

4MAT training supports middle school introduction

4MAT System is a conceptual model for organising curriculum content which assists teachers to develop creative learning that stimulates student engagement.

Founded in the US by Bernice McCarthy, the training system has been used for nearly 30 years in the US, Canada, Europe and Australia.

Schools that use this method report:

- Improved levels of student engagement
- Improvements in student learning outcomes
- Increased teacher motivation and satisfaction
- Improved teacher co-operation and collaboration
- A standard and quality of student work that exceeds teacher expectations.

The 4MAT model is a simple and practical way of helping teachers to make the transition from theory into practice through an understanding of learning preferences and the latest research on the brain.

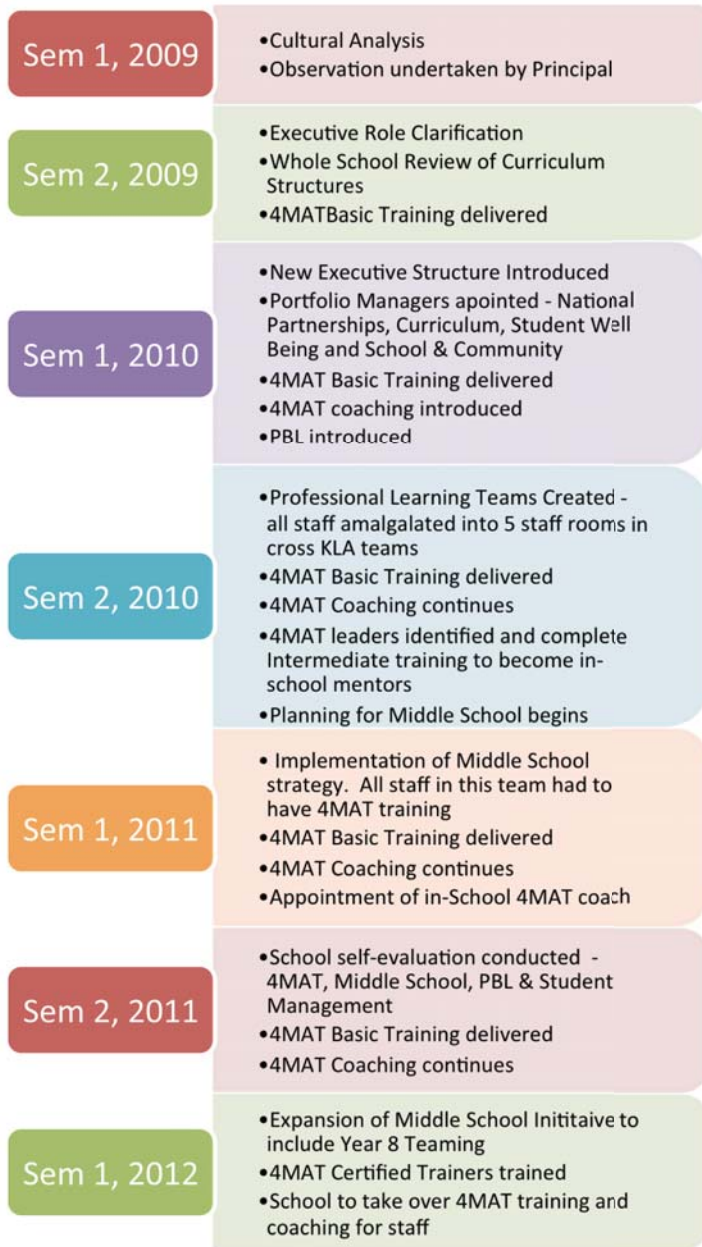
Once teachers are aware of the range of learning styles, they are able to identify and utilise new skills and techniques that are effective with a wider range of learning preferences other than their own, so it has a direct impact on how effective they are as teachers. It is a system of teaching that ensures within a classroom every learner has an opportunity to learn in a way that suits their personal style and has the opportunity to stretch themselves into the other styles.

The first group of Year 7 teachers at Sarah Redfern commenced 4MAT basic training in Semester 2 2009, followed by further training and coaching during 2010–2011.

Karen Endicott believes (and she is supported in this by the staff) that the teaming approach introduced for Year 7 in 2011 has succeeded only because 4MAT provided a coherent pedagogical approach. This ensured teachers could integrate key content from three different learning areas, while maintaining the integrity of the content, to provide a cohesive, logical sequence of learning for students.

The early results about the impact of this work are encouraging. While there are still students performing at or below the minimum standard in NAPLAN tests, results for Year 7 students in the middle school 4MAT pilot are significant:

- Attendance improved for all students by 7.5 per cent from 2010, while attendance levels for boys improved by 12%
- Suspensions reduced by 56 per cent and only two of these were as a result of classroom behaviour



A standard and quality of student work that exceeds teacher expectations

- In the NAPLAN areas of reading, grammar, punctuation and numeracy, students are showing growth rates that are between 9 and 15 points above the state average.
- With significant benefits to student results after one year of implementation, the program

will be continued and expanded in 2012 to include Year 8.

4MAT training is now part of teacher induction training at the school and all teaching programs are being converted into 4MAT units by providing time for staff to work collaboratively on their curriculum.

As the program continues, key staff will be certified as 4MAT trainers to develop a depth of knowledge within the school and to allow them to continue delivering training and coaching for new staff in-house. **ET**