Which way to the future?

ACLE 2

Tuesday September 28, 2004
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Which future?
Possible future developments

- Brain research and classroom practice
- Outcomes-based education
- Technology applications
- Competing with media-based entertainment
- Future role of teachers
- Future professional education
- Schools, community & contextual learning

Methodology

- Backcasting
- Delphi
Mike Middleton:

*Lutheran Schools at Millennium’s Turn*

- Challenge ... is to juggle the need to remain ‘true’ to their calling as Lutheran educational leaders ......
- Feeling that profession is not a calling but subservient to other aspects of school ......
- We are not an independent private school. We are an independent Christian school.
Hedley Beare:

“Education must concern itself with belief formation”

“Beliefs give us the framework to interpret the world … beliefs produce real outcomes …… By our choices we bring into existence the very things we believe in ……”

Lutheran schools ......

- Central purpose is belief formation
- Teachers have an essential role in mediating belief formation
- By choices made, our schools bring into existence the things they believe in
Research project (A)

- Interviews with six principals
- Mix of recent and ‘old’ secondary schools, rural and urban

Central question: *In a ten-year projection, what are the key issues that need urgent attention?*

Three major concerns:

- Staffing
- Learning technologies
- School-church relations
Staffing issues:

- Proportion of Lutheran teachers declining
- Teaching not attractive to graduates
- Continuing supply of teachers with strong faith
- Funding for PD in Lutheran education
- Adjusting to changing concepts of education
- Recruiting staff from elsewhere
- Expanding leadership pool in future

• Teacher gender balance
Research project (B)

- 135 participants
- Primary/secondary conference in eastern states
- Question:
  *How would you prioritise the following ways of supporting students in their faith journey?*

Four options:

- Effective Christian Knowledge/Life classes as an essential feature of Lutheran schools
- Regular and effective Christian life retreats for students (once a term/semester) as an essential feature of Lutheran schools
- The presence of many strong Christian teachers and students who have an active faith, effective relations, and participate enthusiastically in various Christian life programs
- Regular and effective whole-of-school chapel as an essential feature of Lutheran schools
Results

- Item 3 - *the presence of many strong Christian teachers and students* - overwhelmingly favoured

First preference: 80% +
First + second: 92%

Second questionnaire

- *How would you prioritise the following ways of supporting the professional development of staff in their participation in the Christian life of the school?* (use 1 for the highest, and 4 for the lowest priority)
TOPS (Theological Orientation Program for Schools)

- Mandatory participation in studies in Lutheran education that have a cross-credit value in a post-graduate course
- Theological qualifications as a condition of long term employment
- Regular inclusion of spiritual development units in whole-of-staff professional development programs
- Regular staff devotions with a rotating leadership role

**Results**

- 70% preferred the ‘regular inclusion of spiritual development units in whole-of-staff professional development programs’
What emerges?

- Importance of teachers with active faith, effective relations, and Christian participation
- Christ is mediated through people, rather than learning about faith
- Need of PD programs that integrate spiritual development units, and staff involvement in school devotions

Research project (C)

- Workshop for principals and teachers in South-eastern states
- Group work: brainstorming challenges for our schools in next decade
Dominant concerns:

- Staffing issues (31)
- Maintaining Lutheran ethos (14)
- Technology issues (17)
- Litigation, compliance, accountability (10)
- Crowded curriculum

Research Project (D)

- **Participants**: Principals in National Conference of all Lutheran secondary schools
- **Method**: 6 step Future Problem Solving:
  - Identify range of problems
  - Select key underlying problem
  - Brainstorm solutions
  - Develop criteria
  - Evaluate solutions
  - Develop an Action Plan
Sample challenge/solutions

- **Problem:** how to create a larger critical mass of leaders and educators to model and enculturate a Lutheran school ethos?

**Solutions:**

- BLEA responsibility for educational ministry
- Stronger staff promotion of recruitment
- Engagement of key educators
- Halt to school growth
- Scholarships/ fund-raising for leadership
- Greater involvement of LCA as a church in outreach through schools
**Preferred solution**

- Combination, with focus on development of tertiary institution for educational training
- Key features:
  - Convocation to develop strategic solutions
  - LEA funded teacher training: pre and in-service

**Implementation**

- Task force - from concept to action
- On-going conversation
The more things change the more they stay the same