A City Experience

Nathan & Nic getting to know the city during Year 9 City Camp. Story page 6.
Thinking about Thinking

Recently in the newsletter you may have read about the Primary school’s focus for 2015 - Mel Dykstra shared that we are concentrating on ‘Thinking about our thinking’ (metacognition).

Our recent Primary ‘Get Together’ led by SPD unpacked the idea of how we think about our learning and life. Do we have a growth mindset or is our thinking fixed? Can we move from the ‘not yet’ to the possible, or are we stuck with the thoughts of… ‘it’s too hard,’ and ‘it won’t ever happen’? What are the thoughts we have when we face a challenge? Mel reminded us that by embracing struggles as challenges and mistakes as learning we are able to move forward.

That’s easier said than done. In order to start thinking about our thinking we need to have some tools – as in any area of life, we need tools, skills, strategies, knowledge, practice and hard work. We can’t just learn to rewire a house by thinking about it. An electrician needs to have done his/her apprenticeship, know how things work, practice, passed the modules and been signed off on their A-grade. Then they need lots of experience doing the job to become sought-after for their excellent work. It is the same with an athlete. One can’t just run a marathon without conditioning, training and hard work. A marathon runner needs knowledge and understanding about the way their body works and need to have put in the hard yards with nutrition and rigorous training that builds their capacity.

In the same way we all need to learn more about how our brains work and to understand that we can teach our brain to respond and to activate in certain ways. We are not at the mercy of whatever comes our way in terms of our thinking. We can learn to notice our thinking, activate our thinking and grow our thinking. We can become more active thinkers in life.

As students become more attuned to noticing their thinking and reflecting on it (meta-learning) they gain explicit understanding of the process of learning. They develop the vocabulary for talking about the process of learning and are able to articulate (talk) about how learning works. Claxton 2002

Many of our students are able to explain what to do when they come across a word they don’t know when reading. They have a range of strategies and are able to reflect on these and pick the appropriate one. They know they can break the word up, reread the sentence, sound the word out, read around the word, think about what would make sense. Good readers can talk about all of these strategies. In the same way, good learners can talk about their thinking and apply their knowledge to new situations. Good learners also have a strong sense of themselves as learners. They know they have strengths and weaknesses, and that some things are challenges that need hard work and other things will come easily. They have a growth mindset about their learning and they don’t give up!

I love to read in bed as my wind down at the end of a hectic day. Recently I was reading a very tricky book and feeling pretty good about how clever I was and how much I was learning, when all of a sudden I stopped reading - distracted by the sound of possums on the roof. That commotion jolted me back to the realisation I had no idea what I had read for the last 4 pages. I was reading the words but had no understanding. I wasn’t thinking. I wasn’t engaged. School can be like this for many kids. They are going through the motions but are not noticing what is really going on inside their brain. They are not learning with understanding. They are merely doing stuff.

Everyone is different and knowing what works best for you is important in knowing yourself as a learner and thinker.

Think about yourself as a learner and look at the list below and see if any these things resonate with you...

- I can stick at hard stuff and not give up!
- I can manage the distractions around me.
- I can be curious, inquisitive and adventurous.
- I can visualise things by drawing pictures in my mind or creating mini movies about what I am trying to understand or learn.
- I can be OK with the fact that I don’t know everything and don’t have to be able to do everything perfectly, right now. I can say, ‘not yet’!
- I can be curious, inquisitive and adventurous.
- I can notice and be attentive.
- I can manage the distractions around me.
- I can stick at hard stuff and not give up!

So this year our challenge as educators and parents is to help our students (and ourselves) to switch on those wonderful God given brains - activate thinking, notice what is happening, become absorbed in learning, minimise distractions, value prior knowledge (what we already know about the topic) and have a growth mind set!

Further reading...


Diane
Assistant Principal - Primary
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Working Bee

I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the Working Bee this Saturday. It’s a great opportunity to partner with the school in making sure our facilities and resources are well cared for. See you bright and early at 8am!

Parent Seminars

Next Wednesday night is the first of our Parent Seminars. We run these evenings to ensure that our new parents are familiar with the vision and purpose of the school and understand the key ideas of Christian education. As in any good partnership, we want to make sure that we are ‘on the same page’ with some of these foundational ideas. This first session is called, ‘What makes MECS tick?’ and we unpack some of the unique aspects of transformational learning, and other distinct aspects about the way MECS works.

School Photos

On Monday school photos were taken! I’m a bit nostalgic about photos. More than just capturing an image, they capture a moment in history which can remind us of important relationships and events. I’m sure you have looked at your old school photos and been prompted to ask questions like, ‘I wonder what so and so is doing now? Remember when we did...? The camp that year was...?’ Hopefully when our students look back on the photos taken this week, they will be reminded of great friends, enthusiastic teachers and a school that cared deeply about their learning and who they were becoming as young people of God. Thanks to Laura for making the day run so smoothly.

3C KIDZ CARE Information Night

After School Care

3C Kidz Care staff provide a friendly, accredited program in the school grounds. If you would like 3C Kidz Care to partner with you to care for your children after school, please contact June on (03) 8790 3921 or email 3ckidzcare@caseycc.org.au

There is an information meeting on Monday March 23 in the PUMP Room at 7.30 pm for all those who are interested in using this service.

FOCUS

On... Career Development

Career Development: What is it and what happens in Year 10?

The Career Industry Council of Australia defines career development as: “the process of managing life, learning and work over the life span.”

At MECS we encourage all students to understand that they are already in their career and that as they study they are developing, amongst many things, important employability skills such as responsibility, commitment, time-management etc. They are also learning a great deal about themselves which we understand to be vitally important for their career development.

However at certain stages in a student’s life, they will need to make key decisions that will determine, to some extent, their future directions. Year 10 is one of those times and so during this year a lot of work and resources go into ensuring that students are equipped and empowered to make informed career development decisions.

Three years ago, MECS invested in a career assessment program developed by a company called Career Fast Track. The program works by students first completing a series of online quizzes that are designed to give them insight into their personality, occupational interests, skills and values. Students then meet with me individually for a half hour session where I assist them in interpreting the results of the quizzes as well as discussing anything that may be holding them back from achieving their goals. It is important to note that this program is not designed to be prescriptive, but simply a tool to be used in helping make better informed decisions. Students leave the session having identified up to three or four career areas that they are currently interested in (these may be strong ideas or thoughts just emerging).

Equipped with some direction, students then participate in ‘Transition Week’, where the primary goal is to introduce them to a range of options available after Year 10 as well as teach decision making and job application skills. This is complemented by a week of Work Experience (followed by another week later in the year).

In addition, a significant proportion of the Year 10 subject, ‘Life Management’, will have a Career Development focus in Terms 1 and 2 where essential research skills will be taught such as how to find out about tertiary entrance requirements for courses of interest. Work Experience preparation activities will also take place in these classes.

All of this occurs before August when the students are required to select their VCE subjects or alternatively investigate VCAL, (the hands on equivalent of Year 11 and 12). Students are encouraged to choose subjects or pathways that would allow them the freedom to pursue the occupational interest areas that they previously identified or to select subjects based on ability and enjoyment if they are still struggling to identify their career interests.

Throughout all this, MECS seeks to encourage students to view their decision making within the context of God’s bigger picture for their lives and the world. During Transition Week it is a great joy when ex-students return to share with our Year 10s stories about their career journeys and how clearly God is impacting these.

Amelia

Careers Coordinator, VET in Schools Coordinator
MECS Notes

Keeping our children safe

Many children like to play before and after school on the play equipment and lower oval. Sometimes this can be a lovely community time but sometimes things can go wrong. Parents please be aware that it is primarily your responsibility to supervise your children before and after school whilst playing.

We have four duty teachers after school but their main focus is to keep children safe where traffic is involved at Hawkins Road, Kiss and Drop and the lower car park. Children are being reminded this week that the same school rules apply in the before and after school time slots in the playground and that rough play is not allowed.

Children are often tired at the end of the day and have less ability to negotiate safe and happy play. We encourage you to take your child for a less crowded and more relaxed extended play at a nearby park or straight home for a snack, rest and play alone or with friends or siblings at home.

Diane
Assistant Principal - Primary

Premier’s Active April

Premier’s Active April encourages all Victorians to do 30 minutes of physical activity each day during April. It’s free, it’s fun and it’s part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to get more people active and healthy.

Using the online Activity Tracker, you can log your daily activity and track your progress throughout the month. Plus, you can create and join teams, compare the progress of team members, discover events near you and win awesome prizes!

We are planning to enter this as a MECS Community – more details later but...

Just by registering every participant gets*: (Note these bonuses are valid during April, some extending to June.)

- 10 free YMCA passes
- 15% off at Sportsmart in store and online
- one hour free tennis court hire at Melbourne Park or Albert Reserve
- a 2 for 1 ticket offer to SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium
- a chance to win some great prizes including four tickets to the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final (GFAFL15/12), a $1,500 bike voucher or a GoPro Camera
- a chance to win Sportsmart vouchers and coaching clinics at our school with high-profile athletes

Register today at activeapril.vic.gov.au

From the Board

Prior to our March meeting, the Board were pleased to meet with staff new to MECS (and some partners) for a meal together. We spent the time getting to know where the staff fit into MECS and discovering some of their journey. Board Chair Ian also gave an overview of the governance structure at MECS to enable staff to understand how the Board and Association operate in the school.

At the Board meeting following, Ranges TEC Director Phil joined us to outline the current model of Ranges TEC and speak about various possible directions Ranges TEC could pursue in the future. These will be discussed in detail at a Strategic Review Day on 11 April 2015. Please pray for Ranges TEC and the review day as they prepare for the future.

In her Principal’s Report, Narelle updated us on the Leadership planning day, the Transformational Education book launch, staff training and the proposed visit of MP James Merlino, among other matters.

Gerry presented the Finance snapshot for the end of last year and advised that the audited reports will be presented at next month’s meeting. He also presented the Infrastructure Update report and outlined various issues which have led to the need for a revision of the current Infrastructure Master Plan. The Board indicated their support for a revision.

As the position of Vice Chair became vacant when Sue stepped down at the end of last year, Lisa was appointed to fill the position.

There was also some discussion relating to the Association sub-committee and Ian Bushell advised that a CEN Board professional development morning would be held at MECS on March 14 which several Board members planned to attend.

Louise
on behalf of the Board

Friends of MECS

Cooking for the Community

Last Thursday the Home Tech room was filled with wonderful smells as an amazing team of volunteers spent the day cooking and filling our Community Freezer with over 70 meals to bless our community! A huge thank you Amy and Eva who ran the day and the team of hard working cooks who assisted. Thanks to the people who donated groceries and money to help support this. We run these days once a term and are looking for more willing helpers to peel, chop and help prepare these meals so please watch this space early next term for details of the next ‘Cook Off’ day.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer

*Note that these bonuses are valid during April, some extending to June.
MECS Notes

On Road Etiquette

Over the last two weeks I have had calls from various residents in our neighbourhood about driver behaviour following school drop off and pick up. Residents in Hawkins Rd, Karen Crt and Hill Rd have faced challenges in relation to the way cars coming to or leaving MECS use the service road along York Rd. Several near misses have been reported. One resident works unusual hours and has told me he is starting to collect registration numbers of cars that are seen to be driven unsafely. In addition to our neighbours, staff who monitor the Hawkins Rd – service road corner to assist children cross it in the afternoons have also reported to us some impatient behaviour. Also, in supervising Kiss and Drop I have seen quite a few drivers travel past the pickup queue at uncomfortably fast speeds.

I'd like to think that as a Christian school community we can show care and kindness in our driving. What do I mean? That we can demonstrate patience; that we can sacrifice a place in a traffic queue; that we can slow down to allow other cars, bikes and pedestrians to use the road with minimal risk; and that being safe is more important than beating the 40km/h traffic moving along York Rd.

Thanks for thinking of everyone's safety each time you come to MECS!

Dr Gerry B
Administration Manager

Minister for Education Visits MECS

Last Friday we enjoyed a visit from the State Minister for Education, James Merlino. James is also our local member for the Monbulk electorate. Such visits are extremely valuable in terms of relationship building with the Minister. We got to know his ministerial assistant, and are getting used to the new protocols in place since he is now the Minister. It was encouraging to hear that he is finding his portfolio to be richly rewarding.

After a brief chat with Narelle and Gerry, Mr Merlino called in on Kaye’s JP class. Two students (Kiara and Caleb) from the public speaking group in Senior Primary both offered excellent welcome speeches to the Minister. The JP students then grilled him with some critical educational questions such as “What was your favourite subject at school?” and “What pets do you have?” The Minister’s dog, ‘Mr Darcy’ received a significant mention. The JP students presented a giant thank you card (that they had made) to Mr Merlino. To cap it off, Dylan presented the Minister with some chocolates and vegetables (from the MCG garden). The Minister also learned about our Daily 5 approach to literacy.

Do pray for the Minister for Education; that he will use his significant authority wisely.

Dr Gerry B
Administration Manager

Year 7-10 Interschool Swimming

Last Thursday our die hard swimmers bravely and competently represented MECS in the interschool swimming carnival at Monash Aquatic Centre. It was a delightful day as we witnessed some excellent individual achievements and a pleasing overall 3rd place for our school. Well done to all the students, and especially our new students Tom, Micah and Nathan who were fully involved in many events. Special mention to Cameron as the only Year 10 boy to attend. Thanks to Christine and Ben for helping all day with duties.

Below is a list of those who won their events including two who broke records in the 50m freestyle.

50m Freestyle
Steph 13 girls **New Record**
Jess 14 girls **New Record**
Asher 14 boys
Luke 15 boys

50m Breaststroke
Beth 14 girls

50m Backstroke
Jenna 14 girls
Asher 14 boys
Bek 15 girls
Cameron 16 boys

50m Butterfly
Steph 13 girls

Medley Relay
14 girls – Jenna D, Jess W, Bek H, Beth C

Freestyle Relay
14 girls – Jenna D, Jess W, Bek H, Beth C
15 girls – Caitlyn, Erica and others from lower age group

*Anne-Maree*

Secondary Sports Coordinator

**50m Freestyle**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
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<tr>
<td>50m Freestyle</td>
<td>Steph 13</td>
<td>Cameron 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>50m Backstroke</td>
<td>Jenna 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>50m Breaststroke</td>
<td>Beth 14</td>
<td>Bek 15</td>
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*Minister James Merlino with Kiara & Caleb*
A City Experience

Fifty students, five teachers and a ton of luggage made their way across Lilydale train station on Monday March 2 to catch a train to South Yarra. As you can imagine, this was a bit of an ordeal, but thankfully we all arrived in one piece although I did feel bad for the regular commuters! After getting settled into the B&B we got into our predetermined groups and were off into the city.

When we had acquainted ourselves slightly with our bearings we trooped off to explore our wonderful city. After a touch of exploring we went to the Big Issue Classroom to listen to a man’s story on how he became homeless. It was very eye opening to hear how he went from catching a plane to Queensland on a Wednesday afternoon just to have lunch, to sleeping rough under bridges and in shop doorways. It certainly made us realise that nobody is immune to homelessness.

Walking through the city was a great experience, seeing all the city life and the different kinds of shops and people who were about. Stopping for lunch, we had some time to people watch and it was fascinating.

Having some spare time as a group we decided to go to Federation Square and get involved in the city. So we bought two bunches of roses and handed them out to strangers. It was brilliant to see how different people reacted when they got a rose, some people were confused, some adored it and others flat out rejected the rose.

The whole camp was an absolute delight to be on; full of great experiences, like going up the Eureka Sky Deck, having a guided tour of the Melbourne Arts Centre and dressing up to go out for a nice dinner. This has been my favourite camp yet and I would love to do it again!

Beth, Year 9 Student
JP Goes to the Zoo

On Tuesday March 10, Junior Primary students enjoyed a wonderful excursion to the Zoo. The students were filled with awe and excitement as they learnt about, saw, smelt and touched so many amazing animals. As they participated in the Wild Explorers Program, students created mini habitats, explored life cycles, hunted for bugs and mini beasts and identified whose scat is that. A highlight for many brave students was holding a large python snake. Some other very popular attractions were the dancing seals, the beautiful butterflies and the reptile display. All JP students and teachers had a really special day investigating the wonders of creation. Thank you to all the parent helpers who came along and shared the day with us!

Kaye
*JP Teacher & Cluster Leader*

**Student Writing**

On Tuesday Junior Primary went to the Zoo. First I held a snake and it was very silky. Then I saw a monkey. Two were playing chasy. Then I went to the tigers. I was scared.

*Tandia*

I went to the Zoo. I saw the monkeys then I saw butterflies. One landed on my hat and on my hand then one was on my back.

Then we went and saw the seals.

Finally we saw the reptiles.

I had a good day.

*Mia*

JPs went to the Zoo. First I saw the seal and it was doing tricks.

Then I saw the tiger. She was walking around.

After that I saw the snake. It was light green and dark green.

It was really fun!

*Manu*

First I went on the MECS bus. Then I saw the brown, black, creamy meerkats. Later I saw Patch the smooth, squishy snake and Kelly the brown, blackish frog and we named it Kelly! The Zoo was awesome and it was so fascinating looking and learning about the animals on earth.

*Melody*

On Tuesday JPs went to the Zoo. First I saw a meerkat. Then I saw a crocodile. After that I saw a penguin. Finally we went on the bus to go home. Thanks for taking us to the Zoo Eric (the bus driver).

*Riley*
**MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES**

MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

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**Apple Man**
The next apple delivery will be on Thursday March 26. We have Royal Galas, Granny Smith and Fujis available. Each 5-6kg bag costs $10, and will be delivered to the office at around lunch time. Please hand your orders to the office by 12pm Wednesday March 25, and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed.

*Cassie*  
**Receptionist**

**Free trampoline**
Collect from Mount Evelyn before March 24. Phone Gabby on 0410 544 162.

**Movie Days**
Discovery Church, 89 Monbulk Rd Mount Evelyn, will be running two movie days during the upcoming school holidays:
- ‘How To Train Your Dragon 2’ will be showing on Wednesday April 1, 10:30am
- ‘Big Hero 6’ will be showing on Wednesday April 8, 10:30am

Entry is by a gold coin donation. Sausage sizzle and lollies for sale. Information 9736 2323.

**Bells of Peace**
The Bells of Peace is a performance to tell the story of ANZAC from a local perspective. Celebrating 100 Years of ANZAC. Sat April 18, Discovery Church, 89 Monbulk Rd, Mount Evelyn. Performance 2pm. Tickets $20, concession $12, children under 12 free. Free exhibition and entertainment and food available for purchase from 12pm. Official opening 1.30pm.

**Dehydrator for Sale**
Ultimate Food Dehydrator. 10 trays, 3 additional sheets for fruit leathers, thermostat etc. Works well with fruits, fruit leather, herbs, veggies and beef jerky etc. $100. jmiller@mecs.vic.edu.au

**Car for Sale**
2013 Mazda 3 Neo 7, 7500 kms (yes, only that many!), manual, excellent condition, under warranty, 12 months rego, $18 900 ono. Contact jmiller@mecs.vic.edu.au

**Family Fun Day**
Chirnside Park Country Club Family Fun Day, Friday April 3, 10am-4pm, free entry. For the Royal Children’s Hospital Good Friday Appeal. Market, Auction, Sausage Sizzle, Sporting Competitions, Jumping Castle, Face Painting, Live Entertainment and more. 68 Kingswood Drive, Chirnside Park

**Flat in Monbulk for Rent**
Large 2 bedroom, open plan unit with a patio area. 5 minute walk to Main Street shops & public transport. Available April 12 onwards. $285 pw. Contact Julian: 0421 247 987 or julian@nuanceimage.com.au

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**Working Bee**
**This Saturday 21 March, 8am-1pm**
Morning Tea Provided

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**Newsletter deadline is 11am Tuesday on published week. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office**

- After School Care Info Session Notice
- Year 7 & 8 Interschool Volleyball Notice
- Prep Pipeline 2