



# Quality Teaching Program

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Dr Susan Marks

A major focus of the Quality Teaching Program this year has been the pilot of small, collaborative teams of teachers that meet together on a fortnightly basis to discuss their students' learning and their teaching practice. These Sharing and Learning Teams (known by the acronym SaLT) have already begun to transform the teaching and learning landscape at OFGS.

IN THE FORTNIGHTLY SaLT meetings, teachers set goals for themselves and their students. They then discuss with colleagues possible strategies that might be employed in the classroom in order to ensure that their goals are reached. Each fortnight, teachers focus on a key lesson where they intentionally address their goal, and there is often a spill-over effect into their other lessons. In the course of this focus lesson, they collect evidence designed to shed light on the extent to which they have made inroads towards accomplishing their goal. This evidence (including analysis of video footage; student surveys; samples of students' work; and students' results) is then discussed at their SaLT meeting.

As an integral component of this collaborative learning approach, teachers observe their colleagues' lessons and provide feedback to them. Although this could potentially be an intimidating experience for teachers, all those involved in the pilot have embraced this dimension of the program, commenting on the fact that it has been a highlight for them. As a result of the observation lessons, teachers have received affirmation and constructive suggestions that have improved the quality of their teaching and their students' learning.

Another feature of the Quality Teaching Program this year has been the New Teacher Program. Those in their first two years of teaching have participated in a program designed to equip, support, mentor and nurture them. These teachers have a reduced teaching load so that they can meet regularly to discuss issues related to their practice. They have also had a number of their lessons observed and videoed by senior colleagues. These lessons have then been discussed in a context of support designed to drive improvement. Those on the New Teacher Program have also observed and reflected on the lessons of their colleagues, in order to learn from them.



Senior School students working with Junior School students on mixtures in Science

In 2015, the full roll-out of the SaLT program will commence. This will mean every teacher will be a member of a collegial team and will work on setting goals for themselves and their students, and then on realising them. These teams will be the driving force of the Quality Teaching Program. Whole school goals centred on quality assessment, and especially on assessment that informs teaching and learning, will form the basis of teachers' individual goals in the classroom. In addition, teachers will focus on departmental goals. All goals will flow from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, formed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).



Peers working collaboratively in Mathematics

This is an exciting time for teachers and students at OFGS because a central focus has been placed on our core business of teaching and learning. The Quality Teaching Program will continue to drive innovative professional development and deep reflection on what is working and what needs to change in the learning arena of our school. As a result of our teachers' collaborative efforts, all students will benefit so that they are in a position to achieve their personal best at each stage of their development and in each area of academic endeavour.

**Dr Susan Marks**  
Director of Teaching and Learning