

Learning to Learn Program

Background

A major focus at Roselea Public School is to ensure the provision of a learning environment that promotes high quality student learning. In line with current research, we acknowledge the need to develop students who are lifelong learners who possess the skills they need to effectively participate in workplaces and communities of the future, who are literate, numerate, articulate and effective in applying the skills associated with learning and who are socially competent.

To achieve this, we believe that there is a need to be specific in the way in which we teach not only the basic skills of literacy and numeracy but the broader skills associated with effective learning and thinking.

Approach

As a *Learning to Learn* school, emphasis has been placed on maintaining, refining and improving teaching and learning in order to optimise students' potential, achievement and success.

For students, the focus is to challenge and extend them by:

- assisting them to set learning goals and reflect on their own learning and thinking
- fostering knowledge, awareness and control over their own learning and thinking
- encouraging high levels of independence, confidence and self worth
- providing learning experiences which promote a high level of engagement and motivation
- developing in them an understanding and competency in applying the language of thinking
- assisting them to understand the way they learn
- employing an inquiry approach to learning
- skilling them to competently utilise a range of thinking skills and strategies
- developing the skills to apply learning technologies to assist their learning

For Roselea Public School as a learning community the challenges involve:

- developing a whole school approach to the teaching of thinking and enabling ongoing opportunities for students to develop, practice and refine their skills at school and at home
- implementing a common thinking language understood by parents as well as their children
- teachers viewing themselves as learners, actively constructing their own understandings about teaching and learning and developing new approaches and solutions
- teachers understanding, explicitly teaching and integrating thinking and learning strategies across the curriculum
- facilitating students' control of their own learning by involving them in self monitoring, self reflection and goal setting
- providing students with time to think, explore and understand new ideas
- fostering student self esteem (as a person and a learner), confidence, persistence and understanding of how to go about doing a task

Aims of the program

In 2003, the decision was made to begin the process of implementing a *Learning to Learn* Program. Broadly, by explicitly teaching students how to learn, the program aims to:

- increase students' awareness of themselves as learners
- increase teachers' capacity to be creative designers of learning

Students during their primary schooling at Roselea will develop:

- information and research skills
- social competencies such as co-operation, team work, resilience, citizenship, flexibility and effective listening
- a capacity to set goals, monitor their progress and reflect on their own learning
- an understanding of multiple intelligences
- technology skills
- study skills including the use of visual tools for learning
- personal attributes and *Habits of Mind* to assist students to be motivated and have a positive attitude towards learning

Progress so far

At the beginning of the 2003 school year, Roselea staff engaged in the process of reviewing the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning and the development of a model that would best meet the needs of students to become competent lifelong learners. Since then, in the implementation of this model, the staff have worked in the following areas:

- development of understandings around quality teaching and learning
- implementation of co-operative learning and the explicit teaching of the aligned skills
- development of understandings of *Habits of Mind* (learning behaviours), the identification of priority learning behaviours and the development of teaching and learning strategies
- development of understandings about authentic assessment, consistent teacher judgement, student goal setting and self reflection
- skill development in the use of learning technologies

Future Directions

As a school community we are developing our understandings about how we learn and the different ways in which we learn. We acknowledge that the implementation will be a slow process with time needed to read, talk, learn, share, take risks, revisit and evaluate both what we are doing and the effectiveness of tools and strategies being utilised.

During 2005 we will focus on the following:

- development of a whole school approach to planning and teaching core subjects with a thinking focus
- reviewing processes for developing students' ability to set goals, self reflect and engage in 3-way interviews with parents and teachers

- explicit teaching of visual tools to aid thinking and learning
- explicit teaching of the *Habits of Mind* learning behaviours and their assessment
- Multiple and Emotional Intelligence
- building the skills associated with resilience and emotional intelligence
- learning technologies