

Learning story - Best practice for boys in the classroom: Raising awareness.

Lead teachers

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| Synopsis | In 2007 Botany Downs Secondary College (BDSC) initiated a Boys' Education Pedagogy Group who researched and developed resources to promote effective teaching pedagogy for boys, culminating in a full staff professional development session focusing on best classroom practice. |
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| Focusing Inquiry | |
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| Justification | <p>As a new school, built around the whānau concept of education, BDSC has high academic expectations for students, while providing strong and effective pastoral care, enabling them to reach their personal potential as well-rounded individuals.</p> <p>However, concerns had started to be raised over a number of boys that were appearing to achieve well below their potential. Through the formation of a Boys' Education Pedagogy Group senior management believed that interested staff may be able to better understand the issues facing boys and therefore be able to offer advice on best practice to more effectively motivate and engage boys through education.</p> <p>Research is also now widely available on the subject, particularly from Australia, where significant government money has been invested into boys' education initiatives. A teaching inquiry that would enable the Boys' Education Pedagogy Group to feedback to the staff as a whole therefore seemed a logical progression.</p> |
| Objectives | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To form a group of interested staff members focused on boys' education. 2. To research best practice for boys' education using national and international literature. 3. To summarise the key findings to the whole staff and produce helpful resources to support this knowledge. |

| Teaching Inquiry | |
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| Method | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formed a Boys' Education Pedagogy Group of staff interested in the subject. 2. Discussed suitable areas of research and key topics to be covered. 3. Carried out extensive research into issues facing boys in education and the latest best practice pedagogy. 4. Collated and summarised the research focusing on best practice in the classroom. |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Prepared a summary PowerPoint and handout of best practice tips for all staff. 6. Facilitated a full staff professional development session on best classroom practice in boys' education. 7. Evaluated the research and presentation through formal and informal staff feedback allowing reflection on changes that could be made. |
| Resources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation PowerPoint: Boys' Education: Building Bright Futures. 2. Staff handout: Classroom Strategies for Boys |

| Learning Inquiry | |
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| Evaluation and reflection | <p>The research and the resulting presentation worked to the benefit of all staff involved. Those in the Boys' Education Pedagogy group were able to become experts in the subject, who consequently carried positive effects, through reflection, over to their classroom practice. Those staff who were the audience for the professional development session were able to gain an insight into issues pertaining to boys' education and could walk away with a visual reminder of that insight through the handout.</p> <p>We did however note that it was easy to get side-tracked by the vast amount of international research available that focused on boys and their role in wider society. It was important to maintain an educational focus and to ensure that discussions, although enjoyable, needed to remain on topic for progress to be made.</p> <p>The interest that was developed through this process has enabled BDSC to plan and implement new initiatives relating to boys' education such as a more detailed professional development programme for interested staff, guest speakers, "Dads and Lads" breakfasts, and additions to the Learning to Learn programme specifically designed to motivate and engage boys.</p> |