“What do I do next with the cover slip?”

Thebarton senior college is very different from any other school in South Australia. There’s a great depth of programs for vocational educational training, we are also a trade school for the future and we have that strong mix of Australian students who are here to complete their secondary education, woman who left for child caring, people who left school because of poverty or they left school to pick up a trade and then they decided that they wanted to do something different. So we have everything here in that mix aged from 16 to 60.

“What is the present tense of slept?"

“Sleep”

Thebarton senior college always had an English language program for migrants and that’s really set up the colour and vibrancy of the place.

“Another word we pronounce with "T" is guessed”

“Guessed good guessed, Can you spell it?”

“G-U-E-S-S-E-D”

Good”

We thought it was really important that we celebrated the notion of community.

Many of our students have been subjected to terrible trauma in their home countries so we worked with save the children to establish the college as the first secondary school in Australia that was a UN school for global peace many of our students see that United Nations flag as a symbol of peace and safety and somewhere they can live and work in confidence. We perceived the need that our students wanted the school to be their village the place that they could come to the place that they could access a whole range of services.

“I believe this is your second baby”

“Yes”

“And how old is your first baby?”
There were a number of our young women who were expecting children and it was difficult for them to access the anti-natal services at the Woman’s and Children’s hospital in North Adelaide.

“At the Woman’s and Children’s”

This is actually a very convenient location for people that live in the western suburbs, people generally feel comfortable in schools and so these woman access the service here and it’s been extremely successful.

That got us thinking about what other services we could provide and it was quite remarkable the number of organisations in the community that were willing to help. The second service was Commonwealth funded psychological counselling services. Anglicare provided us with housing support, Uniting Care Wesley with financial counselling services and there’s a range of services that just make the work of our educational counsellors and our school counsellors so much richer.

One of the biggest problems with young adults that live independently is that quite often they are isolated and one of the great ways for people to get together is to do that with food.

The main focus of the breakfast club is to promote healthy nutritious eating, a lot of young people don’t eat at all in the morning or if they do they don’t eat healthy food and as the teachers have told us they stay awake longer, they are more attentive and their results are superior to before the breakfast club started.

“This lesson what I would like us to focus on instead is positive stories about games if you can find them”

In the PC gaming class we have quite a diverse group we have got students who have been disengaged from regular study we have got students that have got Asperger’s we have got students that have suffered from depression in the past, students that have had a long gap in their actual studies it’s a way of making the student less threatened by class because the class is full of people like them, instead of them being the only one.

“I am glad that I have finally found the course that will let me game and do my school work at the same time”

“I found that it was a very welcoming environment and everyone really enjoyed being here and I’ve always loved gaming so I thought might as well give it a shot”

“One of the reasons I like this is that I get the literacy and numeracy as well as being able to play games in the process.”

So the idea is that it’s sort of a SACE completion for students that otherwise might have struggled with their journey through SACE.
“There’s kind of that different sort of course for different kind of people”

“Maybe just put it onto automatic, take a photograph, have a look at the exposure settings that it’s giving you”

“Yep”

“Ok”

We run a large range of stage two programs after hours and they include photography, women’s studies, history, philosophy, psychology, biology we run those so that students in neighbouring high schools can access them.

“Ok can you just quickly show me a couple of the previews?”

Thebarton is really the resource for a number of schools to be able to grant the wish of students who might want to do subjects that don’t fit in their own timetables.

“We are going to take on of these pieces of pine; we are going to mark out a trench across there for a housing joint, as we have got up here.”

We run a training program through the Master Builders Association called Certificate I Construction, so the students, the trainees, can come in and maybe 60-70% of them actually get jobs and get employed within the industry.

“Lay it on your hand like that, then place it down, on top of the wood.”

Some of the people that come here do have low literacy skills they might have come from another country overseas, maybe they do know what things are but not the English term for them, so we’ve set up this whole system so that they can go and find the name and they can learn that.

“I am just nearly one year and half in Australia I was in the detention. I was in NAP – New Arrival Program. I finished my NAP and now I start the building construction for my future job”

We teach them lots of skills how to do things and then we get them to apply that into a major project, some of these cubby houses that we have built have been sent recently up to Kadina for a Cancer for Kid’s auction.

The philosophy of the school is that it takes a village to raise a child and so we are looking at sharing our expertise and the things we have learnt with the community and the schools around us so that they don’t actually have to start from scratch but they can actually build on what’s taken years to develop here and that is working really well.