

# Lasallian Professional Development

Monthly PD for the New Zealand Lasallian Family of schools - WE ARE ONE LASALLE!

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## this issue

21st Century Strategies to help you grasp the idea of ZEAL and how this applies today in your own classes.

## The origins of the 12 Virtues...

In 1785, just before the French Revolution, Brother Agathon, who was the fifth Superior General of the De La Salle Brothers, wrote a document called 'The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher'. The list of virtues is like sage advice that a teacher might receive from an experienced Year Level Dean or similar.

The 12 Virtues combines two important pieces of work of St. John Baptist De La Salle's. The spiritual vision of his Meditations and the practical pedagogy of his Conduct of Christian Schools.

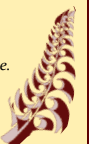
The 12 Virtues help answer the fundamental question for teachers in Lasallian schools: *"If I am to touch the hearts of my students and teach them in the best possible way, what practices should I follow and what vision should I have for them?"*

Br Agathon reminds the teacher - if you have a problem in your class, look to your own behaviour first.

12 Virtues and 12 months of 2013. Each month, I aim to provide you with useful, modern strategies, that will allow you to bring De La Salle's ideas right into your own classrooms. I kindly acknowledge Br. Jeffery Calligan for his work on this material and real insight. Enjoy learning about zeal!

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## The 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher - ZEAL

### Zeal

The Lasallian teacher is dedicated and committed whether it be in class preparation, correcting work, encouraging effort, supervising or coaching.

Do you have the ZEAL that David shows below?

### Zeal



David is able to distinguish what is of **real value** and goodness in his work with young people. He models the virtues he wants to **cultivate** with his students. He has a real sense of his work being a **ministry** and tries always to see his students with the eyes of God. He tries to see **what lies beneath** the surface anger, resentment, boredom and other difficult behaviours.

# ZEAL

A virtue that makes us procure the glory of God with great affection.



## Strategy 25-1

**Purpose:** To take advantage of the power of expectations.

**Description:** Maintaining an expectation that students will do the best they can even when there is no evidence they will do so.

As a teacher, we never want to give up on any students. When, for example, we plan a lesson, we are wise to fully expect that all students will get involved actively and responsibly. When some do not, we do well to assume they had good reason not to and, in the next lesson, they *will* become actively engaged. That is, we should never assume that any student lacks a willingness to be fully engaged. If we were to expect students *not* to become engaged unless, say, we gave them rewards and punishments, grades and tests, reminders and scoldings, they would likely oblige us. Expectations have power. We tend to get what we expect to get (Marzano, 2003).

It is valuable, then, to continually expect all students to be active learners. The message of this strategy is then simple. Find a way to hold that expectation. It is, we believe, one of our most influential, far-reaching strategies. If necessary, put a note on your desk or otherwise create a reminder that will help you to keep that expectation alive.

If you're doubtful, remind yourself that your students probably tackle their hobbies with high spirit. Perhaps check it out. Ask them about their non-school activities, their games, teams, social activities, the activities they really care about. The New or Goods strategy (Strategy 9-4) serves this purpose as well. As students talk about the activities they enjoy, observe their spirit. Use that as a reminder that the capacity for active engagement exists in these young people. Is it not possible that we can bring that life energy into the classroom?

We suspect that few students want to be poor readers, clumsy calculators, ignorant of what goes on in the world. It is unlikely that they see any advantage in being unskilled and ignorant. Said another way, students' natural motives support active learning. If, then, we design Action Flow Lessons (Strategy 3-1) that keep students naturally, comfortably engaged, would it not be reasonable to *expect* that they will, in fact, do the best they can with those lessons?

This is not to say that it's not sometimes challenging to keep expectations high. Here is one teacher's observation:

I had become disillusioned and frankly had low expectations for my students. I also had a lot of reason not to expect much. After all, none of the faculty was able to get much from them. At first I tried to imagine that my students would get actively involved in the lessons, but it never lasted long and I had trouble believing it. Then my support buddy and I agreed to ask each other at lunch each day how we



were doing at expecting active engagement, and that helped. In fact, we are now convinced that students do work harder when we expect them to. Yet, to be honest, we still need to remind each other at lunch. It's really hard, at least for us two, to hold high expectations in this depressed school.

It certainly be hard. But it also can be easy! Try *expecting* it to be easy and see what happens. And consider getting a support buddy as this teacher did. Progress is almost always smoother when we proceed with a friend.

## Strategy 25-5: Inspiring Statements

**Purpose:** To inspire students to strive for excellence.

**Description:** Cheering students on to do their very best.

As all coaches know, the right comment at the right time can inspire people to reach down deep and exceed all expectations. If you are unpracticed in cheering students on, know that effective comments are rooted in genuine respect. They say, in effect, "*I am with you.*" "*I want this for you.*" "*Working together, we can do the job.*" They do NOT say: "Do this for me." "I'm insisting on it." "It is required." They pull, rather than push. Consider the distinction:

**Pushing:** I want you all to master this material. It is extremely important. I will have no student of leaving here without knowing this backward and forward.

**Pulling:** *You will really need this material. I'm committed to doing whatever I can to make sure you master it. Are you willing to work with me and go for it? It will be a challenge – let's do it!*

It is often the care of one person for another that ignites an inner power that leads to inspired results. Words without genuine care are largely ineffective. And if the care is mutual, if the students, in fact, also care for the teacher, the inspiration flows along a highly charged path. It can be of inspired service, even love. We can then in full honesty communicate the message: "We are in this together, but we can't do the learning for you. You must do it. By now you know how much I care for you. I want to be proud of you, not for me. Show the world you can do it. Go to it!" The words, of course, are not the main thing. It's the intention behind the words that counts.

We once heard about an elementary school principal in Illinois, Frank Beczkala, who wanted to inspire students to do more reading. "If every student reads more," he announced, "I, who am deathly afraid of high places, will stand on the roof of this building and read aloud a story to those assembled below." The students met their challenge. And so did he.

## Strategy 25–6: Going for the Gold

**Purpose:** To inspire students to strive for excellence.

**Description:** Challenging students to handle everyday tasks at a high level of excellence.

Consider asking students to do a simple task without trying very hard, say, drawing 3 circles or writing the first 10 letters of the alphabet. Then tell them to repeat the task, this time doing their best. This means you might explain,

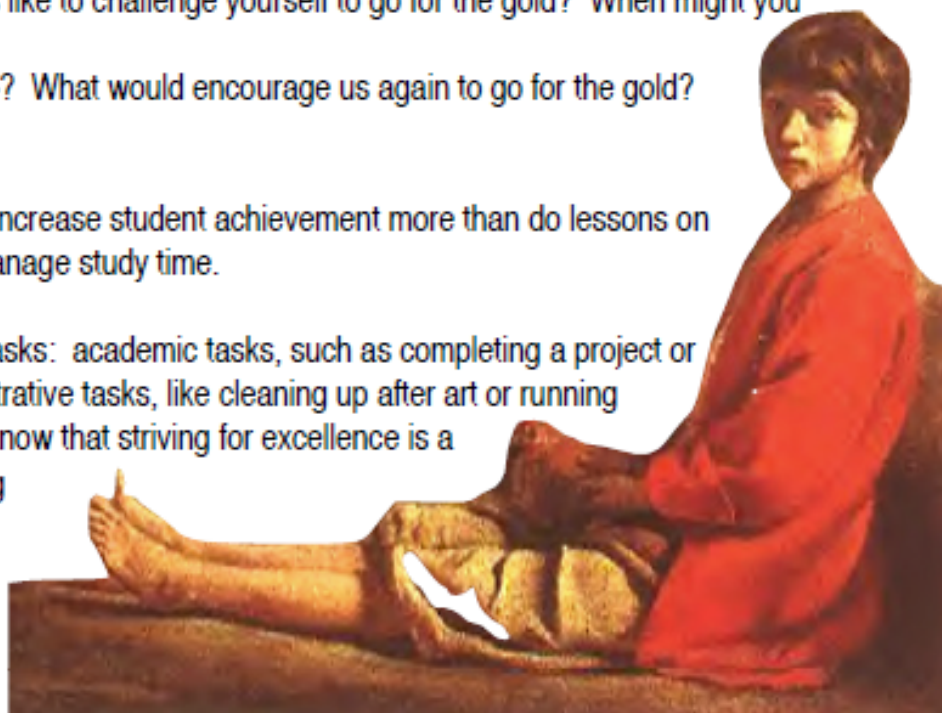
- *Striving:* Doing the very best you can, not doing just an ordinary job. Reaching far beyond the level of work you might do without this special challenge. Perhaps reaching for a level of excellence you never attained before. In essence, going for the gold.
- *Risking:* Trying new behaviors. Not saying with what you know you can readily handle. Perhaps reaching out for unfamiliar skills, speed, accuracy. Stretching yourself.
- *Persisting:* Not giving up. Sticking to it. Overcoming any urge to handle the task at a level below your very, very best. Absolutely refusing to accept less from yourself.

You might conclude by discussing which experience felt more satisfying and which produced better results. Some follow-up questions:

- \* How did you do? What was hard? What was fun? Did anything surprise you?
- \* Why do you think it's important to accept yourself if, this time, you didn't do your very best? What might happen if you didn't accept yourself in this situation>?
- \* What if someone's best is not as good as another person's best?
- \* What would you say about this quote: "It's not whether you win or lose. It's about how you play the game."
- \* How many of you would sometimes like to challenge yourself to go for the gold? When might you do that?
- \* How can we celebrate your efforts>? What would encourage us again to go for the gold? Why would we want to do that?

Evidence suggests that such lessons increase student achievement more than do lessons on ways to improve comprehension or manage study time.

As teachers, we give students many tasks: academic tasks, such as completing a project or a homework assignment; and administrative tasks, like cleaning up after art or running errands. We would want students to know that striving for excellence is a choice always available when handling any of these tasks.





## Strategy 25–8: Personal Model

**Purpose:** To communicate high expectations through teacher modeling.

**Description:** Exemplifying a person who works with high DESCAs — dignity, energy, self-management, community, and awareness.

Historian and author Will Durant reminds us that “we teach more by what we are than by what we teach.” What we are speaks loudly — perhaps more loudly than anything we can say. It is best then, to practice what we preach. If we want to see our students working with high DESCAs — dignity, energy, self-management, community and awareness — we would do well to strive to do the same. More specifically, we should strive to act

- With dignity, ready to assert our own needs.
- With energy, not drained by too many commitments.
- With self-management, not afraid to take initiative.
- With a sense of community, not trying to go it alone.
- With awareness, alert to the needs of our students and ourselves.

When we shine our own light, we are more likely to see our students shining theirs.

## Strategy 25 – 9: Inspiring Stories

**Purpose:** To strengthen student idealism and encourage students to act on their ideals.

**Description:** Calling attention to people with inspiring life stories.

Many teachers report it worthwhile to call attention to people who exemplify high levels of idealism or who successfully overcame serious obstacles, such as Helen Keller, Jackie Robinson, Nelson Mandela, and Thomas Edison. We might ask students to reflect on the stories of such people, to write about or illustrate their lives, or to role-play how they themselves might handle similar situations. For one rich source of inspiring stories, see the *Chicken Soup* series by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. We might also take time to share inspiring stories from our own life and encourage students to do the same. And we might create an area for posting inspiring stories, quotes, pictures, or anything else that we or our students find inspiring. Inspired students, after all, are not most likely to produce inspired schoolwork and to grow up to become positive, inspired citizens.



Check Lasallian Themes for an overall picture of the use of “the reflection.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Reflection,” LASALLIAN THEMES #2, article 50 by Brother Gerard Rummery, pages 146-153