

Special Edition - Learning and Teaching @ Mercy December 2018

Welcome to the fourth edition of Mercy Regional College's Learning and Teaching Newsletter. Through this publication, we aim to focus on issues related to the special partnership between students, parents and teachers. This supports our aim to provide great outcomes for our students. Previous editions can be accessed via the Mercy website: <http://www.mercy.vic.edu.au/newsletters/> (2017 & 2018)

From the Principal:

A final note as Principal of this fine school - over recent weeks, many members of the school community have asked me what I have been most proud in my eight years leading Mercy Regional College. My time at the College has seen significant building works at the McAuley Campus with new Senior Science laboratories, Senior School classroom and a new Middle School building as well as many changes in the College's Leadership Team. The College has continued to nourish its important links with the three Hampden Catholic Schools Network primary schools in transition but also at possibilities of better integration of learning and teaching strategies.

However, the most important development in my time is clearly the movement in the College's perspective with respect to learning and teaching. Over the last five years, a clear change has been seen with our classrooms now directed towards students and their learning rather than teachers and their pedagogy. Learning and teaching has become personalised with a range of data sources being utilised to inform and adapt the programs of individual students. Individual, peer and student feedback is an essential tool for teachers to reflect upon their own practice and teaching teams have become much more collaborative.

It has been an immense privilege to lead this wonderful school and I leave you with my favourite prayer from the last few years, the Mercy Blessing.

*May you meet Mercy each day:
In the light of your own heart,
in the hands of your loved ones,
in the eyes of the stranger and the needy.
And if by chance you do not at first meet it, then search your heart for it,
listen patiently for word of it
and it will tap you on the shoulder,
a quiet surprise,
a small gesture,
the tender look,
given and received
in the encounters of your day.
Amen*

Dr Darren Egberts
Principal

From:

Director of Professional Practice
Mrs. Tania Bruckner

Director of Student Learning
Mrs. Kristie Jensen

Welcome to the end of another school year. Thank you for being involved in your children's education – it is one of the most powerful things you can do. The partnership between school and home supports improved outcomes for students or all ages.

Last week we celebrated the end of the school year for students, with year level and homeroom activities, mass and our awards ceremony. We acknowledge the efforts of all students throughout the year, and would like to share these words that Tania read to the students.

What is learning? What does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Learning can be fun and exciting

It can be hard work

Learning can be quiet or noisy

It can be confronting or confusing

Learning can be creative, questioning and wondering

Who are you as a learner?

The shy one, trying to hide at the back of the room?

The noisy one - pick me, pick me?

The reflective one - how can I do better next time?

The caring peer, always ready to lend a hand?

The boy who was thrilled when he mastered surfing on the Outdoor Ed camp?

Or the girl who made a new student walk a little taller because she said hello?



And who are we, as your teachers?

*We hope to provide a place where you are safe, encouraged and supported,
where you can celebrate successes and work on new skills.*

*We want to help you make progress in your learning,
to work together on developing positive relationships
and to reflect on how we can do better for you.*

Today we celebrate the achievements of many students, who have shown effort and character. Success is not an accident. Success comes from hard work and making good choices. Many of you have worked hard to achieve personal bests, but are not on this stage today - be proud of your efforts.



Assessment and Exams Update:

In line with a focus on formative assessment and feedback, our exams schedule has been modified over the last couple of years. Exams are important in teaching students how to build study skills, especially when working towards VCE, but they are limited in progressing learning. Further details are in the first edition of our T&L Newsletter from last year: <http://www.mercy.vic.edu.au/newsletters/> (go to 2017).

Without exams at Years 7 and 8, teachers of Junior classes have enjoyed using the extra class time to explore topics in more detail. Year 9 and 10 students experienced some study skills sessions, followed by study in classes and then exams for their core subjects - English, Maths, Humanities and Science. They've had some feedback sessions review skills and consider areas for improvement. This is an area we continue to develop, as feedback is powerful in moving students forward in their learning. Students, overall, prepared and conducted themselves very well during this period. It is important to experience some exams and testing, regardless of the pathway students take after Year 10 - VCE, VCAL, work placement, VET and TAFE pathways.



Reporting update:

The main aim of assessment is to provide evidence of learning and student progress. Teachers use a range of methods to track progress, target teach and improve learning outcomes for students. Good assessment allows for opportunities to practise skills, identify potential learning obstacles and strengths, and move forward. Teachers aim to provide regular feedback to students. Students are then encouraged to reflect on how well they met task criteria (or standard, goal, learning intention, etc.). Teachers and students work together on strategies for improvement. Discussions should always be around effort and progress, rather than a focus on the grade.

Reporting on student achievement and progress at Mercy occurs in a variety of ways:

- Parent/student/teacher interviews (twice a year)
- Interim reports each semester
- Summary semester reports
- Ongoing reporting via PAM
- Other communication, such as phone calls and emails

Semester reports include a description of the subject/unit, outcomes and progression (Years 7-10), as well as work practices for learning, self-management and social interaction. Teachers report on assessment and future learning online, in an ongoing manner. You are encouraged to view these comments regularly via the Parent Access Module (PAM). If you have trouble accessing PAM please contact reception for assistance. Paper copies of reports will be provided on request.

During the transition to this new reporting style, there is a mix of assessment results for VCE subjects, including letter grades and raw scores. The focus should be on the comments and feedback, rather than the grade, again accessible via PAM, for individual subjects.

We always welcome conversations regarding your child's progress.



From:

Assistant Principal - Staff & Students

Mrs. Claire Wrigley

- PAC Year 7-10 Resilience Project this year and moving forward**

This year saw the implementation of the Resilience Project across the school from, Years 7 to 10, in Pastoral Care lessons. The program focus is on empathy, resilience, emotional literacy and gratitude. Resilience Project being taught in pastoral care lessons has allowed students time to develop their empathy skills and emotionally engage in a program that helps to build resilience to develop their mental health. Through activities, class discussion and journal writing students have had the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the program. Each year students will continue to have a component of Resilience Project in pastoral care lessons.



- Developing Pastoral Care courses across the school:**

This year we completed a review of the wellbeing program and pastoral care across the school. The staff have spent some time on professional development days reviewing and preparing the pastoral care program at all levels across the school. We will continue to work on developing and implementing new components to the pastoral care program. In its very nature, the pastoral care program needs some fluency, to allow for areas that may need to be addressed because of things that may be happening in the current climate, which in a school can at times be ever changing. We look forward to future planning to ensure we have a rich, vibrant program of pastoral care across the school, that meets the needs of our students.



Holiday homework expectations:

VCE students are strongly encouraged to complete homework set by their class teachers. These tasks are designed to prepare students for the coming year, especially important if a student did not study a subject at Unit 1-2 level. Teachers will have explained these expectations to students during recent Step Up classes. Some will be using Edrolo and Google Classroom - please refer to the notes below about each of these.



Reading English texts:

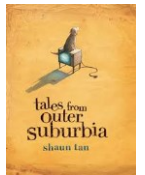
We would also like to remind all parents and students of the expectations of reading class texts.

These are book-listed in advance of each year, and the expectation (unless otherwise stated by the teacher) is that the student has read the book *before* the study of a class text.

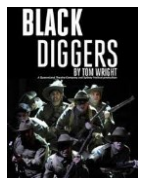


The texts are revisited throughout the course of study to deepen understanding. Students can get a great head start by reading texts during the holiday period. We encourage you to support this. It is also great for English students to keep an eye on the news, so they can start to think about issues for their speeches.

Texts for Yr 11 English: Tales from Outer Suburbia - Shaun Tan
Montana 1948 - Larry Watson
Twelve Angry Men - Reginald Rose (studied in this order)
There will be a film as text, too, title to be confirmed



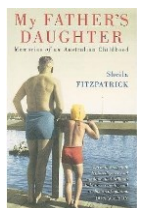
Texts for Yr 12 English: After Darkness - Christine Piper (first text studied in 2019)
Rear Window - film by Alfred Hitchcock
The Longest Memory - Fred D'Aguiar
Black Diggers - Tom Wright



Texts for Yr 11 Literature: Henry Lawson Short Stories (set for holiday reading)
Of Mice and Men
The Book Thief (set for holiday reading)
Ransom
Art - a play



Texts for Yr 12 Literature: Speaking in Tongues - a play (set for holiday reading)
The Man Who Loved Children
My Father's Daughter
The Sound of Things Falling
Language for a New Century - poetry (some for holiday reading)



VCE Resource:



Edrolo is an online resource, which was book-listed for most VCE subjects. It is a supplementary tool that offers videos, questions, tests and other resources for most Year 12 and some Year 11 subjects. They cover every section of each subject's Study Design Key Knowledge areas. Some teachers will have set holiday homework using Edrolo.

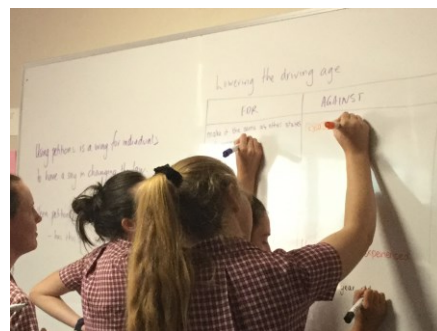
Parent Link: edrolo.com.au/parents/

How can my child use Edrolo?

- Pre-study of Units 3-4, especially if Units 1-2 haven't been studied
- Holiday homework / pre-learning
- Catching up on topics missed when absent
- Revising material learned in class
- Making summary notes
- Preparing for SACs - practice questions & exams on Edrolo
- Completing work set by the class teacher
- Exam revision

List of Edrolo subjects for 2019 (this includes Year 10's studying a 3-4 subject):

VCE	Units 1&2	Units 3&4
Accounting	Yes	Yes
Biology	Yes	Yes
Business Management	Yes	Yes
Chemistry	Yes	Yes
English	-	Yes
Food Studies (new for 2018)	-	Yes
General / Further Mathematics	Yes	Yes
Health and Human Development	Yes	Yes
History: Revolutions	-	Yes
Legal Studies	Yes	Yes
Mathematical Methods (CAS)	Yes	Yes
Media (new for 2018)	-	Yes
Physical Education	Yes	Yes
Physics	Yes	Yes
Psychology	Yes	Yes
Specialist Maths (new for 2018)	-	Yes
Studio Arts	-	Yes
Visual Communication Design	-	Yes



New learning platform:

Google Classroom is an online learning platform that offers several benefits to students and teachers. Some students will have used it at primary school. It does not replace workbooks and textbooks, but is complementary.

Classroom allows teachers to create classes, post assignments, organise folders, and view work in real time. It is interactive and collaborative.

Classroom makes great use of students' MacBooks, and teaches them a range of 21st Century skills. It fits very well with the teaching and learning goals we've had in recent years, including increased use of formative assessment, student and staff collaboration, self-review, feedback and growth in learning.

Some of the benefits include:

- Exposure to an online learning platform - used by many universities and TAFE colleges
- Easy access to resources & class materials
- Self-paced learning or catch up
- Collaboration - teacher/student & student/student, individually and in groups
- Feedback
- Engagement with the task for all learners
- Great for catch up if away
- Secure - set with Mercy's security settings

Farewell:

Best wishes to our Principal, Darren, his wife Freya and their daughters D'Arcy and Stella, as they embark upon a new journey to Kyneton, where Darren will be Principal at Sacred Heart College. We thank Darren for his leadership of our College over the past 8 years and Freya for her work in the arts, in particular. We wish them well.

We wish teachers Joanne Williams and Daryl Richardson all the best as they leave Mercy, for new adventures. Jo will take up a teaching position at Brauer College. This will allow her more time with her young family, and pursue her teaching in the Arts. We congratulate and thank Jo for driving our VCAL program. She has amazing community spirit. Daryl is retiring from teaching, but will be back to do some casual relief work. Thank you Daryl for sharing your years of experience with us. We will miss you both.

Good luck to Jess Niblett, who is taking a year's leave, and to our sports trainee, Claudia Lee, who hopes to join the police force or army.

