

“Time is the First Technology” – by Ira David Socol

A great blog to read - posted on [March 20, 2022](#) by Greg Miller

A few weeks back, I had the great fortune to meet (Zoom) with [Dwayne Matthews](#). Early on in our conversation, I shared a little bit about what we are doing at [St Luke’s Marsden Park](#). He was most interested in how we used time. I explained how we are trying [to push the boundaries of a traditional 9-3 school day](#) through:

- Friday Half-day for K-6;
- late starts three days a week for Years 9-12; and,
- how we are establishing a learning cycle in Years 7-11 of face to face, consolidation (from the previous lesson) and preparation (for the next lesson).

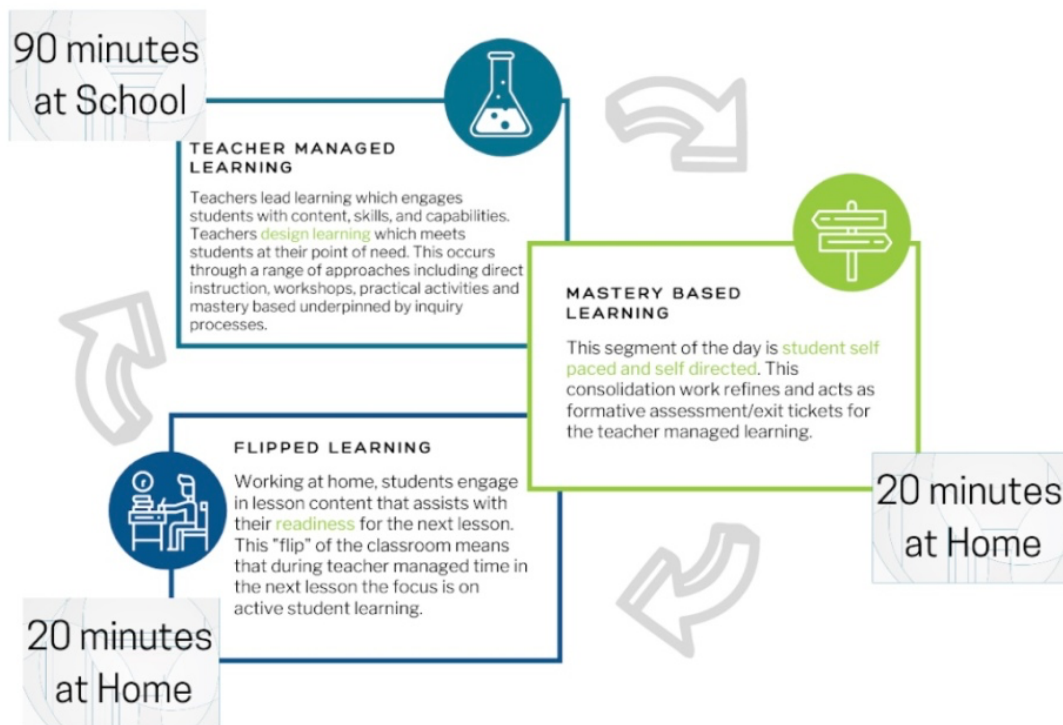
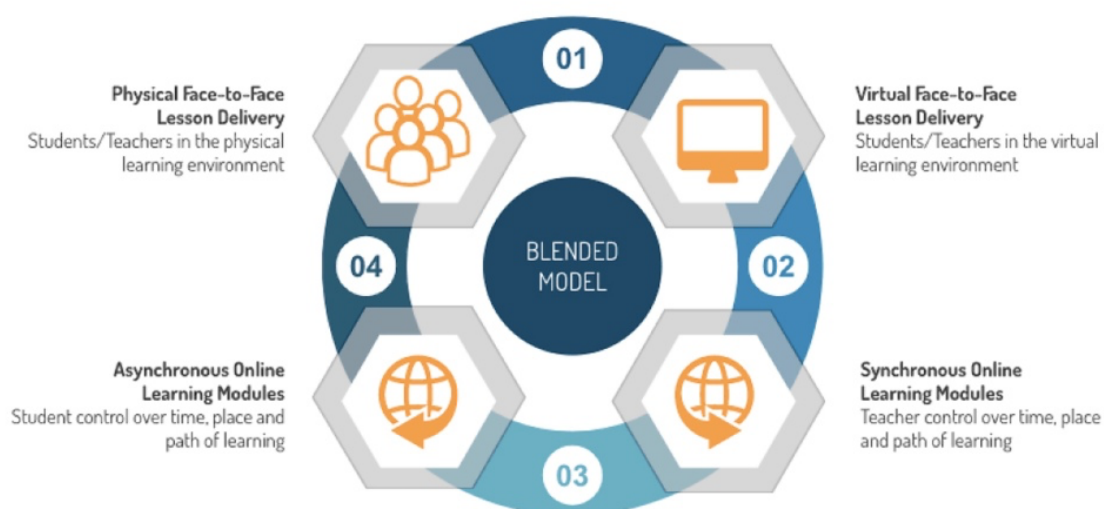


Image developed by Kelly Bauer – Head of School of Entrepreneurs – St Luke’s, Marsden Park.

Dwayne was affirming of the work we are doing at St Luke's by reflecting, "You are way ahead of most people I speak with."

Further on in our conversation, Dwayne mentioned how his school, the [Ontario Virtual School](#) (OVS) offers the Ontario High School Diploma (NSW HSC equivalent) to anyone anywhere in the world. They have 100,000 students who learn virtually, usually through "time chunked videos" (2-3mins) where they learn content and concepts accredited to the Ontario core curriculum. If students hit a hurdle they seek out support for their immediate network, usually other students, for assistance. If they then stall, they go to an expert – the teacher – who usually assists the student to access the success they have not had achieved to that point. One unintended outcome of this approach has been 'time shift accreditation', a reality where students make their way through the curriculum in less time than the 'indicative hours' of the core curriculum.

If we do what Dwayne and others do at OVS, we will reflect that a school day lasts 6 hours. What could we do if it took only 2 or 3 hours for students to satisfactorily cover accredited content? What creative models could we create with the additional 3 or 4 hours? Asking such a question might see a deep dive into which artificial intelligence can provide accelerated feedback for students or which sophisticated technologies can support teachers to more effectively track student progress and achievement at different rates and levels. Locally, it might provoke St Luke's and other Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) schools to consider a mainstream version of CEDP's [School of Now](#) for the majority of students able to utilise a device, possibly as young as Stage 2, 8 years of age.



School of Now Learning Model

Elsewhere, but still related to the concept of time, I read, [*The New Zealander trying to revolutionise the working week: 'It's a rational business decision'*](#). Andrew Barnes raises the concept of a 4 day working week which is getting traction through [4 Day Week Global](#), a non-profit group expecting to run trials with 300-500 companies internationally this year. Barnes himself, in 2018 trialled an 80-100-100 rule: 80% hours, to accomplish 100% of the work, for 100% pay. The experiment worked. Productivity rose, staff were happier. He made the change permanent.

Will something like this get traction in school settings? As I wrote on Twitter, *"For the fire brigade, police, some health services, 4 day weeks (sometimes across a weekend) have been a reality for a while. Methinks schools will be the last place a 4 day week will occur even though curriculum can be covered in 4 x 6 hour days."*

The above reading and conversation was complemented by [Undoing Academic Time](#), a rather forthright blog written by [Ira David Socol](#). Ira's blog contains many many challenging statements including those listed below...

"Time is the 'first technology' because it is the most controlling of all the structures which define 'school'. Learning is, of course, timeless. It exists in its own temporal zone, unique to each individual, and different for each thing 'learned'. But school is all about the clock.

"And of course, a mediocre work turned in "on time" trumps a great work that's 'late'."

"... within schools, we must stop dividing time between 'play' and 'learning'."

"Assignments need to stop having dates on them."

" 'School work' needs to stop being separated from life by the hard line of 'school time' and 'non-school time'."

"If a student comes to class 'late' or leaves early the question is not one of '[bell compliance](#)' but of how to do that politely and without disrupting others."

"If a student chooses an extended lunch (usually 'extended' from something obscenely short) over class attendance, this needs to be viewed as [a micro-economic decision](#), and not a behaviour issue."

When reflecting on Ira's blog, the 4 day working week and my conversation with Dwayne, I have no idea what the implications will be for schools. After staff, **TIME is the greatest resource in a school setting.** I am hope-filled that schools will move into the future continually learning how to best use time as we seek new (and better) ways of learning as well as new ways (and better) ways of working.