Stella Maris Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

Students bring with them varied life experiences and a diversity of religious, social and cultural backgrounds. At Stella Maris we recognise that ‘every learner is in some respect like all others, like some others and like no other’ (Common Journey, Different Paths Spiritual Direction in Cross Cultural Perspective (1992) Susan Rakoczy).

Rationale

The purpose of the Teaching and Learning Policy is to support the challenge of building a learning community rooted in the Catholic Christian tradition. We are all challenged to become lifelong learners and active, engaged and responsible citizens.

Values

This policy is underpinned by the value of justice as we believe that each and every one of our students has the right to a Catholic education that meets their needs.

We strive for personal and professional excellence while engaging in God’s work. In doing this, we discover and use our gifts for the good of students in our charge. We also encourage our students to strive for personal excellence in all they do. Teachers and students demonstrate enthusiasm and responsibility within the teaching and learning process.

Policy Statement

Learning and teaching at Stella Maris School empowers all learners in our community to understand, shape and enrich our changing world, by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(Adapted from the Overarching Goal for Learning, BCE Learning Framework, Brisbane 2002.)

Consequences

In enacting this policy the Stella Maris staff, in partnership with parents and others, will promote:

Learning characterised by

- ‘Knowledge to be attained, values to be acquired and truths to be discovered’ (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium)
- Learning how to learn and learning how to think
- Reflection, self-direction and self-responsibility
- An holistic understanding of the human person
The dynamic engagement of teachers, students and parents
- Individual, small group and whole group learning
- Helpful and constructive feedback on learning undertaken and progress made

**Teaching** characterised by
- Pedagogy\(^1\) and activity that acknowledges the diversity of learners, the reality of multiple intelligences\(^2\) and of the existence of a range of learning styles
- Collaborative professional learning focussed upon skill development of staff to meet the needs of learners
- Practice that is relevant to, and necessary for, the education of twenty-first century learners
- Explicit focused instruction

**Learning environments** characterised by
- The Catholic Christian identity of the school within the Stella Maris Parish and the wider Church
- Responsiveness to the needs of students and teachers
- The encouragement of reflection, prayer and creative expression
- Quality facilities and resources

**Relationships** characterised by
- Professional and supportive staff collaborations
- Strong partnerships and meaningful dialogue between teachers and teachers, teachers and parents and teachers and students
- Quality engagement with others beyond the immediate school community
- Open and honest communication and mutual respect and care

**GLOSSARY**

\(^1\) **Pedagogy** is the art of teaching. It is the dynamic and interactive process between teaching and learning. Curriculum is ‘the what’ of teaching, pedagogy is ‘the how’.

\(^2\) **Multiple Intelligence** is the theory developed by Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University. Gardner has established, using scientific criteria, the existence of 9 intelligences (to date). Each of us possesses varying amounts of the nine intelligences and combine and use them in very individual ways. This theory challenges the notion that intelligence is confined to either verbal/linguistic or mathematical/logical intelligences which have been traditionally valued in the classroom. The 9 intelligences are:

- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence, Mathematical/Logical Intelligence, Visual/Spatial Intelligence, Bodily/Kinaesthetic Intelligence, Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, Naturalist Intelligence and Existential Intelligence.

Implemented through the School Board, July 2009