



# Leading for Learning in a Catholic Educational Context



# The Leading for Learning in a Catholic Education Context Program

## Introduction

The Leading for Learning in a Catholic Education Context program (L4L) has been designed specifically for the Catholic school context described by the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (ECSI) so as to inform, guide and support the professional learning and development of current and aspiring leaders in Catholic schools<sup>1</sup>.

The program design recognises three key pillars (ACEL Leadership Capability Framework<sup>2</sup>) that are developed in conjunction with authentic leadership projects and evidence informed improvement plans, where learning and leadership are strongly linked. Essentially, L4L recognises and attends to the progression of these pillars throughout the program, focusing in the first instance on *leading self*.

1. Lead self for learning
2. Lead others for learning
3. Lead the organisation for learning.

The unique characteristic of L4L is that it brings these three pillars together with research informed frameworks into dialogue with ECSI and its theology in fidelity to the vision and the mission of the Catholic school<sup>3</sup>. These frameworks include:

- Joan Dalton's Learning Talk series
- Teamwork and Systems thinking
- And the influence of personal style on leadership practice

Key to the progression of these pillars is an understanding of leadership development consistent with the AITSL Professional Standards for Principals<sup>4</sup>. The Standards recognise and supports an approach where aspiring leaders engage with and develop Leadership Requirements. They do this through actively engaging with the AITSL Professional Practices in an integrated and interdependent process<sup>5</sup>. Through application of the L4L content knowledge and understandings, participants develop qualities and capabilities which are expressed in the Leadership Profiles.

To further support the development of leadership capabilities, L4L, engages organisational psychology through the use of effective psychometric tools, (professionally supervised) so that participants are able to gain deep insights into their current attributes and personal styles. This is one means by which participants are assisted to critically reflect upon themselves as influencing leaders as well as to plan for growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, School Improvement Framework (2016-2019) *Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School* (hereafter referred to as CHECS) 1.2 Enhancing Catholic School Identity; 3. Leadership and Stewardship

<sup>2</sup> ACEL Leadership Capability Framework

<sup>3</sup> cf. CHECS 1. Catholic School Culture

<sup>4</sup> Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (AITSL) Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited p.11 (hereafter referred to as AITSL)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.12

Integral to L4L is the provision to all participants of Joan Dalton's *Learning Talk* series. *Learning Talk* informs key content that both enhances and is enhanced by explicit links to ECSI. These embedded connections between organisational psychology, *Learning Talk* (capabilities) and ECSI, characterise L4L and its specific design to particularise and enable educational leadership which is faithful to the Catholic tradition into the 21st century.

## Aim of the Program

The long-term aim of the program is to enable the development of excellence in educational leaders in Catholic schools ensuring leadership succession across rural and regional communities in our diocese. Leaders who are informed theologically as well as educationally, who are personally and professionally committed to Catholic Education and who desire to influence the identity formation of our students (and colleagues) informed by the teachings of Christ<sup>6</sup>.

## Who's Invited to Attend

The Leading 4 Learning program has been designed to enable the development of capabilities of current and aspiring education leaders to lead self, others and the organisation; subsequently, teams of teachers/education leaders from individual education settings or clusters of education settings are invited to participate. Ideally, teams of three to six participants are welcome, as the requirement to lead learning is best achieved with the support of colleagues working collaboratively.

In order to assist you when considering staff for participation in this program, ideal candidates would have demonstrated the following attributes<sup>7</sup>:

1. Interpersonal skills - a developed level of emotional intelligence and relational capabilities
2. Skilled teacher - highly accomplished teacher with ability to share learning with others
3. Eagerness to learn - an openness to new learning with the ability to receive feedback with a growth mindset
4. Breadth of perspective - a developed level of personal maturity together with experience in different roles and a demonstrated ability to respect different perspectives.

With this in mind, staff from both primary and secondary settings in the following positions of leadership or aspiring to these positions would benefit enormously from participation in the program:

Principals, Assistant Principals, aspiring principals, Learning and Teaching Leaders, Religious Education Leaders, Faculty Leaders, PLC leaders, Year Level Coordinators, Curriculum Leaders and Level Leaders.

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<sup>6</sup> cf. CHECS 3. Leadership and Stewardship; 3.1 Shared Leadership; 3.2 Building Staff Capability

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Michael Bezzina

## What's Involved

Participants involved with the Leading 4 Learning program will be required to undertake a number of tasks throughout the program including to:

- identify a personal leadership opportunity with the support of an in-school leader or coach; this will be documented in terms of a key focus point for identifying personal growth within the life of the program,
- identify a key priority within the school's improvement agenda and develop a plan to lead the learning of colleagues in this area. This L4L Project will be the vehicle for applying and demonstrating professional learning across the life of the program,
- collaborate as part of a school team to facilitate learning of self and others throughout the program,
- engage in deep personal reflection upon all aspects of the program in order to develop insights to inform, form and transform professional practice, and
- share insights and identify growth as it occurs across the life of the program and finally to present their project to the whole L4L team as a celebration of learning.

Principals of participants involved within the program<sup>8</sup> will be strongly encouraged to:

- provide time for participants to attend all six days of professional learning as well as a minimum ten days (or equivalent) at school for project implementation and coaching,
- meet fortnightly with participants from their school in order to understand, enable and support their leadership journey,
- ensure that participants can engage in an authentic leadership process at school,
- engage in a short debriefing session with the L4L facilitators on coaching days,
- attend the final project presentation and celebration day when participants identify and share their growth pathway and results.

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<sup>8</sup> cf. CHECS 3.4 Stewardship of Resources

# Program Format

## YEAR 1- Leading for Learning in a Catholic Educational Context

Overarching Learning Intention: To develop and enhance your capabilities, skills and understandings to effectively lead for learning in the context of your Catholic school.

### Term 1

A two-day workshop that engages participants with the following learning:

- the shifting landscape of educational leadership - from knowers to inquirers
- the power of trust in building a community of learners
- the Catholic Educational context leading into the 21st Century and described by ECSI<sup>9</sup>
- key Leadership Capabilities - general and spiritual
- developing Learning Talk Capabilities that promote trust and understanding<sup>10</sup>
- creating successful teams
- developing and planning for a team project to apply leadership understandings

Coaching<sup>11</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participating teams as they engage in an individualised team project in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their identity statements
- their learning
- individual team member's leadership goals
- plans for teams to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>12</sup>

### Term 2

A two-day program which will include:

- introduction to *Personal Style* to facilitate a process of deep personal reflection and self-understanding<sup>13</sup>
- giving and receiving feedback to enable the leading of self and others
- developing use of Learning Talk capabilities to enable working with challenge
- understanding Catholic Dialogue within the current Catholic context<sup>14</sup>

Coaching<sup>15</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participating teams as they engage in an individualised team project in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their identity statements
- their learning
- individual team member's leadership goals
- plans for teams to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> cf. CHECS 4.4 Analysis and Use of Data

<sup>10</sup> cf. CHECS 5. Wellbeing; 5.1 Quality Relationships

<sup>11</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>12</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching

<sup>13</sup> cf. CHECS 5. Wellbeing; 5.1 Quality Relationships

<sup>14</sup> cf. CHECS 1.2

<sup>15</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>16</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching

### Term 3

A one-day workshop on Catholic Anthropology<sup>17</sup> engages participants in:

- developing shared understandings and knowledge of the human person from the perspective of the Catholic tradition
- recognising that the Catholic tradition has always been a recontextualising tradition
- understanding and identifying the concept of the hermeneutical space as a means for understanding and engaging students and adults with religious learning into the 21st century<sup>18</sup>
- reflecting critically on previously held understandings of the tradition and Catholic Anthropology and/or the lack of such understandings in relation to emerging and new insights for the personal as well as the professional life<sup>19</sup>.
- developing an identity statement for themselves both personally and professionally, informed by reflection on the day's learning.

Coaching<sup>20</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participating teams as they engage in an individualised team project in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their identity statements
- their learning
- individual team member's leadership goals
- plans for teams to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>21</sup>

### Term 4

Day 6 - Final Day

Presentation of projects to fellow participants, principals from schools involved and CEO leadership members. Each school teams' final presentation is required to reflect and responds to the following scaffolds:

- What difference has your participation in this program made for you personally and professionally?
- How has your personal and professional growth positively impacted your school and its Catholic identity?
- What have been some of your learning highlights? In what ways has your learning been embedded in your practice?
- What shifts have taken place in your thinking and practice?
- What shifts have you observed in your team/school as a result of your actions? Describe these please.
- What personal and professional challenges have you faced and how have you worked to address these?
- As a result of your learning what will your next steps be? Personally/as a team and/or school into the future?

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<sup>17</sup> cf. CHECS 5. Wellbeing; 5.1 Quality Relationships

<sup>18</sup> cf. CHECS 1.2; 1.3

<sup>19</sup> Didier Pollefeyt & Jan Bouwens (2014) Identity in Dialogue

<sup>20</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>21</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching

## YEAR 2 Leading for Learning - The Journey Continues

Overarching learning intention: In the current context of Catholic Education we will enable the development and integration of the personal and professional life of emerging leaders.

### Term 1

A two-day workshop that engages participants with the following learning:

- understanding the movement from leading self to leading others,
- models for system change - enabling participants to understand where the greatest leverage lies to bring about the change,
- recognise and identify the scope and influence of mental models and their dialogue with ECSI for the current Catholic educational context,
- reflect on and understand how our personal style impacts decision-making and how it serves as a filter through which all your learned behaviour passes,
- reflect critically on points of intersection between your personality style, learned behaviours and their impact for a leadership role faithful to your school's role in the mission of the Catholic Church, and
- nominate explicit applications of understandings drawn from mental models which have demonstrably influenced the attitudes and behaviours of those you lead; this extends to and includes ECSI.

Coaching<sup>22</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participants in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their credo
- their learning
- their leadership goals
- plans for to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>23</sup>

### Term 2

A two-day workshop where participants will undertake the following learning:

- understand how both skill and will play a critical role in having the conversations we need to have and the role that our mental models has in this,
- Understand how we can overcome the challenges of stress associated with leading,
- undertake further psychometric assessment to develop self-knowledge as a leader and opportunities for growth,
- become more self-aware of how we use our time, what personally motivates us and what limits us in our quest to lead,
- introduction to Catholic dialogue as a metacognitive application of ECSI understandings<sup>24</sup>, and
- apply practically the thinking, learning and understandings developed over the L4L experience.

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<sup>22</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>23</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching

<sup>24</sup> cf. CHECS 5. Wellbeing; 5.1 Quality Relationships

Coaching<sup>25</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participating teams as they engage in an individualised team project in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their credo
- their learning
- their leadership goals
- plans to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>26</sup>

### Term 3

A one-day workshop on Catholic Anthropology<sup>27</sup> engages participants in

- Revisiting and deepening shared understandings and knowledge of the human person from the perspective of the Catholic tradition,
- recognising that the Catholic tradition has always been a recontextualising tradition,
- understanding and identifying the concept of the hermeneutical space as a means for helping educators to engage students and adults with religious learning,
- a synthesis of the year's learning with the theology of the PCB, Melbourne and Victoria scales (ECSI)<sup>28</sup>,
- reflecting critically on previously held understandings of the tradition and Catholic Anthropology and/or the lack of such understandings in relation to emerging and new insights for the personal as well as the professional life.
- developing a credo for themselves, informed by reflection on the day's learning and meaning for them as Leaders in Catholic schools into the future.

Coaching<sup>29</sup>: L4L facilitators will coach all participating teams as they engage in an individualised team project in their school setting to support a process of exploration and reflection on:

- their credo
- their learning
- their leadership goals
- plans for to apply their learning through leading the learning of colleagues<sup>30</sup>

### Term 4

Day 6 - Learning Centres

All participants are challenged (both individually and as part of a team) to respond 'in the moment' to various planned scenarios that they may encounter as leaders in a Catholic school context. Participants will be called upon to apply their learning, exhibit leadership and demonstrate both skill and will through their engagement. Reflection and feedback moments are built into the process to support all participants in this learning environment.

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<sup>25</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>26</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching

<sup>27</sup> cf. CHECS 5. Wellbeing; 5.1 Quality Relationships

<sup>28</sup> Didier Pollefeyt & Jan Bouwens (2014) Identity in Dialogue; cf. CHECS 4.4 Analysis and Use of Data

<sup>29</sup> cf. CHECS 3.3 A Culture of Continuous Improvement

<sup>30</sup> cf. CHECS 4. Learning and Teaching; 4.2 Effective Teaching



## References:

Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited

Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, School Improvement Framework (2016-2019) *Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School*.

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Joan Dalton and David Anderson, 2010 - 2016, *Learning Talk Series* - books 1-5,