

School story - Professional learning for teachers: Helping boys build bright futures.

Lead teachers

Nicola Agnew and Alison Derbyshire – Botany Downs Senior College.

Synopsis	In 2008 Botany Downs Secondary College (BDSC) gathered and evaluated all relevant data and then established a professional learning group lead by 'expert' teachers who had researched and created resources to promote effective teaching pedagogy for boys.
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Focusing Inquiry

Justification	<p>The staff at BDSC recognised that boys were often not achieving and learning to their potential.</p> <p>What data did you gather and how did you use it?</p> <p>This finding was also reflected in national and international research including documentation from the Ministry of Education that identified boys' success as being of concern. BDSC is a new school with an enthusiastic and motivated staff who inherently want to ensure that all students achieve their personal excellence. Therefore, the issue of boys' success was identified as a key professional learning opportunity for development.</p> <p>Small professional development groups that facilitate shared learning, drawing on the expertise of the staff involved, have also been identified as an important support for ongoing professional learning.</p>
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Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To share with interested staff the theory behind the best practice of what works for boys. 2. To produce helpful resources on, and give practical examples of, how to use this theory to reflect on and improve their own classroom practice. 3. Produce resources that can be disseminated to the whole staff that will spark wider interest in best practice for boys' education.
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Teaching Inquiry

Method	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carried out extensive research into issues facing boys in education and the latest best practice pedagogy. 2. Developed a series of Professional Learning sessions each based on one key component of best practice. 3. Developed PowerPoint presentations containing key ideas and links to other helpful resources for each of the five sessions.
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Prepared a booklet of related readings, drawing on relevant research, as reference material for each of the teachers involved. 5. Delivered each of the sessions allowing time for questions and reflection on teaching practice. 6. Evaluated the programme through formal and informal staff feedback allowing reflection on changes that could be made.
Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Session PowerPoints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: Why is Boys' Education an Issue? • The Brain and Best Practice. • Literacy Skills. • Motivation and Discipline. • Active Learning and Evaluation. 2. Booklet of Readings: including current news articles, conference presentations, and book extracts from Michael Irwin, Paul Baker, Celia Lashlie, Michael Gurian, and James Moloney.

Learning Inquiry	
Evaluation and reflection	<p>For all staff involved the professional learning programme proved to be highly successful. The feedback was positive as most had been able to implement best practice strategies into their planning. Staff felt that boys had become more motivated and active learners as these strategies enabled them to start developing a more supportive learning environment.</p> <p>The programme has created heightened interest in boys' education within the wider school and other teachers are already inquiring about further professional learning opportunities available on this subject.</p> <p>For the "expert" teachers involved, this programme also provided a fantastic professional development opportunity giving them experience in facilitating shared learning for their colleagues.</p>