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La Salle Academy Publications

Number 5

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY



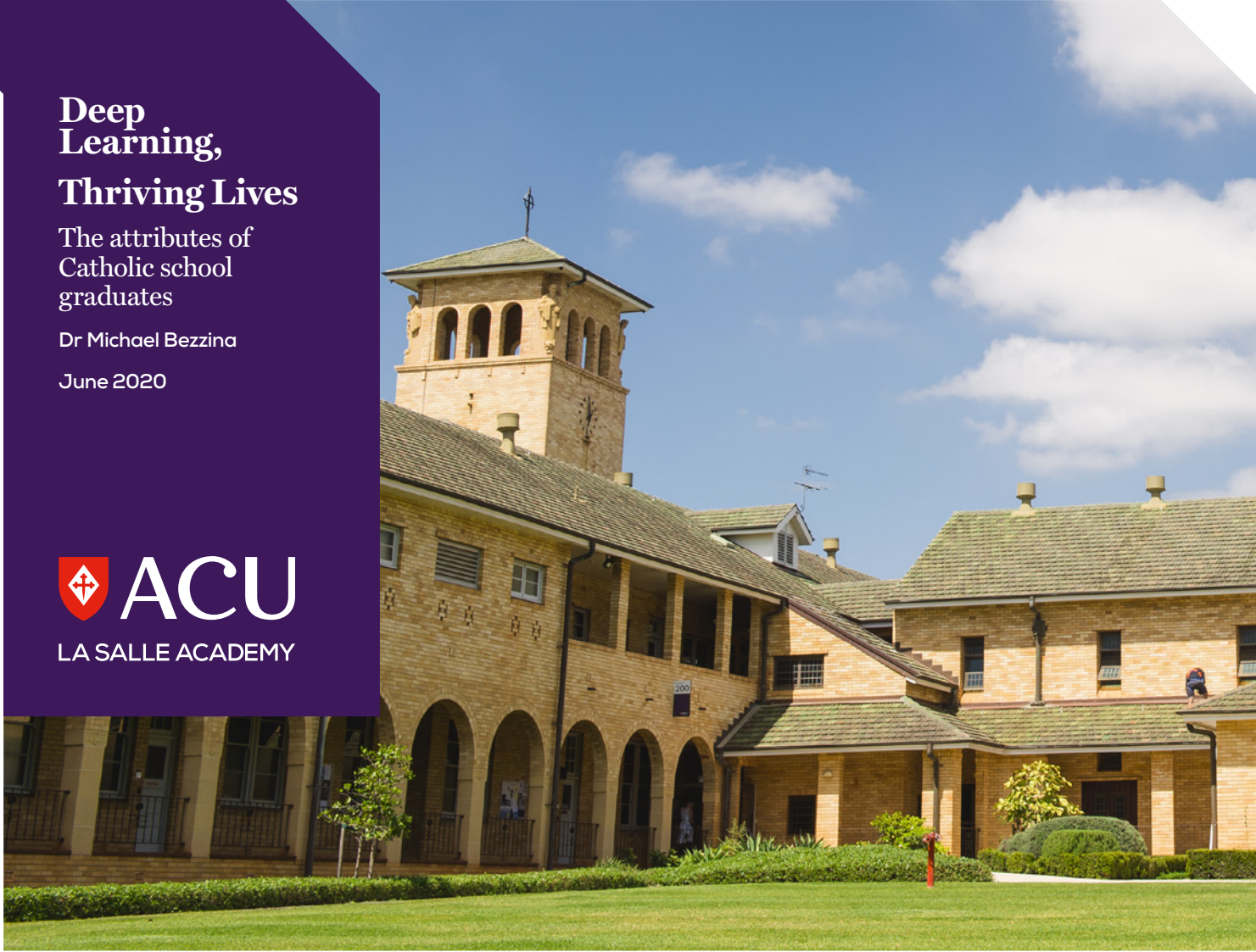
Deep Learning, Thriving Lives

The attributes of
Catholic school
graduates

Dr Michael Bezzina

June 2020

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Foreword

Deep Learning, Thriving Lives: The attributes of Catholic school graduates

It was announced in December 2019 and happened without much flourish in February 2020. A separate Federal government department for education was to be no more, with this portfolio to be combined with employment to form the new Department of Education Skills and Employment. It was part of a government commitment to reduce bureaucracy and streamline the delivery of services. Despite the significance of this merger there was little objection and none that had any effect. The profundity of what happened was summed up in the thoughtful intervention of Senator Mehreen Faruqi who insisted: “Education is a public good essential to building a socially and economically just society, not just an avenue to employment or profit – it demands a standalone focus.”

In creating this new department our Australian government is structurally imbedding what seems to be happening across all too many countries, where education is aligned with the economy as distinct from the society. What is inherent in this model is a utilitarian understanding of the human person, as distinct from one that enshrines the dignity of every human being. It is as if education is more about

creating employees than it is about developing persons and citizens. There is no question that schooling will have failed if it does not prepare young people for productive and meaningful employment, but it is surely more than this. What we need to guard against is what Harvard University’s Professor Michael Sandel calls the drift from the market economy to the market society.

It is imperative that we have strong market economies to aid effective and sustainable productive activity, but Sandel asserts that market economies no longer exist to serve society but that they have become what totally defines our society. This paradigm thinking is hard to escape and yet if our Catholic schools are to offer anything, they must produce something more than graduates fit for employment alone. What sort of people they will be in their employment matters, as does the type of partners, parents, colleagues and friends they will be to those with whom they live and work. We cannot tack our Catholic beliefs and practices on the edge of a good secular education. Our way of educating must ensure that everything that makes up the education experience in a Catholic school is imbued with an anthropological understanding and

a worldview that develops graduates who will be committed to ‘building a civilisation of love.’

In this scholarly, provocative paper, the fifth in the La Salle Publications series, Dr Michael Bezzina wrestles with these issues and proposes a way forward. It is our hope that this paper will help shape further conversations among Catholic educators when considering what’s different about a Catholic education, and what success indicators might look like when it comes to Catholic school graduates.



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Introduction

This work began as a paper commissioned by Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) as part of its system renewal of learning. A core element of this work has been to pursue what Fullan and Quinn (2016) and Fullan, Quinn and McEachen (2017) describe as “Deep Learning”, with an explicit focus on what might be described as “graduate expectations”. Fullan, Hill, and Rincón-Gallardo (2017) define deep learning as being:

“In a nutshell, deep learning is about individuals and groups really understanding and engaging in something that is important to them, and of value to the world. It uses the changing world as the crucible of continuous transformation.” (p2).

In *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*, the OECD (2018, p2) poses the compelling question: “What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values will today’s students need to thrive and shape the world?” Of particular interest in this question is the use of the word *shape*. It positions the learner not as a passive recipient of learning - as having to cope with a world beyond their control, but as an active shaper of that world, who, in the words of the OECD, will not simply survive, but will thrive in the world they help to shape. Catholic educators continue to be challenged by the question of how their graduates will be distinctive, and thereby live in and shape their communities.

In order to frame a sense of what graduates will need in order to be persons who actively shape their world, and who thrive in that world, it is important to develop a sense of the forces already at work in shaping that future. Different sources identify

different factors. Fullan and Quinn (2016) name three major forces that relate directly to education which are driving a need for change in schooling: the *urgency* created by the pace of change and the fact that currently schools lag in their response, leading students to view the experience of schooling as boring; the *emerging knowledge* base about what works in teaching and learning; and the *increased appreciation* of how the capacity of school systems might be harnessed to facilitate improvement.

Casting the net more widely to embrace perspectives on the trends which will be important over the next ten or more years, The Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA, 2008) named global integration and international mobility, the growth of Asian influence, globalisation, technological change, and environmental issues. To this catalogue, the Education Council (2019), in its revision of the goals for young Australians in the *Mparntwe Statement*, added factors such as “information abundance” and questions of trust and authenticity. Mark Scott (2018), Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, in an ‘op ed’ piece in the Sydney Morning Herald, and Andreas Schleicher (2018) in the foreword to the previously cited *Education 2030* report, both named a combination of globalisation and technological innovation. In addition, Lucas (2016) points to global warming, displaced persons and religious animosities as well as the rate of change in technology, science and the arts. A recent study by the Association of Independent

Schools and Knowledge Society (2018) which canvassed CEOs of Australian businesses, also named automation, globalisation and the “gig economy” as factors which should shape future educational provision. Within this spectrum of commentary there is a certain consistency about the factors which have been identified as pushing us towards change. We should be careful, though, to appreciate that among all these factors there is a strong focus on the graduate as *employee*, perhaps to the neglect of a consideration of the graduate as *person*. Significantly, only one of the sources named above, the Alice Springs *Mparntwe Declaration*, makes direct mention of recent international developments in government and politics, with a significant shift towards autocracy and illiberalism, and a growing disregard for the rule of law. If we seek to develop informed and active citizens, they need to be equipped to appreciate, and respond to, these trends.

This paper begins with a brief treatment of the concept of deep learning, and in particular the role of graduate attributes (which Fullan and Quinn treat as clarity of learning goals). It provides an overview of some of the major schools of thought in the secular domain with respect to graduate attributes, before examining the (limited) available Catholic perspectives on this issue. Finally, the report proposes a language and a framework for the consideration of graduate attributes in Catholic schools which responds to some of the currents in today’s society, and some indicators for the way forward.

The 6Cs

Deep Learning is one of four principal elements of coherence in the work of Fullan and Quinn (2016). The others are focusing direction, cultivating collaborative cultures and securing accountability. The focus in this paper is limited to Deepening Learning.

We have previously shared the definition of Deep Learning developed by Fullan, Hill and Rincon-Gallardo (2017). In order to situate the discussion of the graduate attributes, it will be helpful to outline in brief the perspective of Fullan and Quinn (2016) on deep learning, of which clarity of learning goals is but a single element. The other two key elements are precision in pedagogy, and, shifting practice through capacity building. Given their interdependence, they form the core of what might be described as an ecology of deep learning.

Fullan and Quinn argue that concepts like 21st century learning skills have been treated largely by way of lip service and are lacking in specificity. As a way of remedying this weakness by being clearer about *learning goals* they have adopted six competencies (defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “The ability to do something successfully or efficiently”) which they refer to as “the six Cs”. “The traditional basics are not sufficient” they argue (2016, p88). “Future generations need also the 6Cs if they are to thrive”. These New Pedagogies for Deep Learning include:

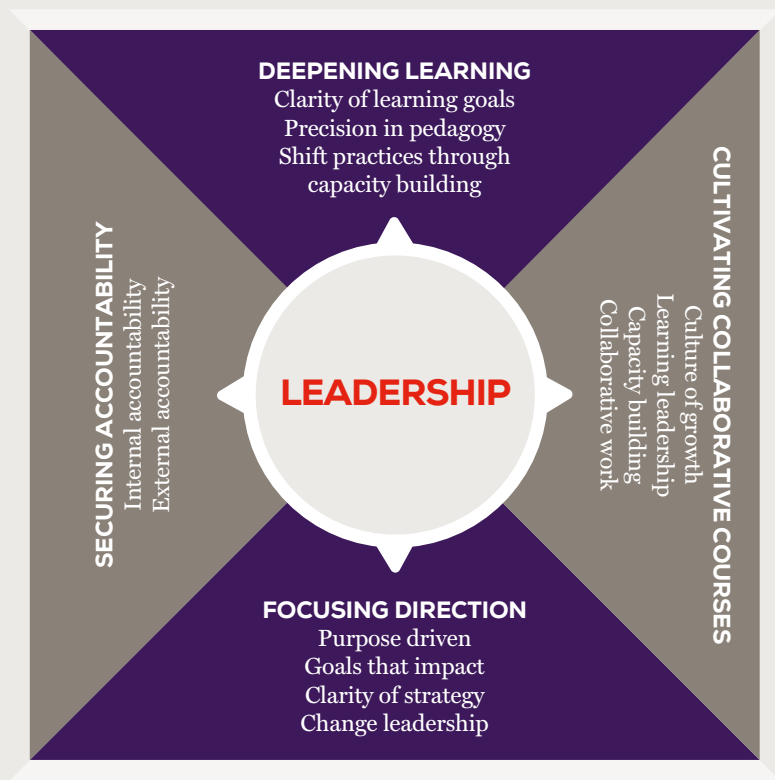


Figure 1: The Coherence Framework, Fullan and Quinn (2016)

CREATIVITY

Having an ‘entrepreneurial eye’ for economic and social opportunities, asking the right inquiry questions to generate novel ideas, and leadership to pursue those ideas and turn them into action.

COMMUNICATION

Communicating effectively with a variety of styles, modes, and tools (including digital tools), tailored for a range of audiences.

CITIZENSHIP

Thinking like global citizens, considering global issues based on a deep understanding of diverse values and worldviews, and with a genuine interest and ability to solve ambiguous and complex real-world problems that impact human and environmental sustainability.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critically evaluating information and arguments, seeing patterns and connections, constructing meaningful knowledge, and applying it in the real world.

CHARACTER

Learning to deep learn, armed with the essential character traits of grit, tenacity, perseverance, and resilience; and the ability to make learning an integral part of living.

COLLABORATION

Work interdependently and synergistically in teams with strong interpersonal and team-related skills including effective management of team dynamics and challenges, making substantive decisions together, and learning from and contributing to the learning of others.

These 6Cs take the commonly used 4Cs of creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication, and extend them by including citizenship and character. The language used to describe the original four competencies provides an explicit description of the behaviour we would see if the learner were expressing the competency in action. For example, collaboration is described in terms of the learner working with others. On the other hand, citizenship is described in terms of the way the learner thinks or is interested, and character in terms of character traits and ability. Neither describes the actions of a citizen, or of a person of character. Interestingly, while citizenship includes an understanding of a range of values, none of the 6Cs makes any mention of having, and living by, a personal set of ethics or values.

Deep learning is certainly facilitated by a clarity of purpose. In the absence of pedagogy which is tailored to these purposes, and processes to build the capacity of the teachers charged with promoting these purposes, schools will continue to be left with one more piece of high rhetoric, and another set of unrealised aspirations. While the 6Cs have been adopted formally by over 1400 schools in seven countries, they are only one of the widely used frameworks which describe the attributes of an educated person. The next section of the report provides an overview and synthesis of several of the other significant models that are currently being used by schools and systems.



Other frameworks for graduate attributes

Many schools and systems have developed their own sets of graduate attributes. The development of this type of framework has value in its own right as a way of engaging educators with the fundamental question of clarifying purpose. However, this report restricts its focus to a survey of graduate frameworks which have a currency that reaches beyond a single school. While not claiming to be an exhaustive list, the following projects provide a representative sample of those which inform thinking in the contemporary English-speaking world.

- The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, n.d.)
- The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA, n.d.)
- Educating Ruby/Learning Power (Claxton & Lucas, 2015)
- P21 (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, n.d.)
- Big Picture Learning (BPL, n.d.)
- MyWays (New Generation Learnings Challenge, 2017)
- OECD Learning Framework (OECD, 2018)
- Hewlett Foundation: Deeper Learning Competencies. (Hewlett Foundation, 2013)
- Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (Education Council, 2019)

As might be expected, there is a degree of commonality across these diverse frameworks. At the same time, there is sufficient diversity to make comparisons difficult. Table 1 is an attempt to map the eight frameworks named here in a matrix. Because of its currency, the 6Cs are used as an organising construct. The categorisation of the various elements is subjective and masks much of the detail in the different frameworks. Notwithstanding, its intent is simply to provide a high-level overview of thinking in order to identify those domains in which the attributes of graduates are named most consistently.

Leaving to one side the detail of each set of attributes, the first observation from Table 1 is that there is a high degree of support for five of the 6Cs. Citizenship is not mentioned explicitly in any of the nine frameworks used in this report. (One reason could be that the attributes connected with citizenship find expression in character as well, and perhaps more fundamentally).

There are eight clusters of attributes which appear in a number of frameworks. Three of these are present in at least three of the eight referenced frameworks. The most common (in seven frameworks) might be labelled Core Knowledge and includes literacy and numeracy per se, as well as traditional knowledge

domains such as science, humanities, arts etc. The next attribute (in five frameworks) is most readily understood as ICT. Interestingly, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority explicitly chose not to name this as a capability in its own right, arguing that it is a key element of many other capabilities. The third, in four frameworks in some form, could be labelled Cultural and Intercultural Understanding. At a time when terrorism and the forced movement of peoples have come so much to the fore of consciousness, it is arguable that a focus on this domain has much to offer individuals, and society at large.

An approach to identifying the attributes of graduates which builds on the 6Cs has the advantage of both currency and familiarity. The insights of this analysis yield a new, expanded framework with eight Cs (or eight, if we follow the example of VCAA by embedding ICT). Our new set becomes: Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity, Character, Core Knowledge, and, Cultural and Intercultural Understanding (and perhaps Information and Communication Technologies).

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE FRAMEWORKS

6Cs	ACARA	VCAA	EDUCATING RUBY/ LEARNING POWER	P21 <i>*These are all elements of the broader category "Learning and Innovation Skills". The others are broad categories.</i>	BIG PICTURE LEARNING	MY WAYS <i>*These are all elements of the broader category "Creative Know How". The others are broad categories.</i>	OECD	HEWLETT	ALICE SPRINGS (MPARNTWE) DECLARATION <i>(This is a far more detailed statement than others, and so the entries below do not address its depth)</i>
Collaboration	Personal and Social Capability	Personal and Social Capability	Collaboration	Collaboration	Personal Qualities	Communication and Collaboration*	Interact in Heterogeneous Groups Reconcile Tensions and Dilemmas	Work Collaboratively	Maintain healthy relationships Are able to collaborate
Critical Thinking	Critical and Creative Thinking	Critical and Creative Thinking		Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*	Empirical Reasoning	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*		Think Critically and Solve Complex Problems	Are able to think deeply and logically and obtain and evaluate evidence
Creativity	Critical and Creative Thinking	Critical and Creative Thinking	Creativity Curiosity	Creativity and Innovation*		Creativity and Entrepreneurship*	Create New Value		Are creative, innovative and resourceful
Communication	Literacy			Communication	Communication				
Citizenship									Are committed to national values of democracy, equity, justice Participate in Australia's civic life Understand their responsibilities as global citizens.
Character	Ethical Understanding	Ethical Understanding	Confidence Commitment		Personal Qualities	Habits of Success	Act Autonomously Take Responsibility		Act with moral and ethical integrity Have a sense of self-worth and personal identity
Cultural and Intercultural Understanding	Intercultural Understanding	Intercultural Understanding			Social Reasoning				Appreciate Australia's rich social, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity
Core Knowledge	Numeracy Literacy		Core Subjects	Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes	Quantitative reasoning	Content knowledge		Master Core Academic Content	Have essential skills in literacy and numeracy
Information and Communication Technologies	Information and Communication Technologies			Information, Media and Technology Skills		Information, Media and Technology Skills	Use Tools Interactively		Are productive and skilled users of technology as a vehicle for information gathering and sharing, and are able to adapt to emerging technologies.
						Wayfinding Abilities			
			Craftsmanship					Learn How to Learn	
								Develop Academic Mindsets	
									Are able to "manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing". Are resilient
									Have empathy for the circumstances of others and work for the common good.

All of the examples used in this section of the report have come from what might be described as 'secular' scholarship and practice. For those involved in Catholic education, these attributes of graduates must be considered necessary, but not sufficient, in the realisation of the aspirations of Catholic schooling

The graduate of the Catholic school

How, then, are we to identify the desirable attributes of the graduate of the Catholic school? There are two approaches to answering this question.

The first is to explore the relevant Church documents about the Catholic school. These Pre, Conciliar and Post-Conciliar documents are built on a clear sense of a Catholic anthropology, in which humanity's creation in the image of God is central, as God is revealed through us. The second is to locate examples where others have named the attributes of Catholic graduates explicitly.

CHURCH DOCUMENTS AND THE GRADUATE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The first type of document on which attention was focused was Catholic system statements on the identity of the Catholic school. Most dioceses or state commissions have some form of statement about identity. A sample of typical statements would include those by Queensland Catholic Education Commission (n.d.), Catholic Education Commission Victoria (n.d.), Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Lismore (n.d.), and Catholic Education Commission Western Australia (2019). While it is possible to deduce, from the attributes of the Catholic school, the attributes that might be seen as desirable for students, the student is not treated explicitly in these documents. Attributes which may be deduced, though, are a knowledge of the Catholic faith tradition; a lived faith and spirituality; a connection to community; interfaith understanding; and, self-direction in learning.

The review turned next to the rich collection of Vatican documents related to Catholic education and schooling. This activity was assisted tremendously by a report on Conciliar and Post-Conciliar documents on the Catholic school published by the Australian Catholic University, La Salle Academy (Hall, Sultmann

& Townend, 2018). This document provides a detailed lexical analysis of the key themes of the nine key documents on Catholic education released between 1965 and 2017. One of the challenges of these documents is the tension that exists (at times) between the avowed commitment to "receptivity of students other than Catholic" (Hall et al., 2018, p.3) and an approach that generally reflects an assumption that all students are Catholic. This is a challenge to which this report will return.

Like the previously cited Catholic school system document, the Vatican documents are more concerned with Catholic schools and what they are doing than with their students and what they are learning. In the analysis of themes (Hall et al., 2018), state that not surprisingly, "school" is one of the most consistent themes. On the other hand, 'students' figure as one of the four major themes in only two of the nine documents - and in the concept maps of these documents, the student theme showed limited overlap with other themes. Nonetheless, there is across the range of documents a small number of statements which provide some insight into the Church's aspirations for its students.

The Second Vatican Council Declaration on Christian Education (1965, in Hall et al., 2018, p12) speaks of the "Christian mind", and of, "moulding men (sic) ... ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world". The Catholic School (1977, in Hall et al., 2018, p14) speaks of helping students achieve an "integration of faith, life and culture", and of equipping them to adopt an approach of "critical and personal analysis". Elsewhere (Hall et al., 2018, p15) students are to be "equipped to make their own positive contribution, in a spirit of cooperation to the building up of secular society".

The 1988 document *The Religious Dimension of the Catholic School* (in

Hall et al., 2018, p18, 19) identifies an appreciation of the "true value of the human person", and "a critical sense which examines statements rather than accepting them blindly." While the 1998 document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* reinforces strongly the inclusiveness of the Catholic school to all, and especially the "poor and the marginalised", it has nothing explicit to say about its hopes for these students, other than the development of "the whole man(sic)" (in Hall et al., 2018, p21).

In 2013, the theme of inclusiveness and engagement was continued in *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools*, initiating in "the dialogue of life young people of different religions and social backgrounds" and naming the importance of "awareness of one's own faith identity" (Hall et al., 2018, p23).

All in all, Church documents (either from the Vatican Magisterium, or locally) yielded little by way of insight into the attributes being sought in graduates of Catholic schools. Those insights that can be gleaned can be summed up, perhaps, as seeking a knowledge of the faith tradition, a personal spirituality, engagement with society, critical thinking, and interfaith/intercultural understanding. While this analysis has revealed somewhat limited attention to the attributes of Catholic school graduates, there is, however, an additional source of insight into the aspirations of Catholic schools for their graduates. This is to be found in the work done by Catholic educators and scholars themselves.

HOW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DESCRIBE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE GRADUATE CHURCH DOCUMENTS AND THE GRADUATE

The preoccupation in Vatican sources with the school rather than the student was apparent in a search for examples of widely used profiles

of graduate attributes. This search revealed that a small number of individual schools have created their own profiles of the graduate, however, these provide a somewhat tenuous basis for generalisation given the narrow base on which they have been built; the limited period over which they have been applied; and the fact that they relate to only a single school community. In fact, only three frameworks could be located which avoided these limitations. The first of these was The Graduate of the

Catholic School (Parramatta Catholic Schools Board, 1996). It is a document that has remained unrevised for years, and is no longer in use, but provides a useful historical point of reference. The second is a Canadian document (Institute for Catholic Education, 2011). Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations is a revision of the original 1998 document. The third was produced initially in 1980 by the Jesuit Education Alliance of America (now the Jesuit Schools Network), and updated reasonably recently (Jesuit

Schools Network, 2015) as Profile of the Graduate at Graduation.

Building on the example of the analysis in Section 3 of this report, this section will use the resultant 8Cs as a reference point for mapping the graduate attributes identified in the analysis of Church documents in Section 4.1 and the three Catholic systemic graduate documents identified in this section, as a way of identifying patterns and priorities among the desirable attributes of graduates of Catholic schools.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE FRAMEWORKS

8Cs	CHURCH DOCUMENTS	PARRAMATTA	ONTARIO	JESUITS <i>(This framework has over 90 individual indicators, and the categories are not an easy match)</i>
Collaboration		Interpersonal Skills	Collaborative Contributor	
Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking			Intellectually Competent
Creativity			Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker	
Communication			Effective Communicator	
Character		Self-Image Outlook	Self-Directed, Responsible and Life-Long Learner	Open to Growth
Core Knowledge	Knowledge of the Faith Tradition	Academically Equipped		Intellectually Competent Religious
Cultural And Intercultural Understanding	Interfaith and Intercultural Understanding			
ICT		Embracing Technological Change		
Citizenship	Engagement with Secular Society	Social Conscience Knowledge of Global Issues Better Society Understanding of Society	Responsible Citizen	Committed to Doing Justice
	Living a Personal Spirituality	Christian Faith Development Integration of Faith with Life Catholic Identity	Discerning Believer	Religious
			Caring Family Member	Loving
				Work Experienced

A cursory examination of the attributes presented in Table 2 highlights a paradox that was previously noted in terms of the Church documents, and is a very real tension in practice. That is, that while the discourse about Catholic schools as schools for all is abundantly clear in the Church documents, and certainly in the enrolment of non-Catholics in significant numbers in Catholic schools, the treatment of graduate attributes is very firmly situated in the notion of the student as not only a Catholic, but a committed Catholic. Here is the challenge. If aspirations are framed generically (i.e., fitting for all students regardless of their faith) educators run the risk of being seen to be watering down the Catholic identity. If Catholic school educators simply act as if all students were Catholic, it is arguable that they are failing to respond to their individual needs as we would in any other domain of the school, and are running the risk of failing to acknowledge and act upon the personal spiritual journeys of students who are other than Catholic. At a time where much is made of the evangelising role of Catholic schools, this is simply not good practice, being open to the accusation that, far from being serious about evangelisation, schools are simply using non-Catholics to “make up the numbers”. This report does not attempt to untangle this particular knot, but it is a matter worthy of significant attention by Catholic educators. In the time-honoured tradition of catering for the majority, the discussion of the distinctly “Catholic” elements of our graduate aspirations is premised on a view of the student as being at least positively disposed to Catholic teachings, a Catholic worldview and a spirituality informed by Catholic tradition.

A closer examination of the map of frameworks in Table 2 reveals that, as we might have hoped, there is significant overlap between what might loosely be described as the secular and religious perspectives on attributes of graduates. Interestingly, the Alice Springs Statement (2019), a document for all, makes explicit mention of the spiritual dimension of the person, as noted in Table 1. The work of education is work for the whole person, not a separation between “the main business of the school” and some other “religious” element. This insight leads to the conclusion that in a comprehensive view of the attributes

of the graduate of Catholic schools, the clarification of goals of which Fullan and Quinn (2016) write, should neither have two sets of attributes, nor one set with two categories. Where appropriate, the insights of the Catholic faith should find a place in an elaboration of the capabilities that would be expected of the graduate of any school. Thus, for example, the Core Knowledge of a student in a Catholic school would include knowledge of the Catholic faith. Engagement with questions of justice and ethics as part of Character would be informed by a Catholic world view, and so on. Interestingly, the Catholic sources used in this exercise all identified various aspects of citizenship in a way that was not so clearly evident in the Table 1 analysis of more general frameworks. It is evident that it needs to be reinstated as a key attribute. However, the generic framework cannot capture adequately the work of the Catholic school in the spiritual domain. This attribute might be labelled: Catholic Spirituality and Worldview.

Thus, having surveyed a range of perspectives on those graduate attributes which constitute our goals for schooling, the paper arrives at a position where a synthesis into a set of ‘9Cs’ is conceivable. This is pursued through building on the six attributes already familiar to educators through the work of Fullan and Quinn, shown to be defensible through mapping them against other learning frameworks (Table 1). The process resulted in adding two (at this stage, ICT is being considered as an embedded capability) additional “Cs” to the list. Taking this forward and repeating the process of mapping against Church documents and three widely used frameworks in Catholic education, it follows that these could be mapped against a new set of attributes, requiring only the addition of a single new distinctive attribute.

Thus, an expanded set of attributes which reflects appropriately the identity of Catholic schools are:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
- Character
- Citizenship
- Core Knowledge
- Cultural and Intercultural Understanding
- Catholic Spirituality and Worldview

A word of caution needs to be offered as to the use of lists such as this. All of these concepts are deeply interconnected, and their significance may well best be understood in that interactivity. For example, Sultmann and Brown (2019, p. 159) write of the concept of *relational agency*. Some sense of its rich meaning can be gathered from the brief quotation below, in which one can hear echoes of collaboration, communication, cultural and intercultural understanding, and character - to name a few.

Relational agency (Edwards 2005) draws from quality relationships with others (teachers, parents, students) within social and cultural tools (traditions and values) that assist in the mediation of agency. From this perspective, relational agency increases the pathways, solutions and options that facilitate student engagement and self-direction in the multicultural, complex and pluralistic nature of schooling.

It may seem that in the identification of our list of attributes, our work is done. Not so. This report has consistently used the word ‘attribute’ to describe these qualities to which we aspire. It is, in fact, more usual to use the language of ‘capability’ or ‘competency’. Why then the preference for ‘attribute’? The next section explains.



Why capabilities are not enough

Once we choose to consider those attributes which are essential for graduates of our schools from the point of view of graduate as person and citizen, rather than simply employee, and to view our ambitions for them as being to help them become shapers of their world who can thrive (rather than simply survive), a new set of imperatives begins to emerge. These imperatives take us beyond capability and into action. The reasons for which this is important are demonstrated in the following short commentary on some of the current realities to which our students are exposed, and in particular the dimension of trust and authenticity named in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (2019).

Tom Nichols, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval College wrote, in his provocatively titled *The Death of Expertise* (2017, p. x):

“Something is going terribly wrong. The US is now a country obsessed with the worship of its own ignorance. It’s not just that people don’t know a lot about science or politics or geography ... the bigger problem is that we’re proud of not knowing things ... The foundational knowledge of the average American is now so low that it has crashed through the floor of “uninformed”, passed “misinformed” on the way down and is now plummeting towards “aggressively wrong”.

Nichols is commenting specifically on the significant numbers of Americans who wear their unfounded beliefs as a badge of honour, denying climate change, resisting gun control, and clinging to nationalistic rhetoric to be their salvation in the face of compelling evidence to the contrary. Nichols goes on to say that they also demonstrate a diminishing capacity to apply moral perspectives to decisions. Moreover, senior politicians are said to demonstrate this very lack of logical or ethical basis for decisions, and yet a significant proportion of the US electorate continues to give them their support.

The people Nichols identifies are the products of an education system whose rhetoric, like ours, has traditionally been full of noble sentiments like citizenship, democracy, respect for the law, and logic and critical thinking. Barack Obama is reported (Snow, 2018) to have warned in a speech in Sydney, that we can no longer take the benefits of liberal democracies for granted. And in case we are tempted to believe this is a uniquely American affliction, we should consider some instances from our own Australian public life.

Minor parties in Australia have effectively commandeered the balance of power. Their situation is based, for the most part, on finding a comfortable home for many of the same views described in the US. And while our major parties and their leadership have not travelled quite so far down the US road, we could (and certainly should) ask ourselves as educators how it is that as a nation we have not risen in protest at the treatment of asylum seekers. Or if we argue that we need more time, why as a society we continue after more than two centuries to tolerate the gaps that exist between non-Aboriginal life expectancy and that of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Or to consider a more recent situation, how it is that the extreme views of a few with respect to climate change (in the face of overwhelming evidence) seem to have paralysed the exercise of good sense. Educators with a view to the future need to remind themselves that the people who shape, or acquiesce to situations like these are the products of our Australian education system (and not a few of them, Catholic education).

David Brooks (2018), in an opinion piece for the *New York Times*, ascribes some of these matters to the emergence of a commitment to a meritocracy in which understandings of self, autonomy, intelligence, diversity and institutions have become exaggerated or misplaced. He concludes with this thought: “The essential point is this: Those dim witted, stuck up blue bloods in the old establishment had something

we meritocrats lack — a civic consciousness, a sense that we live life embedded in community and nation, that we owe a debt to community and nation and that the essence of the admirable life is community before self.”

The issue would seem to be not that significant groups in our society don’t know how to reason logically or make ethical judgements. It would seem that they actively *choose not to*, or to tolerate leaders who take that option. While recognising the fundamental nature of literacy and numeracy, and the significance of the various lists of capabilities that we can include in our treatment of graduate expectations (creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and the like), we cannot be satisfied as educators if our graduates can demonstrate that they can solve theoretical ethical dilemmas or mount a logical argument. They need to go beyond *potential to habits* of behaviour that enable them to live out a coherent and defensible values position, *choosing* to apply their capabilities in a rapidly evolving reality. The outside observer should be able to say, not that our graduates have a particular capability, but that they live it. It is a personal attribute that one associates with them. Thus, our focus should be on the graduate, not the capability. Our journey of discernment has given rise to 9Cs - always keeping in mind that an integral Catholic education reflects its deep religious identity across all dimensions, not just the one we have labelled *Catholic Spirituality and Worldview*.

The graduate of a Catholic school;

- Is Collaborative
- Is an Effective Communicator
- Is a Critical Thinker
- Is Creative
- Is a Person of Character
- Is an Engaged Citizen
- Draws on Core Knowledge
- Is Culturally and Religiously Understanding
- Has a Catholic Spirituality and Worldview.

Beyond the list: The challenges ahead

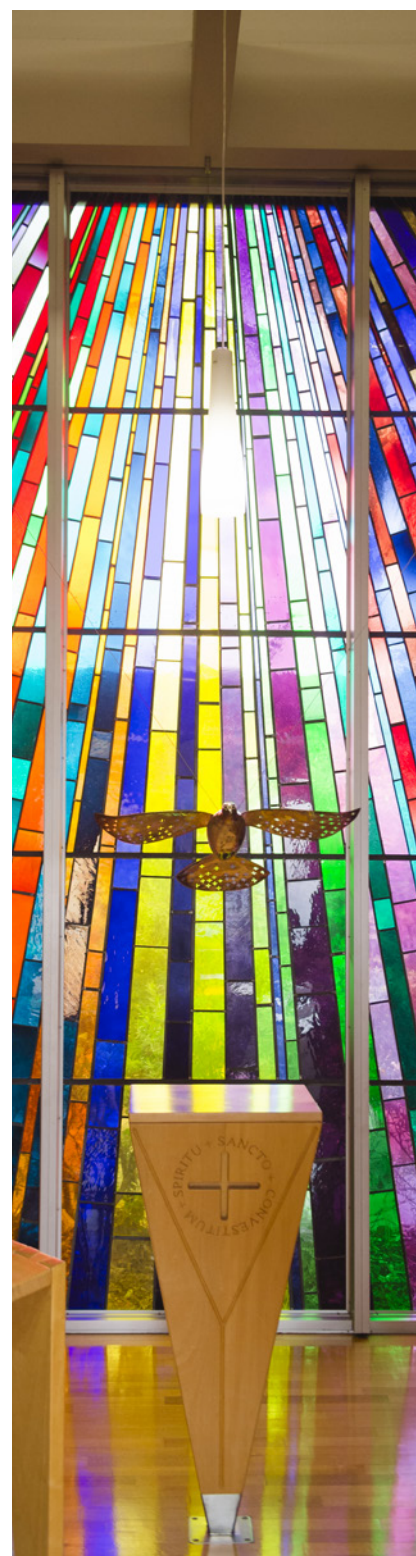
Clearly the 9Cs in their current form are only the skeleton of a fully-fledged framework. They will benefit from further work, drawing on the insights of the material dealt with briefly in this report, and ideally engaging practitioners in making sense of how they might be significant in the lives of students in Catholic schools. However, naming - and even elaborating - a set of attributes is but the beginning of a major process of changed practice and culture. Referring to their 6Cs, Fullan and Quinn (2016, p. 92) note that:

“We are shifting from measuring what is easy to measuring what matters. We need to be able to define and measure these (competencies)”. It is at this point that the best-intentioned attempts at deeper, more authentic learning can flounder. The odds are stacked in favour of measures of literacy and numeracy. They are an easy currency, much loved by the media and the politicians, and invested with the burden of being the *de facto* measure of learning success for schools and students. The challenge is to find the time and the commitment to developing measures which assist learning, rather than impede it with their demands on teacher time and attention.

The kinds of measures which are garnering attention in the discussion of deeper learning are based on progressions, or continua - verbal descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at particular points on a particular learning journey. For example, ACARA has made provision for them in the Australian Curriculum, but a careful examination of the online syllabi reveals that many of the links to continua in fact, lead nowhere, or are incomplete. The work has simply not

been prioritised. The New Pedagogies for Deep Learning initiative, mentioned elsewhere in this paper, has developed continua for each of the six “Cs”. Accessing these leaves interested teachers with the challenging task of ‘retrofitting’ them to a national curriculum which, for all its rhetoric about capabilities is still, at least in practice, content bound.

Making a commitment to deeper learning in the next stage of our journey of improvement will challenge us to continue focusing direction, building collaborative cultures and securing accountability in its broadest and richest sense. It will call for a sharpening of focus while building on the work to date. It will call for the creation of a more nuanced and elaborated sense of the learning that matters. It will require skilled work in finding natural “homes” in the existing syllabuses within which to privilege the 9Cs. It will require pedagogies that are precise in new ways - ways that build on what has been learned in literacy and numeracy, yet go beyond these. It will call for monitoring of progress with tools that in some cases do not yet exist. It will call for the system wide commitment to capacity building to be maintained and refocused. This looks daunting but dealing with the consequences of inaction will present our society with greater challenges still. Above all, it will call for Catholic educators to find new and better ways to respond to the exhortation of the Congregation for Catholic Education (2017, n. 29), that Catholic educators should: “give a soul to our ever-changing global world ...to the priority of building a “civilization of love”.





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