



The Marcellin Difference | Tomorrow's Classroom

We know that the world is changing with leaps and bounds. With the rapid technology onslaught and changes to the world of work, it calls for very new learning and schooling solutions. In a progressive and inclusive learning environment, students should constantly be generating original ideas from multiple sources of information – and be doing so guided by teachers, mentors and communities, all in pursuit of self-knowledge and self-created meaning and creativity.

The Independent magazine published an article on Monday 11 February 2019 written by Lord Kenneth Baker. Lord Baker is chair of the *Edge Foundation* and was secretary of state for education in England between 1986 and 1989. In the late 1980's he was responsible for introducing England's national curriculum and their GCSE exams (equivalent to our VCE end-of-year examinations). Lord Baker now recognises that the world of work has changed and as such education as we know it requires a total re-set, "We absolutely need to move from a curriculum that is "knowledge-rich" to one that is "knowledge-engaged" – not learning facts for their own sake but understanding how to put them to use to build and communicate a rich argument or solve a problem."

At Marcellin we recognise that education has a much bigger role to play than equipping young men for the jobs of the future. Having said that we can no longer ignore that fact that today's prescribed one-size-fits all education structure in Australia has past it's use by date. As such in 2019 we published our new learning ecosystem framework – titled *Polaris*. This significant publication outlines our vision for faith, learning and life for a new world environment. The publication also provides a case for change, while ensuring that we are equipping young men at Marcellin with the relevant foundational knowledge, capability skills and necessary character attributes to thrive successfully in the next phase of the 21st Century.

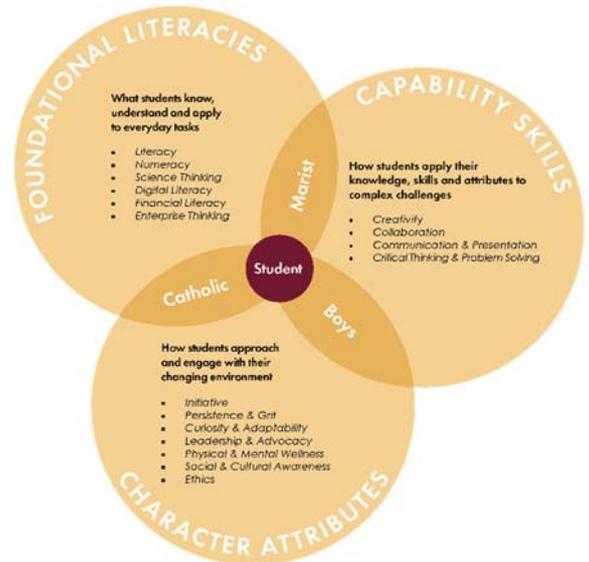
Figure 1 | Polaris Skills for Life-Long Learning

Motivation and improved student outcomes

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an approach that focuses on an individual's inherent psychological needs that are the basis for human motivation, personality development and behaviour self-regulation. SDT differentiates between autonomous (intrinsic) motivation and controlled (extrinsic) motivation.

Perhaps no single phenomenon reflects the positive potential of human nature as much as intrinsic motivation. When an individual is driven by intrinsic motivation, he or she feels self-directed and autonomous; when the individual is driven by extrinsic motivation, he or she feels pressure to behave in a certain way and experience little to no autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of academic achievement, intrinsic motivation is bound and influenced by a set of beliefs and self-perceptions individual students develop in the classroom (Jang, Conradi, McKenna, & Jones, 2015). These include:

- attitude and awareness
- interest, relevance and curiosity
- value
- self-concept
- self-efficacy
- goal setting and goal reaching



Enabling, creating and sustaining intrinsic motivation relies on a teacher's understanding of how to engage with these beliefs and self-perceptions as an integral part of everyday classroom instruction. To this end Marcellin has developed the Polaris Skills for Life-long Learning framework (Figure 1) to inform our teaching and learning pedagogical practice.

What is Pedagogy?

Pedagogy (derived from the Greek work *paidagogia* – meaning *to lead a child*) is often described as the art and science of how students will be taught and supported to learn (Horizons of Hope, 2016). The origins of the word indicate that it is the relationship between a young learner and his teacher, as well as the relationship between learning and teaching that is critical (Loughran 2010).

Marcellin has established an overarching pedagogical framework for the three stages of Polaris, making explicit the expectations held for the learning and teaching that is required to animate the College's new learning ecosystem.

At the **Breadth Stage** (Year 7&8) each of the eight future-focused fully integrated courses will assess student learning against the Victorian Curriculum achievement standards, which includes a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy acquisition across discreet *mastery* and *performance for assessment tasks*. Teachers will use a combination of direct instruction for mastery tasks and Project-Based Learning (PBL) for assessment tasks for performance. PBL was originally developed for medical students to improve their clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills but has since transcended those borders

to be used in other university disciplines and across K to 12 levels in schooling. Studies and literature reviews suggest that PBL can offer many advantages to students, including long-term knowledge retention. A study published in *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning* noted that: "PBL has the potential to improve students' higher-order thinking skills, comprehension and application of knowledge, learning attitudes and motivation" and may also encourage students to accept more responsibility for their learning" (Lee & Blanchard, 2019). While the *Centre for Innovation in Research and Teaching* notes that some of the advantages of PBL include:

- It can encourage higher order critical thinking and de-emphasise memorisation
- It can help students learn what is relevant to the real world
- It can increase motivation to learn and arrive at a solution
- It can provide opportunities for students to collaborate and practice their communication and social skills
- It can help students understand how to learn

The key focus of the **Depth Stage** (Year 9&10) is a time of increased autonomy and independence and a deeper focus on competency, relevance and self-regulation within a defined, yet flexible structure, with a strong emphasis on high expectations and high support. For mastery tasks teacher will deploy direct instruction in support of each students understanding of the key skills and knowledge required to demonstrate competency of the Victorian Curriculum achievement standards. For the performance for assessment tasks teachers are encouraged to explore Heutagogy, otherwise known as self-learning, a student-centred instructional strategy that emphasizes the development of competence, capability and character. This personalisation can help students feel empowered and encourage greater engagement and foster their intrinsic motivation to learn, unlearn and relearn. To complement learning and to foster independence and self-regulation at the Depth Stage, we remove the notion of a 'standard' school day and place responsibility on each young man to shape their fortnightly calendar according to the learning goals established with a Learning Mentor.

"Our task is to educate their [our students] whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it."

Sir Ken Robinson

British Author | *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* 2009

The **Pathways Stage** (Year 11 & 12) is a time of greater independence with flexible arrangements for young men who are required to self-regulate their time and prepare for future pathways and life beyond Marcellin. Teachers need to ensure that they incorporate an explicit instructional approach for all school-assessed coursework requirements as set out by individual VCAA VCE Study Designs. This includes a comprehensive examination preparation program.

What does this mean for your son?

As we walk in partnership with your son across each stage of Polaris, we allow him to see his potential and understand his self-worth. We recognise the importance of community in raising a child and he will be encouraged to reflect upon who he is today, and who God has called him to be, in light of all the opportunities that have been presented to him via his personalised learning plan. As a result, teachers need to develop in response to personalised learning plans and pathways for students, which will enable each student to access curriculum designed at a pace that best suits their abilities and engages with knowledge, skills and wisdom that are most beneficial to them.

Additionally, our vertical House system remains an integral part of a comprehensive wellbeing network that ensures each young man in our care is known, loved and valued. House Leaders, Pastoral Leaders, Learning Mentors and many other key support roles allow each young man to experience the independence to exercise and develop:

- Autonomy, competence and relatedness (SDT)
- Agency and advocacy
- Proactive goal setting and self-review
- Personal resilience and mental and physical wellness

Each young man of Marcellin is ultimately assisted to find his *True North* in a highly supportive, personalised and engaging environment.

All of this requires our entire community to adopt a new mindset. If people in the future will need to reinvent themselves and constantly adapt to change, then education will need to focus even more on learning how to learn as well as what to learn. Schooling should provide young people with the knowledge they need to approach the future with a dynamic and enterprise-thinking mindset.

At Marcellin College we aspire to be a Catholic community that fosters an inclusive culture that enables each young man to access learning designed for explicit growth and achievement. A staged roll out of Polaris will commence from 2020, in the College's 70th year of providing an inclusive faith education for young men in Melbourne's Eastern suburbs.

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