1.2 Develop deep pedagogical and content knowledge

In my role as a leader of learning (instructional leader) this means I will:

- Understand what is involved in leadership for learning
- Engage with current research on leadership that positively impacts on student and staff learning
- Recognise the power of my instructional leadership role to influence and develop a whole school learning culture, and prioritise meeting time and resources for professional learning and work with staff to ensure clarity of our vision for learning
- Accept responsibility to keep abreast of, engage with and critique theories of learning and teaching and their implications for practice
- Regularly engage in professional learning
- Develop personal clarity and precision with the metalevels of language of learning and teaching
- Identify staff members with expertise in particular learning areas, observe their practice and reflect on the role that deep pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge play in their effectiveness

I will strategically design to:

- Ensure staff keep abreast of and critique theories of learning and teaching and their implications for practice
- Provide professional learning opportunities on new pedagogy, including structured critique
- Identify staff with pedagogical expertise and develop opportunities for this to be shared through teams, mentors in mentorship programs
- Encourage and support staff members to develop their disciplinary and pedagogical expertise to ensure greater responsiveness and flexibility in their teaching
- Encourage staff members to keep up to date with new knowledge in their relevant disciplines
- Distribute disciplinary expertise across collaborative teams
- Ensure faculty/curricular leaders understand roles as leaders of disciplinary learning as well as coordinating management tasks

Alert

In the past, knowledge was seen as a static body to be transmitted. Given this, it was reasonable to use strategies that simply required students to record and recall information.

However, if we truly believe that learning requires individuals to construct meaning and it is the teachers’ role to foster this, we need to develop deep professional knowledge of the processes that best enable us to do this. We need to know our curriculum and the best ways to help students get to know ‘the stuff’.

Leaders of learning—Food for thought

**Content Knowledge**

- Knowledge about the subject matter
- The theories and methods of teaching and learning
- The processes and practices of learning

**Pedagogical Knowledge**

- Knowledge about the learning process
- The processes and practices of teaching

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

- Knowledge about how to teach the content

**Leadership Knowledge**

- Knowledge about how to lead the learning

**Practice check**

- Have I scheduled time for my own learning about educational leadership and learning through reading and conferences?
- Do I regularly update my professional reading to ensure I’m abreast of current theories and engage in critiquing them?
- Am I careful and precise in my use of professional language and ensure I’m communicating meaning, not empty words?
- Do I regularly engage in professional learning?
- Do staff members alert each other to emerging ideas and knowledge in their respective Learning Areas? Do I actively seek to develop content knowledge by engaging with my staff members who have experience in certain areas.

If teachers develop their pedagogical and content knowledge, they will…

- Understand their professional work as being intentional and responsive, not just technical implementation of textbook activities or other programs and strategies
- Understand the nature of knowledge through different disciplines and its application in real world/authentic contexts
- Maintain a responsiveness to learners and learning
- Develop and draw on an extensive repertoire of practice to provide multiple entry points into student learning
- Develop and use a repertoire of specific and effective strategies to respond.

Notes:

- Australian operational views of constructivism confuse a theory of knowing with a theory of teaching.
- We confuse the need for the child to construct her own knowledge with a form of pedagogy which sees it as the child’s responsibility to achieve that.
- We focus on the action of the student in the construction of knowledge, rather than the action of the teacher in engaging with the child’s current misconceptions and structuring experiences to challenge these misconceptions...
- The constructivist theory of knowing has been used to justify a non-interventionist theory of pedagogy, whereas it is a fair interpretation to argue that constructivism requires vigorous interventionist teaching...