



Learning To Learn

A Vision for Gordano School

Learning to inspire, challenge and stimulate...

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Introduction

Gordano School has a learning culture that is second to no other school that I have experienced. Learning lies at the heart of everything, it is the *raison d'être* for what we do, the core activity, the business for what we are here for. The mantra of '*Pace-Variety-Challenge*' sings out of the walls of every classroom.

The next logical step for such a highly focused learning organisation was to analyse the whole learning process itself – 'how do our students actually learn?' As a school we are currently developing a dynamic learning policy, a vehicle that will encapsulate best practice from across every classroom in our organisation. Feedback from faculty self evaluation, faculty action-research (into such topics as teaching & learning for gender differences), work scanning and student interviews will feed into this live document.

In setting out our beliefs for what makes for effective learning we have now turned to look at the individual *learner* within our *learning* organisation. This is now evolving into our Learning To Learn programme. Our aims are to support the learning process, to ensure that every child knows how they learn best and are appropriately skilled-up to carry on their travels in learning throughout their lifetime.

There are several projects currently underway in the school that involve learning to learn principles (to name but a few):

- English faculty staff are focusing gender issues in learning
- The Head of Science is formulating a dynamic 'Thinking & Learning' buzz group

- The second in Maths has been re-focused to develop teaching & learning in that area, with a particular interest in stimulating process learning through kinaesthetic techniques.

The whole school Learning To Learn programme being devised by Gordano builds upon this experience, and it is important to understand the context within which an explicit Learning To Learn programme is being developed.

Our objectives can be summarised (so far) as:

1. To develop thinking skills and contextualise the transferability across the curriculum
2. To identify preferred learning styles for individual students and show how this knowledge can enhance the learning experience for the student
3. To develop independent and self-motivated learners
4. To learn effective ways to improve memory and memory recall
5. To understand and promote the concept of multiple intelligences and understand how to work within a multi—modal approach to learning information and skills
6. To promote the ethos of believing in success, for all, developing self-esteem and self-belief
7. To utilise and exploit the latest on brain-based research, including Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), into a pro-active strategy to support the learner throughout their school-based career.

Overall Programme Content & techniques include (in no particular order):

- Brain gym exercises
- Big picture learning
- Multi-sensory learning - VAK – visual-auditory-kinaesthetic
- Getting to grips with how your brain works (Your Amazing Brain)
- Understanding your primitive brain
- Understanding your emotional brain – emotional intelligence

- Understanding your thinking brain – left / right brain tips & techniques
- Gestalt psychology / completeness
- Multiple Intelligences / Howard Gardner / strategies for developing your MIs: Linguistic, Visual/spatial, musical, Kinesthetic, logical/mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, existential
- Mind mapping
- Use of colour in learning
- Association & mnemonics
- Music in learning
- Water in learning
- Physical readiness for learning
- Oxygen in learning / exercise in learning
- Building positive belief
- Can do **not** can not / success comes in cans, not can'ts
- Turning goals into affirmations
- SMART targets
- Chunking down
- Challenging the comfort zone / risk taking
- Planning for learning and developing a learning plan
- Review & recall techniques
- Research techniques
- Concentration techniques
- Visualisation techniques
- Stress busting techniques
- The tripartite approach to revision
- Setting targets
- What makes me work ?
- How do you spend your time ?
- Revision Techniques
- Where I Learn

- How do I organise myself ?
- Time planning
- Looking after yourself / healthy eating
- Examination preparation
- Exam day check
- Good intentions in exams
- Code breaking / critical word analysis
- Developing 5WH analysis
- Extending higher order skills of evaluation and synthesis

This is a shopping list of ideas and content.

The Gordano strategy so far has been to:

1. Develop understanding of the brain (particularly the thinking brain) and how this may support learning (Year 7)
2. Develop strategies to use VAK to make benefit of preferred learning styles (Year 7)
3. Develop positive mental attitude to success (Year 7)
4. Develop time planning techniques for learning (Year 7 and Year 11)
5. Develop pro-active revision techniques (Year 11, prior to mocks)
6. Develop examination technique (Year 11, prior to mocks)

These have been delivered through curriculum collapse sessions that have been scheduled into the calendar for Year 7 and for Year 11.

The next step is to carefully plan a Learning to Learn programme that builds upon each component and stretches across the curriculum, year by year. The Learning To Learn content would thus be relevant for that particular stage, sequential and challenging.