



# PRAHRAN HIGH SCHOOL

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PHS NEWS #8

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# LEARNING, TEACHING AND IMPROVEMENT 2019 - 2020

In this PHS News, James and I reflect on a significant Foundation year of growth and achievement, along with some pointers to our 2020 strategic direction.

This year our staff have been exploring many important approaches to learning that will help us improve student learning now, and in the future. In our Foundation year, everything has been in development for us and many of our strategies and approaches are being researched further and refined as we go. We have the opportunity to take an agile approach to planning for school improvement as we're not beholden to the past and we can carefully plan the future. It's exciting.

As we rapidly approach the end of our first year, together, we share some reflections on our progress in learning, teaching and curriculum development. In this PHS News, we also warmly invite you to attend our final event for the year – our Showcase of Learning (and awards) on Tuesday 17 December 2019.

James Fidler  
Foundation AP

Nathan Chisholm  
Foundation Principal



# OFFICE 365 – TEAMS AND ONENOTE

This year we've worked hard to develop curriculum and learning programs using Office 365. We've participated in extensive professional learning in partnership with accredited Microsoft education experts, with a particular focus on setting up collaborative 'Teams' for each class and using OneNote to provide key curriculum and learning activities to students. This term, we have set students up to begin learning using these platforms, which will be used across all of our subject areas in 2020. This has been a significant area of our work together and you can expect to see this strengthened further as we progress.

Of course, the technology itself isn't what matters most – what is important is the learning opportunities that it provides. So far, OneNote has allowed us to 'open up' the curriculum to students and make learning intentions

and success criteria more visible. It has allowed new and different ways for students to collaborate, made sharing learning resources easier, and is opening up better ways of providing students with feedback on their work.

As we move into 2020, OneNote will also help us differentiate instruction more effectively, providing students with more tailored learning programs to suit their needs. We will also explore further ways of encouraging collaborative learning and critical and creative thinking through the platform.

One major benefit for families is that schoolwork completed this way is always accessible – at home, on any device – along with feedback from teachers, and this opens up some powerful ways to include you in the learning process that we'll explore further next year.



# COLLABORATIVE LEARNING & TEACHING

Another significant area of learning and development has been to further refine our approach to collaborative learning and teaching. This is an approach that is increasingly used in schools (you might be aware of this approach being used powerfully at Albert Park College or St Michael's, for local examples), and sitting behind it is the power to improve learning that comes when teachers collaborate on all aspects of the learning process. Our learning spaces have been designed to support this style of learning – but only when and where it fits best. This means that, for example, in Science practical classes – where a dedicated laboratory is so important, classes continue in mentor group size.

Team teaching has been a strategy we have been trialling and exploring throughout 2019. One of the benefits of our space is that we've been flexible and able to explore collaborative teaching and learning, when it suits particular activities – particularly in Design Lab,

for practical activities in Humanities and for when we've wanted to mix up student groups in different ways. As the year has progressed, we've increased our professional learning in this area, and encouraged teachers to trial different approaches.

What is most important about this development too is the positive impact on student learning - the opportunities for improved learning that we can provide. We are really starting to see some of these benefits emerge as we grow. What we can see now is that opportunities for collaborative teaching shifts learning towards student-centered, more engaging activities. There are better opportunities for group-work, more flexibility and opportunities to tailor learning to the needs of students, and increased consistency across classes, making sure that all students have access to the same teaching, with a broader range of staff (including teachers, support staff, and leaders) to support their needs.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

As with all strategies and developments, it's about learning in the best way possible, and no one strategy is to be used all the time. For example, with technology, students are not using their computers all day – only when it best supports learning, and some activities just work better using a pen and paper or on a whiteboard. Similarly, collaborative teaching and learning offers a lot of opportunities, but it's not every session of learning at PHS.

In both areas, our work will evolve – we'll focus more and more on the High-Impact Teaching Strategies that we can use with students in learning sessions, on the use of data and evidence to inform the learning process, and on further developing ways of giving students 'agency' within the learning process.

In 2020, we will also formalise and further develop our whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy support, intervention and extension – strategies that are so important in ensuring all students make high growth in the core learning areas that will set them up for success in the future.

Our students, our staff and our new school community have achieved so much together in our Foundation year. Learning and teaching is our core business and we remain committed to evidence-based developments in our practice to provide the very best learning opportunities for our students at Prahran High School. As always, if you have any questions, thoughts or ideas about teaching and learning, or just to join the conversation, please contact us at school any time.



# SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA SCHOOL LEADERS AWARD 2019

Last week, I was honoured to receive an award from the School Library Association of Victoria, recognising school leaders who have shown strong commitment to school libraries. On behalf of our school, I was delighted to be at these awards to accept the award. Libraries are about learning, teaching and opportunity for students and our library has become a very special place this year indeed. This award was for both Colin Simpson from Richmond High School, and me. Below is an extract from my remarks in accepting the award.

*'It's a real honour to accept your award today with James Taylor, the Assistant Principal of Richmond High School, on behalf of our school communities. In some ways, I hope this award could have been presented to any school principal across Victoria, as I hope that all school principals believe in the power and value of school libraries as much as we do. If that's not the case, then the SLAV has certainly got allies in James and me to help make that right.*

*Nurturing a love of reading, and first to be able to read and read well, is one of our most important roles as educators. We can't access the world or enjoy the world without reading. Libraries and librarians have a vital role to play as we strive to do this. That's why we believe in you and our libraries.*

*In the end though, rooms with books in them is not enough. The human connection in libraries is what matters most and having excellent, engaging, widely read librarians who love books and who also love kids is what makes the difference. For us we're very lucky to have Karys McEwen leading our libraries - she epitomises all that is wonderful about school librarians and we're grateful for her work.*

*Finally, you know that sadly our friend and colleague, Colin Simpson passed away suddenly some weeks ago. He was a great friend of mine and as we built our schools together we shared much - a strong view that we definitely shared was a commitment to libraries. He would be proud to be here today and I'm honoured to accept this with James, on behalf of Colin too.'*

 Nathan





PRAHRAN HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

# CHRISTMAS TOYSHOP DRIVE

27 NOVEMBER - 13 DECEMBER 2019



Donate a gift to our  
PHS christmas tree

Support our community  
in Stonnington



Children and young people  
aged 0 – 15 years



All donated gifts to be wrapped with a card  
noting the suitable age of the gift recipient.



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# END OF YEAR SHOWCASE OF LEARNING

You're warmly invited to attend our final Showcase of Learning for 2019. Our Showcase provides us with a final 2019 opportunity to share students' learning and growth with you, to connect once more between home and school as we build positive relationships and to acknowledge some of our students with various awards.

We would be very pleased to see you all here with us.

**When:** Tuesday 17 December 2019

**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30

**Where:** Prahran High School Atrium

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