Enhancing Teacher Clarity

Evidence of Impact

Aubin Grove Primary School
Perth, WA • Australia

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Students	Countries Represented	Languages other than English	Parents born overseas
1080	**32**	**31**	**52%**

Aubin Grove Primary School is a government primary school located in the southern corridor of the Perth metropolitan area in Western Australia. The school opened in 2011 as a Kindergarten to Year 6 school and has experienced rapid growth over the first eight years. Initially commencing with 315 students in 2011, enrolments reached 1080 by the end of 2018.

Throughout the first eight years, the school has been characterised by a high quality, innovative teaching and learning environment. All of these factors have been guided by the unwavering commitment of ensuring that every student is a successful learner and every teacher is a highly effective educator. The school climate is characterised by shared beliefs about teaching and how students learn best, commitment to innovation and continuous learning and a multi-layered, collaborative, team-oriented approach. This is underpinned by positive partnerships between students, staff and families and driven by the dedicated commitment to the school principles of **Learn, Enjoy, Aspire, Focus.**

The beginning of the Visible Learning journey

By the end of 2015, the school had successfully completed its first three-year strategic school planning and review cycle. Mindful of the challenges that lay ahead for a growing school, the staff set out to more closely examine classroom practice and in particular, with a committment to ensuring every teacher was highly effective. With the spotlight on a recently developed Pedagogical Framework, in particular focusing on enhancing teacher clarity, through the use of learning intentions and success criteria, the Principal, Frank Pansini, used two videos on John Hattie's work as provocations to stimulate

discussion amongst staff at a whole staff day. This prompted much reflection, debate and informally marked the beginning of the Visible Learning journey. It did not take long to realise that the Visible Learning Professional Learning Process was the 'next step' in the school journey. This process aligned with the school's commitment from day one, *'every student as a successful learner and every teacher a highly effective educator'.*

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Short and Long Term Outcomes

• Influenced by the Visible Learning research, staff were committed to improving teacher clarity, and in the short-term, set about ensuring that learning intentions and success criteria were visible to all learners in every classroom for every lesson. A short-term goal was to ensure that every student was able to confidently articulate and understand *- where am I at with my learning, where am I going next and how do I get there.*

• In 2016, the professional learning that occurred through the Visible Learning 'Evidence into Action' process provided the opportunity to use a variety of tools and frameworks to gather and analyse the first cycle of data. Privileging student voice was a key focus of this first phase. The data highlighted that teacher clarity, providing effective feedback and

developing visible learners would be the key areas. The evidence showed that teachers were strongly reliant on task level feedback (i.e. corrective type feedback) and praise type comments when providing student feedback. Data gathered through student voice also indicated that students believed a good learner was someone who demonstrated compliant type behaviours (e.g. listen to the teacher) and students did not have understanding or language to describe what made a successful learner.

• Another outcome staff were eager to pursue was an improvement in the current processes for student goal setting. The current approach was having minimal impact on student learning and essentially the goals students wrote at set points throughout the year were in many cases, no more than 'words on a page'.

> 66 *Reframing our thinking at a whole school level and classroom level to 'focus more on the learner and learning rather than the teaching', has required a big shift in mindset and our evidence tells us that we are now being highly successful in doing this.* 99

The school organised for the first Professional Development day to be held off-site as a 'launch day' in June 2016. All staff who were available participated in the Foundation Day Training, including all of the Education Assistants and other school support staff. *This day was received with a high level of enthusiasm by all - many commenting on how it was the best, and **"most compelling"** professional learning they had experienced in their careers.* In order to ensure long-term success, to provide timely and practical support to teachers and to harness the initial enthusiasm and 'buzz' that this day had generated, a new role was created in the school. Two staff members were appointed Visible Learning 'Impact Coaches'.

Key Milestones and Successes

1. Improving Teacher Clarity

Ensuring teacher clarity through learning intentions and success criteria was identified as an area for

improvement. The extent of implementation varied across the school and evidence collected showed that the language used by teachers was inconsistent. Establishing a clear understanding across the school of the why, what and how of learning intentions and success criteria became the initial focus area. The aim was to ensure all teachers communicated quality learning intentions and success criteria for every lesson, in every class across the school. More importantly though, it was vital that students could articulate and understand what they were learning and what success looked like and to be able to use them to drive their learning.

Deep and ongoing teacher learning and strategic actions has now resulted in students being able to articulate what they are learning and what success looks like in all their lessons. Teachers also share this information readily with parents. Students have responded enthusiastically to this change valuing

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I am a Thinker	I am a Driver	I am a Communicator	Overview
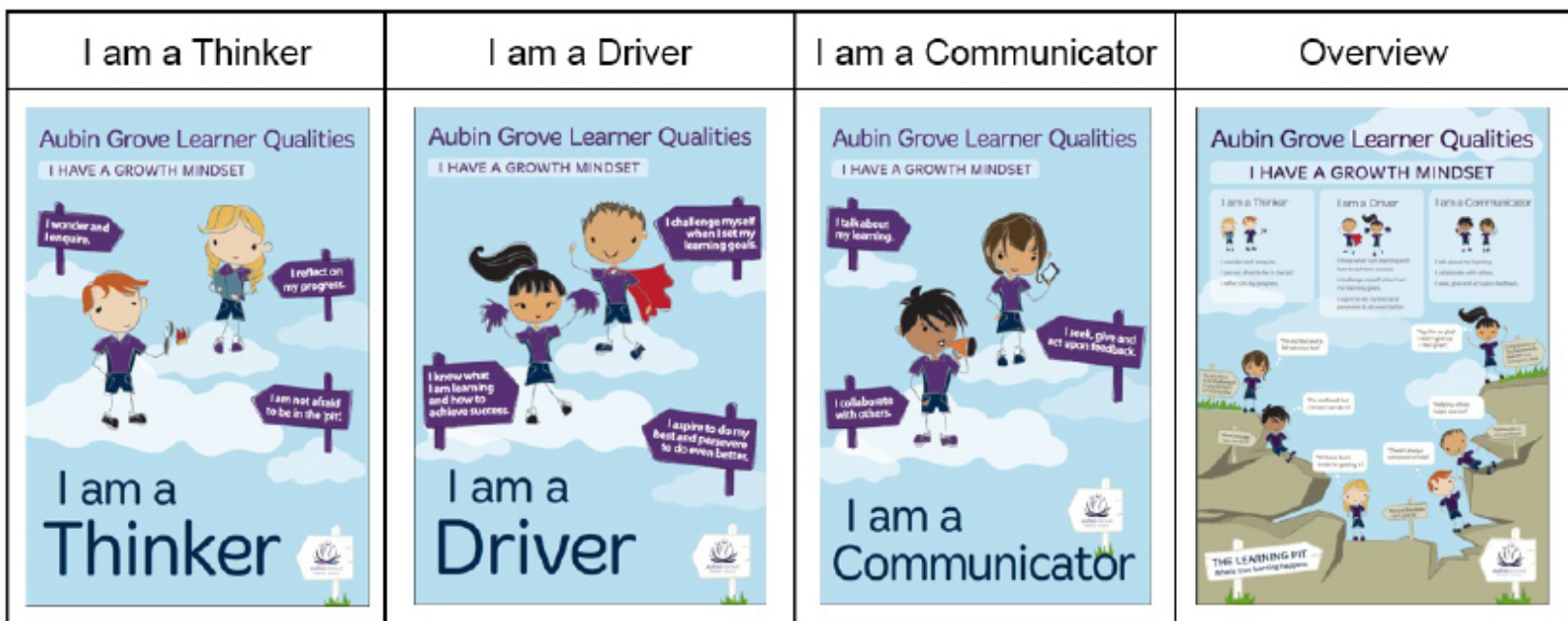
the clarity the teachers are providing them. It is now commonplace across the school to see learning intentions and success criteria visible to learners. One teacher tells the story of the student who, eager to get a head start on a task that the teacher had earlier flagged would be assigned to the class the following week, emailed her on the weekend asking if the teacher could reply to her with the learning intentions and success criteria for the task because she couldn't commence without knowing them!

2. Development of the Aubin Grove Learner Qualities

A major milestone in the school's journey was the development of the *Aubin Grove Learner Qualities.* A goal to develop common language of learning across the school was identified so that students had an understanding of what it takes to become an effective learner, to be their own teachers so that they could be assessment capable, self-regulated learners. Initially, the Impact Coaches worked closely with all staff to workshop ideas and concepts. Eventually, all staff and students agreed on the learner qualities across the three areas outlined below. The Learner Qualities were introduced across the school at the beginning of the 2017 school year.

The Impact Coaches worked closely with teachers

in 2017 to gradually build capacity of staff to understand, communicate and use the Learner Qualities and to support student understanding and use of language to support their learning. When students are now asked what makes a good learner at Aubin Grove, the students have a shared language with the Learner Qualities to articulate their understanding.

3. Effective Feedback

In the first cycle of gathering and using evidence conducted in 2016, the data showed that there was a focus primarily on teachers providing students with task level type feedback and praise. The school worked with the Visible Learning team from Corwin to provide staff with further professional learning that focused on how to make feedback visible and impactful for learning. From 2016 to 2017 it became evident that an improvement in feedback extended beyond praise and task level feedback. In 2017, further evidence showed teachers were providing feedback to students targeted at where the students were in their learning, that is a combination of task level feedback when students are learning new material, process level feedback when students are developing more proficiency, and self-regulation where students have developed a high level of proficiency with what they have learnt. Overall the

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following practices are becoming more commonplace across the school:

• The nature of written feedback to students, is no longer praise but aimed directly at the child's next learning steps in relation to an individual goal or learning intention and/or the success criteria.

• Feedback observed within classrooms is based on where students are at in their learning, with students prompted to reflect on the success criteria.

• The Google Classroom platform the school uses in Year 4 – 6, provides a perfect context for teachers to give students written feedback in real-time which the child receives immediately. This also lends itself well to peer feedback.

• Teachers set their own professional learning goals with their Line Manager, or Impact Coach/Literacy Coach and seek and receive feedback on their classroom practice.

• The student survey regarding teacher use of feedback in 2017 indicated that 37% of students agreed that their teacher gave them feedback on the success criteria. In 2018, the result increased to

41%. In 2017, 42% of students agreed that they have the chance to use the feedback their teacher gives them to make their work better. In 2018, the result increased to 47%. This is an area of continued focus for all staff alongside working with students to be able to provide effective peer to peer feedback and student feedback to the teacher.

Challenges

One of the challenges Aubin Grove encountered in the first two years of their Visible Learning journey has been inducting new staff each year. The challenge of upskilling staff each year, or even in many cases in the middle of the school year, has been significant. This challenge has been overcome by implementing thorough induction processes at the beginning of each year and at point of need. The Impact Coach has played an important role in this process - facilitating professional learning sessions determined by the school focus areas. A distributed leadership model has also been key in ensuring that teachers continue to develop accurate and consistent understandings of the Visible Learning principles. Reframing thinking at a whole school level and classroom level to focus more on the learner and learning, rather than the teaching, has required a big shift in mindset. Whole school evidence collected shows that staff are highly successful in doing this.

Lessons Learned

• An Impact Coach is instrumental in supporting staff in the implementation process of Visible Learning. A key driver across the school, the Impact Coach has been able to provide differentiated support for all staff at point of need.

• Committing to full implementation and embedding the Visible Learning principles is a long-term initiative and therefore a change process requires an openness to continual learning from everyone in the school.

• The importance of an ongoing and active operational plan for the implementation of Visible Learning - one that is driven by the evidence and data collected in the identified Visible Learning areas of focus in the school is needed.

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• Identifying and celebrating champions of Visible Learning across the school helps build collective efficacy and momentum for ongoing reflective practices.

• Timetabled common teacher release time for all staff across each year group ensured teachers met weekly and collaborated to share learning experiences, review student data and plan next steps. This collaborative time has been invaluable since commencing the Visible Learning journey. It has allowed their Impact Coaches to support small groups of staff and for staff to reflect and have conversations about best practice along the Visible Learning journey.

Where are we now

• Negotiated goal setting has been transformed across the school. Students now regularly set and review learning goals with their teacher based on their assessment data. These goals now reflect the learning students are involved in, and the extent to which they are demonstrating the Aubin Grove Learner Qualities.

• Term 1 parent interviews, during which student progress and achievement is discussed, are now three-way conferences in Years 3-6. Students play a key role in describing the learning they have been engaged in, the goals they have negotiated with their teachers, the progress they have made in achieving them and what their next goal/s is/are likely to be.

• Learning intentions and success criteria are evident in every classroom for every lesson and most importantly, the majority of students can articulate what they are learning and why.

• The development of the Aubin Grove Learner Qualities has given the whole school community a common language of learning. Students now include references to having a GROWTH mindset and being

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in the 'Learning Pit' when discussing their learning. There has also been a marked change in the students' understandings of what constitutes a good learner. Our students can describe characteristics of what an effective learner does and uses the Learner Qualities to support their learning.

• In a relatively short period of time, there has been a significant change in student feedback. From teachers being heavily reliant on praise to evidence of feedback related to the process and self regulation.

• Collective teacher efficacy has developed through the use of student voice and data collection that now focuses on measuring teacher impact.

• The school has developed a culture of feedback that supports the improvement of all key stakeholders across the school. This has been in part, due to the structures that have been established for observation and coaching through the continuation of the Impact Coaches' work, a new Literacy Coach position in 2018

and the distributed leadership model, along with far more effective practices being implemented.

What next - The Journey Continues

Several key milestones have been reached in the Visible Learning journey and there is much to celebrate. However, the school community also recognises that this is an improvement process where there is never an end point. The aspiration that all students become assessment capable visible learners is a work in progress and embedding effective practices to support the development our learners will continue. The school has a clear plan moving forward and the staff look forward to celebrating continued success stories and having significant impact on ALL learners at Aubin Grove Primary School.

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