



Professional Learning
Research
Innovation

Learning in Practice

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About the Barker Institute:

- Provides a centre for research, reflective practice, professional learning and innovation in education
- Is a resource hub that facilitates the ongoing development of learning for teachers, allowing them to stay abreast of emerging practice, constantly striving to refine the quality of teaching and learning
- Looks to develop collaborative ventures with other institutions and providers, initiating research and innovation combined with the implementation of new projects and programs for the benefit of students, staff and the broader community
- Shares current research and issues with parents, professional bodies and educators around the globe through ongoing symposia, forums, lectures and conferences

About the Learning in Practice Journal:

As a leader in Christian education, Barker College aims to both demonstrate and inform best practice. This journal was developed to showcase a range of initiatives and research projects from across the School. It explains the rationale behind innovations in practice and archives pivotal developments in Barker's academic, co-curricular and pastoral realms.

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About the Authors

Dean Bunn began his teaching career in 1986 at Shore School where he taught Physics. Committed to hands-on Science, in the early years of his teaching career he established an integrated program of science research for Year 10 students and heavily supported the Intel NSW Young Scientist Competition. He authored 'Physics for a Modern World' which was published by Jacaranda in 1990. Dean took leave from Shore for the years 1990 to 1992 and returned to his country of birth where he taught Mathematics and Physics at Aiyura National High School. Upon his return to Shore, he took up an assistant's role in the Science Department and was appointed the Head of Science in 1996. Seeking some experience in a co-educational setting, Dean moved to Barker College in 2001 as the Head of Science. In 2008 Dean was appointed to a new position at Barker, which involved the explicit teaching and development of leadership qualities in all students across K-12. The position has expanded into an additional focus on Service Learning and the implementation of programs to provide every student an opportunity to serve beyond the school community. His present position is Dean of the Senior School.

Simon Walker is the Director of Student Leadership & Service Learning. He recently completed a Master of Education (Educational Leadership) through Charles Sturt University and has presented on the topics of Leadership and Service at the AHISA Leading, Learning & Caring Conference in 2016 and the IBSC Leading & Learning Conference in 2015. He has a particular interest in blending service, leadership and innovation across all aspects of teaching and learning.

Learning to Lead Through Service: Barker Service Partnerships



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Abstract

The following paper explores the way leadership skills and character are cultivated at Barker through a range of service learning partnerships that are student centred, transformative, long term and linked to teaching and learning. The notion of Service Learning (SL) will be explored along with an explanation of the Barker Service Partnerships' Model and several of the current programs that are available to students.

Learning to Lead Through Service

Service Learning (SL) has become increasingly popular in educational contexts due to its potential to enhance student citizenship, increase communication and reflective practice skills, develop empathy and extend student learning beyond the classroom (Bettencourt, 2015).

SL is any form of

"experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5)

Service opportunities enable students to use their abilities in creative ways to find solutions to social and environmental challenges (Bingle & Hatcher, 2011); to engage actively, collaboratively and compassionately and to build respectful partnerships (Bingle & Hatcher, 2011) and to act in ways that are just and bold with the hope that they will help to empower others (Snell, Chan, Ma & Chan, 2015).

In the realm of student leadership development, SL is a particularly promising avenue because of its experiential nature (Eyler, Giles, Stenson & Gray, 2001). Through this approach, learning and development can take place in both the concrete experiences and the reflective opportunities provided to the students (Lester, 2015). Barker's student leadership programme has for many years focused on developing leadership skills in all students regardless of a formal role or title. Students are encouraged to 'lead without a title' and to take opportunities where possible to lead through service. This approach stems from Barker's Christian traditions in which we uphold the character and life of Jesus Christ, a humble servant leader, that "... did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28, English Standard Version).

This model has been widely accepted by staff and students across the School and has become the foundation for all our leadership programs.

The Barker Service Partnerships' Model

In 2015, under the leadership of Mr Phillip Heath, a new strategic plan, "Inspiring Global Hope" was developed. "Inspiring Global Hope" goes beyond a tick-a-box strategic plan, it is an audacious vision that seeks to make the educative process one that is innovative, collaborative and, most importantly, transformative.

The Service Partnerships' Programme was developed from this vision in line with the five areas of action:

- Mission and Service
- Education and Care
- Community, Staff and Students
- Planning and Resourcing and Innovation
- Transformation and Leadership.

In order to ensure that students and staff are engaged in meaningful and authentic service opportunities that empower others and that align with the goals of "Inspiring Global Hope", the Service Partnerships' Programme adheres to a set of four lenses.

Each lens provides a framework for assessment and evaluation of a service partnership. These include;

- Long-term focus
- Links to teaching and learning
- Transformative experiences
- Student-centred involvement with the wider community

Lens	Inspiring Global Hope - Goals
Long-Term focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming meaningful relationships with local, national and global communities. (CS&S) • Growing relationships which enable us to make something good, just and compassionate happen in the world. (M&S)
Links to Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a globally focused 21st century Barker College model of learning that promotes an outstanding educational experience for all K-12 students. (E&C) • Being a Christian educational community that inspires innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges. (IT&L)
Transformative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking beyond our present successes and implementing creative and new ideas that transform individuals and empower their growth as future leaders. (IT&L) • Fostering innovation using emerging research and educational practice, consciously striving to be educational leaders, transforming students and staff to be visionaries of global hope. (IT&L)
Student-centred involvement with the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring bold and authentic leaders to exercise their compassion as they develop their God given gifts in service to their local and global communities. (IT&L) • Using our resources to impact global hope. (P&R)

Tablet: Barker Service Partnership lenses and their links to the "Inspiring Global Hope" strategic goals.

The Barker Service Partnerships' Program aims to move beyond the 'muffin-day' and 'bake sale' fundraisers (although they have their place), to a more purposeful SL programme that aims to empower others and to build meaningful and transformative connections between students and those within the local and global community.

Students can voluntarily access a range of service initiatives within the programme. This may be during school hours, linked to various co-curricular programs or academic subjects or out-of-school hours within the broader community.

The new student leadership position, Social Justice Captain, was also created to maintain the student-centred approach to this service programme. These students are appointed to lead, promote and co-ordinate a range of service partnerships and social and environmental causes within the School. A number of the partnerships are outlined below.

Darkinjung Peer Mentoring

Darkinjung Peer Mentoring was founded by a former student eager to see stronger connections developed between the Darkinjung and Hornsby campuses. The program focuses on the principles of mentoring, fellowship and friendship and involves a fortnightly lunchtime programme where Year 11 and 12 student volunteers coordinate a range of games and activities for the Darkinjung students. The impact of this mentoring program is seen in the transformation of students and the deepening of relationships as they learn and interact together.

Hampers for Hornsby

Hampers for Hornsby is a Middle School Seniors' initiative that has been operating for the past four years. The programme involves the shared efforts of the Secondary School student and staff community in donating hampers to be distributed to people in need by St Peter's Anglican Church, Hornsby. This programme is student-centred and long term with the hope that lasting relationships might be developed between the parishioners of St Peter's and those whose lives are challenging in the local area.

Timor Leste Service Trip

This leadership and service opportunity is in partnership with Rotary Australia who have established long-term connections with local Timor Leste communities. Barker students travel to Timor Leste to take part in the Rotary Youth Programme of Enrichment (RYPEN), a highly-sought after leadership programme offered to underprivileged Timor Leste teenagers. Students work alongside the course attendees, learning language skills and understanding the Timor Leste culture. This program has strong links with the Year 10 Geography unit that focuses on the establishment of independence in Timor Leste and Australia's involvement in stabilising the country.

Time out Basketball

Timeout is a student co-ordinated basketball programme for children in the local area with disabilities. Timeout aims to help students from Barker and the local community to grow in character and friendship, whilst also giving parents an opportunity to relax and unwind. This programme enables students to exercise compassion and develop empathy and they use their skills and gifts to empower others.

Conclusion

The Barker Service Partnerships' Programme is a growing service and leadership portfolio within the School that aims to provide students with meaningful service opportunities which support and empower the lives of others. Many of the students who participate in these programmes speak of the lasting change that takes place in their own personal development and, more importantly, the empowerment that takes place in those they serve.

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