



Professional Learning
Research
Innovation

Learning in Practice

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About the Barker Institute:

- Provides a centre for research, reflective practice, professional learning and innovation in education
- Is a resource hub that facilitates the ongoing development of learning for teachers, allowing them to stay abreast of emerging practice, constantly striving to refine the quality of teaching and learning
- Looks to develop collaborative ventures with other institutions and providers, initiating research and innovation combined with the implementation of new projects and programs for the benefit of students, staff and the broader community
- Shares current research and issues with parents, professional bodies and educators around the globe through ongoing symposia, forums, lectures and conferences

About the Learning in Practice Journal:

As a leader in Christian education, Barker College aims to both demonstrate and inform best practice. This journal was developed to showcase a range of initiatives and research projects from across the School. It explains the rationale behind innovations in practice and archives pivotal developments in Barker's academic, co-curricular and pastoral realms.

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Dr Brad Merrick is currently Director of Research in Learning and the Barker Institute. His PhD examined the influence of motivation and self-regulation on student understanding and learning. He has co-authored several music textbooks combined with scholarly chapters, articles and papers that explore emerging approaches to teaching and learning, most recently in the 'Oxford Handbook of Music Education' and 'The Routledge Companion to Music, Technology and Education'. He is the immediate Past Chair of the National Executive of the Australian Society for Music Education. His passion is examining new research, pedagogy and emerging practice in education.

A Year in Review: The Barker Institute in 2017



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Abstract

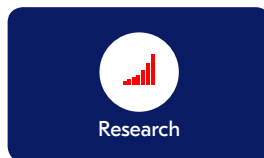
The Barker Institute was developed in 2014 under the leadership of Mr Philip Heath and the direction of Dr Brad Merrick, looking to place a connection across the core components of research, professional learning and innovation within the broader learning context at Barker College. Specifically, the mission of the institute was to share emerging thinking, practice and approaches to learning with the broader Barker Community and also beyond the Mint Gates, so as to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that fosters learning across all key areas. Throughout 2017, there has been considerable growth and interest in the Barker Institute and this article serves as an overview of the various presentations and areas of coverage included in the internal and external events throughout the year.

The Barker Institute www.barkerinstitute.com.au has been an important and successful component of the broader provision of providing access to rich and diverse presentations, research and thinking across a range of settings. Having commenced in 2015, the BI now has well over 30 events each year, which can see audiences ranging from 80 students and parents through to crowds in excess of 400 parents and visitors attending a Community Forum. The beauty of the BI being that throughout the year it provides a range of different learning experiences, across a range of tiered presentations and information sessions.

The Barker Institute aims to contribute to education at the local, national and global level through:



Professional learning that is focused on Tfu, inquiry, critical thinking and quality student - teacher interactions, fostering a growth mindset for all participants.



Inspired learning that is facilitated through purposeful and collaborative engagement in the latest educational thinking and research.



Innovation that is developed through creative approaches to pedagogy, curriculum development, assessment and purposeful integration of emerging technologies.

Based around the various needs of the School and the mission of the Barker Institute, the focus of each event is tailored to the needs of the whole School vision and also provided in response to emerging trends in educational research, social issues and other facets of society that have strong relevance and importance across the broader BI audience.

This year the following levels of events were provided with well over three thousand people attending these events collectively.

The different types of presentations included: -

- Community Forums — Open presentations that provide in-depth knowledge and coverage of relevant and connected issues,
- Twilight Series — Focused presentations and sessions, in areas of specific knowledge, often presented by past Barker students, staff and parents who occupy roles or occupations that provide interest and contemporary thinking,
- Focus on Learning Series — These sessions are specifically designed and developed to create opportunities for interaction with both parents and students across the learning community, focusing on key understanding in the curriculum or assessment, combined with approaches to technology integration,
- Parent Forums — these sessions are aligned with the various developmental levels of the students at Barker and allow parents to share in and learn about areas and issues that are important to specific stage levels,
- Post Graduate Forum — this is a key event held each year, where staff and interested community members can observe staff as they share areas of research and interest in their relevant field of teaching, research or learning,
- College of Teachers sessions — this is where the staff community of coaching is developed with teachers developing skills within a growth framework, and developing knowledge of practice and reflection to improve their engagement in teaching across the school,
- Whole staff Professional Learning — on specific allocated staff days, the BI contributes to the organisation and facilitation of speakers, workshops and collaboration across all staff (teaching and administration), to ensure that the broader members of Barker are aware of developments that have relevance to their roles at school.

In 2017 the Barker Institute had several key presenters for Community Forums. The year commenced with acknowledged speaker and leader in the Growth Mindset field, Dan Haesler presenting our first Community Forum in Term 1 as well as a valuable workshop for the Heads of Department and Grade Coordinators at the School. Later in the term, Lisa Maltman who shared her expertise in sleep management for adolescents while bringing an increased awareness to parents and staff. This was followed up with several valuable parent forums across the school combined with some highly successful work with our Year 5 and 6 students, as they kept sleep diaries and monitored their own sleep patterns.

In Term 3, Warwick Holmes, Executive Director of Space Engineering at University of Sydney provided an amazing insight in to the development and research into space travel, having overseen the Rosetta Mission for the European Space Agency. This presentation saw well over 400 attendees captivated by his experience and story about the mission. This was accompanied by a fantastic presentation by the Barker Robotics team.

Later in Term 3, Christine Nixon, esteemed author, leader and the past Commissioner of Police of Victoria, provided a captivating talk about her latest book 'Women Leading' sharing some fascinating insights and reflections about leadership in the current day, and some of the issues confronting leaders as they work in Australia. In Term 4, Professor Gary McPherson provided an insightful presentation about Childhood Musicians which was of great interest.

The Twilight Series has proved to be of great success, with a number of parents sharing their experiences across varied occupations around the world. Professor Richard Mackay, who is a cultural heritage advisor to the government provided a fascinating journey into the history and damage to significant artefacts through the Middle East, explaining the context behind these events around the world. His talk was titled "Our Cultural Heritage and Global Hope". Professor Liam Semler, from the University of Sydney provided a thought-provoking talk called "Teaching Shakespeare in the New Millennium" that alluded to the increased level of 'systematisation' within the broader education environment, that is subsequently impacting the content delivered in our educational system and beyond. He referenced this through the lens of his work in English Literature at his university. Annalisa Haskell, Barker parent and CEO of Local Government Managers Australia, offered an insight into the difficulties for young women in the workplace, providing the audience with a number of valuable insights and strategies. Her presentation "The Importance of success and value in career development for young women" was a great success.

In Term 4 past student, Mr Andrew Stevens and Chair of the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre, presented our last Twilight Presentation for the year, which saw him discuss how Australia can sustain economic growth and employment in the future.

The Focus on Learning Series, was an innovation and new program of sessions that looked to combine opportunities for connected experiences between students and parents within the community. Commencing in February, the first session "Embedding ICT in the Middle Years" invited parents to come and work with ICT integrators, using their son's iPads to better understand the way that mobile devices can be used in learning, and also how to manage these effectively within the learning process, both at school and at home. This proved to be beneficial for all involved with many parents enjoying the chance to receive a first-hand experience of the way students engage in learning. Later in Term 1, Dr Matthew Hill presented his implementation of the new "Hearts and Minds" program at the School and outlined the way in which he had designed the curriculum for the development of thinking and philosophy at Barker. This was an informative evening that was well received by the attendees. As the year progressed, a presentation on the research into the usage of ICT by parents and students was presented at a forum with both Mr James Stewart, Mr James Denton and Dr Brad Merrick presenting to the students.

Towards the end of Term 3, the Director of the BI presented a report on the ten year longitudinal research project – 'The Barker Journey', which had tracked the learning journey of 43 students who had commenced as Year 3 students in 2008. This evening was well received by many parents, students, teachers and members of the broader community, all of whom were amazed by the data and stories of the boys as they had progressed through Barker to complete their learning journey. The final Focus on Learning Series presentation culminated in an evening which provided training and insight into how to have academic conversations and discussions with students. Looking to assist parents to better understand the way to interpret reports and assessment, providing frameworks and structures for discussions and feedback. This proved to be very successful.

An interesting and very well received presentation called 'Ag After Dark' was instigated by the Agriculture Staff and saw a presentation on the development of the coffee industry by Saxon Wright, founder of Pablo and Rusty's Coffee. This format of having subject specific sessions provided generated a great deal of interest and we hope to develop this area more in the year ahead.

The Parents' Forums were modified in their structure in 2017, seeing the various stages combined for greater access and relevance to parents. In 2017 we had a Junior School Forum, a Middle School Forum and a Senior School Forum, all of which allowed the presentation to be focused and linked to key issues relative to the developmental needs of the students. The Director of the BI, Dr Brad Merrick presented on GRIT at the Senior School Parents' Forum, examining the current research around motivation, resilience and effort for students, drawing on the seminal work of Dr Angela Duckworth in her book "GRIT – The power of passion and perseverance". This provided a range of clear strategies and thinking for parents to utilise and for students to adopt in their own work.

The Junior School and Middle School Parents' Forums focused on the emerging research in adolescent sleep behaviour and Lisa Maltman, the Director of the Sleep Connection provided valuable insight for the parents at both of these forums connecting each session to the issues associated with sleep deprivation and the overuse of digital devices. Her Middle School presentation was called "The Importance of Sleep for Better Health, Resilience and Performance in adolescents" and her Junior School Forum saw her report on a two week sleep research project that she undertook with Year 5 and 6 boys, examining their sleep habits. This was called "Investigating the sleep patterns of our Year 5 and 6 students - key findings and strategies for parents to consider" and was an extremely valuable learning experience for the parents that attended.

Combined with the ongoing development and implementation of the College of Teachers – Growth Coaching program with staff to develop reflective practice and conversations about teaching, there was also the tenth Annual Post-Graduate Forum which allowed staff to share their knowledge and insight about projects and research they had been developing to interested staff and community members.

An important part of the Barker Institute's role is to share learning and provide opportunities for engagement at a local, national and international level.

The Institute continued to develop research programs during the year, working with students on the Extended Stay program in Alice Springs, and also developing research to assist the project groups involved with the transition to coeducation. An important component of the Barker Institute's role is to tell the story of the many facets of research, teaching and learning combined with the day-to-day experiences of students and staff. In 2017 the BI initiated the first edition of the newly created 'Learning in Practice' Journal which saw the first volume published in November.

Along with all of the Barker Institute forums and sessions, the Professional Learning arm oversaw the structure and organisation of much of the learning and presentations provided for staff throughout the year, which included work in the area of Formative Assessment, Writing Across the School (WATS), Goal Setting, Blended Learning, all initiatives aligned with the Schools' ongoing mission and vision for the future.

All in all, a busy but extremely diverse and interesting year for the Barker Institute, with a wide array of participants and many interesting sessions made available. We look forward to another successful and engaging series of presentations and events in 2018.



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