, involving staff in this process of welcoming and speaking to visitors, has been a positive experience.

Shifting our professional development focus to enable us to learn from each other made sense to us, because at the time of our move to co-teaching, and in the five years since, there has been no professional development available to investigate best practice through co-teaching. While we already had many active adopters/believers who were trialing various approaches, and willing to share, demonstrate, and to be open to learn from others, we still needed to ensure we were all on the same page, and moving in the same direction.

As well as involving our whole staff in in-house professional development, this form of professional development has minimised the researcher as the bearer of knowledge and the one to be seen as empowering others, or sometimes judging others. We wanted to avoid the scenario:

Most walkthroughs cast the principal, coach, or other observer as the “evaluator-in-chief” who looks for certain instructional strategies and then monitors their use. (Moss & Brookhart, 2015, p9-10)

The involvement of all staff enables staff to learn from each other and to empower each other. The important aspect of job-embedded professional development, is that it enhances sustainability of pedagogical change, so that the ‘principal, coach, or other observer’ are not the only staff members sharing the observations and learning from the process.

Dr Muhammad, in his workshop on Transforming School Culture – Building a High Performing Professional Learning Community (from a Hawker Brownlow Conference, Thinking & Learning Institute, 2015), spoke about ‘job embedded learning’ where

“WHEN A TEAM LEARNS TOGETHER, YOU INCREASE THE PROFESSIONALISM OF YOUR WHOLE TEAM; WHEN YOU SEND PEOPLE TO AN EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ONLY THEY TRULY BENEFIT”.

Our in-house professional development continued to come to fruition by pulling together some of the structures in Engaging Teachers in Classroom Walkthroughs⁸, Formative Classroom Walkthroughs⁹ and by choosing the points of prior knowledge and experience from our staff. From this we developed the following ‘walkthrough’ plans to date.

⁸ Kachur DS, Stout JA, Edwards CL, Engaging Staff in Classroom Walkthroughs, ASCD, 2013

⁹ Moss CM, Brookhart SM, Formative Classroom Walkthroughs – How Principals and Teachers Collaborate to Raise Student Achievement, ASCD, 2015

TABLE 4.1: THREE EXAMPLES OF JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING USING WALKTHROUGHS

EXAMPLE 1

http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html



This walkthrough is an example of one where we asked staff to have a short walkthrough of the learning spaces and make observations about student groupings, the co-teaching model being used, the configuration of the space, and how the Teaching and Learning Assistant is being utilised. The feedback from these was given to the year groups visited and also collated to look at what we were doing well across the school, and to look at our growth points.

EXAMPLE 2

http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html



This walkthrough was designed to be a group or team professional development day, and one that was structured to enable the team to work through the activities together, and to have the discussions planned, without a facilitator. The focus of this in-house professional development is/was learning intentions and success criteria. The staff conduct a number of different walkthroughs and have time to reflect on their day by considering their own teaching practice and how they can learn from their peers.

EXAMPLE 3

http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html



This third professional development allows time to look at and discuss research, conduct walkthroughs, and have time to reflect on the group's current practices including areas that are to be celebrated and areas that need to be developed.

OUR STAFF NOT ONLY LEARN FROM EACH OTHER ON OUR IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS, THEY ARE NOW COMFORTABLE WHEN OFFERING ADVICE OR FEEDBACK TO THEIR PEERS. HERE IS AN EXAMPLE FROM OUR YEAR 3, 2016 TEAM, OF THIS PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE:

Hi Everyone,

Thank you everyone for letting us walk around your classrooms today. It was wonderful to see so many engaged students and teachers who are excited to be at work.

We particularly noticed how engaged every teacher is and the effort they put in to create a positive relationship with their students.

As we walked around we could clearly see that our spaces are inviting and exciting to be in and the effect that this has on student learning.

A full summary of our findings will be collated once all grade groups have completed their walkthroughs however a few thoughts are listed from us.

1. One area that we had to evaluate was: Evidence that we are a Christian school within the learning space.

We found that there was limited evidence (at this early point in the term) of this present in most classrooms. A thought we had was making a Scripture/Chapel wall (section) where you could display memory verses, prayers, motivation quotes, the chapel topic and student work. This is something we are excited about adding to our Year 3 space.

2. Another area we looked at was the relationship between team members (Class teachers and TLAs)

It was so positive to see all teachers actively involved in student learning and working effectively with each other. What a great message to send to our students about collaboration.

THE EFFECTS OF WALKTHROUGHS AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE

- This aspect of our professional development has been far more beneficial than anticipated because our staff are keen to learn from each other;
- A cultural shift occurs when staff become comfortable offering and receiving feedback from each other;
- Staff welfare improves through job-embedded learning and by giving the teams time together;
- Teaching strategies and models improve because staff want to be the best they can be in the eyes of each other and for their students;
- Student engagement improves as students become comfortable with and not distracted by the visitors to their learning spaces; and
- Everyone learns, because of walkthroughs, in a culture of collegiality.

Our Take-Home Messages

PERSEVERE AND ENSURE THAT YOUR WHOLE TEAM PARTICIPATES IN WALKTHROUGHS.

WALKTHROUGH DAYS ARE GOOD FOR TEAM BUILDING.

FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND THE KEY PROGRAMS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR SCHOOL.

CHANGE TAKES TIME, BUT IT IS WORTH IT.



THE VOICES OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The Claremont College journey from single teacher classrooms to open planned classrooms with co-teaching as the core pedagogical structure, has involved many stakeholders, including staff, parents, students, our School Council, visitors to Claremont College and the wider educational community. We have endeavoured to encourage all of these stakeholders to contribute their ideas and to know that their thoughts, fears or concerns, and their accolades, are all heard and contribute to Claremont College as it is today.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAKEHOLDERS

THE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED TO STAKEHOLDERS TO BE HEARD INCLUDE:

- Year 6 Exit Surveys from both parents and students;
- Transition to High School Surveys from parents;
- Student Voice Surveys across all year groups;
- Staff Voice Surveys;
- Staff feedback from professional development days;
- Meetings with various stakeholders;
- Feedback and testimonials from visiting schools; and
- Individual feedback gathered throughout each year.

Throughout this paper can be found evidence of student voice, staff voice, parent voice and visiting educators' voice. These not only provide us with data to understand what we are doing well but also data to investigate what we need to do better.

1. STUDENT VOICE:

We encourage student voice in many ways especially in the classrooms, as teachers must know what their students are thinking and learning. Teachers also need to know if their students are suitably challenged, if they are bored or if they are out of their depth. While changing to open planned classrooms we wanted to keep track of our students' thoughts and feelings. Many parents were uneasy about the changes, but were the students? We began a variety of whole school student voice surveys in 2014, and have found these to be both affirming and beneficial. Examples of student voice can be found throughout this research paper, and include:

- A survey question about working with the whole grade;
- 'Wordles' about learning spaces and the school;
- A video of Year 6 students speaking about the new learning spaces;
- Open ended questions and responses about working in the new spaces;
- Open ended questions about 'pit thinking';
- Drawings to describe 'pit thinking';
- Open ended questions about thinking and learning dispositions;
- 'Wordles' that reflect the student responses regarding their understanding of good learners; and
- Students' understanding of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

WE ALSO ENCOURAGE POSSIBILITIES FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO BE INVOLVED IN OTHER WAYS, INCLUDING:

- Groups and individual staff meeting with and speaking to our change management consultants, New River;
- Groups of staff meeting with and speaking to visiting educators to our school;
- Students speaking with and presenting to visiting educators to our school;
- Parents joining educational walkthroughs;
- Staff speaking at conferences;
- Staff writing papers for educational journals; and
- Staff planning and presenting to staff as part of our job-embedded professional development.

We feel that it is important to look after our students in a pastoral care sense, as they learn to work in their new environments, and even though the students have been very positive about their new learning spaces, each and every one of the students who began in a single teacher classroom, have had to adapt to change. Some of their thoughts are:

We now get to work with a lot of different people, and it helps you to become closer friends.

We work a lot in groups and we might not always have the same ideas, so we have to work with others to solve problems.

When we are all together as a grade we make more friends, we've grown closer as a group and work better as a team.

You have to have resilience to work with all of the people in your grade, you need to get on with it and not make a fuss.

Being all together helps you to get ready for high school.

Year 6 Students 2015



2. STAFF VOICE:

Throughout the entire journey from single teacher classrooms to co-teaching learning spaces we have endeavoured to listen to the voices of our colleagues. It must be said that some staff have felt they had no voice, when in fact, they have been very closely listened to, but unfortunately for them, they just did not always get their own way. Two very different things.

At Claremont College we have learnt to listen to the 'black hat' thinkers – those who are drawn to look at faults as their default response rather than looking at the possibilities, because:

Resistance, in an organisational setting, is an expression of reservation which normally arises as a response or reaction to change (Block 1989, p. 199). Resistance to change has long been recognised as a critically important factor that can influence the success or otherwise of an organisational change effort. Research undertaken by Maurer (1996) indicated that one-half to two-thirds of all major corporate change efforts fail and resistance is the "little-recognised but critically important contributor" to that failure. (Waddell & Sohal, 1998, p1)¹

**PEOPLE DO NOT RESIST CHANGE
PER SE, RATHER THEY RESIST
THE UNCERTAINTIES AND
THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES
THAT CHANGE CAN CAUSE.**

Waddell and Sohal (1998, p5), in their conclusion to their paper, 'Resistance - a Constructive Tool For Change Management', explain:

People do not resist change per se, rather they resist the uncertainties and the potential outcomes that change can cause. Managers must keep this in mind at all times. Resistance can play a crucial role in drawing everyone's attention to aspects of change that may be inappropriate, not well thought through or perhaps plain wrong. In this case managers should be encouraged to search for alternative methods of introducing the change. They must communicate and consult regularly with their employees. This is perhaps one of the most critical success factors in implementing change in an organisation. Employees must be given the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the change project and they must be given the opportunity to provide feedback. Teamwork involving management and employees can overcome many of the difficulties experienced by organisations in the past. Managers should facilitate teamwork, they should empower their workers to be involved and they should provide the right environment and the necessary resources for employees to take part.

Our 'black hat' thinkers (from Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats²) are an important part of the school team, they have helped to remind us when we were not communicating well enough, and they remind us to consider every staff member, because we are not all on the same page at the same time when it comes to change. Listening to the 'black hat' thinkers has added value to the discussion and pressed others to 'think outside of the box' and come up with solutions, or even just consider that there may be other points of view.

¹ Waddell D, and Amrik SS, Resistance: a constructive model for change, 1998, Department of Management, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, http://www.adaptivecycle.nl/images/Resistance_a.pdf

² DeBono E, The Edward DeBono Group LLC, (n.d.) http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php

EXAMPLES OF STAFF VOICE CAN BE FOUND THROUGHOUT THIS RESEARCH PAPER, AND INCLUDE:

- Their development of the Co-Teaching Models;
- Staff involvement in the building process with architects and peers;
- Their contribution to the analysis of various graphs and data that represent the cultural shifts at Claremont College;
- Their critiquing and contributions to the various aspects of this research paper;
- Their involvement in film making to produce supporting evidence for this paper;
- Their interest and involvement in the exploration of the research;
- Staff involvement, participation in, and planning for professional development days; and
- Their support of and feedback to one another throughout our move to co-teaching.

3. PARENT VOICE:

We have an active and supportive parent body at Claremont College, and like 'staff voice' our school is getting much better at listening to the voices of our parents, including any possible 'black hat' thinkers. The role of the parents during the early days of the change to co-teaching is already discussed in the sections on 'New Learning Spaces' and 'Cultural Change'. However, there are other avenues for parent voice including, one to one interviews, emails, incidental conversations, participating in the Parents and Friends Association, and being involved in school events.

We also invite parents and students to participate in Year 6 Exit Surveys so that we can gather feedback about many aspects of our school and so that we can continue to improve.

The exit surveys have consistently shown that most of the parents' (and students') satisfaction levels of open plan classrooms and co-teaching, are at the 'strongly agree' level, or 'agree' level. The following table gives a summary of the data from 2013 to 2015 (the period where specific questions have been asked relating to open plan classrooms and co-teaching). The specific comment is 'the open classroom structure provided a variety of classroom learning activities that enhanced my/my child's learning'. The levels of satisfaction choices are: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

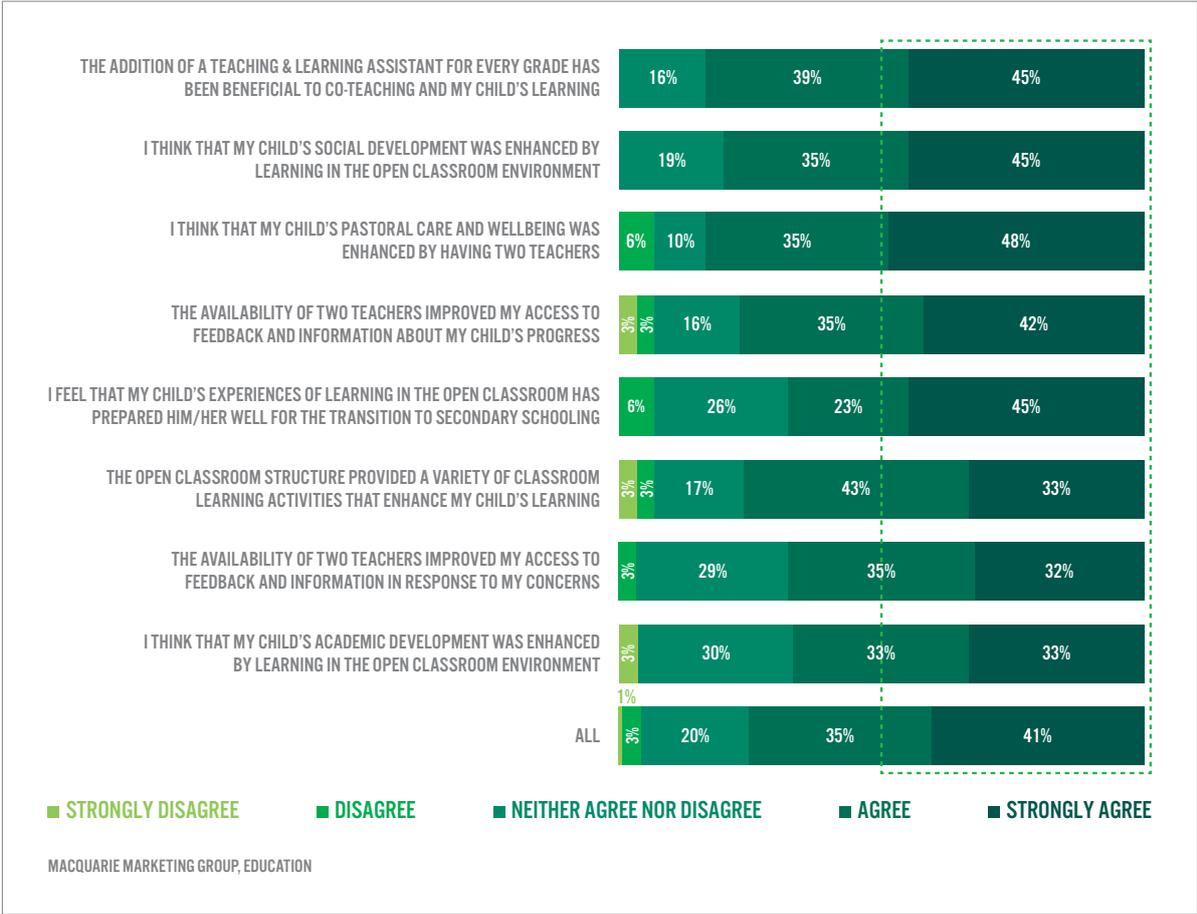
TABLE 5.1: STUDENT AND PARENT RESPONSE TO SURVEY QUESTION ON CO-TEACHING ENHANCING LEARNING.

YEAR	STUDENTS - % OF RESPONDENTS			PARENTS - % OF RESPONDENTS		
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	TOTAL	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	TOTAL
2013	53	29	82	28	28	56
2014	39	52	91	23	40	63
2015	56	39	95	33	43	76

This table (5.1) shows us that we are improving the student and parent perception of the ability of the open plan structure to improve student learning. This is positive growth in a short time. It also alerts us to the fact that we still need to help our parents understand what co-teaching is, and how it helps their child’s learning, as 24% of parents either do not have an opinion yet or disagree, from the 2015 data, received in 2016.

The other statements we ask our parents to respond to in regard to our open learning spaces and co-teaching are in the following table, which is sorted in order of those with the most agreement to the least agreement.

TABLE 5.2: PARENT AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT OPEN CLASSROOM STRUCTURES.



Information from parents, as presented in Table 5.2 helps us to understand what we are doing well and/or communicating well, and what aspects of our open plan co-teaching structure we need to improve.

OUR PARENTS ARE ALSO INVITED TO PROVIDE US WITH OPEN ENDED COMMENTS, AND THESE ARE OFTEN INSIGHTFUL AND HELPFUL TOO.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CO-TEACHING OPEN PLAN CLASSROOM FOR YOUR CHILD?

This brought out the best in my child, it increased confidence socially and academically.

Being able to mix with boys and girls from the whole year group greatly increased my child's social skills, for example in listening to others, collaborating ideas, developing teamwork. Having two teachers plus a Teaching and Learning Assistant means that different views can be obtained in any given situation. The students can learn from these different perspectives. Students might have a closer affinity with a particular teacher who might not be their homeroom teacher. Co-teaching allows the students to build this special relationship. Physically larger spaces and moving around in different configurations allows students to feel fresh, reduce boredom and greatly increase interest and concentration span.

This has exposed my child to a big class environment and an opportunity to interact with different levels of academic strength and different social environments. The open class concept increases confidence.

Having two voices means that the child has the opportunity to hear and learn information from two different people. Sometimes hearing the same message in a different way can really help students. We have often heard that Mrs X teaches Science really well or Mr X teaches Maths really well, or, I much prefer working with Miss X in English. The students will very quickly have options as to which teacher they prefer to have teaching them in different subjects.

If the rapport does not exist with my child's nominated teacher, they can access support from the other. My child gets to learn from two teachers. One may be stronger or more passionate in a certain subject so the teachers can balance each other out.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF THE CO-TEACHING OPEN PLAN CLASSROOMS FOR YOUR CHILD?

My concern is about my child getting lost in the big group if they have a quieter disposition.

There are potentially more distractions.

It has taken a while for my child to get used to the structure and no specific area in the classrooms for students to have their things for rotating work. Shared lockers and drawers can be frustrating for my child.

There is potential for the spaces to be noisy.

4. VISITING EDUCATORS' VOICE

Claremont College now regularly has visiting educators coming to look at various aspects of our school. Initially the visits were to look at our new learning spaces and now more often, they are to talk to our staff about co-teaching and the cultural changes we have made to get to this point.

We ask our visitors to give us some feedback before they leave, so we can continue to improve our practices. The evaluation sheet covers questions about:

- Co-teaching
- Visible Learning
- School Culture
- The Buildings
- How people heard about Claremont College.

We have feedback from 40 such visits, some by returning Heads of Schools who come back with a group of their staff. We value this feedback because it is impartial, and it gives us an outsiders view of aspects of the school that we may not see the same way.

Some of the visitor comments are used for our website testimonials, and often the feedback is shared with staff as it provides us with a snap-shot in time, that we may not see ourselves. Visitor feedback can also be found in a number of sections including the New Learning Spaces section of this paper.



On a recent visit from a group of fourteen staff from two schools in Cairns, our Principal spoke about Claremont College_ <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>. He gave an overview of our journey, and many things that are important to us, before handing over to two groups of staff to speak with our visitors.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

One aspect of voice that has not specifically mentioned throughout this paper is the opportunities that working in open planned classrooms and co-teaching has afforded our staff, and the opportunities they have to grow personally and professionally regardless of their prior experience or level of achievement. Our staff have developed confidence to speak to educators who visit the school, speak at national and international conferences, write articles for educational journals, visit and learn from other schools in Australia and internationally, and to be proud of their own educational experiences and expertise. We would like to draw your attention to a number of these not already embedded within the paper.

A. SPEAKING TO VISITING EDUCATORS



Our teachers often are asked to speak to visiting educators as they walk around the school or to groups who want to know about the Claremont College journey from a classroom teachers point of view. This is

something that everyone was quite nervous about initially, especially as we were still all finding our own way, learning together. An example of two of our class teachers speaking with the visitors from Cairns, shows the openness and honesty our staff are willing to provide to our visitors. <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>

We have to be open about the hard times as well as the good times because that's where most people's questions come from, the fear of the hard things. JH 2016

These occasions provide our staff with opportunities to articulate what they are doing, what is working for them and even what has not worked for them. We find it is important to give our visitors teaching practitioners with various experiences so that they can hear honest recounts from several points of view. We know our visitors really appreciate this aspect of their time with us, and we know our staff have grown in confidence because of these opportunities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF FEEDBACK TO STAFF ARE:

Thank you for sharing your staff with us.

They are clearly passionate and dedicated to the teaching and learning of all students.

I am very impressed with the professionalism and willingness of staff to help, and the atmosphere of the school.

Thank you so much. It was an informative and practical day. Also thank you for the honesty and the friendly approach of your staff.

I enjoyed meeting with staff and considering how data collection is paramount in developing strategies to develop student engagement.

B. SPEAKING AT CONFERENCES

Another opportunity offered to our staff is that of speaking at conferences. These opportunities range from presenting alone, with another staff member, or within a group presentation. It is another way to develop confidence and skills and to help everyone grow professionally. Some recent examples of these conference opportunities where Claremont College staff have presented include:

- Edutech, Brisbane 2016
- ACEL Early Childhood Conference, Brisbane, 2016
- AIS National ICT Conference, Canberra, 2016
- AIS Making Consistent Teacher Judgement, Sydney 2016
- NSW Association of Independent Schools, Primary Educators Conference, 2015

C. WRITING ARTICLES FOR EDUCATIONAL JOURNALS

One of our staff members this year, has been invited to contribute to ACEL e-publications because of her contributions to online educational forums about co-teaching. This is an exceptional commendation of a young staff member who is a truly reflective practitioner.

Having another adult to share my experiences, to build me up as a professional, and to simply be there with me on my teaching journey has been the best continual professional development and encouragement I could have asked for. SA 2016

Her article 'Better Together'³ is attached <http://www.claremont.nsw.edu.au/claremont_research_project.html>. We genuinely love to help our staff grow professionally and it is important that we



encourage them to contribute to the wider educational community. Examples such as this, speaking with visiting educators, and presenting at conferences enable staff to participate in professional opportunities at a 'Lead Teacher' level, from the Australian Professional Teaching Standards(p7)⁴, where "they represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school".

³ Affleck S, Better Together, e-Teaching: Management Strategies for the Classroom, ACEL 2016, p3

⁴ Board of Studies and Educational Standards, NSW, Australian Professional Standards For Teachers. (n.d.)

D. VISITING AND LEARNING FROM OTHER SCHOOLS

As well as staff visiting us from other schools, we like to send our staff to schools to learn from them. The educational community has a lot to share and we are finding these opportunities for ongoing learning to be very valuable for our staff. Sometimes they learn many new things, sometimes they learn that they are doing a good job themselves already. This can be very affirming. It has been an advantageous method of encouraging each other, and going off site to realise what we are doing well, or otherwise, back at school. These visits also give all of us a more informed view of all of the wonderful things that are happening across the education sectors, and a realisation that we are not just one school standing alone, there is much to share.

One example of these opportunities, is our relationship with Stonefields School in Auckland New Zealand, where now for the second year two of their staff come to observe and learn from our staff for two or three days, and two of our staff go to Stonefields to observe and learn from them. When our staff returned in 2015, they were both overwhelmed by the opportunity, with one saying,

“that was the most amazing professional development opportunity I could ever have imagined”.

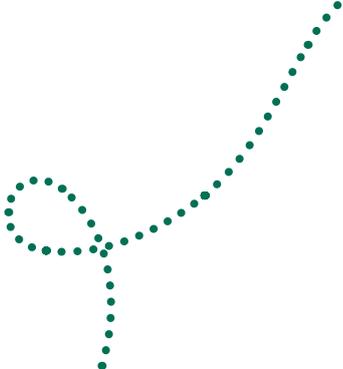
E. STAFF PLANNING AND PRESENTING WITHIN OUR JOB-EMBEDDED LEARNING

Our belief that ‘the answer is in the room’ is evidenced in the number of times our staff offer to provide professional development for their peers. The willingness to share with each other, to learn from each other and to support

each other has been a highlight of the years since we began to move to co-teaching. Again, this has been beneficial for our staff and we all can see each other grow in confidence and knowledge because of this.

THE EFFECTS OF THE VOICE OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.

- Listening to all of our stakeholders has helped us take each of them on our journey with us;
- Hearing a variety of viewpoints helps you to consider the positives, negatives, opportunities, growth points and new ideas, from many perspectives;
- Listening to all stakeholders contributes to everyone's wellbeing;
- Allowing staff to grow professionally contributes to staff wellbeing;
- Professional growth enables confidence;
- Articulating our teaching and learning strategies enables the presenter/s to become experts; and
- Staff are more likely to be on the same bus as the cultural change if they feel valued.



Our Take-Home Messages

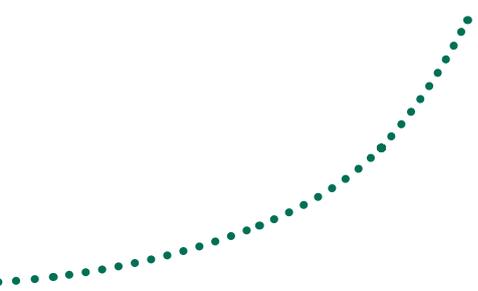
INCLUDE ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

**ALL FEEDBACK TELLS YOU SOMETHING ABOUT
YOUR SCHOOL, USE IT TO LEARN ABOUT THE
PERCEPTIONS OF YOUR SCHOOL.**

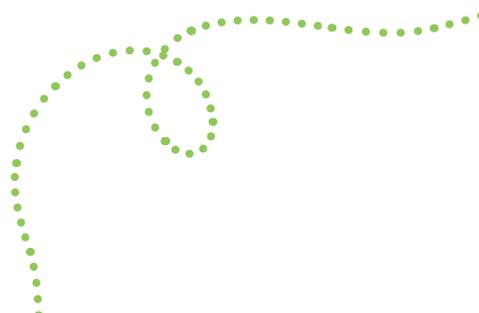
WELCOME 'VOICE' AS PART OF YOUR SCHOOL'S CULTURE.

LET 'THE VOICES' KNOW YOU ARE LISTENING.

**IT TAKES TIME TO USE 'VOICE' WELL, BUT IT IS WORTH IT
FOR YOUR STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.**







SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

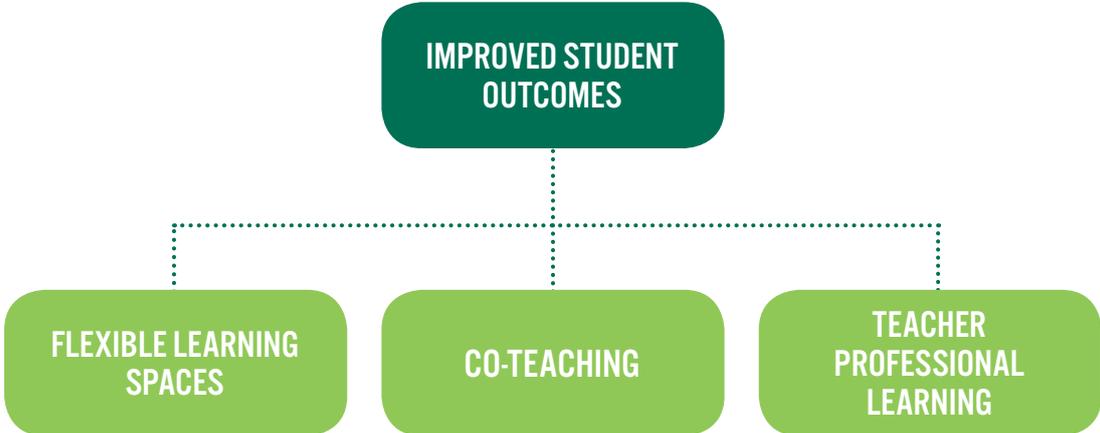
Over the past five years Claremont College teaching staff have been transforming their teaching practices, through co-teaching, to improve student outcomes.



The purpose began with new learning spaces to work in and the idea of co-teaching to deliver the curriculum. We hypothesised that the combination of new spaces plus teachers working collaboratively, would equate to improved student learning and student outcomes. We quickly learnt that two structural changes alone (i.e. Flexible Learning Spaces and Co-Teaching) would not improve student outcomes, without Teacher Professional Learning.

FIGURE 6.1 DESCRIBES OUR STARTING POINT FOR THIS ACTION RESEARCH TWO YEARS AGO WHEN WE HAD DEVELOPED THREE OF OUR SEVEN FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACES. AT THIS POINT WE HAD BEGUN TO CO-TEACH, AND WE HAD STARTED TO DEVELOP OUR OWN JOB EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.

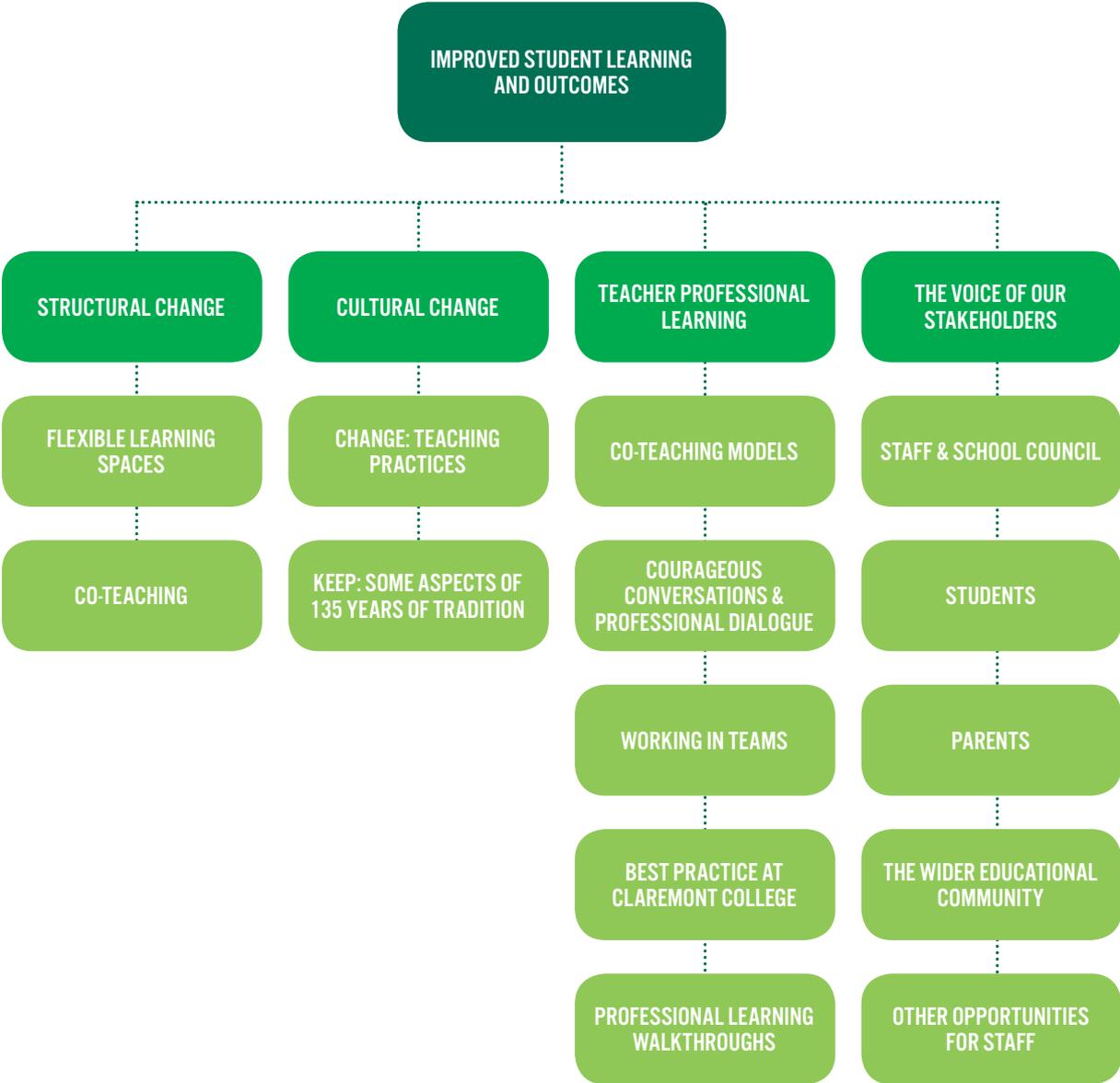
FIGURE 6.1: STARTING POINT OF THE ACTION LEARNING PROJECT (PHASE ONE)



Our initial idea was simply to improve student outcomes by focussing on our new learning spaces and co-teaching, with some teacher professional learning associated with these two aspects. However, while developing the aspects of our teaching practices explained in the Professional Development section of this paper, we discovered an abundance of cultural changes that needed to take place as well, and in this process we also discovered some aspects of our school culture that needed to remain strong. In addition, it has been important to have open two-way communication with all stakeholders, while developing a number of job-embedded professional learning opportunities to enhance all aspects of co-teaching.

FIGURE 6.2 REPRESENTS HOW WE DEVELOPED AND REDEFINED OUR PROCESSES OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS TO INCLUDE ‘IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING AND OUTCOMES’ THROUGH THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE, CULTURAL CHANGE, TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, AND THE VOICE OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

FIGURE 6.2: PHASE TWO – OUR MODIFIED ACTION RESEARCH MODEL.



Through this process outlined in Figure 6.2 we have improved student learning and outcomes, as a result of improved professional learning, that has brought about improved individual (and team) teaching practices.

While our results are showing that the learning spaces and co-teaching are the structures that have provided us with the opportunity to change, it is our teachers who are making the greatest difference. They are the key ingredient that make the learning spaces fun, creative

and engaging. They are the people who make every learning space into a community with a shared culture, a place where the students are eager to attend every day. And all of these communities contribute to the whole school community and culture. Teachers need and deserve to be looked after as they learn to work in a co-teaching environment, as they are the singularly and collectively the biggest change agents to a child's learning.

**WE SHOULD FOCUS ON
THE GREATEST SOURCE
OF VARIANCE THAT CAN
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE –
THE TEACHER.** (HATTIE 2003, P3)¹

¹ Hattie, J., Teachers Make a Difference – What is the Research Evidence? 2003, p3, http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=research_conference_2003

SUMMARY OF STAFF LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

We know from qualitative and quantitative data, the teaching staff and Teaching and Learning Assistants now have improved knowledge of the Key Areas in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1: STAFF KEY LEARNING AREAS AND OUTCOMES

KEY AREAS OF LEARNING	STAFF OUTCOMES
LEARNING SPACES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Creative and innovative learning environments are the structural basis for teaching and learning.
CULTURAL CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A supportive culture exists and this has helped staff through the change process; → A supportive culture where all staff believe that all students will learn – a key ingredient to staff efficacy; and → An inspired culture where all staff love to learn which is modelled for the students.
CO-TEACHING MODELS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Staff have a sense of direction and a common language to discuss the structures to be used in class; → Knowledge and understanding of co-teaching is embedded across the school; → The models we developed gave us the vehicle to discuss what each staff member of each team is required to do, to improve student learning; → Staff assumptions about co-teaching are alleviated; → Staff can plan in teams using the most appropriate model for each Key Learning Area; → There is flexibility to alter the models to ensure they reflect the most appropriate structures for student engagement and student learning; → There are incidental learning opportunities through co-teaching, as members in each team learn from each other; and → New staff are able to learn and understand the structures.
COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Staff have skills to enter into courageous conversations if needed; → Professional dialogue skills are now a regular part of every day; → Feedback from all stakeholders is a part of the school culture; and → Our school has become a 'safer' place as staff can share openly and honestly.

KEY AREAS OF LEARNING	STAFF OUTCOMES
WORKING IN TEAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Collegiality with peers has been strengthened; → Staff receive support from their peers and offer support to their peers; → There is now one Teaching and Learning Assistant on each grade; → Collaboration and planning with your team is the norm; → Decision making is team-based because of our collaborative teams approach; and → Colleagues are supported because they are no longer working in isolation.
BEST PRACTICE AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teaching practices have improved because of the school wide approach to Thinking and Learning Dispositions; → Teaching practices have improved because of the school wide approach to The Learning Pit; → Teaching practices have improved because of the school wide approach to Learning Support through enhancement and differentiation; → Teaching practices are improving because of the school wide approach to Learning Intentions and Success Criteria; → Teaching practices are beginning to improve because of the school wide approach to Project Based Learning; and → Teaching practices have improved because of the school wide approach to the delivery of best practice and the accountability that arises from working in teams.
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WALKTHROUGHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → This aspect of our professional development has been far more beneficial than anticipated because our staff are keen to learn from each other; → A cultural shift occurred as staff became comfortable offering and receiving feedback from each other; → Staff welfare improved through job-embedded learning and because teams have time to learn together; and → Teaching strategies and models improved because staff want to be the best they can be in the eyes of each other.

SUMMARY OF STUDENT LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

This summary is divided into two areas:

1. Academic Outcomes where measurable cognitive skills are derived from the Key Learning Areas; and
2. Student Learning and Outcomes for 21st century dispositions which are the intangible skills needed for 21st century learning.

1. ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Our aim has been to maintain high academic standards, in particular our NAPLAN data. We have done this throughout a period of change at our school. To maintain our high academic standards at the same time as experiencing these many changes, such as:

- Ongoing building projects,
- Staff turnover,
- Internal staff leadership changes,
- New co-teaching models,
- New team relationships and expectations,
- Cultural change,
- Student changes because of the whole grade working together,
- A certain amount of pressure from all stakeholders, and
- The day to day busyness of a Primary School,

...may not be a miracle but certainly must be a testament to the dedicated staff who teach at Claremont College.

Our grade averages (compared to the Association of Independent Schools and the State Schools) across the five years since we began co-teaching, remain exemplary, and are provided in Section 4.d. The relevance of this data is the consistency across five years, as we have maintained the high standards we were achieving prior to our move to co-teaching.

As stated at the outset of this action research project we have now implemented a whole school approach to assessments, predominately through the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to enable us to track and monitor student learning in Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Spelling and Mathematics. The Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT), administered at the end of each year, enable us to:

- Monitor each child's progress;
- To make adjustments according to their needs;
- Be confident in understanding each child's learning journey;
- Communicate confidently with parents about student results; and
- Continue to monitor our school's education programs especially as our approach is co-teaching and there is no documented evidence, that we could find, of the success of this pedagogical approach.

At the time of writing, we are about to complete our second year of PAT assessments and therefore we will not be able to track this data yet, but certainly after five years we expect to see that we will maintain our school's high standards, as we have done with NAPLAN, and we predict that we will improve in some if not all areas, over this period because of improved teaching practices.

2. STUDENT LEARNING AND OUTCOMES FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

The underestimated and to some extent, unexpected strengths of co-teaching, are the growth of non-academic skills that enable students to become life-long learners.

Zhao (2006, p4)² talks about the 'problems with current measures':

What is measured by today's tests is "almost exclusively cognitive skills" (Brunello & Schlotter, 2010, p13)... Judgements based solely upon measurement of cognitive achievement surely have their limitations... the focus on assessing cognitive achievement fails to address the skills and competencies a world-class education must deliver.

Zhao (2006, p6) goes on to say:

There is abundant evidence to show that actions to improve scores on standardised tests can damage the development of other important skills such as non-cognitive skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

The non-academic outcomes are an area of passion for us at Claremont College. We created spaces to prepare our students for their future, without any empirical evidence that 21st century learning skills would unequivocally result. However, we have been fortunate to have been able to track the growth of the non-academic skills

through data as outlined in Table 6.2, collected over the past two years.

Our learning spaces are known for their buzz of purposeful learning, where students are actively engaged. You now rarely see students sitting at their desks and listening to their teachers, participating in 'one-way learning'. This is one outcome we are excited about, but recognise that some parents and visitors to our school are sometimes surprised by what appears to be chaos, but truly is active student engagement. The image (Figure 6.3) of students quietly working at their desks is a scene from a traditional classroom, whereas the second image (Figure 6.4) of students working in groups, is a scene from a Claremont College learning space. We expect our students to learn by collaborating, by communicating with their peers, to be independent and stay on task, to show resilience in their work and when interacting with their peers, and to be happy and engaged when doing so. This type of learning can be noisier than a traditional classroom, but the quality of learning is enhanced because of these 21st century learning skills and interactions.

FIGURE 6.3 - BEFORE



FIGURE 6.4 - AFTER



² Zhao Y, Counting What Counts, Reframing Education Outcomes, Solution Tree Press, 2016, p4

Students at Claremont College now have improved learning outcomes as explained throughout the paper using observations, quantitative data and qualitative data, as summarised in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2 - THE KEY STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING AND OUTCOMES FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

KEY AREAS OF LEARNING	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES USING QUALITATIVE DATA.
ANECDOTALLY, AND FROM SOME QUALITATIVE DATA, OUR STUDENTS HAVE IMPROVED THEIR PROFICIENCIES IN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Cooperation and collaboration; → Independent learning; → Student engagement and the ability to stay focussed and on-task; → Resilience when working with their peers; → Resilience with their learning when challenged; → Happiness in their ‘work-place’; and → A sense of belonging to their whole grade.
KEY AREAS OF LEARNING	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES USING OBSERVATIONS AND QUANTITATIVE DATA.
NEW LEARNING SPACES HAVE ALLOWED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Students to work in creative comfort; and → Greater flexibility and choice regarding where students like to work and learn.
THROUGH CO-TEACHING MODELS THERE ARE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Flexible groupings across the grade; → Increased expectations to work productively in groups and independently; and → Whole school approaches to teaching and learning though co-teaching.
STAFF WORKING IN TEAMS HAS CREATED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Additional support because there is now one Teaching and Learning Assistant on each grade; → Improved student to staff ratios; → Opportunities to connect with three or more adults every day rather than one; → Decisions made for learning because of a collaborative team approach; and → Learning support and learning enhancement across each year group and within each learning space.
THROUGH BEST PRACTICE, OUR STUDENTS NOW:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Focus on learning; → Understand themselves as learners because of their knowledge of their personal thinking and learning dispositions; → Understand that to be challenged, to be ‘in the pit’, is good for their learning; and → Engage in opportunities to understand their learning through the use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.
STUDENT VOICE HAS ENABLED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Opportunities to express personal views, to be heard and to make a difference; and → Students to realise they are a part of their own learning journey.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

AS WE WRAP UP THIS ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT IT IS IMPORTANT TO US THAT WE FINISH WITH A SUSTAINABLE PLAN TO:

1. Continue to improve all aspects of student learning and outcomes through co-teaching;
2. Maintain expectations of high academic achievement;
3. Review and improve our data gathering to monitor and improve non-academic outcomes;
4. Provide staff with ongoing job-embedded learning;
5. Grow the job-embedded learning team;
6. Communicate well with all of our stakeholders;
7. Continue to create a culture of respect for one another (staff and students) and a love of learning;
8. Ensure student and staff welfare are of the utmost importance;
9. Share with and support the wider educational community;
10. Continue to develop and measure, various aspects of this action research project; and
11. Investigate further action research opportunities.

We will continue to give our staff at least one full day of job-embedded professional development each semester where teams of staff are able to work together to learn from each other and to improve their practices. Through these days and whole staff professional development each week in our staff meetings, we will continue to discuss and refine our teaching practices to improve student outcomes (both academic and non-academic), as student learning is the core of our School Strategic Plan.

We will grow the job-embedded learning team, to encourage shared learning, and to create a sustainable model for job-embedded learning.

We will look for opportunities to monitor and gather data non-academic student outcomes, without measuring for the sake of measuring. As we develop ways of measuring the dispositions to improve thinking and learning, we will consider the research and advice of leading educators. Our staff will adopt and integrate the 21st century dispositions for learning, now described by Simister (2016)³ as 'Intellectual Character'.

We will continue to communicate with all stakeholders in the Claremont College community, to ensure their voices are heard. In doing this, and by being very clear that the culture of our school comes from every individual within the school, we will continue to be a place of community, where 21st century learning and experiences are inspiring and engaging, and are the norm.

We will ensure that our staff welfare is something that is nurtured and not taken for granted, as we know and respect that the key to each child's success and sense of personal wellbeing lies with the team of teachers on his or her grade. Staff and student wellbeing are integral components of our School Strategic Plan.

We will continue to support the wider educational community as they come to learn from us at Claremont College, through the 'Professional Learning' opportunities available, and we will continue to encourage staff to share their personal co-teaching experiences with visiting staff and by taking up opportunities to speak at conferences, and to help individual schools as they embark on their co-teaching journey.

AND FINALLY, BECAUSE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST ROUND OF AIS RESEARCH PROJECTS (2015-6), WE WILL CONTINUE TO UTILISE ACTION RESEARCH TO IMPROVE OUR CURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES AND STUDENT LEARNING. USE ACTION RESEARCH AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENT IN CO-TEACHING AND WE WILL INVESTIGATE ADDITIONAL ACTION RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES.

³ Simister CJ, http://www.cjsimister.com/FutureSmart/Educational_Consultancy.html (n.d.)



APPENDIX

1. INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1 The Structure of Each Chapter

2. LEARNING SPACES

Figure 2.1 Student responses to the question of enjoyment because the whole grade works together

Figure 2.2 'Ideal in Practice' Stages of Transformation

Figure 2.3 Year 5 Enrolments 2011 to 2016

Figure 2.4 Whole School Enrolments 2011 to 2016

3. CULTURAL CHANGE

Table 3.1 Management vs Leadership

Figure 3.1 Top-Down Leadership Model 2012

Figure 3.2 Distributive Leadership Model 2016

Figure 3.3 A Shift from Decisions Made on the Basis of Individual Preferences to Decisions Made Collectively by Building Shared Knowledge of Best Practice

Figure 3.4 A Shift from 'Collaboration Lite' to Collaboration Explicitly Focussed on Student Achievement

Figure 3.5 A Shift from an Assumption that 'These Are My Kids' to an Assumption that 'These Are Our Kids'

Figure 3.6 A Shift from Teachers Gathering Data Individually to Collaborative Teams Acquiring Information to Improve Student Learning

Figure 3.7 What Matters Most in Raising Student Achievement?

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. CO-TEACHING MODELS

Figure 4.1 Claremont College Co-Teaching Models

Figure 4.2 The Co-Teaching Cycle

B. COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

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D. BEST PRACTICE AT CLAREMONT COLLEGE

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6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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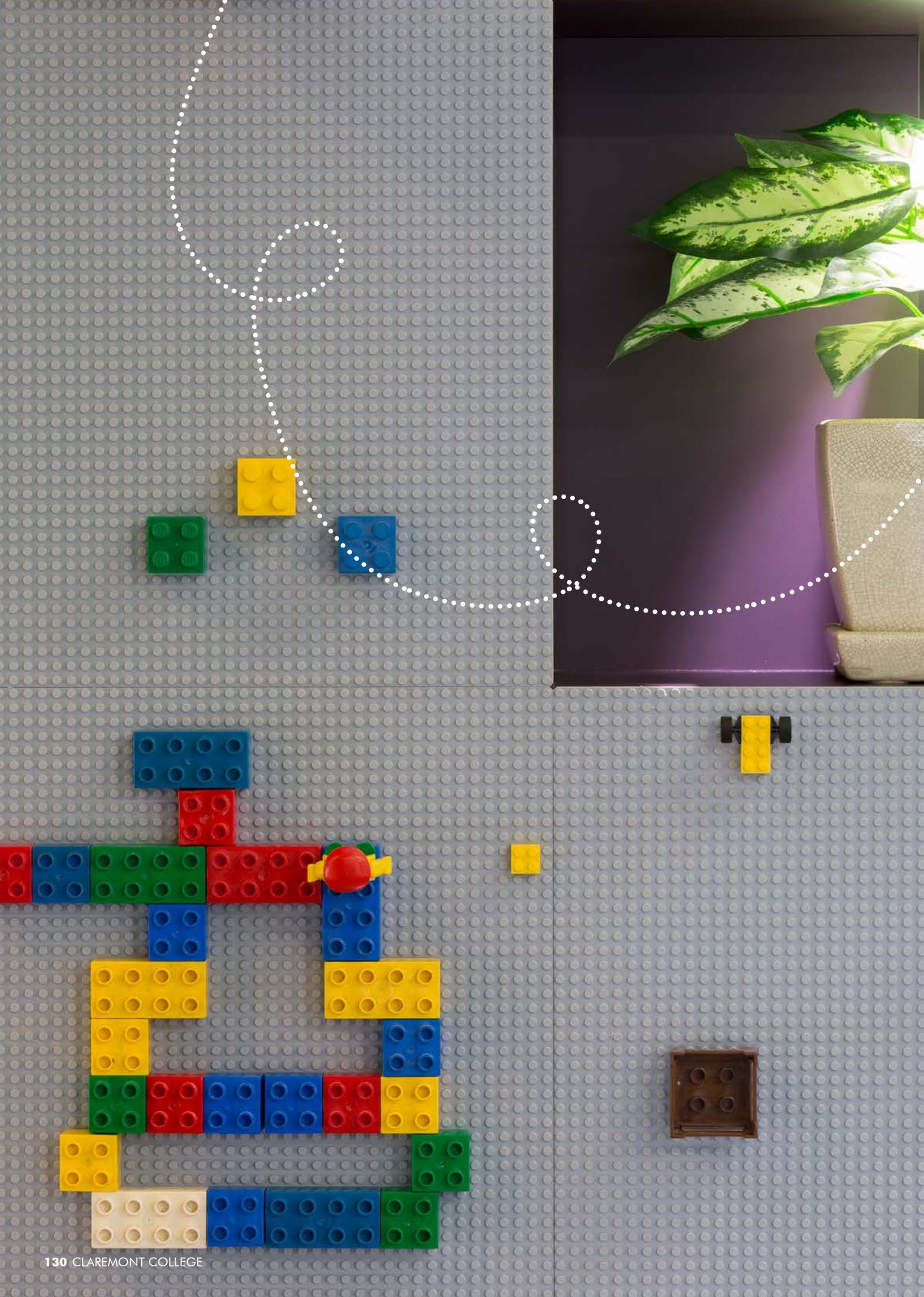
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Table 6.1 Staff Key Learning Areas and Outcomes

Table 6.2 The Key Strategies to Improve Student Learning and the Outcomes for 21st Century Learners, Because of Co-Teaching

7. APPENDIX

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY



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