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Gateway Learning focuses on Prep

WITH the statewide introduction of Prep less than 18 months away, schools in the Gateway Learning Community are coming together to develop a coordinated approach to the early phase of learning.

The Gateway Learning Community (GLC) was established in January 2002 and comprises seven schools in the Brisbane South district — Balmoral State High School, Bulimba State School, Cannon Hill State School, Morningside State School, Murarrie State School, Norman Park State School, and Seven Hills State School.

The schools work together to share resources and improve student opportunities and outcomes. They have created a network that draws on the skills and collective strengths of principals, teachers, students, parents and the wider community.

For the past four years, early childhood teachers from the seven schools have met to plan their annual Under 8s Week celebrations.

This year about 1000 children from Seven Hills, Bulimba, Murarrie, Norman Park and Morningside State Schools and Preschools attended the "Big Day Out".

According to Under 8s Week coordinator, Lynelle Whittaker, the difference this year was that the planning went beyond Under 8s Week celebrations and a GLC Early Years Network was formed.

"The main purpose for the network is to develop an early years philosophy across Gateway Learning Community schools and to develop a consistent interpretation of the Early Years Curriculum," she said.

"One of the priorities is to support staff and schools with the introduction of Prep.

"Seven Hills State School, which currently has a Prep class as part of the phase-in, is coordinating the network and will report back to the GLC management group."

Seven Hills State School acting principal Richard Nash said the network was endeavouring to ensure the smooth and effective introduction of the Prep program.

"It's important every school gives serious thought as to how the Prep class will be integrated into the whole school, how teacher-aid time will be allocated and how the Prep teacher and the other early years teachers work together," he said.



(Back row, left to right) Ian Hansen, Chris Scaife, Dennis Rafter, (on motor bike) William Kirkwood, (foreground) Samuel Olive, and John McNamara. The Rural Vocational Pathways is providing real-world experiences for students in the Longreach district. Photo courtesy of the Longreach Leader.

Real-world learning for rural students

Movers and shakers gear up for middle phase conference

WELL-KNOWN Australian adolescent psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg will be among the speakers sharing insights into the Middle Phase of Learning at an Education Queensland conference in Brisbane in early October.

Four hundred Queensland teachers and administrators will "reflect, celebrate and move forward" as expert speakers and fellow teachers discuss the progress in implementing middle phase reform and strategies for moving forward.

Assistant Director-General Lesley Englert said the conference would help schools plan future directions.

"Many schools, clusters and districts around Queensland have made great progress in implementing the Middle Phase of Learning State School Action Plan," Ms Englert said.

"This conference will help them to take the next steps.

"We will hear from people in schools and clusters who have achieved success in improving engagement, achievement, transitions, teaching and the focus on the middle phase.

"We recognise that our teachers and administrators have a lot of expertise and experience to share. Presenters will include representatives from Mt Stuart, Mirani, Sunshine Coast North, The Downs, Mackay-Whitsunday and Whites Hill State College.

"We'll also gain new insights from high-calibre thinkers like Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Dr Jennifer Nayler and Dr Donna Pendergast."

Dr Carr-Gregg will share the latest research and data about brain development in adolescents, which confirms that the Middle Phase of Learning is a key opportunity to stimulate brain growth.

For more information about the Middle Phase of Learning Conference 2005, contact Mary Lincoln, A/Principal Education Officer, Middle Phase of Learning on 3237 0064 or visit the website: <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/bulletins/mpl-conf.html>



Australian adolescent psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg to appear by arrangement with Saxton Speakers Bureau.

THE Rural Vocational Pathways Program is giving students in Central Western Queensland an opportunity to access practical learning at the Longreach campus of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation.

The joint program between the college and neighbouring state schools is one of the "learning or earning" initiatives to receive funding through the Access to Pathways Grants Program.

Central west district office ETRF Senior Phase Coordinator Roslyn Egen said the program provided students with access to high-quality vocational training and certification while also addressing industry skills requirements.

"It's allowing students in the Longreach district the chance to gain both a Senior Certificate and one or more VET certificates at AQF level I or higher," she said.

"Almost 70 students in Years 8-12 have so far participated in the program.

"The students come from Aramac State School, Alpha State School, Barcardine State School, Blackall State School, Longreach State High School, Longreach School of Distance

Education, Tambo State School and Winton State School.

"They attend the college for one week each term. Most students staying at the Longreach School of Distance Education student quarters."

Henry Willersdorf from the Australian Agricultural College Corporation said students taking part in the program experienced real work situations.

"The college offers a very different setting to the traditional school classroom," he said.

"When they come to the college they're treated as young adults, just

like our other full-time students.

"Students undertake a combination of theory and practical hands-on learning. It's a great benefit to most students as they're getting a taste of what work is really like.

"Many of them thrive on the challenges posed by the practical activities.

"The success of the program is reflected in the fact that more than 95 percent of the students have achieved competency in the required timeframe and a number of students have already taken up full-time apprenticeships."

Graduate Certificate in Mental Health for Teaching Professions

This course is offered jointly by the Department of Psychological Medicine and Faculty of Education, Monash University, via off-campus learning (distance education).

It is open to interested members of the teaching professions and arises from the recognition that the significant role of the teacher in identifying and managing early signs of emotional distress in their students is not appropriately matched by available training or by adequate support of other professionals and services.

The certificate comprises two core units that will cover both theoretical and practical issues in the understanding and management of common emotional and behavioural issues as they may arise in the classroom/school setting.

A diploma year follows the certificate and comprises two more core units that outline counselling techniques for teachers and the organisational and group aspects of the school environment. The certificate must be successfully passed before commencing the diploma year.

For further course information please contact:
Mel Sonogan, Postgraduate Course Administrator,
Department of Psychological Medicine, Monash University
Tel: (03) 9594 1478, Fax: (03) 9594 6499,
email: melinda.sonogan@med.monash.edu.au
or visit www.med.monash.edu.au/psychmed/courses

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