



# L2L NEWSLETTER

## Learning to Learn

*Focus on Student Assessment!*



### Year 8

#### *Great News from Year 8 L2L*

The Year 8 CLE “Mythconceptions” integrates outcomes from the KLAs of Science, PEPDH, and English. The major assessment for the CLE was an in class essay writing task. Kelly was the author of the task, and, as an English teacher, was a little apprehensive about the students’ ability to write essays. Kelly instigated a 3 pronged attack to help them prepare:

- Students in the Literacy Support Focused Learning group were given the essay writing scaffold first. The scaffold was explained to them through a whole group essay writing activity. These students were then given an essay topic to complete with guidance from LAs, in focused Learning.
- We used L2L to guide the whole of year 8 through the same scaffold. The L2L group were given a different practice essay to complete.
- The same scaffold was used to prepare students for their CLE assessment in Learning Sessions prior to the essay task.

Throughout this 3 pronged attack, LAs guiding the students used the same language and thinking processes with students, so that they were clear on the structure and purpose of an essay, regardless of the topic.

### Thanks to the “Laptop Man”

Year 7 had two days Learning To Learn with the aid of their laptops. Students were led through a range of activities and shown many aspects of how best to use their computers. As usual, Dave’s style ensured that all students were engaged and enjoyed their learning experience. Below is a list of topics that Dave worked through with the students. The staff who were able to be there at various times also got an enormous amount out of Dave’s input. How would you go? Neil (Editor)

#### Day 1

##### Session 1 – Computer Management

- Home folders — organising, viewing, what not to change, Sidebar, Dock, Columns
- Saving, opening, Switching applications
- Backing up, Sync, Locations

##### Session 2 – Internet & Safari

- Authentication, changing passwords
- MyClasses, MyMail
- Searching, Tab browsing
- Dictionary & Thesaurus
- Widgets, iChat

##### Session 3 – Hotmaths & Journaling

- Registering, Logging-in
- Tutorials
- Question LevelsQuiz
- Using Journaller

#### Day 2 – Tuesday 27 February

##### Session 1 – Computer Management & Applications

- Battery Management, DVD Player
- Connecting to the Server – Drop Box
- Applications, iTunes, iPhoto

##### Session 2 – Applications

- Word, Pages, PowerPoint, Keynote
- iCal, Stickies, Others

##### Session 3 – MyClasses

- Accessing, Saving Files, Server





Kelly was absolutely delighted with the results the students were able to achieve in their first essay writing task. Especially pleasing were the efforts of the students from the Literacy Support group, who overwhelmingly managed to structure their essays clearly and provide coherent, well supported arguments. The students themselves felt that they had achieved something important, and felt confident in their ability to write essays in the future, regardless of the topic.

I believe this is a great example of how L2L gives us the opportunity to put in practice some of the best and latest research into Learning and Teaching, namely:

“The teaching of metacognitive skills should be integrated into the curriculum in a variety of subject areas” (National Research Council, 1999. *How People Learn. Bridging Research and Practice.*, National Academy Press, Washington D.C.). Learning how to write an essay is a generic learning skill that involves a complex metacognitive “internal dialogue”. Students became confident in asking themselves things like “how am I to organise my ideas?”, “what is the evidence for my arguments?”, and “what is the question asking me?”

This Week: Reflecting on Assessment Tasks

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## Year 7

There is no Learning to Learn session as such this week as the students are undertaking the intensive laptop training. As mentioned in the editorial, this very worthwhile program really sets students up to be effective and efficient learners, taking advantage of the powerful tool they have at their disposal.

Of course the other fantastic Learning to Learn experience this week is the camp. Obviously, such experiences build community as well as provide an opportunity to learn in different ways. Such learnings provide a framework for a better learning environment back in the school situation.

## Staff Learning

Another excerpt from the book “Secrets of the Teenage Brain” - Research based Strategies for Reaching and Teaching Today’s Adolescents by Sheryl Feinstein(2004)

### ***Secrets Revealed***

### ***- Teens***

### ***Overreactions***

School must be an awfully boring place if teens are so fascinated by sensational gossip, right? Why else would they spread and

exaggerate rumours about three students dying in a school bus accident that morning (when in reality, the school bus was empty and the driver wasn’t even hurt)? It turns out that the teenager’s emotion are regulated by the highly excitable and passionate amygdala. Dr Charles Nelson, the Director of the Centre of Neurobehavioural Development at the University of Minnesota, blames hysterical knee-jerk overreactions to information on “emotional lability” (read: instability) of the teenage brain. Adolescents change emotions by the nanosecond, regularly blow situations out of proportion and find something to be self-conscious about at every turn. Hormones are partly to blame, but mostly he believes it is the still maturing frontal cortex that is the root of the problem. Until it assumes full executive control of the brain’s reactions, the teenage mind will be a volatile place.

## Learning Communities Project

This year’s LCP will commence with a meeting of the pilot group in the next few weeks. Any staff who are interested in being part of this organising group, please let me know.