



Trinity
Christian
School

'Deepening Love for Literacy'

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Background

Trinity Christian School (TCS) is a Kindergarten – Year 12 school.
The Junior School consists of Kindergarten – Year 5 (triple-stream).

Overarching Goal

The development of a coaching approach to professional learning across the Junior school.

Focus Area: Writing

Coaching Long-Term Vision:

- ❖ To improve the *ability* and *engagement level* of students across Junior School in Writing.
- ❖ To see a positive change in students' *attitude* towards Writing.
- ❖ To improve the *competence* and *confidence* of teachers in preparing and delivering Writing instruction.
- ❖ To increase *students' performance* on the writing segments of NAPLAN data.



Other more detailed short term goals for 2015 & 2016 included:

- ✓ Teachers will have an increased understanding of relevant and engaging writing instruction techniques.
- ✓ Teachers implement some of the high yield strategies presented through the coaching course in the domains of both writing and coaching.
- ✓ Student results demonstrate a higher understanding of and engagement with the writing process.
- ✓ Students improve in their confidence when approaching writing tasks.
- ✓ Uniformity across year levels' approach to writing techniques including a shared meta-language and common core strategies.
- ✓ Teachers use a common language for writing instruction.

Coaching At Trinity

What did it look like last year?

- Establishing a core coaching team – Coach + 3 teachers
- Coach met one-on-one with each teacher fortnightly
- Core Coaching Team and Curriculum Executives meet each term to work through the Writing modules from LNCA



Last year we established a Core Coaching Team. This team consisted of 1 coach and 3 teachers. Over the year the coach met with each teacher fortnightly to discuss and monitor their Literacy goals for each term. Each term the Core Coaching Team and executives would spend 1 or 2 afternoons working through the LNCA writing modules and discussing the impact this information could have on our current teaching practices at Trinity. During the second Semester the coaching team started presenting information at Junior School staff meetings.

By the end of 2015 Trinity aimed to have a core team of teachers who have completed the coaching course. Over the year teachers completed modules on Writing in both small group and one-on-one sessions with the coach. New approaches and techniques were employed in the classroom using strategies that teachers had learnt through the course. The small group sessions helped build an environment of support and open professional dialogue between the teachers.

At the beginning of 2016 the core team of coaches was expanded to include at least one teacher from each year level (K-5). This meant our core team now has 6 members.

Coaching At Trinity

What does it look like now?

- 6 Teachers meet fortnightly with the coach (in groups of 1 or 2). This time is dedicated to the setting of term goals, monitoring them and discussing challenges and successes- (Video goals were implemented for semester 2)
- The Core Coaching Team of 6 teachers meet fortnightly to discuss current research, to support one another and to work together on their goals and approach to literacy in the classroom.



As the Coaching Team had doubled in size this year we divided several of the teachers into groups to meet fortnightly with the coach. In these meetings we discussed the teachers term goals and how they were progressing, challenges they faced, ways to approach these challenges, ideas and dreams for their classes.

As a Coaching Team we all met together once a fortnight for a Friday lunchtime to build community amongst the larger team. In this time we look at current research, discuss ideas, what lessons had worked well and what lessons need to be changed next time, our challenges and our successes. This helped to unify the Coaching Team and allows more support for each individual member. This has proved very beneficial as the differences in literacy ability from Kindergarten to Year 5 is very broad.

How We Approached Coaching in 2016

- Student Surveys, Teacher Surveys, Coaching Survey of the Staff
- Strategies Across the Junior School
- Karina's fortnightly Musing's is emailed to the core coaching team, summarising interesting ideas from books and current research.
- Staff Meetings- Literacy Staff Meetings (2 or 3 a term) focusing on literacy and writing in the classroom.



How did we approach coaching in 2016.

Data was collected in the form of online surveys through survey monkey. These surveys were completed in February and September. Classes from years 2 – 5 who had a coaching member as their teacher filled in the online survey. This survey asked questions about the types of writing that students enjoyed, favourite and least favourite aspects of writing, what they find the most challenging, what they wish their teacher would do to help them in their writing, areas they would like to change about writing and how etc.

These surveys were then collated and compared with last years results to form our current post data.

The responses from the survey were then shared and discussed amongst the Core Coaching team. Ways to incorporate the students suggestions and struggles were discussed and different strategies implemented as a trial in the classrooms.

Staff Meetings

Over 2016 the Coaching Team has been involved in the running of 9 Literacy focused staff meetings. We have also started incorporating

'Literacy Spots' into various other staff meetings. Literacy Spots are 5 – 10 minute segments where teachers present an approach or strategy they have used in their classroom. These have been brilliant in encouraging staff to discuss their approaches to Writing and it has led to many staff seeking out members of the coaching team to talk about their upcoming lessons and share some ideas. The frequency of these spots and the staff meetings also keeps approaches to writing at the front of discussions and planning.

Strategies across the Junior School: These are some of the approaches to Writing that a lot of classes and year levels have begun to implement (in their own ways).

6 + 1 Writing traits is used from kindergarten – year 7. A shared meta-language around Writing and the various aspects in a Writing piece. Writer's journals, Writer's Workshops, Mentor Texts, use of Low Stakes Writing regularly, and many more are used across the year levels. To assist teachers in finding good quality Mentor Texts we have developed a TCS database for mentor texts which is divided into the headings of the 6 + 1 Writing Traits. So teachers can access a list of age appropriate books in the library to use as mentor texts for each aspect of writing. Teachers are constantly adding new books to the list as they find them.

2016 Goals

Coaching Team Goals:

- Continue one-on-one fortnightly meetings to discuss and track teacher identified goals. Look at the data being provided and how this can inform and direct the classroom teaching.
- Group sessions on online modules provided by LNCA for new members on the coaching team.
- Co-coaching each other through intentional professional discussions- Meet to discuss each teachers goals and approaches as a core coaching team to facilitate professional dialogue, discussions and support.

Junior School Goals:

- JS Staff to work through Module 1 & 2 in the form of booklets
- To develop and implement a shared metalanguage towards Writing- the 6 + 1 Traits
- To start writing the 6 + 1 language into our curriculum documents for English
- To display posters in each classroom of the 6 + 1 traits
- Literacy Snapshots in Staff meetings that allow Teachers to present snippets of successful strategies and techniques they are using in the classroom.



We are pleased to say that over this year we have completed, in one way or another, the goals that were set.

This year the focus was on building a culture and community of coaching and support. This was done through maintaining the fortnightly 1-on-1 meetings with the coach and adding a fortnightly meeting of all the core coaching team. In these meetings we looked at current research, discussed ideas and challenges in the area of Writing.

As a whole staff we worked through modified modules from LNCA on writing, we started having regular 'Literacy Spots' in our staff meetings where teachers would present ideas and activities that they had tried in their classrooms.

SUMMATIVE FINDINGS

Main data collected was in the form of surveys undertaken in Terms 1 and 4.

Teachers

Over this year teachers involved in the coaching course have shown an increasing willingness to discuss their practices with their peers. They have embedded new strategies into their teaching repertoire and have engaged in the process of using self-videos to aid their professional development.

*FEEDBACK: "This year I have enjoyed the discussions and the support from the other members of the team. We have had a lot of great discussions and we have tried new activities and strategies that the students have really connected with. It has been great to see the students passionate about their writing and enjoying this time."
Year 4 Teacher*

Students

- Increase in students identifying writing as 'fun'.
- New ideas and approaches to writing have been provided by the students and tried in their classes.
- Improvement in number of students identifying that they would choose to write across various settings.
- Decrease in students saying writing is boring. (From 30% to 10%)



Our pre and post data was gathered using a survey that was completed from the Year 2 – 5 classes in February and September this year. We did not survey Kindergarten or Year 1 as they were new members of our coaching team and we are looking at ways to include them in our data for next year.

SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES

Successes:

- Continued enthusiasm from Junior Staff about Literacy Coaching.
- Excitement and engagement in literacy spots and literacy staff meetings.
- Passionate teachers ready to try new things, sometimes beyond their comfort zones.
- Executive who are supportive of the program and teachers.
- 6 + 1 Traits for Writing and the use of mentor texts in classrooms.
- Development of a 6 + 1 Writing Traits Mentor Text list for our library.
- Growth in our understanding of Literacy and Coaching.
- Kathleen Kryza PD day

I have enjoyed building a community of practice where we can ideate together and support each other as we take steps to create classrooms which are empowering, with high expectations and where deep knowledge produces transformational writing!

Year 5 Teacher

Overall Challenges:

- Keeping it exciting and relevant
- Ensuring staff meetings are engaging and have an immediate application
- Time management
- Use of Video in the classroom



There have been a lot of successes this year in literacy coaching. Some of these include: Continued enthusiasm from Junior Staff about Literacy Coaching. Excitement and engagement in literacy spots and literacy staff meetings. Passionate teachers ready to try new things, sometimes beyond their comfort zones. Developing trust and building professional relationships within the coaching team. Executive who are supportive of the program and teachers. Executives giving priority to the Coaching process. 6 + 1 Traits for Writing and the use of mentor texts in several classrooms. Development of a 6 + 1 Writing Traits Mentor Text list for our library. Videos being used in the coaching teams' classrooms. Positive, supportive and honest meetings as a coaching team.

Personal successes include; Growth in my understanding of Literacy and Coaching. Changes to my approach in teaching Literacy through using various strategies from the research and from discussions with the Coaching Team.

Challenges we have faced include; continuing the excitement and momentum of the literacy coaching, making sure it does not turn into 'another thing we do' but stays are something exciting and fluid. Presenting staff meetings and coaching team sessions in an engaging way that builds momentum and energises the staff. Time management as I teacher full time and balance the coaching meetings before or after school. Using videos of yourself to do personal reflection and development. It is very confronting seeing yourself on film and trying to encourage other teachers to move out of their comfort zone and try it.

Coaching At Trinity

Where is it heading?

- Next year each teacher in the Core Coaching Team will intentionally coach another teacher- in the area of Writing.
- The Core Coaching Team will continue to meet fortnightly to support and encourage one another.
- As the team continues to grow each year the culture of coaching will continue to grow and become a part of the way things are done.
- Writing Wonderings



The plan for 2017 and beyond is to see the Coaching approach broaden incorporating all Junior School teachers and embed itself into the culture of how we teach at Trinity and how we approach professional development. Jim Knight comments that until you see what you look like as a teacher you cannot understand what you convey to the students. He advocates videoing your lessons so you can get a real image and understanding of what your words and body language are conveying to your students. As we go forward in expanding Literacy Coaching across the Junior School our dream is to help each teacher develop sound practices of professional development and a community of support and accountability amongst the staff.

We are very blessed at Trinity that we have the support of the executives to keep promoting Literacy as an important part of our staff meetings.

Our broader goal to develop a coaching approach to professional learning across the Junior School means the tenants of Literacy Coaching will be developed and built upon as we continue to widen the scope of this culture of coaching.

RESOURCES

Corbett, P., & Strong, J. (2011). *Talk For Writing Across The Curriculum*. Glasgow: McGraw Hill Open University Press.

Culham, R. (2003). *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up*. Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Fletcher, R. (1996). *A Writer's Notebook*. New York: HerperTrophy.

Gallagher, K. (2011). *Write Like This*. Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Knight, J. (2014). *Focus on Teaching*. California: Corwin.

Peha, S. Welcome to Writer's Workshop www.ttms.org

This presentation reports on the findings from "The AISACT Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy (2015)", delivered in partnership with Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and funded by the Students First Support Fund.



The handouts and articles mentioned in the Writing and Coaching modules have been an educational and rewarding resource. We have used several of the articles in our coaching team sessions and our Junior Staff meetings. Teachers have utilised different aspects of these readings and strategies in their classroom

Anything written by the following authors has been very beneficial as well;

- Jim Knight, Kathleen Kryza, Carol Dweck, Ruth Culham, Ralph Fletcher, Kelly Gallagher, Pie Corbett & Julia Strong, Libby Gleeson