

Junior School Newsletter 4 Wednesday 24 March 2010

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed 24 March	Thinkfest
Mon 29/3 – Thurs 1 April	ELC Parent Teacher Interviews
Wed 31/3, Thurs 1/4, Tues 6/4	Yrs 1-6 Parent Teacher Interviews

Contact Numbers for Junior School

ELC Reception	6162 6298 8am- 4pm
1 - 4 Reception	6162 5330 8am- 4pm
5 - 6 Reception	6162 6290 8am – 10.30am

Reading Challenge “Payment”

As I write this I am slowly recovering from the sliming last Friday! My clothes, however, are beyond repair. After watching the twenty brave staff who volunteered to support me get ‘slimed’ by two students each, I wasn’t quite prepared for all forty to then slime me! Well done to all our boys and girls and families who were able to join us to celebrate a remarkable reading response from your wonderful children, 554 643 pages – next year ... no slime for certain.

I would also like to thank Shane and Natalie Seears (Seears Workwear) for providing some weather proof overalls for the teachers, I should have used one.



Thinkfest

Today all our students in Years 1-6 have enjoyed a thinking challenge day. In small teams they have been challenged to respond to short term and long term questions which require team work, critical thinking, decision making, creativity, reflection, drama, independence, enthusiasm and energy.

We have managed to have our own ‘Tournament of Minds’ for the day – well done.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Our first reporting cycle commences shortly with our Parent/Teacher Interviews. ELC classes will be over the following period Monday 29 March to Thursday 1 April, while interviews for Years 1 to 6 will be held Wednesday 31 March, Thursday 1 April and Tuesday 6 April.

These interviews are important as they enable teachers and parents the opportunity to discuss programs, progress, settling in and outcomes after nine weeks together.

Bookings will be made through Junior School or ELC reception, with further information out this week.

Homework Policy

Each year I revisit our Homework Policy, as I am aware that Homework is often the cause of anxiety in households. Our approach to Homework is stated in our diaries, and reflects our student-centred approach. Our aim is to ensure we don't create Mum and Dad Homework, or a system where Homework is crammed into one evening. We attempt to ensure that Homework reflects work attempted that day. I ask that families check our policy – if students are working longer than our set time – have them stop and tell the teacher. If they are having difficulties, let them bring it to class – it shouldn't be Mum and Dad work, we can see if they understand the concept or not. Finally, if you think we aren't offering enough homework, let us know – we can provide some additional sites etc to support our student needs. It shouldn't be an anxious time.

Literacy and Numeracy “Block Times” in the Junior School Years 1 to 6

Most Junior Schools or Primary Schools will have daily blocked times to allow a deep focus upon Literacy and or Numeracy. Included within this time could be Guided Reading, Guided Writing, Grammar, Maths groups, Spelling – Wordwork and so much more. We, too, do this each day, working with language and Mathematics that doesn't fit into our Program of Inquiries.

Our difference, however, is significant. Research indicates that student outcomes are increased if class teachers are able to access additional aides or other staff in the classroom. This year we have been able to allocate more teacher aide assistance in our classrooms, with our teachers, at these times to allow more students access to staff. Our Literacy and Numeracy block times are rocketing along – no change in direction but deeper learning opportunities.

Finally, as we head towards Week 9, we are all conscious that 'our troops' are a little tired. We have longer school days, have a very intense, busy program, and extensive cocurricular programs. We are supporting them on the playground and in the classrooms – they are doing well, but looking forward to the break.

AND....I know, I know.... a Lara update. She has decided she would prefer to climb rather than learn to walk – our coffee table is very exciting, not so the timber floors.

Paul Southwell

Head of Junior School



Radford Junior School

Story Writing Competition

2010

ARE YOU A STORY TELLER?

Enter the SECOND ever Radford Junior School
Story Writing competition!

Your task...

- Write a story of no more than 500 words.
- Your story must be original, or an interpretation of an existing story.
- Include a signature item in your story. This year's signature item is 'duck'. For example the signature item 'duck' could be (although certainly not limited to):
- a quacking duck...ducking under something etc...

Prizes...

- The competition will be run in two age groups (5-7 years and 8+ years).
- The two best entries from each age group will gain entry into the Wakakirri Story Writing Competition
- A variety of prizes will be awarded at school...

Judging Criteria...

Story	50 marks (Clarity, Creativity, Originality, Entertainment)
Delivery	50 marks (Writing Style, Story Structure)
Total	100 marks

Due Date: Friday 25th June

Please email your story to Mr N Martin
nicolas.martin@radford.act.edu.au

TUNING IN to the PYP

Now that we have an understanding of the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) let's move into the very heart of the program...The Learner Profile.

The Learner Profile is a description of the type of learner we are hoping to develop. We want our students to be:

Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced and Reflective.

These attributes are embedded in everything we do at Radford Junior School. Each Unit of Inquiry has several attributes as a focus. Throughout the unit these attributes are explicitly taught and reinforced through the context and content of the unit.

The language of the Learner Profile is used daily allowing a shared understanding of the attributes to develop throughout the school gaining depth as a child moves from PreK to Year 6. Our awards at our Celebrations are based on the Learner Profile. Our comments on our written reports use the Learner Profile as a guide.



Have a chat with your child...ask them if they know the attributes of the Learner Profile.

Try to use them in your daily lives...

"It was so **caring** when you made me breakfast in bed"

"What a great question...excellent **inquiring**"

"I know that is difficult...can you be a **risk-taker**?"

"We need to live a **balanced** life...homework now, TV later"

Or you can ask them...

"Which attribute of the Learner Profile do you think you just displayed?"

"We are about to enter the museum, which attributes of the Learner Profile do we need to show?"

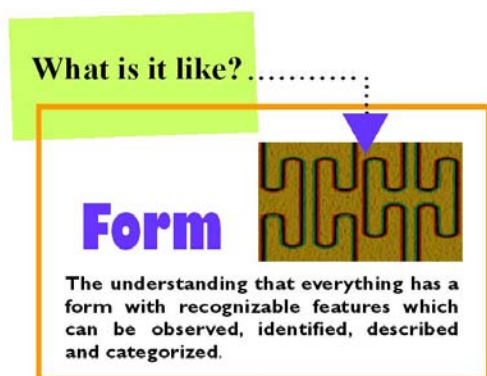
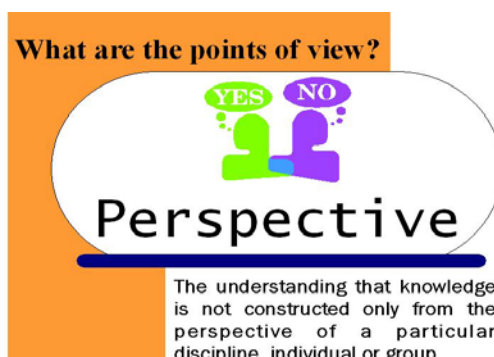
Don't forget to ask why...make them give you a reason!

Nicolas Martin

Director of Studies Years 3-6

Extending our students through the IBPYP key concepts

Parents often ask of their child's classroom teacher "what strategies and tools are you using to extend my child?" Extending students (gifted, talented or otherwise) is something every teacher is conscious of. It is fair to say that many of us find it both time consuming and challenging to find authentic and rich learning experiences that truly extend our students. Gone are the days where we simply 'extend' students by giving them activities or textbooks that are aimed at a higher age or year level (vertical extension). Instead, 'thinking teachers' are attempting to encourage 'thinking students' by providing them with opportunities to extend their learning in an authentic manner. Such opportunities are aimed at gaining a wider and deeper understanding of the 'big issues' being discussed in class (horizontal extension).

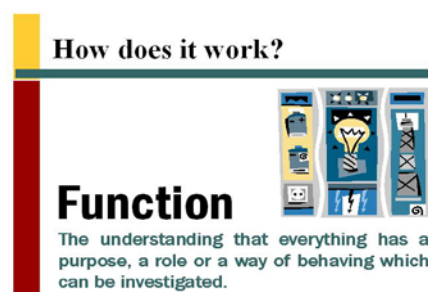


One way in which we can extend our students horizontally is through the use of the IBPYP concepts. The eight key concepts of form, function, connection, causation, change, perspective, responsibility and reflection are an important 'arm' of the PYP and the taught curriculum. Each unit of inquiry is underpinned by two or three of these concepts. The teacher questions and the associated learning opportunities that occur

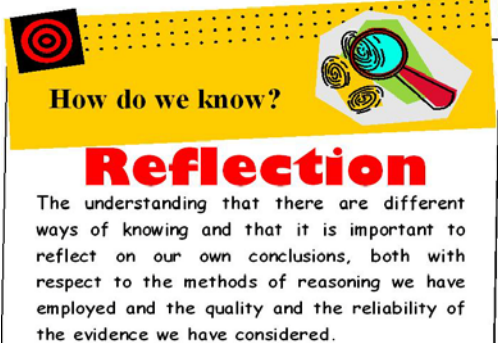
in class are linked directly to the 'focus' concepts that form the basis of each unit. Given this emphasis on the concepts, it makes sense then for students to be given the chance to actively apply these concepts as a way to extend their own understanding of those issues being discussed in class.

Extending students using the eight key concepts - an example

Every unit of inquiry is taught using specific and targeted teacher questions to guide students through their inquiry. As facilitators of the inquiry, we also encourage our students to ask their own questions and inquire into their own learning. Each question (teacher or student) can generally be classified and grouped into one of the eight key concepts.



Whilst we, as teachers, may focus our teaching on two or three identified concepts as part of our questions, many children are interested in exploring their own questions related to different concepts. It is at this point that we step in and extend such students by allowing them the opportunity to go 'deeper' and develop new insights and understandings.



How do we know?

Reflection

The understanding that there are different ways of knowing and that it is important to reflect on our own conclusions, both with respect to the methods of reasoning we have employed and the quality and the reliability of the evidence we have considered.

In order to extend these students and facilitate their inquiries, we allocate regular times for our students to refer to their questions and give them the opportunity to investigate one or more of their questions in greater detail. Using a model such as Kath Murdoch's inquiry model, the children begin to conduct their own individual or group inquiries. They first begin with what they know about their chosen question. They

then research their questions further, using both primary and secondary sources, to find out and sort new information and knowledge. This new understanding and knowledge may then lead to new questions. Following this stage, students then begin to share their new understandings and knowledge and draw their own conclusions. At this point, they may decide to stop with their inquiry or possibly take action.

Summary

The IBPYP concepts provide students with the opportunity to delve deeper into their own inquiries and gain greater insight and understanding of their questions. By providing regular opportunities for our students to actively use and apply these concepts in class, we are encouraging them to approach their learning in a deeper, more analytical manner. At the same time, we are attempting to extend their learning beyond more traditional textbook challenges designed to fast-track their learning vertically through the curriculum as opposed to horizontally.

David Gocentas
Year 6 Teacher

Workshop on Autism Spectrum Disorder

The two day workshop and information sessions for parents/ carers of school aged students on the autism spectrum are part of the *Positive Partnerships: supporting school aged students on the autism spectrum* initiatives. These initiatives are funded by the Department of Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) through the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package, and also includes a national professional development program for teachers and other school staff. The *Positive Partnerships* initiatives are being developed and delivered by the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC).

Workshop details

Venue: The Centre for Teaching & Learning 51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

When: **Two-Day Workshop** – 30 April & 1 May 2010

Day 1: 9.00 am - 4.30 p.m (**Registration from 8.15am**)

Day 2: Information Sessions 9 am – 4.00 pm

For further information or registration forms please contact Mr D Mackay.