

Induction for beginning teachers

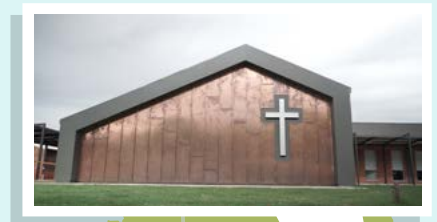
Case studies

A collaborative approach

St Johns College

St Johns College, Dubbo is a Catholic co-educational comprehensive high school serving the Western Region of NSW. St Johns has a student population of approximately 1050 students and over 140 teaching and support staff. Ten percent of College students are indigenous. The College employs a number of staff to support these students and their families.

New teachers to St Johns College are often in the very early stages of their career. The school developed the role of the Mentor Coordinator in recognition of the need to support those teachers in their growth. Professional learning sessions that were initially part of the induction program have now grown to involve the entire teaching staff. Teachers have a strong role to play in determining the content.



School sector Catholic
Location Provincial
School type Secondary



I've become a really resilient teacher. I've been challenged to improve my teaching practices for the students, and I think this has made me more confident and allowed the students to gain confidence in return.



Induction approach

St Johns College's approach to induction aims 'to build resilience and proficiency through relationships. Teachers are provided with opportunities to realise their potential for the betterment of students and society.'

At St Johns, all mentoring and induction programs are evaluated and improved over time through the use of staff surveys; according to need/needs analysis; and based on ongoing research in educational leadership.

Making connections

St Johns College employs a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, as well as a Mentor Coordinator to assist with their induction processes. Induction at St Johns includes a full-day introductory meeting with the school executive. New staff become familiar with programs, policies and procedures through a two-hour presentation from the Mentor Coordinator.

Professional learning

The induction program includes all staff in professional learning sessions that occur every fortnight. These sessions take the form of lectures or research presentations, and staff discuss and reflect on what they have learnt afterwards as a community. There are regular opportunities to workshop the content of the presentations in small groups. Professional conversations amongst colleagues are also supported, and focus on topics such as research-based and engaging teaching strategies.

Mentoring

St Johns College utilises mentoring in both one-on-one and group settings. The one-on-one mentor/mentee relationship often includes observations of the mentee's teaching practice and the provision of targeted feedback, as well as addressing wellbeing. Mentors meet with their mentees at least twice per term. Teachers applying for accreditation (known as full registration in states/territories other than NSW) will have fortnightly meetings with their mentor to assist them in that process. The Mentor Coordinator has a reduced teaching load to allow them to undertake mentoring activities, and is provided with their own office to maintain confidentiality of meetings. One-on-one meetings may naturally develop into group meetings with other teachers. Group mentoring provides a supportive forum for reflection and goal-setting.

Classroom observation

Classroom observations occur at a mutually-agreed time between the mentor and mentee, twice per term, and may include a number of classes across a variety of contexts to ensure accuracy and consistency of feedback. The focus is agreed prior to the observation, and informed by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Post-observation conversations include reflection on what was observed and formative feedback to the mentee. The focus for development and actions to be taken are then recorded.

Instructional rounds

Staff are also able to visit other classrooms as part of instructional rounds, which are run by the Teaching and Learning Coordinator. The purpose of these instructional rounds is for a group of teachers to observe and discuss the practice of a colleague; not to give feedback, but to analyse practices that could be adopted in their own classroom or inform new approaches. Typically, each round involves visiting three classes in a single period.



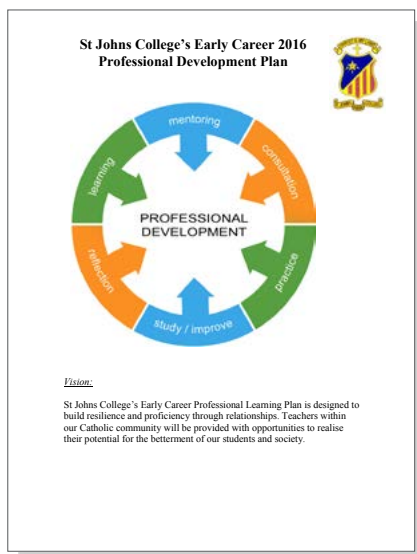
Questions for reflection

1. Why did you select particular induction strategies to use within your education setting?
2. How might you implement all-staff learning sessions in your context?
3. How can you support beginning teachers to apply the learnings from classroom observations to their practice?
4. How could you use or strengthen the use of one-on-one and group mentoring sessions in your setting?

School documents

Early career professional development plan

St Johns have developed a professional development plan for early career teachers.



Related resources

Instructional rounds how-to guide

Use AITSL's instructional guides and accompanying videos to learn about classroom observation strategies including instructional rounds.

