Podcast Transcript

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(TD) I’m joined today by Paul Ivey who’s responsible for instructional leadership at St Phillips Christian College Cessnock. Paul also works as the Head of Innovative Learning. As you listen to Paul, you’ll hear about some of the ideals that the school has had in mind for remote teaching. Paul also describes the ways that teachers are continuing to implement an I do, we do, you do approach as well as how sending materials home such as mini whiteboards has been useful. I hope you enjoy this interview with Paul as much as I did.

(TD) So, thank you Paul, what’s been the most useful thing you’ve done to in order to get your learning plan up and running?

(PI) We’ve had got a couple of ideals in mind when planning for our students from K through to 12.

The first thing is that we didn't want to do was simply just lift the timetable and place it in the hands of parents at home. We appreciate that many parents will be facing significant challenges and even hardships at this time.

Basically, we have three pillars to our approach. The first one is PC time, continuing with our normal PC periods and we're doing that through Zoom calls.

The second thing that we are looking to do is continue our face-to-face lessons. Again, we are using Zoom calls here and sharing screens of pre-recorded material. Teachers are delivering one-third of their regular face to face time in this way.

The last pillar here at school is what we're calling our Help desk. It’s a really interesting innovation. It's actually manned from 8:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. each evening Monday to Friday and students are able to dial-in and speak with a subject specialist teacher for one-on-one support.

That’s our plan moving forward and we’re looking at collecting some detailed feedback from the staff and students and parents as we go through this week. Yeah but interesting times in education.

(TD) There’s a few instructional strategies aren’t there that you and your team have put in place to support student learning? I wondered could you take us through these?
(PI) Yes sure, as you know we've been working across the school on embedding the Principles of Instruction and instructional leadership through coaching. The coaching has really been challenging as we've lost some of the normal cycles and routines we've developed, however I would say that the relationships and trust that I've established through coaching have really been instrumental in helping us support each other at this time.

Much of my time in the last three weeks has been making myself available to support individuals and in that spirit next week we've got a number of staff who have made themselves available to support their colleagues between their online lessons with this new normal that we find ourselves in.

It's also been pleasing to see how Rosenshine's Principles might look different and look in a different context. For example, I've seen many junior school teachers recording their daily reviews to be shared digitally and they're still using an I do-we do-you do approach to their teaching. I know that a mini Whiteboard and Marker was certainly an essential item sent home alongside making our digital devices available for loan.

Those teachers I think who have embraced use of video within their coaching cycles have actually transitioned quite quickly just in terms of using the technology or in their comfort and willingness to share those clips So they're actually sharing those clips now directly to parents. Again, there's a vulnerability in that.

Our junior school teachers are using See-saw at present, and Schoolbox hasn’t been ruled out for them yet. This is allowing teachers to get feedback out to the students based on the work that they’re loading. I've seen many loaded images and video collections of students with their whiteboards making their learning visible.

I'm sure there are challenges ahead and I'm sure that the feedback we gathered throughout this week will give us some things to think about obstacles to overcome. There's just been some really fundamental shifts in the way that we deliver our teaching, and all these have been designed, communicated and implemented in a couple of weeks. So we'd be foolish to think that we've got all those things right and as a school we need to be ready to respond again, be agile and fail fast with these innovation issues which is what my role is all about.

I think we're all feeling vulnerable at this time. We're all doing things differently. Probably my greatest piece of advice would be that we need to be kind to each other and ourselves to be honest

(TD) We wish to give you Thanks Paul for sharing your work with us and we obviously wish everyone at the school all the best during these really unchartered times

That's all for this episode folks and we'll bring you a new school story in the near future.