



## **Specialist Subjects**

**Switching young adults on to  
21<sup>st</sup> century learning.**

*In times of change learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.*

**Eric Hoffer**

## To fulfill our vision and give life to our values students at Albany Senior High School will be:

- Actively engaged and excited by their learning.
- Open-minded, willing to accept challenge and take risks.
- Resilient learners who achieve personal excellence.
- Agents (in charge) of their own learning.

## They will be switched on to learning.

The New Zealand Curriculum defines the vision for young people in New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners. It defines five key competencies that are critical for ongoing learning and effective participation in society.

### The five key competencies:

- managing self
- thinking
- relating to others
- participating and contributing
- using symbols and texts.

Learning that engages and promotes success for young adults is:

- Authentic
- Involves performance
- Transparent about the what, why and how of learning (split screen thinking).

*In a fast changing world, if you can't learn, unlearn and relearn then you're lost. Sustainable and continuous learning is a given of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Stoll, Fink and Earl (2003)**

*It's not if you are bright, but how you are bright.*  
**Jane Gilbert (2005)**

# Embracing the 21<sup>st</sup> century at Albany Senior High

## The new 3Rs:

**Respect**

**Research**

**Responsivity**

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**What do we teachers do to achieve our vision?**

- We understand that we learn together (in a community of learners)
- We respect one another; we use research in our practice; we are responsive to learners and their learning.

**Respect**

**What is learning?**

Research shows that respectful relationships are the key to effective learning. Learning is about change. It happens when we change our mental models, i.e. we change our mind (set). Learning is easiest when we can build on what we already know or new ideas conform to what we already believe. When there is a clash (a cognitive dissonance) we may choose to reject or accept different ideas. For these reasons, we respect one another and understand that learning is challenging and often involves our emotions as well as our minds.

**Respect means:**

- Establishing caring and honest relationships that maintain high expectations of progress and achievement
- Encouraging students to seek to discuss their learning and seek feedback
- Engaging with students by connecting learning to their different worlds
- Sharing our interest and passion for our subject discipline
- Encouraging students to be investigators, experimenters, performers - to experience our subjects
- Sharing our reflections about our own learning with students – being public learners.

John Hattie identifies high trust student-teacher interactions as the key to effective teaching.

*Look at young people as who they will become.*  
**Douglas Reeves (2008)**

## Research

### How and why do we learn?

We learn by noticing, then processing new ideas; often through talk or actions. One metaphor that can help to explain learning is the information processing metaphor. While we know our minds are not computers, we can usefully think about our minds having a short-term memory that can only store a limited amount of data. If this data is to be retained (learned) rather than forgotten or discarded, it needs to be processed so it is linked to what is already known and able to be stored for ready access.

Learning is a social process experienced with others. We learn because we are interested and /or the learning is important to us.

### Research means:

- Knowing students as learners (inside and outside school)
- Helping students to develop their understandings of how well they are doing and being able to explain gaps in their understanding.
- Recognising that students learn at different rates and in different ways.
- Extending our understandings of current thinking in our specialist subjects
- Inquiring into the teaching and learning process, reflecting on the responses, then adjusting the learning experiences to do better.

*At the heart of the problem teachers face in the classroom is knowing what is going on in the minds of students*

**Graham Nuthall (2007)**

*Assessment is a treasure hunt, not a witch hunt,*

**Douglas Reeves (2008)**

## Responsivity

The key to effective teaching is how we use the information we have gathered to plan for learning that is appropriately challenging and responsive. It's also about hearing the voices of learners and being flexible.

### Responsivity means:

- Focusing planning on addressing students' strengths, interests and learning needs
- Leaving space for reflection. Encouraging ongoing feedback during lessons. Think SingStar!
- Being open and flexible. Responding to feedback from students (assessment is feedback for teachers)
- Encouraging self reporting by students
- Being specific about progress and explicit about next steps for learning
- Encouraging students to participate in planning, developing success criteria and teaching
- Sharing our specialized knowledge using the split screen to identify the what, why and how of learning in our subjects

### How will we know when learning is successful?

Through analyzing;

- Ongoing student feedback.
- E-portfolio reflections including those about their development of the key competencies.
- Success data (NCEA and other achievement and goal data).
- Course pathways and leaver pathways.

## **Some ideas that lie behind our pedagogy**

### **Authentic learning**

(Gardner, Donovan, Newmann, Robert Starratt)

Learning which is connected to students' prior knowledge and backgrounds and real world tasks, careers and situations.

### **Co-construction**

(Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Bruner)

Culture and interaction play a central role in the learning process. Students' understandings are co-constructed through their interactions with others, through talk and action. Learning is highly social and mediated by students' cultures.

### **Inquiry**

(Reid)

Inquiry is a process of systematic, rigorous and critical reflection about professional practice, and the context in which it occurs, in ways that question taken-for-granted assumptions.

Inquiry can be undertaken individually but is most powerful when it is collaborative.

### **Split screen**

(Claxton)

Allows students to think critically about their thinking and their learning. It enables students to stand back from the information or ideas they are engaging with to discuss the what, why and how of learning. Split screen thinking involves explaining/justifying what a learning task has been designed to do, talking the learning out loud, making links with the outside world and real life applications of learning (see lesson template).

### **Performativity**

(Lyotard, Gilbert)

Students getting opportunities to perform as they would in a real life role relevant to whatever they are investigating at the time. Jane Gilbert

### **Responsivity**

(Alton-Lee)

Teachers responding to student needs during the course of a lesson / being able to change in real time so that learning is maximised. Students demonstrate responsivity by being flexible thinkers.

## Suggested readings

- Alton-Lee Adrienne (2003) *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*
- Aitken Graeme, Sinnema Claire (2008) *Effective pedagogy in Social Sciences/Tikanga a Iwi*
- Bruner Jerome, (1996) *The Culture of Education.*
- Gardner Howard (2007), *Five Minds for the Future*
- Gilbert Jane (2005) *Catching the Knowledge Wave*
- Claxton Guy (2006) *Expanding the capacity to learn: A new end for education?*  
[www.guyclaxton.com](http://www.guyclaxton.com)
- Nuthall Graham (2007) *The Hidden Lives of Learners*
- Ministry of Education (2007) *The New Zealand Curriculum*
- Reid Alan (2006) *Key Competencies: A New Way Forward or More of the Same*, in *Curriculum Matters*, Vol. (2), pp. 43-62, NZCER.
- Starratt Robert (2005) *Ethical leadership*