Goal Setting Day, Tuesday 3rd March

Following article written by Rachel Lam, Deputy Head of Canowindra - Teaching and Learning

Canowindra students have begun work planning for and setting themselves challenging but achievable goals for Year 9, which they will be presenting to parents and their teacher on the upcoming Goal Setting Day. They have considered possible aspirations for the long, medium and short term future and are learning about the creation of S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals to ensure this process is effective and useful to their lives. During these meetings, the goals - as well as how they will be achieved - are examined and discussed. Parents and teachers also explore how they can best support the student to achieve their goals.

Goal Setting Day is the first formal step in a year long process of creating of a digital learning portfolio, which is presented at the conclusion of the school year. Early in Term 3, there will also be the opportunity for students and parents to formally re-visit these with the student’s teacher and review their progress toward achieving these goals.

The interviews are largely led by the student, but should be a genuine discussion, between the parents, student and teacher. We encourage parents to ask their child questions throughout the meeting. Each interview is for 15 minutes and we request that parents are mindful of the time constraints, and following appointments. Therefore, should parents have other matters they wish to discuss with their child’s teacher, we ask that they please organise a separate appointment.

Thinking and Inquiring at Canowindra

As students at Canowindra delve into their learning in the various areas, they are encouraged not just to gain new knowledge or learn new skills, but to develop a sense of curiosity and wonder in their learning. By doing so, students develop inquisitive dispositions, adopt an attitude of Thinking first and experience the joy of becoming lifelong learners.

This week, students at Canowindra have demonstrated their curiosity by asking great questions, as showcased here.

Digging Deeper

Students began developing their major historical research questions, which will underpin their research this semester. Some questions included:

- How has the discovery of atomic energy changed the way different societies see their role in the world?
- How did politics in Berlin change after World War II?
- How did innovation affect communication in the Roaring Twenties?

You should be able to read more research questions in the Digging Deeper photograph below.
It’s a W.R.A.P. (Weekly Reflection and Planning)

Students puzzle over their major goals for the year. The significant amount of thinking and refining can be seen in the photograph.

Thinking first

Last year, our College theme was ‘We can make the change’. In 2015, our theme is Thinking first. Four of our
Canowindra students have been called upon to show what this theme means for them, and how they think it will help their learning.

"For me, our theme this year, Thinking first, reflects upon how each and every one of us is different. And, because each and every one of us is different, we all think and therefore learn differently. For me, Thinking first is about being aware of our own thinking, and the way our minds work. Remember those Multiple Intelligence tests we took in Grades 5 and 6, where you could be kinetically intelligent, or visually intelligent? Maybe you discovered that you could only learn things properly if you actually did the things you were learning about; you’re a hands-on kind of person? The point is, we are all different, and this theme is celebrating our differences and how uniquely our minds work.

It is also important for us all to be aware that, not only are our minds unique, but so are everyone-else’s. Maybe someone in your class is not so great at English…what’s a verb? What’s that rule again about the i and the c? What are the exceptions? This does not mean, however, that they are not as smart or as clever as yourself. It just means that they learn differently. Maybe this person absolutely rocks at Maths, because they like all the order and how everything is set out logically. There is only one answer, and so there is none of this ‘interpretive’ stuff.

So, for me, our theme of Thinking first brought to mind the fact that we are all unique individuals with our own ways of thinking and learning, and we should all be aware of that. It also empowers us to take control of our own learning; if you know that you are a kinetic learner… just get out there and do it! Do it your way. Learn in a way that suits your thinking."

by Georgia Cooper, 9 Green

"After hearing the theme for this year, Thinking first, my mind began racing with all the different things that this could mean. For me, when it comes to learning, I like to be organised and so I interpreted this topic in the sense of organisation.

What I would like you to try and do is to place yourself in this situation for a moment and think about what you, as a student, would do. So, just say you have just been handed an assignment in one of your electives and today being the 13th of February, you get told it is due on the 4th of March. Bonus right? You have got almost a month to do a little project!

So what do you do next? You have probably got about half a lesson of class time to do it and the rest of your work needs to be completed at home. Before you begin your assignment, are you going to think about how you are going to present this work? Maybe think of different ways you can go about organising your time in terms of getting this task completed?

Whatever it is you decide to do, you are thinking about it first now aren’t you? But, what if you do something that I know a lot of us - including myself - are guilty of, which is thinking ‘wait a sec, I have got heaps of time to do this, so, why am I thinking about it now? I’ll just do it later.’ Soon enough, it rolls towards the end of February, and then March starts, and suddenly you remember that your assignment is due tomorrow. What do you do now? Stress? Get upset? Ask for an extension?

Either way, you know that you will probably end up rushing through this now not-so-little-project, and what do you think your results will end up looking like? I know that, for me, I need to put my best foot forward in terms of getting good results and take my time. But you can’t really do that now can you? You have got to get this task completed and so taking it slow, unfortunately, is no longer an option.

You see, even though it is a very simple thing to do, a lot of us may skip out on Thinking first about how we are going to go about the completion of our work. And as a result of that, we can be let down and sometimes very disappointed too. By simply planning ahead of what needs to be done you can complete some great work, all because you took the time to think first."
by Alexandra Wright - 9 Red

"My first thought upon receiving the College theme, Thinking first, was the concept of thinking before you act. This refers to having responsibility for your actions by first considering the implications of your chosen actions. I will give you an example of what I am referring to. Imagine you come across someone who is struggling with a task at school. Do you make a joke out of their difficulties, or do you provide some words of encouragement that will assist them in their progress? Thinking before you act means considering the impact of these two actions. Which one is going to make them feel upset? Which one will give them some positive motivation? By Thinking first we can see the negative effects of putting someone down for failing to understand something. Therefore, our actions will not be that of making fun of someone, but instead providing words of encouragement.

Next, thinking before you act means taking responsibility for your actions. Because we are expected to think before we act, we are held responsible for our actions. It means being mature about our choices. In 2014, a new Victorian campaign was launched regarding the coward’s punch. If you unexpectedly punch another person in the upper body, and it results in a serious injury or death, you can end up with ten years in prison. This example shows the worse case scenario when we fail to consider the impact of our actions. It happens unexpectedly because a person simply didn’t think before they acted. I know this example sounds extreme, but it relates to us. Bullying? Imagine the physical and psychological impact this can have on an individual. It can all be avoided if we simply think before we act on our immediate instincts."

by Anthony Trajcevski - 9 Red

"After hearing about the many different ways to interpret the theme, Thinking first, a range of different things can be taken away from this. Whether it be thinking before you act, planning ahead of time or just generally how people think differently - no message is any less important than the other. Thinking first is always something that is important in our everyday lives and should not go unnoticed. Thinking before you act was a major point raised regarding the theme, Thinking first. Instead of doing the first thing that comes to mind, think about how this can affect the situation in the long run. Planning ahead of time so that things don’t start piling up and before you know it things will start to look better for you. Being aware of your own thinking to understand what needs to be done. In the end it all comes down to how you think first in your day to day activities big or small. Thinking first is always a crucial step to achieving great things."

by Christian Dimopoulos - 9 Purple

2015 Swimming Carnival

The sun was shining as we made our way to St Albans Leisure Centre, the buses filled with students looking forward to our annual House Swimming Carnival. There was a lot of chatter, excitement and a rainbow of blue, red, green and yellow colours around the pool. Teachers were busy setting up and sorting out helpers, students were finding their places on the grass and the Year 5 students were getting ready for their first swimming carnival. The students were having fun in their novelty events and the racers were getting ready to compete. Noise was becoming louder as the day progressed. You could hear the buzzer go off and then SPLASH! they were off.

The competition was tough in each year level. It was great to see students cheering, having fun and most importantly, trying their best!

It was finals time and the atmosphere was tense. You could see the nervous flash across the competitors’ faces. All four Houses were well represented. The scores were quickly tallied up and winners were rewarded.
Curie took home first place, Newton second, Pasteur (unfortunately) in third place and last, but certainly not least, Edison in fourth place. Another amazing Swimming Carnival full of highs, fun and extreme fatigue.

by Oliver Charles 9 Blue