From the Principal

Fast feedback facilitates learning

To ensure student progress we must have the active involvement of the students in their learning and an effective classroom assessment program aligned to the intended curriculum. Students need to be given a clear understanding of the intent of each lesson to ensure they know what is it is they are expected to know and be able to do. This enables students to maintain a clear focus on the goals of the lesson.

Students must also fully understand the knowledge and skills they need to develop in order to be successful in a particular assessment task. If students are clear about the success criteria to be used to measure their understanding, then they can begin to self-assess, judging their understanding against these criteria. Students who are provided with feedback during the teaching and learning process will have greater motivation to achieve as they have clear steps to follow in order to improve their understanding.

Assessment in the classroom is a continuous process and is at the heart of effective teaching. Student information is collected and used to determine their progress towards a particular learning goal. The teaching and learning experiences the students receive are then adjusted and modified to take into account the results of the assessment.

Students need SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and timely) learning goals. These goals are best determined in consultation with their teachers in response to information gathered by formative and diagnostic assessment tasks. The steps to achieving these goals should be clear to the students.

By providing fast effective feedback to students, assessment has positive effects and becomes a tool to promote learning because students are able to understand what they need to do next to improve their skills. Teaching students the importance of assessing themselves is also vital as they begin to take ownership of their own learning journey.

Anzac Service

Our ANZAC service was held at the school on Tuesday 19th April, to which the community was invited. After an introduction from Mrs Crocos, there were readings from staff members, Brenda and Lindy, from Chelsea representing the P&C, and from our School Captain, Amelia. Our official guest, Mr Richard Scott from the HUGHENDEN RSL, gave the main address. Glen Wright, also from the HUGHENDEN RSL, accompanied Richard and did a great job as flag orderly.

The students had previously researched the roles of various animals (horses, pigeons and dogs) in war. Each student presented a summary of their findings at the service. Both the official party and the students laid wreaths at the school memorial, and the community placed poppies. Lest We Forget.
Quadrennial School Review (QSR)

Our enthusiastic QSR Team – minus Stacey but plus one junior!

Our QSR is well underway with lots of discussions taking place about the future directions for our children.

I would like to remind everyone that the school review team will be visiting on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th April. We would like as many members of the community as possible to visit CDSS on Thursday afternoon from 2pm to speak to the reviewers about our school. Dads are especially welcome as well, as we tend to see you less frequently.

Three-way conferences
Mrs Crocos has introduced a new format for parent-teacher interviews; a three-way conference whereby the students are included in the process. The students assist in leading the discussion with the parents and the teacher, so they have an inclusive role in communicating their strengths and the areas needing more work. In this way, the students take more ownership of their school progress, leading to a better understanding between students, parents and teachers.

New e-Kindy facilitator
This term we are lucky to have Lynette McCarthy (Rocket) to facilitate the e-Kindy activities on Wednesdays and Thursdays. A bonus is that the children already know Rocket from their swimming lessons. The e-Kindy kids are really enjoying their activities and developing skills in interaction with their peers as well as having fun and becoming familiar with school routines.

Mrs Townley’s bit
Congratulations to the children who participated in the ANZAC day service, it was a wonderful morning and the students delivered their pieces like seasoned public speakers. The morning tea afterwards, as usual at Cameron Downs, was an enjoyable and delicious feast! The students have started training for the Athletics Carnival, practising events such as shot put, discus, high jump and long jump. They are putting in a big effort and working towards achieving personal goals. In History the students have been looking at wars in the build up to ANZAC day. We have started dance for our Arts unit this term, it is very pleasing to see all students participating and giving a big effort to learn their steps. Great work students.

Pilates at Cameron Downs.
A few weeks ago we had a visit from Jeannie and Bernie, our enthusiastic ladies from the Rural and Remote Family Services group. After participating in activities with the playgroup and eKindy kids, they treated us to a Pilates session, a first for Cameron Downs. Everybody, staff, students and eKindy kids set themselves up on mats placed on the lawn under our shady trees; a very pleasant place to be.

Jeannie took us through a series of stretches and Pilates routines, while reminding us of the need to maintain core body strength for long-term good health. Our star performer was Mackenzie, an eKindy kid, who set herself up right in front of Jeannie, and followed every exercise to the letter. Well done Mackenzie.

Thanks to Jeannie and Bernie for an enjoyable session; we didn’t even mind a little bit of muscle stiffness the next day!

Special visitors to Cameron Downs
Last week Peter and Susan Maguire visited the school. Peter’s late mother, Bonnie, was the school’s “unofficial Grandmother” back in the mid-1990’s. After responding to a “Letters to the Editor” piece placed in the Courier Mail by the students, Bonnie began to write to the students as a pen-pal, and then began to send parcels of various goodies, and hand-made cards, for each student. Bonnie did visit the school after a couple of years of this association, and had a special relationship with the school and Jenny Underwood (nee Oswin), who was the principal at the time. Some of the community families will remember Bonnie.
Visitors Peter and Susan Maguire

With this background, Peter & Susan were understandably very keen to visit the school when their travels brought them to the district. After a good chat and a few photos they left the school with an updated understanding of our school and community, and a refreshment of memories of Bonnie’s involvement.

Chappies Corner

In my continuing series on the seven key roles of chaplaincy in schools, we have so far looked at the roles of social and emotional support, followed by mentoring and role modelling. This week I’d like to talk about the role of educational support.

There is a two-way relationship between a child’s wellbeing and their success at school. Young people are able to make the most of their schooling when they are doing well in general.

Because of this, schools are important sites not only for the educational development of children, but also for their social and emotional development as well. At school, alongside gaining the foundations for educational success, children develop their self-esteem and social skills; participate in a range of cultural, sporting and other leisure activities; and broaden their spheres of influence to include peers, teachers and other adult role models.

Successful engagement in and completion of secondary schooling has been shown to promote good health and wellbeing; success with employment, higher education, independence and economic security; and positive participation in society.

Schools develop a deliberate, coordinated school-wide approach to promoting both learning and wellbeing. Schools seek to create a safe and healthy school environment; provide mental health and life skills education to young people; provide appropriate referral pathways to mental health services; engage with a broad range of mental health education stakeholders; provide opportunities for youth participation and consultation; implement health-promoting policies and practices; and provide professional development and training for staff.

In Australia, whole school approaches to learning and wellbeing such as these are seen to lead the way in effective, innovative wellbeing promotion and improving educational engagement, education and employment outcomes and other aspects of social inclusion.

SU QLD school chaplains promote the kinds of positive learning environments that are the “core business of schools”. They are well-placed to advance the goals of whole school approaches to learning and wellbeing by participating in or facilitating activities that promote a rich school culture and positive ethos, create a sense of belonging that leads to positive behaviour, improved student attendance and higher academic achievement.

School chaplains engage with students in conversations about their school behaviour, school engagement and educational pathways; and occasionally run tutoring, reading or transition programs.

School chaplains also provide support to teachers in classrooms through running in-class activities and providing one-on-one support for students with extra needs.

So in these ways, SU QLD school chaplains contribute to both the overall and educational wellbeing of children and young people, fulfilling our vision to see them experience fullness of life.

Next time we’ll look at the role of chaplains with respect to extra-curricular activities.

Book Fair on Monday May 9th

Book Fair will be available from Monday 9th May, and we are hoping for community support for this fundraising event. Come and visit the school and check out the books.

Remember that Playgroup will also be held on this day. The Rural and Remote Family Services Health Care ladies will also be present.

Hughenden Show Café

Remember to support our Café at the Hughenden Show on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th of May
Some information about NAPLAN

NAPLAN testing dates: 10th to 12th May

Preparing for NAPLAN by Andrew Fuller - Article provided by David Christiansen – Guidance Officer.

Let’s start by letting you know what NAPLAN is not. It is not a measure of how intelligent you are. It is not a measure of what you are capable of. Your results on NAPLAN don’t effect if you pass the year or not.

I could tell you as a psychologist that your results on NAPLAN aren’t worth worrying about, but I’m not sure you are going to believe me. So if you have ever felt butterflies in your stomach or a headache whenever you think of a coming test or NAPLAN, the ideas in this paper are for you.

Everybody gets stressed.
Everyone gets stressed during tests and exams, even the people who say that they don’t. Look around in a room where people are doing a test or exam. Even those people who are yawning, looking bored or stretching and looking as cool as cucumbers, are stressed. That means everyone has to learn how to cope with these feelings. It is not just you!

Stress can block your memory, give you a queasy tummy, make you lie awake at night, give you a dry throat or a headache - these aren’t nice feelings to have.

Get Stressed
The first strategy to dealing with stress is to get stressed. Huh? Makes no sense? Let me explain. Stress feels yucky but it is actually your body’s way of preparing you to perform at your best. Blood gets pumped to your arms and legs, your heart speeds up, and non-essential services like your digestion slow down - you are ready to take on the world. So stress might feel unpleasant but realising that it is your body’s way of revving you up and helping you to perform at your best, will help you to keep these feelings in perspective.
Write Out Your Worries
The second strategy to deal with the stress of an upcoming test or exam is to grab a piece of paper one or two days before the test and write down all your concerns about it. Write out an answer to the question, “What would happen if I fail this test?” (Even though you can’t fail NAPLAN). Then write out an answer to the next question, “If I did fail what would happen then?” Read your written answers aloud to yourself. Even if doing well is really, really important to you, knowing your fears will calm you. Answering the question, “If I did fail, what would happen then?” helps you to make a back-up plan.

Chew Something.
Ok you’ve done all of that and you still feel nervy. The third strategy is to eat or chew on something either before or during the test or exam. Check with your teacher that chewing something is allowed in test and exam rooms. If chewing is not allowed, at least chew something just before entering the test. Some jellybeans or fruit would be ideal. Stress happens when we feel we are in a dangerous situation. It is an automatic process that we can’t completely control. Eating or chewing on something sends a signal to your body that says, “Well, if I’m chewing something I can’t be in total danger, so relax a bit.”

Focus on now.
Stress can spin your head. It can have you thinking all sorts of weird ideas. Stress can have you remembering that time you failed all those years ago or that time you were so embarrassed by something. Stress can also blow things out of all proportion and have you predicting bad things in your future. The past is no longer with you and the future hasn’t happened yet. Worrying has never changed anything in the past and predictions about the future are usually wrong. Doing well on a test or exam means you need to focus on the question in front of you now. Keep reminding yourself, “What do I need to do right now?”

Build Momentum
Answer a question that feels easy first off in a test or exam to build up your confidence.

Breathe Out - S L O W L Y
When you feel stressed one of the fastest ways to calm down is to breathe out slowly. We all have a calm down system that is controlled by our breathing. If you breathe out and count silently to yourself, “one thousand, two thousand, three thousand”, you will start to feel calmer.

Stand tall walk proud
Your brain is incredibly intelligent. In fact, you possess at the top your neck, humanity’s latest upgrade- the most intelligent brain in all of history. But! Your brain is also incredibly stupid. It believes what you tell it. This means if you stand-up and maintain a powerful posture your body sends a signal to your brain that tells it you are feeling in charge of things and it can reduce your stress hormones.

Look after yourself
- **Breakfast**- eat “brain food” the morning before. Have a higher protein, lower carbohydrate mix at breakfast. That means less toast and more eggs.
- **Drink water**- water lowers your levels of cortisol that causes stressful feelings. Avoid energy drinks as they rev you up and may interfere with your levels of concentration.
- **Sleep well**- try to get a good night’s sleep the night before. If you are feeling really worried, set an alarm so you can wake up early and feel awake and ready.

Make yourself smarter
The biggest obstacle you face in doing well at a test or exam is not your brain. You have plenty of intelligence. The big issue is your level of anxiety. If you take the time to prepare for the test or exam and use the strategies suggested in this sheet, you will perform at your best.

Keep Calm and Carry On
You have many, many skills that will NOT be assessed by NAPLAN. Tests and exams are important, but they are not the big predictors of life success. Do your best and prepare as well as you can but don’t make the mistake of thinking that your score on NAPLAN is a measure of your intelligence or predicts your future.