

Becoming best State of Victoria School

- Bentleigh West Primary School



The role of the principal is a uniquely complex one. Principals are responsible for the entire educational direction and operations of the school. Communication is important mobilising the community to work towards a common direction to benefit all children. Fostering leadership within the school to build a cohesive learning community encompassing highly effective teams to ensure high quality and sustainable outcomes is the goal of any school.

Many leadership courses outline the importance of leadership, vision, effective communication and teamwork and few give the tools and have wide ranging impact that helps develop each individual in the organisation. The journey towards implementing UHM started with my own training, then the training of the leadership team and finally whole staff engagement over the period of three years.

The Universal Hierarchy of Motivation

The Universal Hierarchy of Motivation (UHM) provides a framework to analyse leadership at the individual and organisational level.

I have used the UHM to understand myself and leadership style to a deep level.

Understanding who you are as a person and a leader has allowed me to lead more naturally and stress free. I now understand my strengths and weaknesses more. I design my working day differently. I am much more aware of my communication blind spots and the errors I am more likely to make. This has allowed me to incorporate feedback and checks to help me be more effective.

In understanding myself I learned to value the importance of all members of the organisation gaining an insight into themselves. Having the UHM as a common model also provided a platform to build a consistent language and reference point to relational work.

Results

This has had a profound impact on the school in the following ways:

- How we run meetings.
- How we give feedback for growth.
- How we communicate.
- How we construct our teams.
- The strategic management of the school.



Feedback and Observations

The feedback from staff has been very positive with one teacher stating it had changed their life and others reporting the benefits of the learning at work transferring to help productive relationships at home.

We have found the model has helped us analyse miscommunication and conflict from a UHM point of view rather than a personal point of view, so assumptions and blaming have become rarer.

The school has successfully implemented wide scale changes and has seen an improvement in academic results, staff opinion results and parent opinion results.

We have also seen the acceleration in development of our leaders.

Two people have been employed from the school in principal roles that were part of the leadership team.

Principal: Steven Capp