Editorial

This edition of Curriculum Matters has a focus on the senior secondary stage of schooling and specifically on the multiple pathways being created by schools to engage students in learning and to provide them with school to work and post school transition opportunities.

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) set in motion a number of initiatives to assist schools with the challenge of meeting some student needs in the senior years.

In 2005 and 2006, secondary schools received funding to support their initiatives, programs and procedures. This included the development and implementation of Senior Education and Training (SET) Plans, initiatives in Careers and Pathways Education and VET in schools.

A very successful and professionally rewarding networking opportunity to showcase school-based initiatives and programs was held in Term 4 of 2005. The showcase plus written reports has provided the material for this edition.

The outcomes of the ETRF 2005 initiatives included:

- opportunities for teachers to conference with students regarding SET Plan development
- administrative support to enter student data re SET Plans
- opportunities for staff to attend professional development re careers and pathways enhancement for students
- the development of a whole of school approach to career education programs
- release for VET Coordinators to liaise with Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) providers, School based Apprenticeship and Traineeships (SAT) providers, and local TAFE providers
- support for VET staff to fulfi l industry placement requirements and
- development of VET programs.

Many thanks to the writers and contributors, to Dennis Harvey, Adrienne McDarra who undertook a guest editor role, and the editorial committee who worked to bring this edition of Curriculum Matters to you.

Fran Ralston
Editor

Newsy Bits

The Australian Catholic University, Arts Centre
WORKSHOPS 2007, Workshop at Qld Art Gallery The Old Master Project
The Old Master Project is an introduction to religious art, arts education and the religious imagination through the 30 master works in the QAG that celebrate the Christian story and religious imagination

The workshop will include responses to the master works from the restored Banyo collection and other works in the new QAG exhibition

Presented by Dr Lindsay Farrell (ACU)
When: 3 hour workshops with morning or afternoon tea at the gallery
Date in 2007 is yet to be confirmed
Cost: $30.00 per participant (GST exempt).
This workshop can also be run as an in-school in-service activity.
All enquiries should be addressed to Dr Lindsay Farrell
PO BOX 456 VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Australian Catholic University. Telephone 3623-7191 Fax 3623-7245
Claver’s Careers Office

Paul MacKay

St Peter Claver College took a new direction in 2005 by investing significantly in the establishment of a Vocational Education and Careers Office. This office was staffed with a Coordinator, Anthony Elmore (with a 6 hr teaching load) and a fulltime assistant. In 2006, a part-time placements officer also joined the office. The two room office was located at the rear of the administration block with its own phone, fax and computer links to make it directly accessible by students, parents, employers and staff.

Why a Careers Office?
Previously, St Peter Claver College had worked with a network of other schools to provide structured work placement and seek school-based traineeships. The establishment of the Careers Office has enabled the College to organise its own placements. This has the advantage of faster and more tailored placements – occurring within hours or days rather than several weeks.

The Careers Office staff work with students and parents to locate suitable placements and monitor student learning within these placements. Strong relationships between local businesses and the College have been developed and enhanced, so the Careers Office can now make direct contact with local businesses and arrange placements. This has resulted in reduced cost to the students and a tighter bond between our local business community and the College. As a consequence, our industry placement program has expanded in the number of students it serves from 80 to 146 in Years 11 and 12.

How does the Careers Office work?
The Careers Office staff began actively seeking Vocational opportunities for students in Years 11 and 12 and subsequently expanded the program into Year 10 for students with particular needs. The Careers Office provides support to students as they apply for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

The strong links the Careers Office has in our local community has been responsible for an increase in the demand for students from our College. The number of School-based Apprenticeships and School-based Traineeships has also increased dramatically from 2 to 34, with many more employers seeking students from our College to fill vacancies.

The structure of the College timetable was adjusted to enable all students to access vocational learning.

Students following an OP pathway can now complete structured work placements without missing significant time from other subjects. This resulted in the proportion of Year 10 students selecting Vocational Education and Training as a component of study for senior rising from 25% to 70%. The Careers Office also supported the work of teachers in the VET area overseeing assessment and the renewal of programs. VET programs have become more closely aligned with local industry. In 2005, 98% of Year 12 students completed a VET certificate.

It is more than finding placements.
The pastoral work of the Careers Office has also had a strong impact on the College Community. Students have been better matched to workplaces; this has resulted in a decrease of non-attendance especially among students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The staff of the Careers Office has worked collaboratively with the College Counsellors, Learning Support Staff and Indigenous and Samoan College liaison officers to ensure social and cultural issues are addressed in a supportive manner. The services provided by the Careers Office have been used in partnership with other resource personnel to assist in things such as behaviour management. Career counselling through the office has given many students the opportunity to establish a relevant pathway for growth and maturity.

Individual counselling and assistance was given to each and every Year 12 student with their QTAC preference selection and application lodgement.

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Individual counselling and assistance was given to each and every Year 12 student with their QTAC preference selection and application lodgement.
Individual counselling and advice was also provided for most of the 150 strong Year 10 cohort as part of their senior subject selection. Students have gained assistance from Career Office staff in writing resumes for applications for part-time jobs.

The success of the Careers Office is the result of a strong team effort by all staff within the Careers Office and their close working relationship with College Administration and teaching staff.

St Peter Claver College has a very diverse student population and the Careers Office has proved to be a very important initiative in meeting the diverse range of educational needs. The establishment of this office has made St Peter Claver College a leader in the provision of Vocational Education in the Ipswich region. The development of the Careers Office has also assisted in raising the profile of the College in our local community.

The Career Educator’s Role

Ideally students in Catholic schools should be able to access current and accurate career education information. One model that supports this is to have a dedicated Careers Educator role in each school. The article from St Peter Claver describes how they have put in place just such a role. This article also delineates some of features that will contribute to making the role work effectively.

The Role

A role holder will

• be a teacher on staff,

know the latest and most effective career education methods,

understand the tertiary offerings and admission procedures,

be familiar with the new apprenticeship system, which includes school based trainees,

The Careers Educator will need an appropriate teaching load that enables time to

• liaise with local community partnership contractors
• meet with local business groups
• attend workshops and other information getting opportunities
• coordinate the delivery of career education classes to a minimum of all Yr 10, 11, and 12 students
• be an invaluable contact for students at all times especially during breaks
• visit employers at short notice to resolve workplace issues as they arise
• attend annual information sessions from universities, TAFEs, group training companies and employers
• be available for appointments outside of school hours to meet with families
• possibly coordinate the VET program (with administration assistance).

Currently there are a number of models operating across Brisbane Catholic Secondary Schools. These include specific Careers Officers, VET Coordinators and Guidance Counsellors, the latter having had a traditional role in the area of career counselling combined with providing a range of other services including personal counselling for adolescents.

Young Achievement Australia (YAA) Program

Fiona Turner – VET Coordinator
Mt Maria College Petrie

Involvement in the Young Achievement Australia (YAA) Business Skills program at our College has proven to be exciting, educational, nerve wracking, exhausting, character building and most of all, a great deal of fun!

Our College has been successfully participating in the programme for three years. We are committed to continuing with YAA, as we have found it to be a perfect vehicle for developing the generic employability skills necessary to survive in the world beyond school.

These skills are:

• Communication
• Teamwork

• Ongoing learning
• Technology
• Self management
• Decision making
• Planning and organising
• Initiative and enterprise

Students are required to engage in a range of activities. These may include activities relating to forming a company, such as: deciding on a name (which must include the letters YA consecutively), selling shares, opening a company bank account, deciding on a product to produce and sell, conducting the market research, committing to
a recognised position in the company, attending board meetings, working as a team member, making decisions, communicating with other company members, sponsors, mentors and contacts in the business community.

As company executives, students are required to attend a management skills seminar with executives from other participating schools. This is a great experience and a wonderful opportunity to network with mentors from the business community of South East Qld. These experienced mentors run workshops for the students in their specific areas of responsibility such as – Managing Director, Company Secretary, Finance, Sales, Production, Human Resources, Environmental, Website Management and Advertising. Students gain valuable insights into the reasons behind successfully run businesses and they learn how to write a viable business plan.

In conjunction with the day to day running of a business, other major events take place throughout the year. Most companies organise a product launch, inviting special guests, sponsors and the local newspaper. This year our company MayniYakz (pronounced maniacs for the uninitiated) asked the local council member to auction the first product of the season. This was a great success and a great way to involve the entire school community. Bidding started at $10.00 and quickly escalated to $50.50 - our Principal Sam Puglisi being pipped at the post by a rogue bidder.

The YAA Trade Expo, held annually in August is possibly the best opportunity our students could be given to demonstrate their transferable skills. This event is held in a large suburban shopping centre, and for the past two years this has been the Logan Hyperdome. Teams from all over South East Queensland are involved in the day. Students arrive at 7.30 and are allocated a stall. They are required to merchandise the stall in a way that meets all Workplace Health and Safety requirements, as well as those of the Centre Management. Rules are very strict. Students are then required to work on the stall in rostered shifts, with no more than three students at a time. As the day progresses, the students are judged for many awards including: Customer Service, Merchandising, Product Knowledge, and Sales Technique. They are also required to present a three minute “infomercial” on centre stage. All sounding a bit too much? NO – our experience has been that students rise to the challenge and really enjoy the experience!

After the Trade Expo, the company is required to sell remaining stock, present an annual report, liquidate assets and return a dividend to the shareholders. These last steps allow students to see the whole business process from beginning to end. To date, our successful companies and products have been:

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YAA caters for different learning styles, and can be successful with a diverse group of young people. Students all receive a certificate of participation for their portfolio. Certificate 11 in Business is achievable through this program. This year the MayniYakz are all participating in a Certificate 11 in Retail.

The teamwork and partnerships with business formed through this programme have given the students the most fantastic opportunities - opportunities that many adults would not have experienced. We highly recommend you take a look www.yaa.org.au
The New Transition: Middle to Senior Phase: Making the Change at St Mary’s College Maryborough

John Mula, Principal
St Mary’s College, Maryborough

Year 10 is an important time of transition for students as they begin to think seriously about career pathways, work and study options. They begin to form deeper understandings about their strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes, interests and abilities. Year 10 is a time when students make choices about educational options. It is appropriate then, for them to experience a little of what an academic or vocational course will entail.

With significant developments in the middle phase of schooling, Year 10 has become the “new” transition. Year 10 students are at a crossroad; they are expected to embrace the work ethic and study patterns of senior secondary education as they prepare themselves for further study, entry into the work force, TAFE courses, apprenticeships or traineeships. Some students will need to consolidate parts of the foundational curriculum, e.g. English and Mathematics, while others will be ready to explore Extension Units that prepare them for senior subjects.

To this end, since 2005 Year 10 students at St Mary’s College are being offered an innovative curriculum with the aim of assisting students in the transition from the middle years (Year 8 and 9) to the senior years (Year 11 and 12) of schooling. The new Year 10 Curriculum is in line with the State Government’s Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) initiatives by offering semester based courses in all subject areas which are both challenging to the students whilst providing diverse learning experiences. It serves as an introduction to the range of pathways the student may take in Years 11 and 12.

St Mary’s objectives for the Yr 10 transitional year include:-
- Reconfiguring the curriculum to provide students with a ‘fresh’ approach to learning after the nine years of the early and middle years of schooling
- Developing curriculum units that link the Brisbane Catholic Education’s (BCE) Learning Framework with Queensland’s 49 Common Curriculum Elements (CCE’s)
- Providing opportunities for students to engage in areas of interest
- Preparing for specialised studies in the senior phase
- Teaching and learning work preparation skills through the delivery of a Certificate 1 on Work Education
- Developing the student understandings of senior schooling and an assessment system based on standards and criteria
- Improving links and continuity from Yr 10 to the senior phase of learning at St Mary’s College.

With a well established Middle School Program for Years 8 and 9, St Mary’s College Maryborough has reviewed and restructured its Year 10 Program after significant consultation within the College community. The aim of St Mary’s transition year program is to assist students in the move from the middle years to the senior years of schooling and to help each individual student realise his or her potential by providing a challenging and diverse learning experience. This will serve as an introduction to the range of pathways the student may take in the senior years.
they choose a curriculum pathway that will satisfy their goals, and provide motivation for them to continue their schooling while also enhancing their capacity to face life’s challenges in productive ways.

St Mary’s Year 10 transitional year is now referred to as being part of the senior school i.e. it provides opportunities for students to specialise in areas of interest, it provides a level of preparation for specialised studies in senior years and it aids in the development of student understandings of senior schooling and its assessment system. Ultimately, it provides improved links and continuity from Year 10 to the senior years of learning. (Years 11 and 12)

In developing units for students in Year 10, the teaching staff at St Mary’s College was very conscious of the need to ensure students develop the skills and attitudes required to be successful in senior schooling. To facilitate this St Mary’s College have tried to match the units with both Lifelong Learner Roles and the Queensland CCE’s. By reviewing the units carefully and looking at the subjects they relate to in Year 11, students will ensure they choose a course which will provide both depth of skill acquisition and breadth of experience.

Year 10 students are able to select semester units in all subject disciplines. This applies to both traditional core subject areas as well as elective areas. Sample semester based units include a science unit called “Chicken Soup” which introduces students to the study of chemistry and biology by studying pool chemistry, the applications of science in the kitchen, and in the backyard with an investigation of pests and their control, compost, propagating, earthworm farms, aviaries, pets and their care and wildlife.

Business and Technology courses include All Aboard the Enterprise, where students prepare a written business plan, start a small business and evaluate the business experience. Computer courses offer students advanced presentation skills including web page design and industry standard multimedia using FlashMX technology.

Students can also select a course in Media titled And Then There Was Pingu which explores the five key areas of media (technologies, representations, audiences, institutions, languages) through claymation in the fashion of the Academy Award winning Australian short film Harvey Krumpet. Students will create a claymation concept that will be produced and shown at the St Mary’s College Film Festival. Students will also analyse an award winning claymation film.

Ultimately, the Year 10 transition program at St Mary’s is focused upon providing opportunities for students to reflect further upon their academic and personal strengths in order to support them in making wise choices as they look toward the senior phase of schooling.

More information on St Mary’s College transition Year curriculum and the Year 10 curriculum handbook can be found at www.smcm.qld.edu.au
Aquinas College Whole School Careers Programme

Mary-Elizabeth Nash, Assistant Principal Administration
Aquinas College, Ashmore

The whole school careers program at Aquinas College has been developed over a number of years, with 2006 being the first year that a mapped program of formal career education has been in place for all year levels.

In 2004 an audit of various aspects of curriculum was undertaken which identified where ‘careers’ was addressed across all subject areas. The most encouraging aspect of this audit was the identification of informal careers content in all subjects. We found that teachers and Heads of Department were discussing career options, subject prerequisites, student interests in particular career/subject areas, and available degrees/diplomas, etc. within particular departments across the courses they taught.

Beyond this, however, there was a need to formalise some career education at each year level. The senior years were quite well catered for, particularly in Year 10 prior to senior subject selection and in Year 12 prior to Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) preference nominations. The other year levels employed more ad hoc careers activities.

Heads of House (our pastoral coordinators) with our Heads of Middle School and Senior School, spent several months during 2005 planning and reviewing our pastoral program. Each took responsibility for writing, formulating and coordinating a whole school pastoral curriculum area. The resulting units were to be presented during pastoral lessons, a period of time timetabled into each Tuesday or Thursday of our Week A/B timetable structure. The Head of Senior School took on the lead role for careers education within this designated pastoral program.

The end product overview is:

Year 8  Real Game over 8 sessions
Year 9  Be Real Game over 8 sessions
Year 10  School devised program over 12 sessions including Student Education & Training Plan (SETP) planning, curriculum expo and subject selection interviews for senior studies
Year 11  Get Real Game over 5 sessions plus additional guest speakers and SETP review
Year 12  School devised program over 10 sessions including guest speakers, visiting career expos and individual career advice sessions with the College Guidance/Careers Counsellor

In Years 8, 9 and 11 we chose to use the Real Game program. The teachers were provided with professional development to deliver the program and it was tailored to meet the needs of our students and the time we had available to deliver it.

The Real Game was originally developed in 1994 by Bill Barry, a Canadian teacher whose 12-year-old daughter felt the subjects she was studying at school were not relevant to her future life. This inspired Barry to create a career and life skills education programme that would help students see the connection between school studies and life after school. Over time, the Real Game became a series of six programmes for students aged 8 to 18 years and adults.

The implementation of The Real Game series in Australia is a Commonwealth Government initiative, managed by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. This interactive and exciting program addresses the areas we believe students require in a careers program, especially in the Middle Years of Schooling. It also meant that we didn’t have to ‘re-invent the wheel’ particularly in year levels that had previously not had a formal careers program.

In Year 10, the program, which continues to evolve, has grown to 12 sessions from an original 6 or 8. Our involvement in the Education Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) trial was partly responsible for this increase in time as the SETP was introduced to assist students in career interest identification and subject selection for senior school. In addition, substantial input from the Head of Vocational Education in relation to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and mixed (non-OP) courses has been included in the program.

The Year 10 program currently includes:

**Session 1:** Introduction, Job Guides distributed, OP/FP/RANK/VET information
**Session 2:** Career websites activity
**Session 3:** Job Guide activity
**Session 4:** Financial Coaching - QLD Teachers Credit Union guest speaker
**Session 5:** SET Plan activities / Preparation for Curriculum Expo
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Session 8: SET Plan activities
Session 9: Small group discussions with Guidance/Careers Counselor
Session 10: SET Plan data entry (computer labs)
Session 11: Preparation for Subject Selection Parent Interviews
Session 12: QCS introduction

To supplement these sessions, students are issued with the Job Guide and our college Student Handbook which contains senior school documents such as our Assessment Policy, Exam Policy and Senior Contract, subject information pages and the SETP. Students also enter the data for their SETP online via our school website which is automatically emailed upon completion to the Guidance/Careers Counselor and the Assistant Principal Administration (APA). Prior to final subject selection, a Curriculum Expo is held to which both Year 9 and 10 are invited. On this night, Year 10 interviews are conducted with the parent, Year 10 student and a designated and trained teacher, for individual senior subject selection.

The Curriculum Expo is held in our Drama Centre in August and involves individual displays for each department within the college. Pamphlets related to all subject areas are on display with examples of senior student work, with the relevant Heads of Department and senior teachers within the department available for consultation. Presentations on relevant topics (in 2006 the focus being the new Queensland Certificate of Education – QCE) are repeated throughout the evening so that parents and students arriving at any stage of the evening can be informed. Given that students have had the opportunity to complete six electives in Year 10 in combination with their core subjects as a preparation for senior studies, the Curriculum Expo is an opportunity to discuss the final choices that students are considering for senior subject selection.

Next year we hope to include individual career assessments of all Year 10 students conducted by a Brisbane based company. This will involve ‘testing’ students regarding career interests and personality aspects and the preparation of a profile report for each student which would be followed by a thirty minute interview with the student to allow discussion about the report. The SETP would form part of this discussion so students could then further explore career interests.

By Year 12, the focus is on preparation for the requirements of tertiary studies or other post school options. Individual advice is available at all times, but appointments are made with each Year 12 student in Term 3 to discuss specific career options with the College Guidance/Careers Counselor. This combined with opportunities to participate in Tertiary Careers Expos and hear from guest speakers from tertiary institutions can help students refine their career goals and finalise QTAC applications if required.

With new career opportunities constantly emerging and such a wide variety of post school options available to students to explore, a quality whole school career education program is essential within secondary schools. Aquinas College is meeting the challenge to provide such a program successfully.

The Rise and Rise of Vocational Education:
Trinity College Beenleigh

Peter Shaw
Assistant Principal Administration

2006 saw the first ever release of the so-called league table in the Courier-Mail which compared data between more than 350 secondary schools across Queensland. Trinity College rated very highly and Peter Shaw, Head of Curriculum at the College, argues this has as much to do with the College’s success in Vocational Education as it does in the success seen in traditional academic areas. He writes:

As Assistant to the Principal for eight years, I have witnessed the changes in curriculum offerings at the school which I believe are reflected in this 2006 data.

Over the last few years, we had asked a number of questions of our curriculum in order to develop a better balance between the academic and the vocational. To understand this, it is worth understanding a little of the demographic, historic and geographic data relating to the College which in 2006 is celebrating its 25th year of operating in the Beenleigh area.

Trinity has an eclectic mix of students from a range of communities. They travel in from as far as the rural...
slopes of Mt Tambourine and the Beaudesert region, the cane fields of the Northern Gold Coast and the urban growth corridors south-east of Woodridge and along the Pacific Highway. The city of Beenleigh itself however, is a rather insular economic region, which boasts a wide range of light, heavy and agricultural industries providing excellent employment opportunities.

The local state high schools have provided many successful Vocational Education and Training (VET) opportunities for their students in the past few years. In a sense, we were forced to compete with these schools as well as continue to support our own students and families, including those seeking high academic success. We faced difficult decisions in order to achieve an effective balance of VET whilst retaining traditional academic subject offerings. Trinity resolved that thirty percent of their students would, like the State average, go directly into university after Year 12, thirty percent would go directly into tertiary VET pathways and the remaining third would vary between these two choices. In the past few years we’ve worked hard at getting the balance of our curriculum offerings right, and the 2006 data appears to reflect this, on both sides of the ledger.

Trinity College believes that established management structures will continue to be a vital key to successful VET offerings. The College operates several committees which oversee the delivery of VET. These are:

a) A Management Committee which comprises Senior Leadership Team members who oversee policy matters and ensure medium and long term decisions are made for the planning and focus of VET pathways.

b) A Steering Committee comprises ‘main players’ which include the VET Co-ordinator and the Heads of Departments which offer VET subjects. VET Co-ordinator, Warren Bath, believes that the nature of Vocational Education requires a constant flow of information - paper-based and otherwise - which must be delivered, checked, filed and subsequently audited. This is necessary to ensure the integrity of the competency-based system associated with VET teaching, learning and assessment. The Steering Committee oversees these day-to-day activities. Compliance to the Australian Quality Training Framework regulations is typical of the focus of this Committee. In 2006 a dedicated Vocational Education School Officer was added to the team, ensuring students have immediate access to information and processes in seeking VET pathway options.

Vocational Education, especially at Trinity, is broader than just the dozen VET subjects on offer. These subjects include: Information Technology, Business, Early Childcare Practices, Media, Hospitality, Tourism, Engineering, Furnishing and Workplace Practices. Most are Certificate II levels courses offered by the school. There are also co-provider arrangements and students involved in TAFE linked courses which are completely independent of the school offerings. These include Beauty, Hairdressing, Retail, Construction and Business courses. Currently there are more than 45 students involved in external School-based Apprenticeships or Traineeships. These range from Hospitality, Retail, Mechanical, Electrical, Horticulture and Business and include for the first time, Trinity College students attending the new Australian Technical College (ATC), Gold Coast. The students at ATC are working towards attaining a Certificate III trade qualification and as part of the program will have the opportunity to articulate into full Apprenticeships.

Success has been achieved with the help of one of the most successful Local Community Partnership (LCP) network groups in the country - the Beenleigh Region Industry Network (BRITN). For many years BRITN has ably supported Trinity students and teachers in placing young people with local employers and training providers. LCP Management Co-ordinator, Mrs Cheryl Taylor believes that we have built a great community network here in the Beenleigh region, and Trinity College students are well received within the business sector. She acknowledges factors such as the clear direction from the College management for the effective partnerships that have contributed to this success. Other regular weekly visitors to the College in support of Vocational Education included Career Keys and Jobs Pathways personnel.

The final word rests with the Principal, Mr John Lamb, a long-time advocate of multiple pathways opportunities.
“Congratulations must go to all sectors of the vibrant but successful VET (and other) pathways operating in our school. Our achievements are second to none. Furthermore, our success augurs well for the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) being sought by our current Year 10 cohort. The QCE will recognise the broader curriculum opportunities needed in today’s educational and economic sectors and our Trinity students must surely be ahead of the field in these endeavours.”

Whole School Career Education

Andrea Merrett, Assistant Principal Administration
Carmel College, Thornlands

Carmel College began a whole school review of its Career Education program in 2005 which continued in 2006, making use of some of the Education Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) funds distributed through Brisbane Catholic Education.

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD) was used as a basis for mapping the College’s current Career Development activities and determining what “gaps” needed to be filled.

The Blueprint is a national framework of competencies providing a framework to create comprehensive, effective and measurable career programs. The Blueprint provides an appropriate basis for developing a whole school approach to Career Education as it stresses that Career Development is “a lifelong process of growth through life, learning and work”. It is organised around three main areas: “Personal Management”, “Learning and Work Exploration” and “Career Building” with four phases covering Primary through to Adult Education.

Our review process began by determining “where we were” by gathering together key staff including the Head of Faculty responsible for Personal Development, VET Coordinator, Year Level Coordinators, Counsellor and APA for a brainstorming and planning session. Career Development activities across Years 8 to 12 were mapped against the Career Competencies at Phase II (Years 8 & 9 with some covered in Year 10) and Phase III (Years 10-12).

As a result of this process, a number of new initiatives were implemented or are under development.

A brief outline of Career Development at Carmel College follows:

Years 8 & 9
The ABCD outcomes in the area of Personal Management are largely covered through the Personal Development Activities incorporated in the “Enhancing Personal Development” strand of the Health KLA. In Year 8, the Areas of “Learning and Work Exploration” and “Career Building” are covered through students engaging in the “Real Game” (conducted as a special program) along with follow up activities during Pastoral Care. For Year 9, a special “Introduction to Careers Planning” program will be developed to be implemented in 2007 through Pastoral Care lessons. This will precede the subject selection process and Parent Information Evening for the year-long “Senior Trial” subject electives that students will select for study during Year 10.

Year 10
Students in Year 10 have timetabled “Personal Development” lessons which provide the main platform through which the Career Development program is implemented. Students begin the year by engaging in the “Be Real Game” which covers competencies across all three areas of the ABCD. A number of targeted “Career Education” lessons follow on from this and lead into a three day “Senior Schooling Seminar” which runs towards the end of Term 2.

A three day Senior Schooling Seminar introduces students to the various pathways available to them in senior study and beyond. A motivational speaker helps to focus students on their goals, dreams and aspirations. Information on various aspects of Senior Study is presented including OP vs Non-OP pathways, rules for qualifying for the QCE, Work Experience opportunities and VET options including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, and TAFE Cooperative programs. The seminar culminates in students visiting
the Careers Expo held at the Brisbane Convention Centre where students spend time investigating careers. Parents attend a “Pathways Evening” during the Seminar, which provides similar information.

The Subject Selection process for senior study is deliberately removed from the Pathways Planning process, with the subject selection book, talks from Academic Staff and Subject Selection Parent Evening not occurring until Term 3. Students select subjects as part of the development of their SET plan (which is completed through Personal Development lessons). Counselling occurs on two levels with counselling from academic staff and administration targeting “performance” related concerns. All students are also interviewed by either a careers advisor (who is outsourced) or the school Counsellor, with the interview designed to confirm that each student’s choices aligns appropriately with their chosen pathway and long-term career goals.

Years 11 & 12
In both Years 11 & 12, all students are timetabled for two lessons of “Strategic Futures Planning” each cycle, during which the Career Development program continues. In Years 11 & 12, academic monitoring by administration works hand in hand with the regular review of SET Plans. Students do not apply to change subjects but now complete an “Adjustment to SET Plan”. All students are required to formally review their SET plan at the end of Semester 1 in Year 11 with all students again interviewed by a Careers Advisor or the College Counsellor. All students are given the opportunity to undertake Work Experience at the end of the year and although this concept is often seen as outdated (with many schools choosing to focus solely on Structured Workplace Learning), many OP and Non-OP students who do not study VET subjects would otherwise miss out on the opportunity to “trial” a career and increase their understanding of the world of work. From 2007, all Year 12 students will begin the year by once again reviewing their SET plan in light of their Year 11 results. All students participate in a “Future Options Day” in Term 3 which features guest speakers from QTAC, various Industry Groups and Tertiary Education Institutions. Once again a Careers Advisor will interview students in either Term 3 (for those making QTAC applications) or Term 4 (to follow up with students whose chosen pathway does not include Tertiary Study).

Whilst the school has developed a much more cohesive approach to Career Education, the review process will continue as we reflect upon the effectiveness of these new initiatives and finalise the mapping of Career Education activities against the ABCD.

SET Plan Development – A Collaborative Approach between Students, Parents and Staff at Marymount College

Vince Riener
Assistant Principal Administration

In alignment with the Education and Training Reform Framework (ETRF) in Queensland, Marymount College has developed an exemplary and comprehensive program for students entering the senior phase of learning.

The collaborative development of the Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan has incorporated all stakeholders for the education of young people, including parents, students and school personnel.

The College has developed an online program for students to complete their own individual SET Plan, which includes academic results from Year 8 through to Year 10. Students participate in a careers preparation program, which utilises the Queensland Schools Authority (QSA) Careers web site, as well as a very comprehensive Careers Expo with over 100 businesses, universities, TAFE and other career pathways. Senior Subject books are distributed to parents to inform them of the various
offerings from which students are able to make a selection. Once the preparation program is completed, both parents and students attend an information night where all the various subject offerings are on display in a subject marketplace format: a unique way for students to explore their options for the future. In 2006, both parents and students will view the newly prepared slide show on the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), prepared by the QSA.

At the time students choose and create their SET Plan, both parents and students have an interview with school staff and engage with the electronic version of the SET Plan. At this time, students are able to see and discuss their options and, using the technology, see whether they meet the requirements for the QCE, or for OP Eligibility. It also displays calculations for their Field Positions, and any Common Curriculum elements that may be missing from the student’s profile. Students are able to access their choices via the College’s Intranet 24 hours a day.

The concept of the SET Plan data base was originated by the author of this article, Vincent Riener, APA, who worked with a team of staff members to develop the various fields which needed to be included. The data base itself has been created by the College’s Data Integrity Officer Mrs Dawn Sajin.

Recent Reports on Youth and Career Choices and a Professional Development Program for Parents: Generation Y Students Choose Careers on Interests Not Money

**On track? Students choosing a career** is a report prepared for the Smith Family by Adrian Beavis, a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER). The Report was published in March 2006.

This major national study has revealed that many Generation Y Australian students are choosing careers based on their interests, not money. The study of more than 1300 disadvantaged Year 11 and 12 students who are receiving support from The Smith Family’s Learning for Life program found that anticipated income is not a factor in their plans to attend university. Rather, the type of role and how closely it aligns with their interests and abilities has emerged as the deciding factor for these teens rather than the potential size of their pay packet. This report adds to the research data collected by ACER for The Smith Family, to guide the development of the Learning for Life strategy and suite of programs.

The findings of the report relate to four areas: “the influence of family expectations on plans to go to university”, “students perceptions of the world of work in late 2005 and how these had changed since 2004”, “the extent to which students’ post-school plans in 2005 imply upward social mobility”, and “factors which shape Learning for Life students’ plans for attending university”.

A sample of the results include:

- 40% of students had educational plans that matched the level required for the preferred job, however it should not be assumed that sound plans made in one year will stay the same, or, if they change, remain sound.
- There is little evidence of overly ambitious families pushing their children into unrealistic pathways.
- A small majority – around 60% - saw university as a preferred pathway. The strongest factors influencing this view were the socioeconomic status of their preferred job and their perceived ability. Vocational interests were also important. However the likely return in the form of remuneration that follows from having a university degree did not appear to be important to students deciding whether university study was worth it to them, even when they had an accurate understanding of these monetary returns.

Further information may be found at:
www.smithfamily.com.au
Parents as Career Transition Support (PACTS)

PACTS, a professional development program for parents, was first developed by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence to assist families of students participating in their programs. During 2005 at the request of Department of Education, Science and Training all Career and Transition Programs in Australia were asked to trial the PACTS program in their work with 13 – 19 year olds.

The influence and advice of parents and families is recognised as one of the most valuable ways to help young people prepare for transition from school.

The survey undertaken during the trial showed that parents think it is important for them to be involved with their child’s transition, students want help and advice from their parents, but only 20 percent of parents were confident they had sufficient knowledge to do this effectively.

PACTS has been developed specifically to help bring parents up to date with current knowledge and details about career options so they can effectively help their children with career decisions.

The program works with groups of parents in a relaxed, informal workshop led by a trainer. Parents are provided with a workbook that includes practical resources and a directory of services available in the local area. Workshop topics include What Parents Can Do To Help With Career Choices; Knowing The Facts About Career Options Today; TAFE, University, New Apprenticeships; Tackling The Employment Market; Preparing For Employment.

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Year 10 – Transitioning into Senior Schooling: An end or a beginning?

Jane Blackburn
Education Officer - Curriculum (Secondary)

Are the curriculum experiences that students encounter in Year 10 the end of learning in the ‘compulsory phase of schooling’? Is it a time to consolidate and deepen conceptual understanding encountered in the KLA’s? Is it a time to ‘catch up’, or a time to be looking to the future and deciding what subjects students are good at (or not) in order to make choices for the following year? Is it a time to be sampling and/or starting to study senior subjects (and if so, are only Authority subjects offered to Year 10 students)?

Schools have been grappling with these questions since the ETRF situated Year 10 as being in the senior phase of schooling. In this article some research is examined in an attempt to find some answers to the questions, and to determine what may be considered ‘good practice’ for 15 year old young people as they undertake a transition into the senior years of schooling.

This transition experience can be complex and daunting for many students. Pressures on students may increase as they find themselves part of a more competitive academic environment, one which generally has a focus on levels of achievement rather than outcomes. Students experience increasingly specialised subject areas and changes in performance expectations from teachers and parents as well as in the ways they are supported to meet these expectations.

Teaching approaches change for senior students and become more content focused, abstract and specialised. Many teachers expect students have already mastered those processes and skills important for success in senior schooling such as higher order thinking, complex reasoning, problem solving and meta-cognition skills. There may also be an expectation that students can exercise independence and responsibility for their own learning in order to benefit from the choices available to them via the diversity of pathways and learning opportunities.

The transition into Year 11 has been identified as one of the most abrupt changes experienced by students throughout their schooling. The bar is suddenly raised and many students undergo a considerable amount of stress and anxiety during this transition (Mirani SHS; Hertzog & Morgan, 1997).

Schools face a genuine challenge in developing middle to senior phase transition programs or processes that best
meet the needs of all students. Teachers need to have a good understanding of the curriculum requirements at both middle and senior levels, as well as the needs and characteristics of the adolescent learner. This knowledge will assist teachers in matching the curriculum with the social, emotional and cognitive development of students at this stage of their development.

Additionally, teachers who only teach in either one of the middle or senior phases, or who have a pastoral group in one year level, need to work with their colleagues in the other phase of schooling to create an appropriate transition program. This will help teachers of both phases to have ownership and a sense of mutual responsibility for students as they move from the middle to the senior phase. It is no longer appropriate or in the best interests of students, for teachers to ‘belong’ in only middle years classrooms or in senior classrooms. An understanding of the curriculum demands at each phase – content and conceptual development – the programs, requirements and expectations, will encourage a sense of articulation and alignment (Forster, Peterson & Johnson). Collaboration and co-ordination between professionals is essential.

A middle schooling experience which has been both challenging and supportive will help students make a successful transition. Research indicates that students who stayed together with the same teachers and who experienced more hands-on life-related learning activities, integrated instruction, and co-operative learning groups were more successful in their transition (from middle to senior schooling) than were students who had a more traditional school experience during the middle years (Mizelle & Irwin 2000). Strategies for independent learning and for taking responsibility need to be taught. Schools should also plan for the articulation into senior to be an integral part of middle years education. Often the time and effort invested into easing the transition of outgoing students into senior schooling is limited, and teachers use significantly fewer articulation practices than they use with students transitioning into the middle years or into secondary school (Mizelle & Irwin, 2000).

Parents and students should be provided with essential information about senior schooling, and be encouraged to provide input into both phases, middle and senior. Although it can be very challenging to provide opportunities for parent involvement, studies show that parental involvement and support in a student’s education can be instrumental in student success (Foster, Peterson & Johnson).

Studies have also shown that those schools that successfully transition students, focus on their well-being and educational success. Despite advances in theory and research on individual differences in learning and effective schooling practice, there appears to have been little change or impact on how schools and teachers respond to diversity. “If all students are to successfully complete a basic education through equal access to a common curriculum, the way in which schools respond to the diversity of student needs must undergo major conceptual and structural changes” (Oates & Flores 1997). Programs need to foster development and educational resilience and to promote the learning success of young people, especially those ‘at risk’ or requiring greater-than-usual educational and related support services (Oates & Flores, 1997). A broad-based coherent approach that includes family, school and other community resources is required (Oates & Flores, 1997).

Schools need to encourage positive attitudes and high expectations. Successful students feel they have had a great deal of control over their lives, a belief known to promote educational achievement. Conversely, young people who did not experience success tended to believe that they don’t have control over their lives, that chance and luck are important, and that something always seemed to stop them from getting ahead. (Schwartz,2000, in Eric/Cue Digest No 109).

Providing students with transition activities and programs has proved to greatly reduce student apprehension and increase their sense of belonging as they transition into senior schooling (Herzog & Morgan, 1997). These activities and programs need to be those that best fit a school’s characteristics, ethos and the needs of the cohort as a whole and of individual students within the cohort.

Most secondary schools offer some kind of program or activities to assist students make a smooth transition from the middle years into senior. These may include:

- Guidance and career planning sessions with students in the middle years to discuss senior curriculum pathways and opportunities, timetabling and certification requirements.
- Parent nights to discuss senior curriculum pathways, timetabling and certification requirements.
- A ‘transition’ team that may be composed of middle and senior school co-ordinators, academic co-ordinators and teachers, counsellors, students and parents. Transitioning students can be surveyed to
determine needs and concerns so effective transition activities and programs are developed by the team.

- Ongoing career advice and counselling including SET Plans and Review Updates. Career counselling may also include study skills, conflict resolution, learning styles and the importance of school involvement. This can begin with students in the middle years or earlier.

- Mentoring or tutoring of students during the middle years by senior students about subjects, courses and pathways.

- Developing programs where students and teachers can ‘shadow’ someone for a day or part of the day. For example, middle years students might shadow a senior student, a senior teacher might shadow a middle years student … the ultimate goal is to promote greater mutual understanding between all those with a stake in the transition experience (Hertzog & Morgan, 1997).

- A fair or expo, in a fun atmosphere, of information related to senior curriculum, leadership opportunities, vocational courses, academics, available electives, TAFE and other providers’ partnerships, District Youth Achievement Plan goals and support networks and services etc. Individual displays may be designed according to the school’s goals, mission and/or offerings.

- Exploratory classes during the middle years that give students opportunities to look at the connections between academic or vocational subjects and careers that draw on these subject’s disciplines.

- Scheduling time for senior coordinators and teachers of senior subjects to talk to middle years students about life, learning and expectations as a senior student, and how this is different to being a middle years student.

- Passing on student folios to senior teachers, and encouraging them to review the folios and use them to inform planning – and making adjustments to work programs or study plans if necessary.

- Developing a team approach to teaching Year 10 students. This is one of the most effective actions that can be taken to assist students make a successful transition from the middle years into senior. Incorporating a team approach allows senior teachers to work for extended periods of time with transitioning students, thereby enabling them to develop greater rapport. Enhanced student-teacher relationships bolster students’ feelings of connection and reduce anxiety and apprehension (Hertzog & Morgan, 1997).

Schools employ many programs, processes and strategies to ensure a smooth and stress free transition into the senior phase for students. Whether Year 10 should be the beginning of senior studies and pathways into further ‘learning or earning’, or the end of the broad and general KLA based compulsory years - or a combination - remains a decision that a school may make based on the characteristics and needs of the students.

References for this article can be obtained from the author or editor.

Newsy Bits

Curriculum Support for Senior Secondary

Secondary schools are responding to a number of changes arising from the Senior Secondary aspect of the Education Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF). These, plus the new Queensland Certificate of Education and changes in Vocational Education and Training, are just a few examples of the initiatives affecting the secondary sector.

The Curriculum Team supports secondary schools in a wide range of activities some of which are directly related to the implementation of ETRF initiatives.

Dennis Harvey Senior Education Officer: Curriculum and Jane Blackburn Education Officer : Curriculum (Secondary) have been joined this year by Jennifer Towler Education Officer: Curriculum (Secondary). Jennifer’s recent experience in the Toowoomba area has been to support schools in career and transition programs, aspects of ETRF, and in working with parents through the PACT program. Information on this program is included in this edition.