



CURRICULUM NEWS

Year 7, Semester One, 2015

Welcome to the first edition of Year 7 Curriculum News for 2015. A Curriculum News will be issued each semester, in addition to the 'Lalor Eagle' newsletter, as a part of our commitment to sharing the responsibility of the education of your child with you, the parents. At Year 7 your child has just entered an important stage of their education and the information contained in this circular will help you to keep in touch with what your child is learning in the classroom. By establishing and encouraging particular areas of interest you will be assisting your child with the development of future pathways. We also include a 'parent interest' reading. In this edition, the article relates to maintaining positive thought patterns with your child, which is essential for success not only in Year 7, but also in the more demanding years to come. I hope you find this information of use. If you have any queries regarding curriculum matters please contact me.

Mrs. Kaylene Kubeil,
College Curriculum Leader, Years 7-12

ENGLISH - The focus of English in Year 7 is to engage students by studying a variety of texts for enjoyment. Students listen to, read, view, interpret and evaluate texts designed to inform and persuade. In Semester One students studied the visual novella 'Lighthouse Girl' exploring themes such as family, war and friendship. Students responded to this novella with a variety of tasks. The study of this particular text was enhanced this year as 2015 marked the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, a significant event in both Australia's history, and the text itself. Another task required students to submit their own diaries. This task allowed students to explore the elements of reflective writing, and also gave Year 7 English teachers a chance to get to know their new students through reading about their thoughts and experiences. Term Two will see Oral Presentations on a particular issue taking place, a skill students at Lalor will be expected to exhibit in English from Years 7 to 12. Throughout the year, the course means that students will spend a period a fortnight in the Library, reading silently as they progress in the 'Premier's Reading Challenge'.

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) – This term, students in the English as an Additional Language class have been reading and studying the novel "Boy Overboard" by Morris Gleizman. Students have been enthusiastically developing their reading skills by reading aloud and using the choral reading strategy in class which they have thoroughly enjoyed. Students have also undertaken role play of the characters to develop their understanding of specific character traits which will assist them in their upcoming assignment. The variety of activities in the assignment will allow for students to apply their thinking in both a written and creative manner, as well as continue to develop their English language skills by focusing on comprehension and development of new vocabulary.



NUMERACY - The main successes with Numeracy classes can be seen where students' levels and confidence increase dramatically, allowing them to demonstrate a higher level of understanding of key concepts within their Mathematics. Numeracy Support is designed to support students who find understanding Maths concepts challenging and are often lacking in confidence as a result. The focus for Term One was on times tables with students practicing them on a regular basis. This is an area that can be reinforced by practice at home and through the Mathletics program. A concentration on basic number skills, including whole numbers and integers was covered. The area of number skills can be used in many different concepts in day to day life for example when working with money and being responsible with credit cards.



MATHEMATICS - The year began for Year 7 students with a review of Numeracy skills with an emphasis on appreciation of Maths as it is applied to the real world. The main focus regarding other topics covered this term were mainly number related and included Index Laws, Square Numbers and Prime and Composite Numbers. A review of Fractions, Decimals, Percentages and Order of Operations was also part of the Term One maths course. Calculators were used some of the time, but students were encouraged to do most calculations mentally or manually. Students began to see a connection between the various skills they developed, in particular the relationship between equivalent Fractions, Decimals and Percentages.

The Mathletics program, which the students have purchased access codes for, can also be used at home and to support student learning and reinforce ideas covered in class. Mathletics motivates students in wanting to learn Mathematics in a non-threatening, interesting way. Activities are set by the student's teacher and usually involve practice of concepts that are suited to each student's abilities and to the expectations of the Australian Curriculum.

HUMANITIES – This term has been an eventful one. The Humanities department has begun to implement subject content to match the changes outlined by the Australian Curriculum. Within History, Civics and Citizenship has been incorporated, with Business and Economics included in our Geography units.

At the Year 7 level, students have been examining the ancient world with a focus on Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. They have looked at daily life, religious importance and the role of government, among many other topics. Students were encouraged to compare ancient systems of government, especially early democracy, with the current Australian system, to best prepare them for their own role as an Australian citizen.



In the coming term, students will examine Ancient China and the impact it has had on our modern world. Students will look at the changing nature of one of the world's oldest and longest civilisations. Student will also complete a historical essay examining a particular feature of Ancient Chinese life.

SCIENCE - Term One of 2015 has seen the Year 7 cohort develop their skills as inquiring scientists. They have studied the Laboratory and safety procedures, famous scientists, how to conduct successful experiments and how to communicate scientifically. As we move into 21st Century learning with a focus on inquiry and ICT, Lalor Secondary College has implemented a program from the developers of Mathletics, called IntoScience. IntoScience is an interactive environment in which students create a scientist avatar to explore various facets of scientific theory and locales, including a Biodome and Research Lab. Students complete activities, games and puzzles to extend their understanding of the world around them.



Term Two will see the students learn the Particle Model of Matter and Earth's Place in Space. Student's will also get the opportunity to further their understanding of working scientifically, when they complete this semester's inquiry task which will require them to design and conduct their own experiment. Year 7 science teachers will also be running Science Club at lunchtimes, beginning Term Two and running for the rest of the year.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Congratulations to all the Year Seven students who have made a positive start in Health & Physical Education. This course incorporates one lesson of theory and a double practical lesson a week. It is crucial that all students are organized each week and wear the correct HPE uniform in these practical lessons so they can improve their physical fitness and motor skill level. During Term One, each class has taken part in various Athletic events. This allowed students to select appropriate events to compete in at the Athletics Carnival held in early March. Students have also taken part in Fitness Testing activities, which measure fitness components such as muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. The aim is to record each student's individual fitness levels from Year 7 to Year 9. In theory classes in Term One, students have covered the unit of 'How my Body Works' which covers the various body systems in the body. Students were also required to complete an assignment on this topic, with a focus on either the Skeletal or Muscular System. During Term Two, students will cover the units of 'Changing & Growing' and 'Active Lifestyles'. Towards the end of Term Two students will sit a Semester Test, which covers all content studied throughout Semester One. The results of the 'How my Body Works' Assignment and Semester Test will be highlighted in the semester reports, along with a mark based on their performance, behaviour, and effort in practical classes. In practical sessions throughout Term Two, students will develop their motor skills, fitness and ability to work with others in the following units, Netball, Softball & Fitness. They will conclude the semester by taking part in two weeks of Hip Hop lessons conducted by a professional dance teacher.

SPORT - In Year 7 Sport, students participate in their chosen sport for the whole term. This gives them the opportunity to further develop their knowledge of the game as well improve on their sport specific skills. In Term one the students are given a choice of Cricket, Tennis, Volleyball and Softball. During Term two, the sports that can be chosen from are Netball, Football, Badminton and Soccer. Throughout each term students focus on teamwork and fair sportsmanship whilst working through skill based activities, game strategies and tactics. Students are expected to participate to the best of their ability and encourage others to do the same. Many students will, and have been, given the opportunity to represent the school in their chosen sport during the inter-school sport days.

ART – Students have focussed on self-identity and portraiture as themes this term. Students have thoroughly enjoyed the series of practical tasks that have focused on developing their drawing and painting skills, as well as understanding of proportion. They closely observed photographs of the Year 7 Student Management team and as a class developed grey lead and oil pastel drawings which can be seen in the 300's corridor. The Art elements of shape and colour were examined as students then explored their own portrait and looked at the artist Henri Matisse for inspiration. A showcase of the Self Portraits inspired by Matisse will be presented at the front office at the beginning of Term 2.

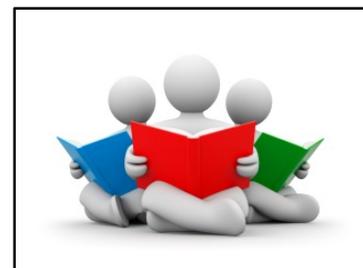


MUSIC - Students began the term by studying the instruments of the orchestra in detail. They were shown images of various musicians performing well known pieces on these instruments, as well as been shown a number of woodwind and brass instruments from the Music Department. Students have also been studying how to read music notation, by learning the names and value of musical notes. In addition, they have performed simple rhythms using classroom percussive instruments. As part of their assessment, Year 7 students will design and present an instrument which they have completely constructed from recycled materials. They will also learn how to play basic piano pieces on the keyboard and perform these individually to the class.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY – This year we have had an excellent start in Year 7. The Year 7's have been very keen to learn how to use equipment safely and understand the basic fundamentals of learning to cook in a kitchen. They have also been learning and demonstrating how to handle food safely in order to prevent food poisoning. The food produced ranges from cakes and biscuits from scratch to main meals such as Stir Fry's.

PRODUCT DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY – The students in our Design and Technology classes have been developing their thinking and reasoning skills by constructing a range of projects from a variety of materials. They have made a sugar scoop from acrylic plastic using thermo forming techniques. They made a pen holder from tinsplate requiring skills in measuring, folding, metal punching and soft soldering. They are in the process of constructing a spice rack from pine timber requiring skills in measuring, cutting with a coping saw, filing, assembling using glue and nails, sanding and varnishing. Workshop safety is emphasised during all of the production activities. They have recorded all of the production details in their log books and have evaluated each of the completed projects. The students were given a research project on Pine Timber and most of them have completed this task by the due date. Many of the projects are of an excellent standard.

LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE - All Year 7 students have completed an Orientation lesson to enable them to be familiar with their Library Resource Centre. The reading program has been implemented in collaboration with the English Faculty. To further support students in developing their reading habits, most students are registering to participate in the annual Victorian Premier's Reading Challenge. The focus next term will be on encouraging students to undertake the challenge to read 15 books by September.



LANGUAGES - MACEDONIAN - In Year 7 Macedonian students started with learning the alphabet, months, days of the week and colours. Part of their cultural assessment was to investigate the country of Macedonia and all students completed an Assessment on 'Macedonia'. Part of this assessment involved students researching the Macedonian national anthem and also the traditional costumes of Macedonia. Term two will allow students to discover the traditions of Orthodox Easter. Students will also complete a unit on 'Family' where students will learn the correct Macedonian terms for all the family members, students will be creating a family tree to assist them in remember the correct language. Grammar focus was Nouns & Present Tense.

LANGUAGES- FRENCH - Students have studied greetings, the alphabet, numbers, colours, gender & nouns, definite & indefinite articles & the concept of conjugating verbs, in particular, the verb “to be.” They will also study subject pronouns & the verb “to have”, read simple dialogues, learn about France & its regions, as well as learn to conjugate “er”, “ir” & “re” verbs. Students will have opportunities to practise short dialogues in French and be assessed on their oral skills via a short test. Mini written & aural tests are also scheduled throughout the semester. Topics that students will have covered by the end of Semester One include parts of the body, the family, pets and numbers from 21 to 40.

LANGUAGES – GREEK - The Year 7 Greek class has made a great start to the year. The class is divided into two distinct groups – The Advanced and The Beginners.



The beginners group have all learnt the alphabet, days of the week, their school subjects, items in the classroom, the numbers 1- 100 and basic commands.

The advanced group, who have all previously undertaken Greek, have written letters, read short stories and undertaken the set tasks.

On the 25th March, Greek Independence Day, the class celebrated with a traditional Greek feast of spanakopites (spinach and cheese pies), tiropites (cheese pies), loukoumia, melamakarona, baklava (traditional sweets) and eating much loved Ion chocolates.

LANGUAGES – ITALIAN - Term one of Year 7 Italian is always exciting as all student are very eager to practise their Italian skills from primary school, or learn Italian for the first time. Students looked at the alphabet, colours, greetings and expressions. Students got the chance to discover their Italian name and learn about ‘Onomastico’ the days that celebrate those names. The year 7’s performed a dialogue to practise their greetings and also completed reading and writing assessments.

Term two allows the year 7’s to look at schools in Italy and Australia, whilst learning all the vocabulary for describing their favourite and least favourite subjects at school. Students will also look at the cultural aspect of Italy and its importance on the Italian way of life. To assist them in this year, the 7’s will be creating dialogues and performances in class.

Positive Thoughts – Positive Outcomes'

"If I don't do well in the NAPLAN tests it's the worst thing ever!"

Do you have a child who automatically assumes the worst case scenario in any risky or new situations? If so, you have a catastrophiser on your hands. Catastrophisers exaggerate their worries and place enormous pressure on themselves. The default mechanism in their thinking always goes to the most negative outcome possible. The results won't just be bad, they'll be catastrophic! For instance, they won't just mess up if they give a talk to their class at school. They'll make total fools of themselves and the whole class will laugh at them, or so they say.

Catastrophising makes students feel miserable. Worse, they often don't want to do anything because they expect the worst possible outcome. So what to do with a catastrophiser?

Your approach will depend to some extent on your child's age. School-aged children need to be encouraged to keep things in perspective. Challenge your child's propensity to catastrophise.

Here are five ways to challenge your child's catastrophic thinking:

1. "What's the most likely scenario?" Sometimes it's useful to introduce a dose of old-fashioned rational thinking. "Yep, you could break your leg if you go skiing. But the odds are that you won't."

2. "Does it really matter?" "You may be right, but is it the end of the world as we know it?"

One way of dealing with hard core catastrophisers is to admit that they could be right, but even if they are right and the worst case scenario does happen, the sun will still shine tomorrow. Take students to the worst possible scenario and they may see it's not so bad.

3. "Where does this fit on the Mood Meter?" Catastrophisers get themselves in a knot about relatively insignificant things. Okay, making a fool out of themselves may not be insignificant to students, however compared to plenty of other events..... ..well, perspective is a good thing. Help them get some perspective by giving their worry a score out of ten, on how important the issue really is.

4. "That's unhelpful thinking." Sometimes students' thinking is so out of whack with reality that they become anxious about minor things. Thinking such as, 'everyone must like me', 'I must never make a mistake' and 'bad things always happen to me' are extreme and need to be replaced by more moderate, realistic thoughts. E.g. "It would be nice if everyone liked me but not everyone will. It's important to have some good friends".

5. Replace extreme words for feelings with more moderate descriptors: Today's students talk in extremes – 'awesome', 'the best' and 'gross' roll off their tongues easily these days. Extreme language leads to extreme thinking. So encourage students to replace "I'm furious" with "I'm annoyed", "It's a disaster" with "It's a pain", "I can't stand it" with "I don't like it". Sounds minor but by changing students' language you change how they think about events and, more importantly, how they feel.

I suspect that many parents will identify strongly with some of the above.

We all catastrophise from time to time, particularly when we are under stress. It takes a cool customer to moderate their thinking the whole time. So be mindful of your child's need to jump to the worst from time to time. A bit of reassurance is all that's needed in these one-off scenarios.

But if you, like your child, are a serial catastrophiser, then it will be useful to challenge your unhelpful or extreme thinking when it happens. Not only will you model realistic thinking for your students, but you will get an insight into what you need to do to change your child's catastrophising.

Adapted from www.parentingideas.com.au, 2015

Key Learning Area Leaders - English – E. Bruno and J. Stephens, EAL – R. Medcalf, Humanities – P. Leo & J. O' Hara , Maths – A. Constantinou, Science – S. Russo, Arts – C. Koronowicz, HPE – V. Leckie, Sport – L. Christian, Languages – E. Tatrav & Library Resource Centre – S. Graetsch