

*In being instruments of God's sovereign truth and grace in the educational life of our students, it is important that we provide them with the opportunity to live what they are learning. Human life in its entirety should be life unfolding itself in terms of a response to God's grace, our love for him and our desire to be obedient servants. A life that seeks to live what we learn as hands on, adventurous and authentic kingdom builders.*



# LIVE

WHAT YOU LEARN

Principles of Christian authenticity:

1. We are to be hearers and doers of God's word
2. Faith without works is dead
3. Revelation demands a response
4. The issues of life pervade all learning (e.g. truth, faith, justice, self-centredness, compassion, greed, happiness, evil, grace, love)
5. Knowledge and skills learnt through the curriculum, must serve our calling to live Christ's story in our lives.

### **Authentic contextualised learning**

It is imperative that Christian teachers provide students with the opportunity to embrace an authentic faith through all that they learn (including seemingly abstract knowledge, theory and skills). This is achieved through:

Designing both curricula and extra curricula activities that contextualise learning and provide opportunity for real life experiences and adventurous learning. At Nepean Christian School we call these opportunities 'Slice Of Life Adventures' (or SOLAs). We attempt to develop all learning through a SOLA approach not just camps, excursions and special events. Where possible we attempt to make all learning tasks authentically contextual remembering the 5 principles of Christian authenticity.

Being alert to those unplanned moments when learning rubber hits real roads and being flexible and courageous enough to seize these moments and run with them.

It is important to realise that this is more than explaining how something that is being learnt can be used. It involves actually using the knowledge, skills or values that are being learnt in ways that are as real as possible. Some knowledge, skills and values are easily contextualised (maths units on money, English novels based on the dramas of life, the making of technology products, the science of genetics, community service, letter writing etc). But others are not (factorising polynomials, dinosaurs, grammar, subatomic chemistry etc). However, in some way or another most areas can filter their way into something that is real.

The term, SOLA at Nepean, has been coined to refer to all those specific extracurricular events in the school that are 'real', meaningful and relevant. However, there are lesson, unit, subject, class, section and school Slice of Life Adventures. For example, spelling must be contextualised. In living a life of Christ likeness it may not be enough to simply know how to spell. The speller must be able to effectively use this knowledge to bring joy, information or entertainment to someone with their spelling. This might involve letter writing, keeping a diary, creating a PowerPoint presentation, making signs, applying for a job or writing a newsletter item. Knowledge and skills learnt through the curriculum, must serve our calling to live Christ's story in our lives.

The danger of any Christian school is the lack of application ie head knowledge not becoming heart and hand realities; having a good view of life, but not doing things in harmony with this view. The Hebrew view of knowledge (eg God knowing us and us knowing God) was very experiential. Someone could not claim to know something unless they were living it – walking the talk. This is best done in the midst of something where the students feel that they are having an impact, or making a product or working as a team or being confronted with the real issues of life.

In any SOLA the boundaries between subjects are blurred and hence, learning becomes more vital, authentic and integrated.

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