Reading Comprehension

Following article written by Belinda Klose, Deputy Head of Junior School (Teaching and Learning), Taylors Lakes Campus

With the new school year underway, I take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to all of our Junior School families. After much planning and preparation from all the teaching staff, it was great to have the children start school on Wednesday 4th February. It has been wonderful to see the many smiles and bright eyes across our Junior School Campus and I have personally enjoyed visiting the classrooms and getting to know the Junior School community.

On Monday 9th February at Keilor Campus and Tuesday 10th February at Taylors Lakes Campus, the first Junior School Parent Information Evenings for 2015 took place. The evenings were well attended across the Junior School and I trust that parents found these evenings both valuable and informative. Both Ms Tracy Fielder and Mrs Anne McNaughton introduced the evenings with a very comprehensive presentation outlining the Junior School focus for the 2015 school year.

One focus we touched on during the evening was Reading Comprehension. As readers, we know that reading comprehension takes our reading to another level. Reading is what I would refer to as a high profile, necessary and essential skill; one that often attracts many misconceptions. If readers can successfully decode, have phonemic awareness, the ability and knowledge to connect sounds, a strong vocabulary, fluency and have mastered the code of reading, the assumption is often made that comprehension will occur naturally, that comprehension will just happen because we have all of the above. However, this is only true for very few readers and research indicates that comprehension is a separate aspect of reading and one that requires the same amount of instruction time as the decoding skills of reading.

To improve children’s comprehension skills we must explicitly teach children how to think while they read.

Reading is a complex multistep process that must begin and end with meaning in mind. Proficient readers continually draw on a range of strategies to ensure they maintain understanding while reading. Strategies utilised by proficient readers are;

**Making Connections**: the power to connect to a text about a familiar topic or character during reading.

**Asking Questions**: the power to ask questions during reading, reflecting on textual understanding and text direction.

**Visualising**: the power of readers to visualise during reading by constructing and making pictures in their head, from words and images they see.

**Making Inferences**: the power to infer occurs when readers come across a word they are unsure of or when they
are aware that good authors leave many clues in their stories and images.

**Analysing and Synthesising (Transform):** the power to transform is to change thinking during reading by continually reflecting on their understanding.

Comprehension is an important part of reading. The essence of comprehension is the **awareness** of the **‘what is happening’** while we read. Children must learn that reading is not simply words on a page, but it is what those words mean to them. How to make sense of what we read is just as important as teaching children how to read.

**Assembly**

At the Taylors Lakes Campus we enjoyed the first Junior School Assembly for the year last week. Although there were no classes performing, it was great to come together as a Junior School and set the tone for the year ahead. During this assembly we reminded students of the playground protocols, classroom standards and how to treat each other as well as thanking them for the wonderful start to the year. We celebrated our first Star Students and the Junior School House, Chapel and Choir Captains were presented with their badges. We look forward to many more exciting assemblies as the year progresses and the classes share their learning.

**Prep T**

*Following article written by Linda Tzimos, Prep Teacher, Taylors Lakes Campus*

The Prep Centre at the Taylors Lakes Campus has been bubbling with energy and excitement as the Prep students settled into their classrooms and experienced being part of our school community.

In Prep T, students have begun their journey at school learning and consolidating their knowledge of lower case and capital letters, in addition to developing their concepts about print. They enjoyed the antics of *Chicka, Chicka Boom, Boom*, a story that led each student to physically move their assigned letter as it journeyed up and down a coconut tree. The Preps participated in the shared reading of Joy Cowley’s big books, *Mrs Wishy Washy* and *Dan the Flying Man*. This supported their learning about the function of print as they delighted in the mischievous behaviours of the characters in the text. The repetitive nature of the books allowed students to engage with the stories, and scaffolded their responses to set tasks. Through action rhymes and big books, students also built on their knowledge of rhyming words designed to develop early literacy skills and increase phonemic awareness.

The Preps were extremely excited when presented with an item from the THRASS Treasure Chest that represented a THRASS word. They each had a turn in locating the matching THRASS word on the giant floor mat. This encouraged teamwork, as well as developing their foundational knowledge of the chart. In conjunction with this, students were introduced to using a phoneme fist when hearing individual phonemes in words. A focus in the classroom is for students to identify where a particular phoneme is heard within a word. This aims to support their understanding of how the THRASS chart works as well as strengthening their phonemic skills.

Students are already able to independently sing along to the *Crocodile Chant* that acts as a reminder to hold their pencil in the correct manner. They have also worked hard to stay in time with the THRASS handwriting audio sequence to support letter formation. There has been a buzz in the room when students share their thoughts and experiences though oral language and drawings. This is particularly evident when students take pride in their attempts to convey meaning through letters and symbols.

In Mathematics, students have been learning counting strategies using concrete materials such as counters, beans and teddies to develop one to one correspondence and naming numbers in sequence. Through cutting and pasting
activities, the Preps have also begun to connect number names, numerals and quantities. The *Big Numbers Song* is a popular daily request made by numerous students, which is enthusiastically enjoyed during eating time.

A highlight for the Preps was a visit from their Year 4 buddies. They ate their snacks together in the Prep Centre before sharing the adventure playground during recess. The Year 4s supported the Preps to use the playground equipment safely and assisted them in a variety of ways.

The Preps have enjoyed a smooth and successful start at the College and have been embraced by our unique school community in every way.
Accessing the Online Encyclopedias from Home

*Following article written by Jennifer Barry and Maria Muse, Junior School Library, Keilor Campus*

Overnewton subscribes to two online encyclopedias that are accessible from home: *World Book* and *Britannica Online*
They are suitable for students from Prep all the way through to Year 12. You can access these great resources by logging on to the intranet and clicking on Library and then Research Resources.

The encyclopedias are very user friendly and we recommend that, for any research task, students visit the online encyclopedias first before conducting an internet search. The information is current, reliable and ad-free.

Please contact either Jennifer Barry or Maria Muse if you have any questions.

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**Students of the Week, Junior School, Keilor Campus**

*Congratulations to the following students for being awarded Student of the Week*

**Prep BK** Kale Bajinskis for demonstrating an enthusiastic approach to learning and helping others.

**Prep K** Lolita Zerafa for walking into the classroom each day with a big smile and positive attitude.

**Prep P** Meth Kaluarachchi for listening carefully to his teachers and for always striving to do his very best in the classroom.

**Prep R** Tyson Oppy for always displaying enthusiasm during classroom activities.

**1CA** Imogen Stevens for participating with enthusiasm in all school activities, particularly learning new Mandarin words.

**1G** Fiona Thanumas for being a kind and generous classmate.

**1S** Levi Frantzeskakis for always looking for ways to help others.

**2M** Grace Williams for writing a detailed and well structured recount of her favourite excursion.

**2P** Aliya Davis for being a generous and considerate member of the class community.

**3C** Charlotte Collett for always being willing to help other children in the classroom.

**3E** Xavier Costanzo for his wonderful narrative about Ormie the persistent pig.

**3GK** Monique Vilardo for being organised in the morning when getting ready for learning.

**3S** Nikolaj Pjanic for always being eager to learn.

**4MO** Daniel Bijeljic for following instructions and always staying on task.

**4MP** Oliver Sugarevski for being a wonderful example to others.
4NK Georgie Hanzinikolas for listening to and respecting his home room teacher’s wishes and respecting others in the yard.

4P Xavier Robinson for completing all of his 25 second timetable challenges.

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**Coming Events - Junior School, Keilor Campus**

**Friday 27th February**
Chapel, Prep to Year 2, 1.40-2.15pm  
Year 3 and 4, 2.45-3.20pm, Assembly Hall, 4NK Hosting

**Wednesday 4th March**
Years 4 to 6 District Swimming Carnival

**Friday 6th March**
Chapel, Prep to Year 2, 1.40-2.15pm  
Year 3 and 4, 2.45-3.20pm, Assembly Hall, 4MP Hosting  
Zooper Dooper Day

**Monday 9th March**
Labour Day Public Holiday

**Tuesday 10th March**
Year 4 Mad About Science Incursion

**Thursday 12th March**
Years 4 to 6 Divisional Swimming Carnival, Oak Park  
Junior School Student Leadership GRIP Conference

**Friday 13th March**
Chapel, Prep to Year 2, 1.40-2.15pm  
Years 3 and 4, 2.45-3.20pm, Assembly Hall, 4MO Hosting

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**Coming Events - Junior School, Taylors Lakes Campus**

**Thursday 26th February**
Prep BBQ, 5.30-7pm  
Assembly, 3M Class Presentation

**Friday 27th February**
House Synergy Day  
Nude Food Breakfast, 8.20-8.55am, for both students and families

**Monday 9th March**
Labour Day

**Thursday 12th March**
Assembly, 2A Class Presentation

**Friday 13th March**
Year 4 Incursion
Tuesday 17th March
Parent/Teacher Interviews

Thursday 19th March
Parent/Teacher Interviews

Thursday 26th March
Assembly, 4I Class Presentation

Friday 27th March
Last Day of Term 1

Nude Food Breakfast Picnic, Taylors Lakes Campus

To help launch the House Program for 2015 and celebrate this year’s introduction of ‘Nude Food’ within the Junior School, all families are invited to our **Nude Food Breakfast Picnic** on **Friday 27th February** from **8.20-8.55am** in the **Junior School Courtyard**. During Term 1 we are focusing on **Synergy**: “**Working together to make a difference**”. We ask you to bring along your breakfast (rubbish free, or ‘nude’) and a picnic rug to enjoy with other children and their families. Fresh fruit will be available to promote nude food.

Nude food is a fantastic opportunity to teach children about how their actions can impact the environment, focusing on the positive message of nude food equaling a healthy body and a healthy planet. Students are encouraged to bring in nude food (no wrappers, plastic wrap, etc.) in their lunchbox each day.

**Ideas on how to reduce lunchbox rubbish:**

- Purchase lunchboxes that are the same size as sandwiches, to avoid the need for plastic wrap or zip lock bags. Ensure it is BPA free.
- Buy less single packaged snacks and spend more time in the kitchen with kids cooking yummy biscuits, slices, muffins etc.
- Use reusable drink containers and avoid buying drink poppers. They cannot be recycled due to the fact that they contain so many materials including plastic, paper and foil.
- Instead of giving the children disposable spoons or forks for their yoghurt or fruit snacks, use old stainless steel cutlery or get some from a second-hand shop. So if it gets lost it won't be such a big deal.
- Purchase biscuits and crackers in bigger packs that you can then serve in small reusable containers.

We look forward to an exciting Nude Food breakfast and thank you all for actively supporting Junior School House events.

*The House team: Octavia Rae (Edison) Taleisha Ianzano (Curie) Fil Nastasi (Newton) Nicola Treacey (Pasteur)*

**Scholastic Book Club Ordering**

**LOOP** is the new Scholastic Book Club's **Linked Online Ordering and Payment** platform for parents. If you want to pay by credit card for your online book club order, this new platform makes it easy. It eliminates the need for paper order forms and your order is submitted safe and sound.
Log in to the Scholastic website or download the new iPhone and iPad app from the App Store.