



An Introduction



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Why 'Magnify'?

The name “**Magnify Sandhurst**” is an appropriate choice for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited’s (CESL) integrated learning and teaching program for several compelling reasons. The concept of magnification inherently suggests making things larger, clearer, and more detailed, so let’s take a moment to do just that ...

Firstly, magnification implies **enhancement and improvement**. Just as a magnifying glass enlarges objects, making them easier to examine and understand, the “Magnify Sandhurst” program aims to expand students’ knowledge and skills. This enlargement is not just about making things bigger but also about making them better. By providing comprehensive resources and evidence-informed teaching methods, the program can significantly enhance the learning experience, making education more impactful and effective.

Secondly, magnification allows us to see the **finer details** that might otherwise be overlooked. In the context of our education program, this means paying attention to the individual needs of each student. Using Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) with greater fidelity, the “Magnify Sandhurst” program can more effectively identify and address these unique needs, ensuring that every student and every teacher receives the personalised support they require. This attention to detail can help educators be more responsive and adaptive, tailoring their teaching strategies to better suit each learner’s strengths and weaknesses.

Moreover, the name “Magnify” conveys a sense of **clarity and focus**. Just as magnification brings hidden details into sharp relief, the program aims to clarify complex concepts and make learning more accessible. This clarity can help our teachers and students grasp less familiar and challenging practices and learnings more easily and retain information more effectively.

Additionally, “Magnify” suggests a **broader perspective**. By magnifying their understanding, our staff can see the bigger picture and make connections between different areas of knowledge. This holistic approach can foster critical thinking and creativity, in turn, preparing our students for the complexities of the real world.



Importantly, there are also several biblical references to the concept of “magnify.” In Scripture, “magnify” is often used to describe the act of exalting or praising God, highlighting God’s greatness and attributes.

One notable example is in the Gospel of Luke, where Mary, the mother of Jesus, proclaims, “*My soul magnifies the Lord*” (Luke 1:46). This is part of the Magnificat, ‘Mary’s battlecry’ for justice, a song of praise expressing her joy and gratitude for God’s blessings in a world where justice and equality will prevail, and where everyone will eat their fill.

Mary’s use of the word ‘magnify’ extolls God’s abundance shared out to everyone, irrespective of their starting place. Magnification in a biblical sense then, is about recognising and proclaiming the greatness of God, much like how a magnifying glass makes small details more visible and significant. Through our daily endeavours, we seek to magnify the impact of our work, so that every child, every teacher and every school might know God’s abundance, every day.



How did the Steering Committee arrive at its decisions?

Research and Development

In Term 2, the Executive Team convened a group of three Principals and four CESL staff to begin the work of crafting a response to the Board's prioritisation of the Strategic Plan areas of Learning Community and Healthy and Well Community. The team met fortnightly across Terms 2 and 3, with considerable research, meetings and planning occurring in between. Their work occurred alongside, and at times impacted upon, the plans of the Board and Executive to ensure that CESL can operate most effectively as the organisation it needs to be for its schools.

Elsewhere, we have provided a list of some of the readings and research (and podcasts) that informed the team's thinking. The development, alignment and indeed, evolution of the program, has been significant over the five months, as ideas and possibilities were tested against the lived-reality of other dioceses, school systems, not for profit organisations and for-profit companies, who had each already undertaken much of this work at scale. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the generosity and humility of these other organisations in sharing their learnings, including things they would have done differently if they had their time again. We in Sandhurst, have very much been the beneficiaries of the work, mistakes and learnings of others in the years preceding our efforts.

Some important and influential moments along the way include:

- Discussions with the Grattan Institute report researchers. They have been critical friends in testing our plans and raising challenging questions along the way.
- Conversations with Literacy experts including Professor Pamela Snow and Professor Tanya Serry from LaTrobe University. As a local to our area, Pamela, in particular, has been very keen to advise and support us in this journey.
- Ongoing conversations with leaders from other Catholic Dioceses, including Canberra Goulburn, Lismore, Melbourne and Adelaide as well as independent and government schools/jurisdictions, to understand how various programs were implemented, supported, tracked and nuanced.
- Discussions and testing with world renowned educationalists including Dr Tim McDonald, Elena Douglas, Ollie Lovell, Josh Goodrich and Dr Jarrod Cooney Horvath which with each return conversation, expanded our knowledge and refined our thinking about the scope, depth, timing and process of implementing Magnify Sandhurst.



ACER School Improvement System Report to CESL

Holding the above mentioned work in a coherent manner was the amalgamated recommendations to CESL from the ACER School Improvement Tool System Report (2022 and 2023).

See below for the high-level recommendations and a brief response to each:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Build the capability of leaders to effectively monitor and evaluate their progress towards targets and priorities.

Our Response:

In alignment with the Grattan Multi-School Organisation Report, our Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited Office (CESLO) redesign includes the establishment of new lines of responsibility, including School Improvement Leaders, who have the remit to work closely with principals and their leadership teams and to ensure there is consistency and sharing across schools. These roles will facilitate strategic planning and enhance the capacity of leaders to monitor and assess progress towards established targets and priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Continue to provide support for schools to analyse multiple sources of data as part of decision-making at both classroom and whole-of-school levels.

Our Response:

We are advancing our approach with the introduction of the CESL Assessment and Intervention Framework for Schools, which will be further refined in 2025. The improvement of the implementation of data tools and dashboards, including Power BI, Intellischools, and the ACER OARS platform, will enhance data accessibility, enabling CESL to better support teachers and leaders through more informed decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Support leaders to build collaborative professional learning communities, that privilege data-informed and observational reflections on pedagogical practice.

Our Response:

Our system reforms are designed to enable and reinforce collaborative practices among school leaders and teachers. A key facet of Magnify Sandhurst is the introduction of a common means of instructional coaching and professional learning communities.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Provide extensive support to schools in systematic curriculum delivery to ensure continuity of learning across the year levels and the alignment of curriculum, assessment, and reporting.

Our Response:

Addressing this recommendation has been a central focus of Magnify Sandhurst. This recommendation has been integrated into each program, ensuring alignment of curriculum, assessment, and reporting practices wherever possible.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Provide targeted support for leaders to strengthen the pedagogical core in classrooms. This should include a whole-school focus on effective differentiation strategies which provide the right amount of challenge for each learner, and on the deployment of high-yield, context-appropriate pedagogical practices.

Our Response:

Magnify Sandhurst will focus on enhancing teacher knowledge through explicit curriculum design and the implementation of MTSS strategies. This will help ensure that all learners are able to engage with the curriculum at their appropriate level, supported by the best educational neuroscience available. Additionally, CESLO's organisational structures have been redeveloped to acknowledge and support that complex student needs often require multi-disciplinary responses.



Magnify Sandhurst Learning and Teaching model

Magnify Learning places teachers at the forefront, emphasising their role in delivering a knowledge-rich curriculum and learner skills. This method focuses on responsive student engagement and guided practice, providing a strong foundation before advancing to complex tasks: it's sophisticated, inclusive and highly interactive. Neuroscience supports Magnify Learning, highlighting its importance in learning and retaining key skills and knowledge, as emphasised in instructional frameworks such as Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, the HITS and Cognitive Load Theory.

To support teachers to Magnify Learning, a low variance curriculum provides consistency and clarity. Instructional coaching programs support it by providing regular feedback, observation, and collaborative planning, helping teachers refine their techniques and adapt to student needs. As teachers become more proficient with Magnify Learning, they experience a gradual release of responsibility, gaining autonomy to adapt their methods while maintaining core principles.

In Magnify Learning, differentiation applies to both teachers and students! Novice teachers and those more familiar with other teaching methodologies receive extensive support and clear expectations, while experienced and expert teachers can personalise their strategies. This ensures continuous improvement and effective teaching. Magnify Learning is distinct from facilitative or purely inquiry-based models, involving a more proactive initial interaction followed by immediately responsive teaching to engage students and foster deep understanding.

It's important to note that Magnify Learning is not synonymous with rote memorisation or passive learning, but instead ensures that students are actively engaged and can apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. By maintaining a structured yet adaptable approach, teachers can create a learning environment that is both supportive and challenging, helping all students achieve their full potential.

A knowledge-rich curriculum aligns seamlessly with Magnify Learning by providing a structured framework that emphasises the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills. This type of curriculum ensures that teachers have a clear and consistent content roadmap, which supports the delivery of explicit and direct instruction. By focusing on core knowledge, teachers can build a strong foundation for students, making it easier to introduce and reinforce key concepts. This structured approach allows for effective differentiation, as teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students whilst assuring growth and maintaining high standards. Additionally, a knowledge-rich curriculum supports the gradual release of responsibility, enabling teachers to guide students from novice to expert levels of understanding. This alignment ensures that both teachers and students benefit from a coherent and focused educational experience, fostering deep learning and long-term retention.



Key Points of Magnify Learning:

- Teachers deliver explicit and direct instruction with gradual release as student knowledge and skills increase.
- There's a corresponding gradual release for teachers as they build their skills.
- Continuous, differentiated professional learning and instructional coaching supports Magnify Learning.
- Neuroscience underpins Magnify Learning, especially understanding its importance for student and teacher learning.
- Where possible and necessary, low variance curriculum is utilised.
- It is distinct from facilitative or purely inquiry-based models, with an emphasis on dynamic interaction and responsive teaching.

What is a Low Variance Curriculum?

Using a low variance curriculum in education refers to a structured approach where students are exposed to topics or skills in a gradual and consistent manner, minimising abrupt changes or complexity spikes. It includes:

Sequential Learning

It allows for a structured progression where foundational concepts are introduced first before moving on to more complex ideas. This sequential learning helps students build a strong base of knowledge and skills.

Reduced Cognitive Load

By presenting material in a predictable and manageable sequence, a low variance curriculum can reduce the cognitive load on students. They can focus on mastering one concept before moving on to the next, which promotes deeper understanding.

Increased Confidence

Mastery of foundational concepts before tackling more advanced topics can boost students' confidence. They feel more prepared and capable as they build upon what they already know.

Retention and Long-Term Learning

When concepts are introduced gradually and reinforced over time, students are more likely to retain the information in the long term. This contrasts with a high variance approach, where rapid changes in content can lead to superficial learning and forgetting.



Support for Diverse Learners

A low variance curriculum can be particularly beneficial for students with diverse learning needs. It provides a steady pace that allows for differentiation and targeted support where necessary, catering to various learning styles and abilities.

Curriculum Alignment

It ensures alignment with educational standards and learning objectives. By following a structured sequence, educators can ensure that all essential content is covered in a logical progression.

Minimisation of Overwhelm

Avoiding sudden jumps in difficulty or content complexity can prevent students from feeling overwhelmed. This can be especially important for younger learners or those who are new to a subject area.

Overall, a low variance curriculum promotes systematic learning, supports retention and understanding, and helps create a positive and manageable learning environment for students.

A Low Variance Curriculum also benefits teachers:

Consistency and Clarity

It provides a clear and consistent framework for instruction, reducing ambiguity about what needs to be taught and when. This helps teachers focus on delivering high-quality lessons without constantly reinventing the wheel.

Efficiency

With a well-defined curriculum, teachers can spend less time on planning and more time on teaching and engaging with students. This efficiency can lead to better use of instructional time and improved student outcomes.

Professional Development

Implementing a low variance curriculum often includes built-in professional learning opportunities. Teachers can learn and apply effective teaching techniques consistently across different subjects.

Equity

It ensures that all students receive the same high-quality education, regardless of which teacher they have. This can help close achievement gaps and promote fairness in educational opportunities.

Support and Collaboration

A standardised curriculum fosters collaboration among teachers, as they can share resources, strategies, and best practices more easily. This support network can enhance teaching quality and job satisfaction.

Overall, a low variance curriculum helps create a structured, supportive, and effective teaching environment that benefits both teachers and students.

‘Know Better, Do Better’

The oft quoted sentiment, “Your students may not remember what you said, but they’ll remember how you made them feel,” resonates deeply with the essence of John 10:10, which speaks of living life to the fullest. This connection underscores the profound impact educators have on their students’ emotional and spiritual well-being. The same is true of a leaders’ impact on their staff, especially during moments of professional and personal change.

Humility is an essential Gospel value that, ironically, allows us to reflect on our past with pride. It’s important to recognise and celebrate our achievements, acknowledging the hard work and dedication that brought us to where we are today. At the same time, humility helps us accept that we are fallible, knowing that we have done our best and will continue to do so. Embracing this duality enables us to learn and grow.

As the humanitarian, poet and educator Maya Angelou wisely said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” This perspective encourages us to view our past decisions with compassion, understanding that we have acted based on the knowledge and circumstances we had at the time. Recognising that we did the best with what was known and available is crucial for personal growth and development. By acknowledging our efforts and learning from them, we can move forward with greater wisdom and resilience. So too, humility allows us to accept constructive feedback and seek continuous improvement, fostering a mindset of lifelong learning.

In the ever-evolving field of education, new research and discoveries continually emerge, challenging us to adapt and refine our practices.

In the same way, having the courage to de-implement programs that have brought degrees of success is a vital aspect of ‘know better, do better’. Recognising that some initiatives, while beneficial at a point in time, may no longer serve our evolving goals, requires both kindness and courage. Leading people through this process involves proactively helping them let go and acknowledging with them that change can be challenging. It is essential that we provide encouragement and direct support to our staff, ensuring they feel valued and understood during transitions. By guiding with empathy and clarity, we can, together, foster a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability, ultimately benefiting our entire educational community.



For those who also have had programs that were going very well but are now being asked to move to something else, it is also important to acknowledge efforts and successes. Transitioning to new methods in solidarity can be difficult, especially when previous approaches were effective. However, this collective shift is necessary to align with broader goals and new research. Supporting such people with empathy and providing clear reasons for the change can help ease the transition. Similarly, encouraging a mindset of solidarity and shared purpose, while offering direct support and reassurance, will help everyone move forward together, fostering a more unified and collectively progressive educational environment.

Additionally, for those who have built their professional identity around certain beliefs or practices that are now being phased out, it is crucial for us to approach this transition with sensitivity and respect. Acknowledging everyone's dedication and the impact they have made is important, and helping them to see this change as an opportunity for growth and new contributions can make the process smoother. By providing support and recognising past efforts, we can help our community embrace new roles and identities within the evolving educational landscape.





SANDHURST
magnify

every **student**
every **teacher**
every **school**
every **day**