



3 Eisenkolb Term 3 Newsletter 2015

I trust you all enjoyed the winter break with your children. The time went faster than I would have liked because I still haven't completed all the school chores I had planned. But then I did try to have a break too. I managed to get away for a few days with Peter to do some bush walking down Carrackalinga way. We found some magical paths near the local waterfall. It was delightful walking through pine forests up and down valleys. I particularly liked one section where the sides of the forest were completely covered in maidenhair fern. The landscape changed quite a bit from remnant pockets of indigenous stringy bark forest (my favourite) to plantation pine, where we spied the odd red mushroom speckled with white dots. That dance with nature certainly recharged my batteries for a while.

Let's Negotiate

This term I have placed the organising of new learning teams over to the students. Before embarking on their selections, we discussed suitable candidates. It was pleasing to hear them reflect on how friends can either support learning or become a distraction. In fact most of the criteria they came up with was about choosing people who consistently used appropriate and supportive learning behaviours.

These were their criteria for choosing a team member:-

- using suggestive language
- giving eye contact and listening
- being respectful using manners
- need to be able to work well perhaps a friend perhaps not
- being organised and efficient
- someone new you haven't worked with
- gender balance with someone supportive

I thought this list was pretty comprehensive and there was very little input from me except for gender balance.

Last term they worked on a self reflection of their group / social skills. They used this guide to identify areas which needed more work. They used these areas as a bargaining tool in finding a partner so that they could do a mutual swap eg. I'll support you with if you support me with...

When I set them off to negotiate it was an interesting sight. Many sat down with their record books and were deep in conversation. I was impressed to hear them identify and use the language of negotiation when they offered suggestions in order to create a team. Some found the prospect of having to speak up for themselves or approach others a challenge. A few were determined to wait for whoever was left, but then realised it may not be productive. The process was a real learning curve. Once they had a partner they needed to choose another pair to make a suitable team. They could then choose a table and set about writing their new rules and team foci. It was a delightful first lesson and showed how far they have come in such a short time.

Thanks for your homework.

The feedback you have provided once again will be a valuable part of their future goal setting. Together with their commitments to their new team mates they will be able to work on writing achievable goals for their learning, behaviour and organisation. You will have to complete this only one more time, it is worth it and I do thank you. Reading through their record books and sharing the activities in their work books with your child gives you a clearer perspective. My comments from their reports then make more sense.

Camp News

Although it seems so far away the kids still talk about their experiences on camp at

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Illawonga. I am still making the movie of our adventures. This does take a while but it will be worth it, thanks for your patience. As for trying to send the video of us singing Foil to our hero (influenced a little by me) Wierd Al, I have run into a dead end, he isn't contactable... but I will persevere.

I'm forever blowing bubbles...

This week we undertake our swimming lessons at The Adelaide Centre. Thanks for getting your forms in so quickly. To help with lost belongings please ensure that items can be identified. No one ever claims jocks and nickers held up, (understandably so), but settling them down again after such clarification isn't as much fun as you think.

Our lessons will be occurring at 11.00 am so bathers can come to school under uniforms. We'll have an early recess before we go and come back in time for lunch. We'll give fitness a miss this week, running in bathers isn't much fun, they'll get plenty of exercise in their lessons. Our swimming buddy class is Sue Woolford's year fours. We can't take parents on the bus but I believe the centre will allow you to observe their lessons should you wish to do so.

Connect to Reading

The Premier's reading challenge ends this term about week 6. The library offered various incentives as a reward to complete the challenge in term one. Reading enthusiastically, our class had met the challenge, Yay! In fact some of our book worms have completed two pages and are working through a third! In class meeting we decided our reward would be to have access to the ipads and laptops for a lesson. We are yet to decide on a time. Congratulations everyone, for your strong commitment to improving your reading skills.

This year's Book Week theme is *Books Light Up Our World*. As the week gets closer I know the library will have organised some exciting activities. No doubt there will be another dress up parade so time to start planning creative costumes.

Last Thursday all students undertook another Star Reading test to check their accelerated reading level. For all it was higher than term two vindicating their efforts so far. Yay. They are to use this new level to support them in selecting books appropriate for their reading skills at this time. I signed the most certificates I had ever done so last term for our avid readers.

Since we have used the point system and are graphing the percentages completed each week, the children are using this to monitor their progress. As I have mentioned previously the more students read the stronger their skills become and the positive effects on learning can't be over stated. That requires time, so I guess when I ask for reading to be completed for homework 30 minutes is a minimum.

Mayoral Make a Book

I will be giving this competition a miss as a whole class exercise this year, however if some students want to participate I will pass on the relevant information. I thought I'd give them a break after their efforts in board game making.

Melting Moments

Last term we had a great time learning about the Sun and Moon in relation to day and night. How cool was the Solar System they did a great job painting the planets. I wouldn't normally squash such a big topic into a busy term given we had NapLan and camp to fit in too. But I was given some miss information for term three, which preempted

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me to plan it for term two. It now turns out we could have studied it this term, (which I would have preferred), oh well them's the break. We still might finish off some space stuff if time allows.

This term we get to delve into chemistry and look at the changing states of matter particularly when heat is involved hence the topic name *Melting Moments*. The students are already undertaking a home project that they should have already shared with you.

Sir Mark Oliphant Science Competition

The Sun and Moon science board games we completed towards the end of the term were fabulous. The children showed a lot of creativity in the designing and planning of their games. The evidence of understanding their research topic was clear. That project combined a lot of learning not just the obvious literacy and numeracy, but also for time management and organisation.

We gave our published games to our neighbouring year five classes and Georgie's year three's for peer evaluations. From that we chose four to be entered into the Sir Mark Oliphant Science Competition in the board game section. It will be interesting to see if the judges agree with our decisions. I guess Emilia, Tia, Kate and Alicia will be eager to find out how they went. We wont wish them good luck, as you and I know, luck plays no part in such things. But we do wish them well.

Mathletics

We've had some serious growth in students skills and I congratulate the students who regularly spend a few minutes each night to strive for 100% accuracy in their activities. I will drop the number of activities to 6 this term to allow students to polish their skills. The program allows lots of practice

particularly when they open Rainforest Maths. There they can revisit all the concepts and perhaps challenge themselves at the next year level. Students with computer problems or are unable to access can organise time to catch up in the pods during break times or before and after school.

Spelling Contracts

This term the menu continues to stretch their multiple intelligences with some new activities which require a little bit more effort. Students have time in literacy block to complete sections, so homework shouldn't be a burden. If you are concerned work is beginning to pile up, you may need to ask them how they are using class learning time.

For students who attend OSHC they have areas for students to complete homework and if you arrange with the staff, they will sign logs and diaries at the completion of activities. That way you are not faced with having to ask your child to complete tasks when your day ends late. Your family time is precious so take advantage of having things completed at school.

School pupil free days and closures

This term our pupil free day for staff to undertake professional development was based on mathematics and numeracy in the current curriculum. Lisa-Jane O'Connor, a leading expert in this field, led us through many questions which made us reexamine our understandings of what we do, why we did it and how we approached mathematics and numeracy in our classes. I tend to ask kids the same three key words What, why and how. These questions are useful to address in our thinking for all of us in all parts of our lives.

Lisa-Jane will also be supporting the year three staff in developing units of work. I am

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particularly interested in supporting students making connections with mathematics and numeracy to the Royal Show. Stay tuned for more on that as the show gets closer.

Speaking of the Show the closure day this year will be Friday 4th of September. So please put that in your diary, which may or may not fit in with your timetable. I'll understand if you need to make other times to visit the show grounds.

Hats off

During most of this term students are not required to wear their hats outside. However come the first of September in week 7, hats will need to be back on. This lull in hat wearing will give you a chance to check out the cleanliness and durability of the hat in readiness for springtime.

Snot enough

We still have a few boxes of tissues in storage and I thank the generous donations, but I fear with the cold and flu season still rife that sneezes and number elevens will quickly deplete our stock. I don't even want to think about hay fever season that is just around the corner. So if you haven't yet been able to supply us with a box we would appreciate one. Many thanks.

To blog or not to blog

It seems I can't stay in the backwaters of technology treading water and hoping for things go back to the good old days of simplicity and chalk. Heavens, I don't even have my own mobile! I guess there's no use waiting, so I'll just have to be brave and jump in to play like all the rest of the techno savvy folk I work with. So I, yes little Ellen the technophobe, have started a class blog.

You will soon receive explanation and permission notes that will make sense of

such things. Now given I am just beginning to get my head around Blogging, things may move slowly. However, I work with a very talented group of colleagues who readily share their expertise, for which I am grateful. This has been a learning goal of mine and I am looking forward to observing how this tool will open up greater communication for us all and supporting in the education of your children.

It's good night from me

I think that's about all I had to tell you. There's probably more, but I'm sure you'll want to go to sleep by now.

As you can see already we're off and running with much to do. Thank you for your ongoing support thus far. Should you wish to meet with me to discuss any issues, then a note in your child's diary will be the best way for us to arrange a suitable time. Just a reminder, Wednesday night is staff meeting and as I help with debating Thursday nights is out too.

Here's to another busy term of new learning.

Cheers *Ellen*