LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

"Learning brings hope. In a Catholic school that hope is based on God's love and care for all. Catholic educators see learning as a journey of possibilities, where students are energised to seek meaning and explore questions about the world around them."

Horizons of Hope. 2017, p. 5

Academy of Mary Immaculate (the College) is a premier learning community where Mercy charism is central to all we do. Consequently, the six key Mercy values of respect, service, courage, hospitality, compassion and justice are the living touchstones and expressed in all pedagogical, curriculum and assessment practices. Furthermore, in keeping with our Catholic tradition of valuing the dignity of the human person, this education embraces the religious, intellectual, physical, social and emotional dimensions of the learner.

This policy is underpinned by the belief that through the on-going formation of our learning community all of our processes demonstrate a commitment to empowering young women to be future ready, to develop empathy and imbue in them a strong sense of social justice.

As identified in our Annual Action Plan: 'through our contemporary educational philosophy, we provide ambitious learning programs and co-curricular opportunities that utilise the rich resources of the City of Melbourne'.

We strive to improve student learning outcomes through personalised, effective and stimulating learning and teaching that builds student engagement and success in all areas of the curriculum. Our emphasis on student wellbeing develops confident contributors and strengthens engaged learning.

High expectations and a commitment to excellence are at the heart of this vision. Success is conceived as continuous growth whereby students reflect on their performance, identify goals and work toward achieving their personal best.

Definitions

For each learning area or subject, the **achievement standards** are a statement of what students should know and be able to do at the end of the year or band of years. The achievement standards describe a broad sequence of expected learning.

Authentic learning allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 includes **capabilities,** which are a set of discrete knowledge and skills that can and should be taught explicitly in and through the learning areas, but are not fully defined by any of the learning areas or disciplines. Capabilities include the personal and social capability, ethical capability, the intercultural capability and critical and creative thinking.

Data refers to any information collected to inform our understanding of student progress. Types of data include but are not limited to standardised testing, formative and summative assessment and classroom observation.

Differentiation refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, in the same course, classroom, or learning environment. Differentiated assessment recognises and respects the varied ways that students might show what they know.

As identified by Carol Dweck, people with a **growth mindset** feel their skills and intelligence can be improved with effort and persistence. They embrace challenges, persist through obstacles, learn from criticism and seek out inspiration in others' success.

To that end, within the framework of this policy, we seek to develop within our teachers and students a growth mindset with a view to encouraging risks to be taken in our learning and teaching.

High Quality Exemplars are provided examples of the best practice in the educational environment, which are designed to assist students to increase their understanding of particular skills, content or knowledge in any given situation and articulate established criteria and standards.

Parent engagement involves consistent communication between teachers and parents in the educational narrative of the students in our care. Such communication focuses on identifying areas of strength and weakness of the students and seeks to not only monitor their progress, but to assess specific wellbeing and learning priorities. This communication could involve phone calls home, individual parent/teacher meetings, email correspondence, letters home and notes in student diaries.

Student Voice plays a key role in the learning and teaching framework. By using such mechanisms as student surveys and evaluations, they have the capacity to help shape the directions of our learning and teaching program and the pedagogical approach that is adopted by identifying relevant priorities which will engage them more effectively in their learning. It also helps our students to develop a greater autonomy in and responsibility for their learning.

Understanding by Design (UBD) is a framework for improving student achievement. Emphasizing the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning, UBD works alongside curriculum standards and supports teachers to clarify learning goals, devise assessments revealing student understanding, and craft engaging learning activities.

Statement of Purpose

The Learning and Teaching Policy, together with the Assessment and Reporting Policy, seek to:

- actively promote shared understandings about best practice in teaching and learning
- provide consistency of approach
- promote staff harmony
- identify high standards of professional practice
- establish guidelines for procedures and routines
- establish a process for delegation and decision making

Guiding Principles

At the College best practice in teaching and learning:

1. promotes high expectations of all members of the learning community (students, staff)
2. is student-centred, encouraging students to have a voice and develop a growth mindset
3. is informed by evidence (including both qualitative and quantitative data)
4. ensures that learning tasks are authentic and relevant
5. designs experiences that promote collaboration, curiosity and creativity
6. is underpinned by critical reflection, continuous improvement
7. celebrates diversity and ensures that learning experiences are differentiated
8. recognises that effective use of assessment provides evidence of learning which informs teaching and learning plans
9. recognises the importance of engaging parents in the educational narrative of the student
10. promotes student responsibility for their own learning

Protocols

In consistently reviewing and developing curriculum and pedagogical practice, it is expected that teachers will adopt the following protocols:

Curriculum

"Curriculum in a Catholic school is illuminated by Catholic faith with the formation of, and reverence for the learner at its centre." (Horizons of Hope, 'Curriculum' 2017, p3)

Therefore, at Academy quality curriculum is enacted through:
1. the adoption of the 'Victorian Curriculum' in Years 7 – 10, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) courses of study including VET units for students in Years 11 & 12
2. an informed understanding of the achievement standards and capabilities learners should attain as they progress through school (as stipulated in the Victorian Curriculum, CEM RE Curriculum Framework)
3. a commitment to the principles of Understanding by Design (UBD) and the development of UBD planners for Years 7-10
4. opportunities to explore deep questions in relation to local and global issues from multiple perspectives and significantly from our Catholic and Mercy Tradition
5. a commitment to the support of literacy (including digital literacies) and numeracy strategies being embedded across the curriculum
6. reviewing of curriculum so that is cohesive, rigorous and comprehensive (this means that educators commit to mapping curriculum at whole school, curriculum and year levels)
7. storing of units in agreed to and easily accessible locations on the school's designated platform
8. an expectation and commitment that teachers share resources

Pedagogy

"Pedagogy in a Catholic School seeks to develop deep learning and to create animated learners, inspired by the Gospel, led by the Holy Spirit to act for justice and strive for the common good" (Horizons of Hope, 'Pedagogy', 2017, p5)
Therefore at Academy pedagogy is enacted through:

1. developing engaging learning experiences that promote curiosity, creativity and wonder
2. nurturing of respectful, safe, supportive learning environments that encourages student engagement
3. creating learning environments that challenge students to persist
4. using data to inform practice
5. the regular provision of learning intentions that are clearly stated and or recorded from outset of the lesson
6. the regular provision of success criteria and high quality exemplars prior to assessment
7. the regular provision of timely and specific feedback to students
8. the regular opportunity for both staff and students to set goals and reflect on their progress
9. using professional learning, in particular PODs, teachers become experts for one another and share effective teaching practices
10. seek opportunities to collaborate within and across Learning Areas
11. the use of professional learning, teachers develop inclusive learning and teaching practices that differentiate in catering for students
12. the support of the Pedagogy team in developing a shared understanding of data and promoting a dynamic contemporary learning culture

Related Documents

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Dweck C.S., (2012) Growth Mindset: How you can fulfil your potential, Little Brown Work Group, London.

Victorian Curriculum, http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ (Access date: 22.01.18)

Victorian Entry Certificate, http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/index.aspx?Redirect=1 (Access date: 22.01.18)

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Revision History

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release Date	Review Date
1.0	Fiona Lennon / Paul Finneran	New Policy	January 2021	December 2021
1.1	Andrew Baker/ Fiona Lennon	Minor language changes	December 2021	December 2023