



The Launceston Preparatory School

Our three styles of teaching

The Paideia Method outlines three streams of teaching and learning by which its objectives can be best met. They are:
didactic instruction
coaching
Socratic questioning.

Didactic instruction is the “chalk and talk” method of teaching and learning, where the teacher has a body of knowledge to convey and the students learn by listening. This form of instruction certainly has its place, although at The Launceston Preparatory School it will not always be to a class as a whole but also to smaller groups. In Australia today, researchers estimate that an average of approximately 70% of time at school is spent on this mode, Under the Paideia philosophy, however, this proportion is drastically reduced to around 20% of schooling time. This is an aspect of Paideia strongly supported by the school.

Consistent with the Paideia method, we spend most of our time in COACHING, believing that children learn best by “doing”. This mode allows teaching to be most constructive and learning to be most lasting, because children are actually practising the skills they need under the eye of a coach, who will refine, support and re-teach each student as necessary. About 70% of our time is spent in this column of teaching and learning, which allows us most effectively focus on individual needs.

It is the third strand of the Paideia method – Socratic questioning – that most clearly distinguishes it from others. Socrates used to teach the young men of Greece by “drawing out of them what they already knew” rather than by telling them things. So too do we encourage children to consider issues and develop values by exposing them to ideas and drawing from them their own opinions through carefully constructed questioning.

A Socratic strand runs through all our teaching, but the Socratic Seminar with the teacher facilitating the thought-provoking question has the greatest capacity to transform the nature of the students because:

- A bond of mutual respect is created between all
- Each student must learn to think critically, understand ideas, solve problems, make decisions, resolve conflicts and apply their knowledge to the situation
- Articulation, listening and critical thinking skills are improved.