PROGRAM OUTLINE

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IMPACT PROJECT AND LEARNING CENTRE

Mission

The central mission of the project is to:-

- Promote innovative teaching and learning through exploring non-traditional ideas and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- Develop and manage a strategic plan designed to improve teaching and learning across the college.
- Review current teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- Be outward-looking in linking the projects and students' endeavours with the community and outside expertise, experiences and networks.

Vision

Our vision for the IMPACT project and learning centre is shaped by the extensive research into the Middle Years of Learning and the evolving landscape of the knowledge age – in particular the need for life-long-learning.

What is clear from this research is the unmistakable shift in focus from the teacher to the learner.

As such new and innovative approaches and student centred enquiry based learning is at the heart of our vision.

Teaching approach

Fundamental to the ways teachers work with students and each other in the project is the concept of the co-learner. The culture of a learning community is geared towards supporting staff learning to improve student learning. As such the teachers in the program act as role models for life-long learning.

Accordingly teachers will use an action research model to continually investigate, apply and evaluate new strategies that improve student learning. Linked to this process will be the use of:-

- Individualised student learning plans and negotiated outcomes
- A range of assessment methods including student self assessment
- Diagnostic tools and data to track students' various starting points and individual progress.

Literacy and numeracy

The project has set a major goal to improve student outcomes in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy across all subject areas. Our definition of literacy is deliberately broad and includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematical, visual, scientific, and technological and language (LOTE).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The project regards the use of ICT as an integral part of everyday practices and management. It encourages students and staff to assume greater responsibility for their own learning and to develop their:

- Skills to become active and independent leaders
- Abilities to communicate, collaborate, plan, analyse and solve problems
- Skills to use new and emerging technologies, particularly ITC.
The way we should do things

The project has adopted the following “ways of doing things” as guiding principles at all times. It is the expectation that all staff, students and other people involved in the program will operate within this set of values.

- Communicate respectfully
- Co-operate in good faith
- Aim for consensus decision making
- Confront problems respectfully
- Allow and give no put-downs
- Accept where others are
- Suspend judgements
- Adopt a sense of responsibility within the group
- Adopt a sense of responsibility for the group
- Respect confidentiality
- Maintain a sense of humour!

Source: Adapted from the Australian Schools Network & the Coalition of Essential Schools and used by Leongatha-Corner Inlet Cluster of Schools

Our Motto: NEVER KILL AN IDEA

Program model

Improved student engagement and attitude to school and sense of self worth.

To help students to place themselves and their learning into a contextual framework they need an understanding of, or sense of place.

Integrated Thematic approaches

The learning program is designed around a four-term thematic approach centred on developing a sense of place in students, to expand student concepts and sense of Self, Self and Local Community, Self and the Broader Community and Self and the Global Community.

A focus on student health and well-being and environmental education underpins the programs content with an emphasis on establishing close learning partnerships and relationships with students, parents and the local and broader community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term One</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Two</td>
<td>Self and Local Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Three</td>
<td>Self and Broader Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Four</td>
<td>Self and the Global Community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tutorial/Advisory Sessions

To support the learning needs of all students the program is supported through a learning team structure and timetabled tutorial sessions with a mentor teacher. The mentor teacher will also be delivering units in the IMPACT program and know these students very well. These tutorial sessions will be used to:

- Monitor students’ personal learning plans and goals
- Assist students to stay on track and help them with planning strategies
- Respond to individual learning issues and student management concerns
- Deliver a range of skill sessions and extra-curricula support

The tutorial teachers will:

- Provide both students and parents with a first port of call for any inquires or concerns.
Program structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>SOSE</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>Language and Literacy</th>
<th>Elective Visual Art</th>
<th>Elective Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram shows 48min periods per fortnight

CENTRAL STUDIES

Central Studies

Central Studies is an interdisciplinary curriculum framework that allows students to study real-world ideas, problems and issues and to make connections to their learning. Central Studies incorporates the tradition learning areas of English, Science, SOSE and Health.

- The Central Studies provide opportunities for personal choice and in-depth studies in the school and the local and broader community
- Each of the Central Studies will be consistent with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

This framework draws on the expertise and content knowledge of each area in responding to an overriding set of Fertile or Essential Questions.

What is a fertile question?

Fertile questioning places the question at the centre of teaching and learning. It deflects the teaching from its focus on a ‘correct answer’ to a focus on open ended investigations and deeper learning.

Fertile Question Criteria

Taken from ‘Teaching and Learning in a Community of Thinking’ Yoram Harpaz,

1. An open question - a question that in principle does not have one definite answer, but actually several answers different from and even contradictory to each other.
2. An undermining or irritating question - a question that undermines the basic assumptions and fixed beliefs of the learners; one that casts doubt on the ‘self-evident.’
3. A rich question- a question that requires grappling with rich content; that is impossible to answer without careful and lengthy research; that tends to break up into sub-questions
4. A connected question - a question relevant to the life of the learners, to the society in which they live and to the discipline and subject within which it was asked.
5. A charged question - a question having an ethical dimension, such questions have a strong emotional charge to motivate learning and inquiry.
6. A practical question - a question that can be developed into a research question; a question about which information is available to students.
The following is an example of the ways in which a fertile question could be evaluated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How do we sustain the human population into the future, what role do individuals and communities have in achieving this and how can tensions between competing interests be diffused to achieve peaceful outcomes?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>There is no answer as to how we sustain the human population or if we need to at all, there is no definite upper limit to the population of humans, there are a number of ways that people and communities could contribute to sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritating</td>
<td>Learners will have preconceived ideas about the future of the planet and ideas about what needs to be done to make preferred future, ideas of others will conflict with their own assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>To answer the question effectively, knowledge will be needed to grapple with the complex and sometimes conflicting issues associated with sustaining the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>The students are part of the future and they have an interest in being part of how it is shaped and what resources are used, they will be at the forefront of new technologies that may help or be used in sustaining the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged</td>
<td>The way we shape the future is an individual and emotionally charged topic, everyone sees different priorities and everyone interprets how everyone in the world is effected by the actions of people and groups of people, questions around who and what is sustained and what is meant by sustaining are asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>The issues and knowledge associated with sustainable futures are researchable, smaller questions can be asked that focus on particular areas or issues of which information is readily available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of a Fertile/Essential Question

- Is gravity a fact or theory?
- Does art reflect culture or shape it?
- Must a story have a beginning, middle and end?
- Is biology destiny?
- Are mathematical ideas inventions or discoveries?
- When is a law unjust?
- Is history a history of progress?
- Who are we and what are we doing here?

Fertile/Essential questions are global and overarching in nature. More specific unit questions are then used to introduce and guide the work of a particular study. They can be subject based and topic specific and used for framing content and inquiry, leading to further more subtle essential questions.

The differences in specificity are illustrated by the examples (below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Question</th>
<th>Unit Question</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does an organism’s structure enable it to survive in its environment?</td>
<td>How do structures of amphibians and reptiles support their survival?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is light?</td>
<td>How do cats see in the dark? Is light a particle or a wave?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do we always mean what we say and say what we mean?</td>
<td>What are sarcasm, irony and satire? How do these genres allow us to communicate without saying what we mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is a friend?</td>
<td>Are frogs and toads true friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is U.S.A. history a history of progress?</td>
<td>Is the gap between the rich and poor any better now than it was 100 years ago? Do new technologies always lead to...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
progress?

Who am I and what am I doing here? | What connects me to the physical environment and places I have been?
--- | ---
• Heritage (norms and traditions)  
• Family (relatives and linage)  
• Memories/Events

It is important to note that the distinction between essential questions and unit questions are not pure black and white. Instead they should be viewed along a continuum of specificity as shades of grey. The focus is to frame questions, engage the learner and guide the exploration and the uncovering of important ideas.

In the IMPACT program there is one Central Study. The fertile/essential question that is explored is Unit one for example is

**Who am I and what am I doing here?**

This question responds to the exploration of “A Sense of Place” and the theme “The self” in term one.

Further essential and unit questions and detailed frameworks to guide student through this exploration have been developed by the learning teams. As an action research project we do not design further that one term in advance and constantly evaluate and refine the week to week program. See a sample outline for Unit 3 on the diagram on the last page.

**Text Books**

The Central Studies units and Mathematics teachers have removed the use of set text books. This design element is very deliberate and purposeful. If teachers are to move to student centred and negotiated episodes of learning the sequential one size fits all reliance on prescribed text books is at odds with this process. The teaching team as a result have generated an enormous amount of new, responsive and interconnected curriculum material and resources.

**Assessment Rubrics**

Assessment Rubrics form the foundation for much of the Impact team’s student evaluation practice. They provide an excellent framework for developing measurements and judgements that encompass assessment for, as and of learning. Student self assessment and peer assessment is also closely linked to this model.

**Culminating Performance/ Celebrating success**

Students conclude all major investigation with a public presentation of their findings and outcomes. For example these take the form of Health Expos, Oral presentation, Earth Summits, Multi Media Exhibitions or Publication of Web sites or Electronic Portfolios etc. It is our experience that students will aim high and excel when they have to present their learning to community members, parents, other teachers and their peers. These events purposefully draw together and integrate the various elements of each specific discipline area.
**Collaborative approaches – Non central studies areas.**

While maintaining their own autonomy for program design and content, it is intended that there will be many layers of collaboration and interactions between all learning areas. The IMPACT program’s vision and design are clear in encouraging integrated approaches and learning partnerships to bring together student learning.

**Mathematics**

Mathematics appears on the program as a separate learning area. However, Mathematics is to move to units based on an enquiry learning model where the content is more student centred. The integrated themes of the program and the use of essential questions can link Mathematics to the overall program and the Central Studies.

**Physical Education**

Physical Education is a separate offering in the program that provides the two dimensions:

- Movement and Physical activity
- Health knowledge and promotion

There are many learning links between the content of these dimensions and the IMPACT project, in particular health knowledge and in catering for the high percentage of kinaesthetic, active learners involved.

There is a focus on team building, relationships, action, participation and community interaction. Both active and passive units are offered to provide for a broad range of student interests. Each group will be expected to plan and deliver a health and well-being activity, event or session to another group. Actions units are non-KLA content specific with assessment based on student participation, initiative, co-operation and organisation.

**Language and Literacy**

This component of the Year 9 program incorporates the offering of LOTE (German) with a range of units that respond to the language and Literacy needs of all students. This model has been included specifically to support students and the Literacy priority of both Macleod College and the IMPACT project. Placement in units will be negotiated through both teacher recommendations and student choice to identify the most appropriate unit to address the students’ Language and Literacy and general learning needs.

Potential units include LOTE – German. Language for Business. English Language. ESL Support. Making a Difference – Language Support. Lending a Hand – Special needs and skill support.

**Visual Arts and Technology Electives**

The two elective programs of Visual Arts and Technology are retained as in previous years. There are clear concepts and subject matter in the IMPACT programs themes that lend themselves to these creative learning areas. The project looks forward to many learning collaborations and interactions with the Visual Arts and Technology faculties.
“What icons or characteristics define Melbourne for you and why?”

Research product - A minimum of two Melbourne icon website pages. One page to be interactive and linked to related sites.

“The icons or characteristics that define Melbourne for you and why?”

“In what ways do Melbourne’s icons provide you with a feeling of belonging?”

“Homeless, down and out in Melbourne – who and where would you turn to for help?”

“What ingredients make Melbourne?”

“You're a journalist, how would you market Melbourne?”

Research product - an online survival brochure.

Research product - Web pages that feature scientific investigations about the materials of Melbourne

Research product - Web pages that feature a student study of identities and culture of Melbourne

The culminating performance will be the publication of a website that combines the four research products listed above to feature Melbourne.