

Citizens of Tomorrow, Today (CoTT)

A lifelong learning programme

Implementation Manual

Jennie Bickmore-Brand

“Citizens of Tomorrow, Today” is designed to maximize the resources both human and material that exist in the community where the student goes to school and that of their home location. For this reason the programme works best where there is commitment from these sectors. In this way the responsibility for the success of the programme, and the credit, gets dispersed.

The following ideas have come from trialling the programme and refining it during its initial implementation in a school and may save others from re-inventing the wheel. The ideas have several sections: stages of implementation, roles and responsibilities of participants, and questions and answers.

First things first!

As the programme is recommended to be a compulsory component of the student’s study it will benefit from gaining ‘buy in’ from key stakeholders. The programme from the outset was actually developed with a team of interested parents and staff who were there to support the programme and deflect any ‘issues’, rather than being driven from the ‘top down’. Whilst this may not be replicated, it is recommended that a small committee of parents, staff and, where relevant, school board or council members meet before the implementation and at least annually to monitor and provide a level of accountability beyond the Key Staff Member who moderates the course.

For Your Interest- Background of the Programme

The parents and staff attended a workshop which I ran, that asked them to consider:

1. “What will the world be like in the year 2020?” Having predicted various scenarios from doom and gloom to living on Mars or a commune in the middle of the outback... it became clear that it was indeed difficult to be accurate about the future. Suffice to say it will be very different from today, and students will need to be equipped to manage change. This led to the next question:
2. “What knowledge, skills and values will be important for students to thrive in this future society?” It was pointed out that by the year 2020 the current students would be ‘running’ our society and making decisions about whether we should have national health care, pensions, etc. In other words many decisions that would have a direct impact on us as adults either retired or thinking about it!

The following aspects it was thought would prepare the citizens of tomorrow for the world they would live in.

- **Global Awareness** - understanding basic facts about the world we live in
- **Survival Skills and Personal Management** - time management and goal setting
- **Spiritual**- developing our understanding of spirituality
- **Community Awareness** - offering community service to the aged and needy
- **Bilingual/Multicultural** - discovering Australians and their ethnic contributions
- **Technology and Computer Literacy** - learning and teaching others
- **Critical Humanities** - being able to read the media and marketing messages
- **Athleticism** - increasing personal fitness and sportsmanship
- **Creativity** - photography, fine arts and drama
- **Communication** - multi media messages targeted for different audiences
- **Enterprise** - understanding small business and local community
- **Numeracy** - being able to balance a budget and manage shares

Note: After 12 months of piloting the programme “**Environmental Awareness** - needs of flora and fauna and ecosystems”, was added.

This list was then lined up with the Graduate Attributes from reputable universities around the world e.g. Harvard and Oxford, and across Australia. It was interesting to note how generic these were and how comparable they were to the list we had generated. The point was made that if this is what the key educational institutions around the world were equipping students for, might not we also benefit from gearing our curriculum towards these attributes.

But Australia conforms to a national Curriculum Framework which after all had been developed by expertise across the country... should this be ignored? Interestingly enough these attributes had their genesis in the Mayer Key Competencies and once again when aligned to the list we had generated were surprisingly similar.

So the task for the teachers on the committee was to look at the short fall between what was currently being taught in the curriculum and what would need to be added to broaden and equip the students for the future.

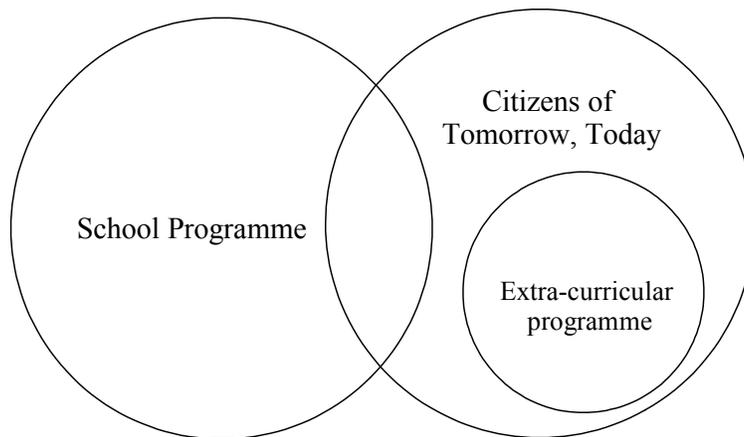
The COTT Record Book represents a comprehensive set of activities which, in addition to the curriculum, are relevant to preparing students for the future - to be Citizens of Tomorrow, Today!

Once the actual process of how the programme would operate began to be thrashed out the following key operational Values became embedded.

- Use initiative and are not just passive
- Organise others and cooperate as a team
- Exhibit high levels of practice or skill accomplishment
- Are altruistic i.e. done for the benefit of others less fortunate than ourselves
- Show an ability to examine and market one’s strengths
- **Act with integrity and honesty**

Heated debates occurred around how competitive the structure should be and what value should be given to each of the activities. The activities are graduated across the levels in line with degree of difficulty and effort required by the student.

The relationship between the school programme, the extra-curricular school programme and the COTT programme is represented in the diagram below:



It should be noted that 80% of a Bronze medal can be achieved from within the school programme.

The programme was originally designed for students in their final years of Primary School in W.A. i.e. years 6 and 7, but has subsequently been used with older students.

The programme has been designed to intentionally not limit what students can achieve. Some students in the original programme were actually national and state champions in their field of endeavour e.g. gymnastics and would be well out of the 'average' for the age group and population at large. The majority of the activities are not age specific, although levels of maturity will enhance many of the activities, particularly those that involve organizing others or putting on an event.

Stages of Implementation

Form a Committee

As mentioned in the background, the programme was created with a group of stakeholders which contributed to the ownership and success of the programme. It is recommended that a small committee be made up of a representative of the school parent group, another parent representative, several teachers who teach the age of children who will be involved in the programme, the Key Staff Member who will moderate the programme, and, where relevant, a member of the school board or council. The Key Staff Member, where possible, should be part of the initial meetings.

It is suggested that this group, together with the Principal, receive some induction by the programme's developer, Jennie Bickmore-Brand, as to the implementation of the programme. This will also provide opportunity for questions to be raised.

Deciding which Year Levels

At the above meeting the decision as to which year levels will be involved can be made. The design of the programme was such that it was best completed over two years. It is also valuable to have the final year that a student completes the programme to be marked in a significant way. Hence in W.A., completing the programme at Year 7 made it part of the graduation ceremony and added closure to that stage in the student's education programme. In a similar way it could end before students entered or left Middle School.

The nature of the activities is such that initiative and responsibility are encouraged as is participation in the local community. For this reason, the greater the maturation level of the student the more likely they are to gain significantly from the programme. Year 6 (11 year olds) do require quite a bit of 'hand-holding' in their first year.

Getting Buy-in from the Stakeholders

As the programme achieves best results from being a compulsory component of the school programme, it is important to have positive messages from various sources being communicated about the programme. The parent group, board or council of the school should be informed and encouraged to participate in as many ways as they can, depending on the age of their own children in the school.

Appoint a Patron

It is recommended that the programme have an advocate from the wider community appointed as Patron of the programme. Suggestions include: local Mayor, Rotary President, church or educational leader or other prominent community figure. This person needs to be fully briefed about the programme and its relationship to, and benefits for, the wider community. The Patron can be there for the launch of the programme both at the outset and each year when the next intake of students arrive. They can also be the figure who congratulates the graduating students at the end of their programme and give out the medals to each student.

Mentor Drive

The programme assumes that a Mentor will be provided for each student in the programme. Large numbers of students can make this a difficult ideal. It is suggested that students 'at risk' of not completing the programme be lined up with hand picked Mentors.

Canvassing for Mentors to participate in the programme also acts as a 'public relations' exercise. Mentors can be drawn from the school staff, both teaching and non teaching staff should be considered. Mentors from sections of the school not immediately involved with that age group should be given the opportunity. Mentors can also be sought from local community organizations such as Rotarians and Lions clubs, TAFE or other educational institutions, church or sport leaders etc.

All Mentors need to be briefed about their roles and responsibilities (see later). They also need "Police Clearance" documentation that is legally required in each state that pertains to Duty of Care measures.

Mentors will need to be all finalized before the launch.

Public Relations

Because the Citizens of Tomorrow, Today programme is a value added component of the school offerings it can be used in marketing materials for the school and in promotional events such as Open Days/Nights.

Regular spots in the local newspaper or school newsletter can provide a forum for students to showcase their activities (and gain more points) and to raise the profile of the programme.

Book Orders/Costing

Every student is required to have their own copy of the Citizens of Tomorrow, Today Record Book. This book stays with the student throughout their participation in the programme.

Book orders should include enough copies for each student, the staff of the students whose classes they will attend during those years, as well as the Mentors and Patron. A copy could be placed in the archives with the school records.

Costing per student could include a levy which allows the payment of the Key Staff Member (.1), the provision of medals, catering at the launch and any administrative expenses.

A grant could be applied for from the government due to its positive impact on youth.

Local service clubs such as Rotary may want to donate towards the programme to acknowledge the community involvement aspect of the programme.

Launch

It is recommended that the programme be launched with a great deal of ceremony where key stakeholders are invited. Dignitaries and even the local press should be included. Where possible some form of catering should be included, light refreshments after the presentation will encourage people to affirm the possibilities for the programme for their family.

Selecting a 'family friendly' time and child care should also be considered. Extending the invitation to families who will have students in the programme the following year could also be considered.

End of Term 1, or well into Term 1 will give time for adequate organization to be made and not interfere with more pressing start of year agendas.

The date should be set when the yearly calendar is being planned in order to avoid clashes or overload on parents, students, staff, and Mentors to attend. Regular publicity of this date should be made leading up to the launch.

The event should be compulsory for all students who will be participating in the programme and a parent or representative to be present. Special arrangements may need to be made to run an information session for any families who were unable to make the launch.

The following pages show **an example** of publicity for the launch and a programme sample for how the event might proceed. Note the students will be given their books at the launch and will meet with their Mentor for the first time at the launch.

The launch endeavours to demonstrate a range of activities using students and staff to show the diversity of the programme.

Annual Launch

Once the programme is off and running in the school it will not be necessary to have a major launch, however it is recommended that a minor launch be run each year when a new intake of students join the programme. In this way it provides status to the programme and signals to the parents how it is valued and they all get to hear their roles and responsibilities.

Timing

As mentioned above, the date for the launch each year should be set when the yearly calendar is being planned in order to avoid clashes or overload on parents, students, staff, and Mentors to attend. It is a compulsory event for students and parents so it is important that regular publicity of this date is made leading up to the launch.

By giving the organizers at least one term to settle in, it gives time to identify students who will need a Mentor, and to make Mentor matches.

The activities can be back dated to the beginning of the year, even though the launch may be well after the school year has started. There is some merit to giving out sample pages for the incoming students to be aware of and possibly participate in during the school holidays. However school culture will guide this practice.

Citizens of Tomorrow, Today

Lifelong Learning Programme

LAUNCH

28th May 7.00pm College Auditorium

INVITATION TO ALL FAMILIES IN THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

This year we are launching a new graduation programme for our year 7's which is rich in lifelong learning experiences and will assist to not only prepare our children for high school but for many of the challenges that face them in years to come. In the year 2020 the current year 7's will be making decisions that will impact on our society while many of us will be retired or being looked after in an old folk's home. That's if this current generation of children actually value older people!

In preparing our school for the 21st century the following criteria was developed that students should be equipped in:

- **Global Awareness** - understanding basic facts about the world we live in
- **Survival Skills and Personal Management** - time management and goal setting
- **Spiritual** - developing our understanding of spirituality
- **Active Citizenship** - offering community service to the aged and needy
- **Bilingual/Multicultural** - discovering Australians and their ethnic contributions
- **Technology and Computer Literacy** - learning and teaching others
- **Critical Humanities** - being able to read the media and marketing messages
- **Athleticism** - increasing personal fitness and sportsmanship
- **Creativity** - photography and fine arts and drama
- **Communication** - multi media messages targeted for different audiences
- **Enterprise** - understanding small business and local community
- **Numeracy** - being able to balance a budget and manage shares
- **Environmental Awareness** - needs of flora and fauna and ecosystems

The programme has a range of over one hundred activities for the children to do.

The idea is that through school and home, the year 7 student will have specific experiences that will have a point system assigned to them and the student will collect points towards an award they will receive at the end of the year at graduation. Some of these experiences are totally to be conducted at home e.g. Cooking - make a healthy 3 course menu, obtain ingredients, cook it for your family and clean up (*Survival Skills*), Calculate change manually while out shopping with your family on five occasions (*Numeracy Skills*). Other experiences will be conducted mainly at school e.g. Compare a book version with a video or film version of the same story (*Critical Humanities*), type to a speed of ten words per minute (*Computer Literacy*), research the number of countries that are in famine and organise a fund raising programme to support a third world country (*Global Awareness*).

Citizens of Tomorrow, Today: LAUNCH

7.00pm May 28th Auditorium

PROGRAMME

- 7.00 *Choir, gymnasts (Ashleigh Jones, Nick de Groot, musicians, soccer- Stephen Norris, artist- Jade Flower, Chef- Emily Dawn, cheer squad- Maya Cherry, and team, reader- Navraj Summer, tennis- Daniel Marr, Ballet Melissa Edwards (all students move across stage acting out their specialism)*
- 7.05 *Welcome – multicultural greetings (Mr Friid (Indonesian), Ms Hay (Japanese), Ms Reed (French), Ms Harris (Dutch), Mrs Richards (Spanish), Mr Hammond (German), and Ms Vander Man (English)*
- 7.06 *Introduction to official guests, background on the project- Dr Bickmore-Brand*
- 7.20 *Lord Mayor to read Mission Statement (Ms Harris’s sister to sign in Auslan)*
- 7.25 *Patron- Pastor David Snaith’s address to launch programme*
- 7.35 *Core requirements- Mr Rod Beavis*
- 7.45 *Active Citizenship, Community Awareness- Ms Julie Trapp*
- 7.55 *Numeracy and Enterprise- Ms Jeanette Kemmis*
- 8.05 *Global Awareness- Mr Jeremy Valley*
- 8.10 *What the school can offer- Ms Emily Lace-Key Staff Member*
- 8.15 *What the class can offer- Mr Paul Smith- Year 6-7 Head Teacher*
- 8.20 *Official Mandate from Executive Principal- Ms Barbara Wade*
- 8.40 *Introduce Moderators and announce student-Mentor matches- Ms Jo Hay*
- 8.45 *Go through process and any questions- Dr Bickmore-Brand*
- 8.50 *Closing blessing- Head Boy- Joshua Valley and Head Girl- Samantha Garden*
- 8.55 *Year 7 Meet with Mentors*

REFRESHMENTS

IF YOUR CHILD IS IN YEARS 5, 6 OR 7 DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS EVENT

Roles and responsibilities

Key Staff Member

This person is responsible for the overall record keeping of the programme and is a moderator and final arbiter.

It is suggested that the teacher be given some time allocation to perform this role, for example 0.1FTE for up to 120 students.

This role could also be done by a sessional/hourly paid member of the community, possibly a retired teacher, or teacher on parental leave.

The Key Staff Member needs to be fairly 'thick skinned,' in as much as when parents contest the conduct of the programme, or become overly competitive, the Key Staff Member needs to be equipped to handle this.

The Key Staff member will typically perform the following duties:

- Order books to be distributed at the launch
- Provide Mentors and relevant staff with books
- Approach and assess Mentors (final approval should come from the Principal)
- Arrange Mentor matches with students
- Run the launch
- Run regular Mentor information sessions (2-3 times per year - optional attendance)
- Counter sign each student's activities in their Record Book.
- Be available on weekly basis to see students Record Book and/or meet with students (note the Key Staff Member may want to challenge or clarify the details of an entry a student has in their Record Book).
- Maintain a data base of student's results, i.e. transfer from the back of each student's Record Book onto an electronic database.
- Provide a print out to the Principal and relevant staff involved a Progress Report at least three months before the students are due to complete the programme. This will signal any students 'at risk' of not completing the programme for whom some remediation should be actioned e.g. inform parents in a letter or by interview, inform Mentor, meet with student and arrange some goal setting. It may involve communicating with teachers ways in which they can give the student credit for in school activities. Core Requirements can often be outstanding towards the end of the programme and may involve a proactive move on the part of the school to, for example take a group of students to the Museum (*Creativity*).
NOTE: the school should be committed to getting all students through the programme at a minimum level of a Bronze medal.
- Order medals, make up Certificates.
- Coordinate with end of year Presentation Night to include medal ceremony
- General communications e.g. letters to Mentors, parents, staff etc re dates for meetings or deadlines.

Mentors

The idea of having Mentors in the programme is to provide a safety net for students whose families may not be in a position to support their child. The Mentor for many students is often the first outside person in their circle of interaction. For many it is the first time they relate to someone who sees them in a more objective and unbiased way (excluding teachers). It is a chance for the students to be exposed to the 'real world.'

It is recommended that as many Mentors as possible to be drawn from the school staff. In this way it enhances communication across sectors e.g. primary and secondary and across departments. Using early childhood teachers with the older students can be very rewarding for the teachers. They may have been a former student of the teacher. Using non teaching staff is also an effective way to validate that learning is not the province of the teaching professional alone.

Mentors can also be sought from local community organizations such as Rotarians and Lions clubs, TAFE or other educational institutions, church or sport leaders etc.

A Mentor may not be an immediate member of the student's family or have a student currently participating in the programme. Often Mentors can be sought from grateful parents whose child has completed the programme and they want to give something back to the programme. This helps as they become good advocates, can offer helpful advice to other Mentors and students.

Aligning Mentors with students should be done carefully. Where students are 'at risk' the Principal or Deputy may take these students. A staff member can Mentor more than one student, although more than three students may be stretching their ability to fully meet students' needs. Where a falling out occurs between Mentor and student, it is recommended that a senior staff member pick up that relationship, and it stays 'in house'.

Mentors are expected to stay with the student for the full period of time of participation in the programme, which would generally be two years. Should any difficulties arise they should go direct to the Key Staff Member who will inform the Principal.

Mentor Meetings

Mentor meetings should occur at least once per term. During which time the student will share with the Mentor the activities they have done since they last met and what they plan to do in the future. Assisting a student to familiarize themselves with the sections that contain the activities the student is most likely to enjoy or be gifted in is part of the meeting. Drawing up a timeline and setting goals when activities could be completed may be necessary for some students. Some activities may be done with the Mentor present, especially if the parent is unable to assist the student.

Strict adherence to the school's Duty of Care policy is essential. At no time should a Mentor place themselves or the student in a compromising situation. It is recommended that Mentors meet with their student either at school e.g. after school or during a recess or lunch break, or in a public location such as a sporting venue or fast food outlet. This meeting should be with the parent present on location (not actually participating in the meeting) or being assured of the supervision of their child. It is not recommended that the Mentor and student meet at either parties home.

It has been the experience of some students that they maintained the relationship with their Mentor beyond the time frame of the programme. The Mentor becoming supportive of the student's academic, career and personal development.

Guidelines for Mentors:

- Mentors should be prepared to stay in the programme for a minimum of two years
- Mentors need to attend the launch where they will be introduced to the programme and meet their mentee/student(s)
- Mentors should stay with same student where possible
- Mentors should meet with the student a minimum of once per term i.e. four times per year
- Meetings typically last 30 mins
- Meet in school or public place, not the student's home
- Mentors attend any Mentor information sessions (optional)
- Mentors should plan to attend the student's Graduation Ceremony

Mentor Information Sessions

It is suggested that a Mentor Information Session be run prior to the launch to engender confidence in the Mentors about the part they will be playing, to allow for questions and to reiterate Duty of Care obligations.

Further Mentor Information sessions may be run throughout the year (e.g. twice). This should be voluntary and be more of a trouble shooting session, and sharing of solutions of working with difficult or unmotivated students. Comparisons of students should be avoided; however it may be useful to circulate a copy (to be returned to the Key Staff Member) of current progress of students to give an overview of how their student might fit into the overall cohort.

Students

It is recommended that students keep their Record Book on them as they move throughout their school day and to take them to and from school.

Each activity must be signed by the relevant adult and dated, with a comment which is optional. Students may be able to use the comments others have written in their Record Book in future job applications.

Students are responsible to actively engage in the activities. The breadth of the experiences is intended to appeal to the gamut of interests and gifts that students are likely to want to engage in.

If students are given a chance to hear what previous students and other students have done they can get encouraged to take risks and get credit for activities that may not have occurred to them to do so. For example a student who looks after his own pet realized that not only could it be counted in the programme but that he could approach his neighbours and walk their dogs at the same time as he was taking his own dog for a walk and this would be counted as an enterprise.

Encouraging students to value add to their current activities by going to other categories, or by progressing along one line so that they gain the bonus points acts as a real incentive and helps the student to go deeper with the experience.

Students will need to be mindful of the Core Requirements and ensure they are completed by the end of the programme in order to achieve their medal, regardless of how many other points they have achieved.

If the student doubts that they can achieve some of the activities that need to be done at home, they should approach their Mentor.

Whilst doing the Core Requirements the students may engage in a category that it had not occurred to them to experience. This may encourage them to look more closely at that section to see if other activities interest them.

The Global Awareness Quiz needs to be done as part of the Core Requirements and may need to be done on the school computers. The Mentor or staff member may need to supervise this.

Family

The Family is a significant part of the student's success in the programme. The programme is designed to reconnect adolescents with their families and validate what they can learn from their parents and extended family as well as encouraging them to take increasing responsibility and contribute to the family.

Core Requirements should be read by the family and planned in advance so the student does not find themselves falling short of these at the final count. It should be noted that the actual compulsory parental involvement is extremely minimal but significant.

The greater the family's involvement the greater the benefits for them. Note there are a number of activities that are 'to be negotiated' in each category. This is an opportunity for families to add in their own favourites, for example, making your own bed, ironing, unpacking the dishwasher.

The programme is designed to reward the families who take their students to after school sports and club activities or engage with other community organizations as a normal part of their family lifestyle.

School

It is recommended that students have a minimum of one period a fortnight devoted to the programme. This provides an opportunity for the Key Staff Member to collect any Record Books, it allows for students to share their progress and ideas, it can be used by the class teacher to teach goal setting, planning and time management. Students can map out their school commitments on their school diary and place their Citizens of Tomorrow, Today activities in realistic time slots.

Where students have arranged for a guest speaker to come to the school this timeslot is then already free for students to attend. Mentors might find this a suitable time to visit the student, especially where other arrangements have fallen by the wayside.

Some students may need to book into the school computers in order to complete the Global Awareness Quiz as part of the Core Requirements. Schools should be mindful of opportunities that students can be involved in and gain points e.g. assisting in Sport's Carnivals, Multicultural Events, Functions. They may also want to assist with catering, for example, Parents Meetings, Special lunches etc.

The programme is designed to encourage students to be greater participants in the school life and take the pressure off the teachers to offer the extra curricula activities. The programme is also engineered to raise the profile of activities that students may be less inclined to participate in such as the LOTE programme or attending training sessions for sports carnivals.

Schools should provide space in the school newsletter or magazine to not only profile the students' activities in the programme, but provide them with a publishing location for their material which in turn they can get points for.

Awards

Medals

The Record Book indicates the number of points required in each medal category (e.g. Bronze = 200 points) and the stipulation that the students complete ALL the Core Requirements and top up the rest of their points with activities of their choice from various sections in the book, or design their own negotiated activities.

All activities need to be ratified by the adult witnessing the student achieving the activity. The book must then be presented to the Key Staff Member to countersign and enter onto the master register database. Students can submit their Record Book to the Key Staff Member at any time to find out how their tally is going. Some activities will require supporting evidence such as photographs or certificates. The Key Staff Member may wish to quiz the student about an activity to ensure the correct allocation of points. This is particularly relevant when an activity has a range of points (e.g. 5-7 points) that need to be externally moderated according to the effort and achievement of the student.

A cut off date when all students must finally submit their Record Book should be made clear to the students from the outset. Students who are coming to the end of their programme should be given reminders of this date.

The Key Staff Member will tally each student's points and designate the appropriate medal to be awarded at the Graduation Ceremony.

The school should make a commitment to ensure every student receives a medal. It is quite likely that around 80% of the programme can be actually done in school, although this should not be widely publicized as student initiative and community engagement is an integral outcome of the programme.

Medals should be ordered well in advance. The use of a medal in each of the associated colours should have (1) the student's name, (2) year of completion and (3) the heading Citizens of Tomorrow, Today: The Lifelong Learning Programme inscribed in the back. The front of the medal can be the standard school logo.

Certificates

The programme is recommended to run for at least two years of the student's involvement. In order to keep momentum it may be valuable to produce interim certificates when a student reaches a landmark medal score before the final graduation. For example a student may graduate with a Gold medal but in the first year receive a Bronze Certificate and during the second year a Silver Certificate.

Students who leave the school and transfer to another school before they complete the programme may be issued with a Certificate of Achievement

Late Entry Students

Students who transfer into the school part the way through the programme are able to count back to the date that their cohort would have begun collecting points from. They will need to go through the book with their family and ratify what activities they may have done at their previous school or with the family or community. Evidence of certificates and signatures will need to be provided to the Key Staff Member and may well require cross examination.

It is a testament to the programme and the above process that a student has achieved a Platinum Medal who transferred to the school having missed the first year of the programme.

Graduation Ceremony

It is recommended that the occasion of giving out of the medals marking the student's transfer out of the programme be marked in a significant way. In this way it signals to not only the students and families that the programme that they have participated in is of value, but it also signals to up and coming students what achievements they might aspire to. It is recommended that the presentation of medals be attached to other end of year presentation nights.

The Patron is recommended to give out the medals.

As each student arrives on stage to collect their medal it might be possible to have a PowerPoint behind them showing some feature of the programme they enjoyed and some comment about the value they gained from it e.g. what they learned about themselves and any aspirations they now have for their future.

It should be acknowledged that the students are receiving their awards not purely through their own efforts but with the support of their teachers, families and Mentors. Mentors and family members are encouraged to support the students by attending this ceremony.

Evaluation

The programme has been trialled throughout its initial implementation in the following ways which may give insight into ways in which a school might ensure the programme is sustainable and relevant.

In the first year of the programme the first group of students was run as a pilot group for twelve months. It was then reviewed by an external consultant who interviewed the staff, students, Mentors and parents. It was then agreed that twelve months was too short and a minimum of two years needed. The Record Book underwent considerable rewriting in order to ensure clarity in activity description and equitable distribution.

The external consultant constructed a questionnaire for each of the participants i.e. students, staff, families, and Mentors. This was used in subsequent years as feedback and to refine the process of the programme, although the Record Book remained unchanged.

A whole school evaluation was conducted annually and the programme was included as an item open for comment.

Strategic planning exercises continued to monitor the position the programme held in the school and any need for staffing allocation changes.

By being open to evaluation of the programme, all stakeholders will continue to feel confident that the programme is suited to their context. It also validates for the organizers a quality control process.

In order to gauge the level of participation of the students in each category it is possible to convert the data that the Key Staff Member collects in the master database and quantify each category. This may prompt certain departments to promote their learning area and encourage students' participation more. It is also possible to separate the final medal scores by gender and make some observations about the difference in engagement between boys and girls.

Frequently Asked Questions

Dr Jennie Bickmore-Brand responds...

Doesn't the programme reward students who have parents that are prepared to run around after them?

Yes the student who has parent(s) who take an active interest in the programme will be advantaged. But isn't this how life works? Those of us who have had a helping hand from our families often do have a head start at certain points in our lives. In order to not disadvantage students who do not have this level of engagement from their families each student is given a Mentor. In several cases students have achieved high scores because of the proactivity of the Mentor who stepped in.

Doesn't the programme really just perpetuate competition between students?

Yes there is certainly an element of competition. This is a reality of life and students will need to be able to deal with this in order to succeed in the future. It is assumed because of the diversity of activities that the competition is a more level playing field, rather than the existing school practices of acknowledging sporting and intelligent students the most. In order to avoid an overemphasis on any one skill or interest the programme is engineered that a student cannot gain all their points from one section and will need to take additional activities from other categories that may not be their strengths.

Failure? What if the student just doesn't make it?

Yes students can fail or fall short. There is a high degree of accountability expected of the students; however we acknowledge that for various reasons some students would miss the mark unless we held their hand pretty closely. Students, families, Mentors and teachers are 'warned' at the final three month period before points are finalised. Where students 'at risk' of failing are identified, letter are sent home to the family and to the Mentor. These students are closely monitored by the Key Staff Member and if after a further month it is still looking grim, a meeting between the Principal and the student sets in place a plan of action which may include an increase in the Mentor support, various staff members and even the parents may be called in. The school should make a commitment to get the student over the line. The isolation of a student who has not succeeded when the whole cohort lines up on graduation is to be avoided at all costs and may need some pressure placed on the family to acknowledge this reality if the final result rests on their participation. (Note the degree of compulsory family participation is extremely minimal).

What if the student cheats? How do you really know students have actually done the work?

Penalties exist for cheating (see book). Obviously it needs to be fully investigated but it could result in the student losing up to three times the points for that activity. It is important to follow through the misdemeanor with a penalty to retain the integrity of the programme and act as a warning to others.

The amount of points allocated for each activity does not seem to fully represent that activity for example sometimes the student has to put in a lot of effort to get very few points. *That's life!* In this reward driven society citizens will be more resilient to the hard knocks of life if they get used to a disproportionate reward to their effort. Over the course of the programme students experience gaining points for doing things for and with others and learn a valuable life lesson that intrinsic rewards are more significant than extrinsic.

What if there is a group activity and not all students pull their weight.

There is a nice story that goes with this where three boys ran a lunch time chess competition and when they came to divvy up the points, I asked them whose idea it had been in order to allocate the higher points. Two of the boys decided that because one of the boys really needed the points in order to go into the next level they would sacrifice their own points and give them to him. Is this the kind of citizen we want for tomorrow?

What if a student loses their book?

We had two incidences where students lost their books. In the both instances it was drawing near to the end of term and the final count. In one case the book went missing, and regardless of severe sanctions on the whole class, didn't appear until the eleventh hour when it was revealed to be a girl prank! In the other case the boy was dreadfully disorganized and despite threats to the parent (single mum) that he would only be able to gain the lowest level- Bronze for all his efforts, the boy resulted in having a series of meetings with the Key Teacher, Mentor and other teachers to re-verify his activities and 'prove' he had actually done the work to gain a medal at all.