



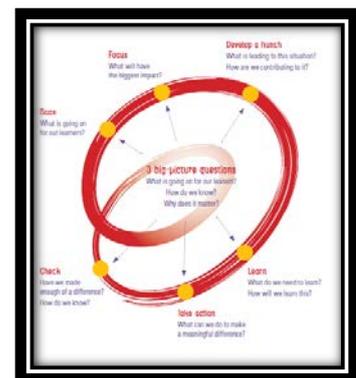
Buxton Public School

School Context

Buxton Public School is a relatively small school in the semi-rural town of Buxton. 98% of our student's come from English speaking backgrounds. Our school provides for children's educational needs in a happy, stimulating and caring environment. We have a strong focus on student wellbeing, consistent with our school motto: 'We Care'. We are a Positive Behaviour for Learning school which allows for consistency of expected behaviours across the school. The school's curriculum has a strong focus on English and Mathematics with programs such as Language, Learning and Literacy K-2 and Targeted Early Numeracy across the school. The school site is rural and vast with a large playing area for our 175 students. The school provides many forums for children to be involved in singing, sport, dance, art, debating and public speaking. A large variety of leadership opportunities are available and all staff work closely with students to fully develop their potential and achieve their personal best. Staff development is a key component to the success of the programs across the school with professional learning in Spirals of Inquiry, coaching and mentoring, growth mindset and the 4C's. Our community of schools is collaborative and engaging, working closely on a program over the next 3 years funded by a Fair Education Grant and focussed on creating aspiring communities across our five schools. Within our school we run a Little Library program once per week for children 3-5 years of age. The aim of the program is to provide a rich experience for those children in the community who do not attend pre-school as well as creating a learning hub within our school for the local community.

Scanning

At Buxton PS, the leadership team had undergone many changes in 5 years and therefore the sustainability of any programs was greatly hindered by the lack of consistency and professional learning. When we undertook external validation using the NSW Department of Education's School Excellence Framework in 2016, the current Principal had only been in the school for 6 months, so although at the time this seemed like the worst case scenario, the process actually gave the new executive team an opportunity to drill down to see what had been achieved and where to next. The element of collaborative practice was at the working towards delivery stage and the team knew that they had some learning to do in order to move towards excelling. The greatest bonus was that **all staff members** were fully on board and ready to embark on whatever adventure came our way. The Principal had been an Instructional Leader prior to Buxton and had an understanding of Spirals of Inquiry but had not practiced the process in any schools.



Focus

The school had already started the process of shifting culture, by participating in a Learning Tour of Melbourne schools to view the work of John Hattie and Visible Learning. Through

visible learning we wanted to shift the school culture to one where everyone was responsible for the learning of all of our students and students were given the responsibility to be self-regulated learners. At this time we knew in order to have the staff using the same metalanguage across the school, we need to come together in two groups (K-2 and 3-6), to discuss the learning of our students and make the centre of our discussions. This is when Spirals of Inquiry made its first appearance at Buxton Public School.

Hunch

As a school we wanted to know three things; what is going on for our learners? How do we know? Why does this matter? We wanted to investigate what impact our teaching had on our learners and what we could do differently to suit their needs. We also wanted Professional learning that was relevant, tailored to our needs and had an impact on our children.

Learning

Our learning began in 2017 when two members of the executive team attending training at Lurnea PS and Glenmore Park PS. Immersed in Halbert and Kaser's work developed a passion in us that made us want to come back and share it all immediately. We worked through the Spiral's Playbook and after a short time launched straight in to 'have a go!' Alongside Halbert and Kaser's work, we read a great deal about Timperley's work and attended the Residential in Bowral. We learn something new every time we meet. We read professional readings to support our learning and explore the possibilities that will help us turn our learning into actions.



The greatest impact on our learning comes from the NOII community. We are privileged to be a part of something so much bigger than Buxton and to be immersed in professional dialogue with our NOII schools is invaluable.

Take Action

We participate in Spirals of Inquiry every fortnight on a Wednesday. The first 3 hours are for K-2 staff and the final 3 hours for 3-6 staff. We use this as our sacred learning time, including our learners when appropriate to help us make a meaningful difference. We make plans to do things differently whilst embedding ways to keep checking and reflecting on our processes. We need evidence and data, as 'without data you're just another person with an opinion' (W. Edwards Deming). We have continued to embed our Visible Learning pedagogies into everything that we do as well as embark on a quest to study Carol Dweck's work on Growth Mindset with Dan Haesler. We knew that our teaching had come so far in 18 months but always strived to do so much more. We could see we were making a difference but wanted



to be very strategic with our Professional Learning and make it about our children in our context. Reflection has become a critical part of what we do and whilst we still have a long way to go, we certainly know that we are on the same train with the only stops required to refuel and go again!

Check

For us our measures of success come in the engagement and progress of our children. Certainly not any less important is the dialogue and professional learning of our staff. The staff know we value their learning as it is prioritised in a school day. We celebrate our successes and rethink the things that may not have worked. We revisit the spiral at any point to check in and re-evaluate what we are doing. Watching our children begin to have high expectations for their own learning and setting the stage for what comes next in their learning is inspiring. In the words of Halbert and Kaser "One spiral of inquiry leads to another. Small changes create the confidence to design and implement more radical change. This is how transformation begins. We believe this is more likely to happen if young people are learning in engaging and innovative settings where curiosity – for everyone – is a way of life".