

## DISCUSSION PAPER

### Implementing the NSW Model of Pedagogy in the Diocese of Broken Bay

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#### ***Introduction***

The Professional Learning Position Paper published in the Diocese of Broken Bay in 2004 identifies that current international and national research shows the single most important determinant of student achievement to be quality teaching. The position paper asserts that quality teaching needs to be supported by strategic professional development, which in turn aims to help teachers to build knowledge, refine skills, practise new learnings, obtain feedback, and receive practical support. These propositions challenge our system of schools with key questions: *What is quality teaching? How do we support our teachers in continually improving and extending their expertise?*

**The NSW model of pedagogy** developed by Dr. James Ladwig and Professor Jennifer Gore of the University of Newcastle in consultation with the Department of Education and Training (2003), identifies the elements of quality teaching that directly impact on and improve student learning and achievement. This model is respectful of teachers, acknowledging that their professional expertise and the quality of their pedagogy is the element that most directly and powerfully affects the quality of learning outcomes for students. Importantly, the model is also inclusive of all teachers, K-12, across all curriculum areas. The model respects the multitude of different styles of and approaches to teaching, while identifying the generic elements of pedagogy that have been successfully applied to result in improved student learning.

In 2006, the Catholic Schools Office leadership team plans to provide structured and strategic opportunities for teams of teachers from all systemic schools to develop a deep understanding of the NSW model of pedagogy. From this knowledge, school leaders will then be positioned to decide how, when and if their school community will commit to implementing the model in 2006 and beyond. The Catholic Schools Office plans to work collaboratively with schools to develop individually tailored implementation packages to assist each community to move forward with this sustained focus on quality teaching in a way that aligns with schools' strategic and annual priorities. This discussion paper aims to outline some of the issues and questions that arise in planning for the implementation of this strategic initiative.

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#### ***Background***

The NSW model of pedagogy was developed from an extensive research base including the work on *Authentic Pedagogy* in the US (Newmann, 1996) and more recently, *Productive Pedagogies* (Queensland Schools Reform Longitudinal Study, 2001). More detailed information on the research background of the model can be examined in *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: an annotated bibliography (2003)*. There has been a widespread uptake of the model in DET schools across NSW and it is also acknowledged that there is a growing awareness of the NSW model of pedagogy across systemic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay.

The Diocesan school system in Broken Bay has a strong tradition of focusing on the core business of schools ie teaching and learning. The Catholic Schools Office has a history of working with schools in a spirit of co-responsibility to build capacity for educational excellence. From this, the following strategic initiatives have emerged: *Excellence in Teaching and Learning*; *Lighthouse schools*; *Leading Learning*; *Partnerships in Catholic educational learning*; and *Building Learning Communities*.

A strategic emphasis on supporting quality pedagogy aligns with previous initiatives to maintain and extend capacity for educational excellence in our schools.

#### ***What is the NSW model of pedagogy?***

The model identifies the elements of pedagogy that have demonstrated positive effects on learning outcomes for all students. The model comprises three dimensions: Intellectual quality; Quality learning environment; and Significance. Each dimension is then described in terms of elements. More detail on the dimensions and elements is provided in *Quality Teaching in NSW public schools: Discussion paper (2003)*.

As part of the support for schools that decide to commit to implementing this pedagogical model, the Catholic Schools Office will provide access to the range of publications that 'unpack' this quality teaching framework.

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#### ***Why now?***

Planning to support the implementation of the NSW model of pedagogy in systemic schools is a response to both a high level of interest expressed by a number of schools and the research on the importance of teacher quality. Education in New South Wales has undergone a period of sustained change during the last decade, including: new HSC; Standards referenced assessment; new 7-10 syllabuses; modifications to the role of outcomes in K-6 syllabuses; and the development of the Professional Teaching Standards (NSW Institute of Teachers).

In this context, it is now both timely and appropriate to focus on supporting the “art and science of teaching”, the craft and professional expertise of our most valuable asset: our teachers. However, it is important to note that the Catholic Schools Office is not mandating the adoption of the NSW model of pedagogy in all schools. It is our intent to introduce the framework to teams of teachers from all schools, and then to support schools when they decide to commit to this initiative.

#### ***How does it connect to the Diocesan Systemic Schools Plan?***

A focus on supporting quality teaching and excellence in pedagogy has strong links with the Diocesan Systemic Schools Plan, *Catholic Schools Going Forward Together, 2002-2006*. Priority 2 (Empowering Teachers and Support Staff) and Priority 3 (Connecting Learning Communities), emphasise the intent of developing and supporting initiatives that improve outcomes for students by building capacity in our teachers.

Furthermore, the Professional Learning Position Paper reinforces the view that professional learning is built around shared beliefs and commitment that empower individuals and groups to become active members of a collaborative professional community. The plans to implement the NSW model of pedagogy respect this philosophy, and recognise the importance of ensuring that the implementation takes place in keeping with school-based plans and commitment.

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#### ***Will it change the strategic direction of my school?***

This will depend on the current directions that have been planned by schools. As noted above, several schools have already arrived at a point in their development where a focus on teacher quality and pedagogy is the key priority. The NSW model of pedagogy may therefore align neatly with documented strategic and annual planning.

In some other schools, a focus on pedagogy may not be explicitly planned as a priority area. It is therefore critical for school leaders to learn as much as possible about the NSW model of pedagogy, and to consider both the professional learning needs of their teachers and the rich body of current research that places such emphasis on teacher quality. This knowledge will then enable school leaders to make decisions on how best to respond to the model in their school community.

#### ***How will it affect me in my school?***

The Catholic Schools Office leadership team has planned a series of seminar/workshop days with Professor Jennifer Gore. These include:

- **3 November 2005:** an initial presentation to Principals and nominated leaders. Prior to this meeting, Principals are strongly urged to read *Quality Teaching in NSW public schools: Discussion paper (2003)*.
- **23-24 February 2006:** a two day workshop on the NSW model of pedagogy. Each school will be invited to nominate a team of 3-5 leaders to participate in the workshop. The members of the team should be those identified as being able to lead change in the school with enthusiasm and integrity. Team members must be able to commit to participating actively in the full two days of the workshops, and the follow-up day in March.
- **17 March 2006:** a follow-up one day workshop.

After this intensive input, each school community will be encouraged to consider its response to the new understandings on pedagogy.

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The decisions made by school communities may then impact on elements such as:

- planning for professional learning days;
- structuring whole staff and KLA team meetings;
- budgeting for release and other forms of continuing professional development;
- establishing and supporting communities of practice;
- liaising with the Catholic Schools Office for specific support (for example, on-going involvement of an Education Officer to work with a particular team of teachers).

As a result of discussion at the Director/Principals meeting on 25 August 2005, careful planning of resourcing and budgeting implications will be undertaken.

The impact of the NSW model of pedagogy on schools will obviously depend on the school community's response to the workshops, an analysis of the professional learning needs of teachers, and the established strategic directions.

#### ***How will it link to other strategic initiatives?***

Obviously, school communities cannot focus on everything, and too many priorities can result in a loss of focus. However, schools are encouraged to draw connections between implementing the NSW model of pedagogy and other current strategic initiatives. Schools are involved in a range of projects which focus on the pedagogical practices of teachers, such as: the Australian Schools Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) project, *Improving student achievement in Mathematics through pedagogical innovation*; the Middle Years Literacy project; the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project; and the recently funded Telstra project focusing on meeting the needs of underachieving gifted students.

Schools are encouraged to consider these strategic initiatives planned for 2006, and make decisions on the viability and practicality of focusing on pedagogy in the light of these commitments.

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#### ***How will I involve my whole staff?***

This is a critical consideration. The Professional Learning Position Paper recognises that positive outcomes are most likely to be realised when there is alignment of individual needs with the needs of the school, system and community. Involving the whole staff may include initiatives such as:

- Sharing professional reading on pedagogy and research into the importance of teacher quality;
- Making professional learning the focus of staff, KLA and team meetings;
- Planning professional learning days with a view to linking with other schools to share professional learning about pedagogy;
- Considering the role of key curriculum leaders to provide on-going and sustainable support for this initiative within your school.

#### ***Will all schools have to commit to implementing this model of pedagogy?***

The short answer is 'no'. While all schools will be expected to nominate a team of committed leaders to participate in the three days of workshops in February and March 2006, school leadership teams are in the best position to decide how to respond to the challenges posed by the issue of quality teaching. The Catholic Schools Office leadership team believes that the NSW model of pedagogy is well-researched, respectful of teachers, and sustainable. Most importantly, we believe that implementing the model can lead to increased capacity for educational excellence in our schools, and improved outcomes for our students.

Therefore while the model will not be mandated across our schools, the Catholic Schools Office encourages all schools to consider it thoughtfully, thoroughly, and with reference to the school context. The Catholic Schools Office will work collaboratively with schools that decide to implement the model to provide ongoing support and advice.

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#### ***What are the practical short term considerations?***

The immediate considerations for Principals are:

- To read as widely as possible on the NSW model of pedagogy\* prior to the presentation by Professor Gore on 3 November;
- To decide on the team of leaders/teachers who will participate in the three days of workshops in February and March 2006;
- To discuss school-based strategic priorities for 2006 and beyond with leadership teams and school communities;
- To assess the medium and long-term professional learning needs of teachers;
- To consider budget allocations for professional learning priorities.

**In conclusion**, we invite you to think through the issues raised in this Discussion Paper with a view to engaging in discussion at the Director/Principals meeting on Thursday 25 August, 2005.

For further information, please contact members of the steering committee that has been established to work on this initiative: Dr Mark Askew, Helen Colman, Carmel Kriz, Frances Reynolds, Dr Michael Slattery.

Br Tony Whelan CFC  
Director of Schools

17 August, 2005

\* Go to the website for the Department of Education and Training, Professional Support and Curriculum, and click on 'Quality Teaching':  
[www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au](http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au)