**Unlocking Potential**

Nearly every week, our entire teaching staff comes together for a professional learning meeting. At these meetings, presenters from within and beyond our school promote discussion; introduce new learning; and encourage staff to collaborate and find ways in which we can develop our practice so as to achieve improved outcomes for our students.

This week, our staff meeting focused on the education of gifted and talented students. We revisited the signs and indicators that teachers and parents can look for which may indicate that a child is gifted or talented. This is part of our work around ensuring that we cater for the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of our students.

Last week, I attended a conference with other local primary and secondary principals. The theme of the conference was *Wellbeing for Learning and Life*. The keynote speaker, Andrew Fuller, is a leading psychologist. He delivered sessions on *Brain based Teaching*. He talked about advances in neuroscience which can now be combined with research on the factors that create success.

I have included in this Belltower one of Andrew Fuller’s articles, *Ten ways to promote the natural genius in your child*. He has also written a book, *Unlocking Your Child’s Genius* (Finch 2015), which is available in nine languages.

You will see from his article that many of the strategies he suggests fit really well with the 21st Century Learning which we have been embracing as part of our School Plan over the last two years. This semester, teachers are exploring Critical Thinking and ways to extend this skill in our students. Last semester, our focus was on Creative Thinking. You will see both of these elements reflected in Andrew Fuller’s article for parents.

I will include more articles from Andrew Fuller in coming weeks. Research about how the brain functions and what factors contribute to learning, development, resilience and success – in its broadest definition – is telling us more all the time.

If you have any topics about which you would like to know more, either through articles in the Belltower or through workshops and presentations, please feel free to email your suggestions to me at hurstville-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au.
Ten ways to promote the natural genius in your child

Andrew Fuller

The contribution made by parents and grandparents to a child or teen’s success in school and in life is enormous. When teachers and families work together the results that kids achieve are amazing.

Here are some of the main things we can all do to give children and teenagers a boost in school success.

1. Be positive about learning ourselves

By taking on hobbies, new courses and discussing new inventions and ideas we show our children and grandchildren that learning is interesting and it is for everyone. This can be as easy as discussing new idea and shows, interesting facts and discoveries, reading new books- the key idea is for young people to know that learning is something adults do too.

2. Have a creativity corner

Find somewhere in your home for projects, art works and collections. Setting this up doesn’t need to be expensive. Creative geniuses need somewhere they have to invent, work on and keep ongoing projects. One of the great ways to learn about persistence is by starting a project and then building upon it and improving it over time. Warning- cover the carpet under this corner and at times you may need to cover it all with a drop sheet. Expect this area to get messy and wild. Becoming a genius is not always neat.

3. Experience + reflection = learning

The experiences we have in our lives build our brains. When parents and grandparents involve children in experiences they grow their brains. By giving our children new and interesting positive experiences, we stimulate their brain development and make them smarter.

By asking them to think about the things they have seen or felt they consolidate this new experience into their brains.

To really have the natural genius of kids surprise and delight new friends, visit new places and try out different ways of seeing the world.

4. Look for strange and weird ways to connect things

Imagination and creativity is often about thinking ideas that no one else really thinks. You can help stimulate this by playing a game of thinking up ways that different things are alike. For example how are the planet Mars and an apple alike? Do not worry if you don’t have an answer. Genius is more about asking questions than having answers.

5. Know that mistakes are opportunities

If you can’t make a mistake you’ll never do anything new. If children can’t bear to make a mistake they can’t access their inner creative genius. Help them to realise that we all make mistakes. No one gets everything right the first time they try. In fact making mistakes is the way we learn.

6. Stretch ideas

The world seems to encourage people to seek answers (usually from google) and then stop thinking. Be the antidote to this by helping your child or teen to take ideas and stretch them out. This requires parents and grandparents to have a good sense of humour and an enjoyment of the absurd. Ask kids to take ideas and apply them in as many strange ways as they can. Geniuses take information from multiple sources, recombine them in new and interesting ways and apply them in settings not many people thought of before them.

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7. Develop concentration

It is hard to imagine attaining success in an area of life if you cannot learn to concentrate. Anyone who has even learned to ride a bike, play a musical instrument, surf a wave or drive a car knows that concentration is a skill we can get better at.

Often kids are drawn to different things to concentrate on. Notice what draws their attention and build upon that.

8. Help them learn to plan and make decisions

Being able to anticipate what is likely to happen as a result of your actions is an essential life skill. The ability to look beyond your current circumstances and consider the outcomes of possible courses of action is something we can help children and teens to learn.

This can be as simple as mapping out different pathways or asking kids, what do you think will happen if we did this or what do you think would happen if we did that? Our actions have consequences.

Decision making is a rare skill. Some people just allow life to happen to them and then express dissatisfaction about where they end.

Help kids to become active decision makers if you want them to have a happy life. Much of our life’s happiness - where we live, where we work, who our friends are and who we are in a relationship - is determined by the decisions we make.

Decisions are like crossroads that we meet in life. Helping kids to stop, pause and weigh up the likely results of taking different actions or pathways is one of the most powerful things a parent can do to help create a happy life for their child.

9. Don’t just read to kids, read with them

Reading with kids helps them to gain an interest in new information. By pairing time with parents and grandparents as learning time helps them to see the value in new learning.

Even when children are older capable readers, occasionally sharing a story, reading out something interesting from the newspaper or reciting a poem, saying or song will show them learning is something older people do as well.

Genius is about being more interested in the things we don’t know than the things we do know. It is very difficult to become intrigued in the things we don’t know if we don’t occasionally see the world from someone else’s perspective. Films and computer games will do this to some extent but nothing beats a good book. Even for really reluctant readers, it only takes one great book being read to them and with them to make a world of difference.

10. Let them know how incredible they are

These days, we talk of some people being a genius but have forgotten that everyone has a genius. Within each person is an inner genius, an inner passion, ability and desire that we can unlock and draw out. As parents and grandparents it is much more important to focus on drawing out potential and focusing less on current performance.

One of the things very successful people say is that they had someone who believed in them as a child. When asked how they managed to achieve a remarkable accomplishment they often pause and reflect that no one ever told them they couldn’t do it.

Andrew’s latest book is *Unlocking Your Child’s Genius* (Finch, 2015) and is available in nine languages.
**From the Deputy Principal**

Fact Sheets for Parents – Anaphylaxis - in English and Other Languages

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. It usually occurs rapidly after exposure to a food, insect or medicine to which a person may already be allergic. Anaphylaxis must always be treated as a medical emergency and requires immediate treatment with adrenaline.

This fact sheet contains the following sections:

- What is anaphylaxis and how is it treated?
- If your child has been diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis, their treating doctor should provide
- What is the role of the parent
- What are the responsibilities of your child’s school, preschool or childcare service
- Further information

Download full fact sheets here

http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/fact-sheet-for-parents-anaphylaxis

This document is also available in Arabic, Chinese, Dinka (South Sudan), French, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Macedonian, Persian/Dari, Spanish, Tagalog (Philippines), Turkish and Vietnamese.

Ms Jennifer Birch – Deputy Principal

The *Tell Them From Me* student feedback survey

I am delighted that this term, our school, like many others in the state, will participate in a Department of Education initiative: the *Tell Them From Me* student feedback survey. The survey aims to help improve student learning outcomes and measures factors that are known to affect academic achievement and other student outcomes. The focus of the NSW-wide survey is on student wellbeing, engagement and effective teaching practices.


The survey is a great opportunity for our students to provide our school with valuable and quick feedback on what they think about school life, how engaged they are with school and the different ways that teachers interact with them. Schools in Australia and around the world have used the *Tell Them From Me* survey to help improve how they do things at school.

I want to assure you that the survey is confidential and school staff will not be able to identify individual students from their responses. The survey is conducted online and will typically take less than 30 minutes to complete. It will be administered during school hours between 21 March and 8 April. Participating in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you do not want your child or children to participate, please return the consent form to school by Monday 21 March. FAQs and copies of the non-consent form, including translated non-consent forms, are available from the website above.
**Parent / Teacher interviews**

Parent / Teacher interviews will be held over the last two weeks of Term 1. This is a great opportunity to discuss and share information about your child with their class teacher.

We use an online booking system to provide parents with the opportunity to select their preferred interview time. To book a time with your class teacher that is convenient for you, please go to [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) and complete the following steps for your child:

1. Enter the Event Code: a9xdr
2. Fill in your name, email and child’s name.
3. Choose your child’s class teacher.
4. Choose available times which suit you.
5. When you click *finish*, your interview timetable will be emailed to you automatically.
6. You can return to the website at any time, and change your interview times.

Please be advised that online bookings will need to be completed by **Thursday 24th March, when the online booking system closes**. After this time, you will need to contact your child’s teacher to arrange a time.

If you require an **interpreter**, please **DO NOT** book online. **Interpreter interviews** will be conducted at the following times:

- Wednesday 30th March between 1pm and 4.15pm, and,
- Wednesday 6th April between 1pm and 4.15pm.

Please fill in the form sent home last week if you require an interpreter interview.

We look forward to discussing your child’s progress and working together to ensure a successful year.

*Miss Danielle Scott – Deputy Principal*

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**In The Classroom**

**Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten)**

Thank you to parents who are helping their child prepare news each week. News is an opportunity for your child to talk in front of the class about a particular topic. If you help your child to prepare, they will feel more confident to talk in front of their peers. Here are the news topics for the rest of the term.

- **Week 9:** **Where were your parents born?** - Students can bring in a flag from the country their parents were born in.
- **Week 10:** **My Grandparents** – Students can show a photo of their grandparents and talk about the things they do with their grandparents.
- **Week 11:** **My Holidays** – Students can talk about what they are going to do in the holidays?

We would also like to congratulate those students who have completed homework on a regular basis this term. Homework is a time to revise what your child has been learning in class. Here are some helpful hints to support your child’s learning at home.

- Ask your child to think of lots of things that start with a particular sound. If your child is struggling, see if they can identify an animal or food item that starts with the sound.
- When your child is reading the sound words, ask them to pat their head when they say the first sound, pat their shoulders when they say the second sound and put their hands on their
hips when they say the last sound. This helps the students to sound out the word before
reading the whole word.

- Write the ‘camera’ words twice onto paper and cut them up so that students can play a game
  of memory, where they have to remember where the camera words are. Ask your child to
  read the words as they turn them over.

Next **Thursday 24th March**, Kindergarten will be participating in the Easter Hat Parade. We really
encourage students **to make a simple hat at home to wear on this day**.

*Mrs Jessica Maakaroun – Assistant Principal*

**Stage 1**

**Year 1**

This Term, Year 1 has been exploring the ‘Past and Present’. During our research, the students have developed knowledge and understanding about the nature of history. They have discussed the similarities and differences of technology from the past through to the present, and sequenced them over time.

The students have also viewed photos from the past, of a young child who grew up to be a teacher at Hurstville Public School. The students worked collaboratively in small groups and applied critical thinking, as they developed a series of questions about the past, to ask the mystery teacher when she visits our class.

*Ms Nikki Roebuck –
Class Teacher*

**Year 2**

Year 2 students are continuing to have fun participating in experiments in our Science lessons. We are learning and discovering more about forces such as push, pull, friction and gravity.

“I can use a push force to close the door that leads to the garden. I can use a pull force to pull the picture off the wall with my hand.” – Phoebe

“I can use a push force to push a ball to my friend. I can use a pull force to pull the door, to open it, so my friends can get in.” – Andy

In History, we are learning about the past and how technology has affected and changed our lives.

“In the past, washing clothes was done by hand. But today our washing machine can do it by itself. It was too tiring to wash by hand so people made it easier using technology.”— Kaylyn

If you haven’t done so, please return your Easter raffle tickets and money to school as the winning Easter Raffle ticket will be drawn on the coming Wednesday, 23rd March, 2016.
Parents and caregivers are also reminded that Monday, 21st March, 2016 is the school photo day. Students are to bring their photo envelopes in on that day with the money inside. **Students are to wear full correct school summer uniform.**

*Ms Erina Law – Year 2 Class Teacher*

**Stage 2**

*Years 3 and 4*

Years 3 and 4 have been busy learning about celebrations around the world for their new History subject. They have been learning about the importance of family and communities during these celebrations. The classes are working on group projects, learning to research, sort information and organise it, as well as negotiate with group members to arrange a presentation. The teachers are looking forward to seeing their results.

The students have been learning new skills during CAPA groups’ time. The classes will rotate each term so they learn a new set of skills. Some of the skills currently being taught are in relation to calligraphy, sewing, drama, digital media, music arrangement and composition, as well as band and choir which do not rotate. The students are enjoying the creativity side of these groups.

*Miss Bronwyn Moar – Year 4 Class Teacher*

**Stage 3**

*Years 5 and 6*

Important reminder for Year 6 parents: Please return completed high school forms by Monday 21st March. It is important to secure your child a place at a local high school.

*Stage 3 Class Teachers*

**Support Unit**

It is Week 8 already. This term is going so fast. All of the Support Unit classes have settled well into the routines of their classrooms.

A few reminders:

*School photographs will be taken on **Monday 21st March and Tuesday 22nd March.** Children are asked to wear their full school uniform with correct socks and footwear on this day.
*Easter Hat parade is **24th March.**
A note was sent home on **Thursday 17th** with information about PLP meetings which will be held in Week 11 this term.

Support Unit Green has been working really hard on their sounds. Have a look at some of the beautiful work they have produced.
The Support Unit Team

From the Library

Premier’s Reading Challenge

Congratulations to students who have already begun borrowing books to read for the challenge!

After reading, children will need to log their books on the PRC website. Well done to those who have started doing so. The site may be accessed through our school website or by doing a Google search for ‘Premier’s Reading Challenge’. Your child must use their school login and user name to access this site. These are obtained from the class teacher.

Ms Chaan Wadley – Teacher/Librarian

Sport News

A reminder for Years 4, 5 and 6 that winter PSSA team trials will be held in Weeks 10 and 11.

Sports on offer are netball (mixed), oz tag (mixed), girls’ football (soccer) and boys’ football (soccer). Please discuss with your child whether they are permitted to trial. Cost for the first 10 weeks will be in the vicinity of $90. Winter PSSA takes place all of term 2, plus about 5 weeks of term 3, weather permitting, of course.

The school cross country carnival will be held in week 1 of term 2. Running enthusiasts should start practising now.

Congratulations to Victor L. for making the Sydney East Regional Tennis team. Victor will be travelling to Tweed Heads to participate in the NSW PSSA State Tennis Championships in May. We would like to wish Victor all the best for that carnival.
Swimming News

The school swimming carnival ran smoothly, with 155 swimmers from Years 3-6. The overall House Champions were Bundarrah. Ribbons were presented for the overall 1st, 2nd and 3rd placegetters in each event.

On Friday of Week 5, 29 students represented Hurstville PS at the Botany Bay Zone swimming carnival. They all competed very well and were wonderful ambassadors for the school. Some outstanding achievements were:

Michelle S. 11yr Girls: 1st backstroke, 1st butterfly, 1st 200m Individual Medley, 2nd Snr Girls relay
Diana D. 10yr Girls: 3rd freestyle, 2nd butterfly, 2nd backstroke
Alison L. 11yr Girls: 3rd backstroke, 2nd Snr Girls relay
Grace C.: 2nd Snr Girls relay
Jessie T.: 2nd Snr Girls relay
Harrison C. 9yr Boys: 1st freestyle
Jasun X. 10yr Boys: 3rd backstroke, 3rd butterfly, 1st breaststroke, 1st Jnr Boys relay
Justin L.: 1st Jnr Boys relay
Jason W.: 1st Jnr Boys relay
Kaden K.: 1st Jnr Boys relay
Matthew K. 12yr Boys: 3rd breaststroke
Victor L. 12yr Boys: 2nd breaststroke
Arnold T. 11yr Boys: 3rd 200m Individual Medley

The Junior Boys not only won the relay, but they also set a new record time. Fabulous achievement! The students who placed 1st and 2nd will be progressing to the Sydney East Regional Swimming Carnival on Tuesday, 15th March at the Sydney Olympic Park pool, Homebush. We wish them the best of luck for this day.

A very large thank you goes to Mr Theerawat Sae-Jong for being a parent helper at the Zone Carnival, timekeeping on Lane 6 all day. Your assistance was greatly appreciated by everyone involved on the day.

Eleven Hurstville Public School students attended the Regional Swimming Carnival this week:

Victor L., Diana D., Harrison C., Michelle S., Jasun X., Alison L., Grace C., Jessie T., Kaden K., Jason W. and Justin L. Congratulations must go to the Junior Boys Relay Team who placed 3rd so will be advancing through to the State carnival at the end of this term.
Miss Bronwyn Moar- Sports Co-ordinator

Band
It is expected that all Band students purchase a Band uniform for performances from the My Schoolwear uniform shop. The band uniform consists of a Band polo shirt with our logo on it and black pants, both of which should be purchased from the uniform shop. Students should wear black shoes and black socks also to our performances. The MySchoolwear uniform shop is located at 2/299 Forest Road, Hurstville and is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 9am – 5pm. Our first official performance will be at Bandfest in Term 2. Our Training Band has come a long way since their very first week of band rehearsals this year. We would like to invite all Training Band parents to see them perform during rehearsal time. The short performance will begin at 2.30pm on Tuesday 5th April in the main hall. We would love to see you there.

Miss Danielle Scott - Deputy Principal

Values in Action Awards
The students listed below will receive their medal on Monday 21st March at the whole school morning assembly. These students have received two GOLD Awards. Congratulations! Parents are most welcome to see their child receive their medal.

Jack R. 3A     Jingxi H. 4D

The students listed below will receive their GOLD award at this assembly as well.

Ella D. 2B     Elaine H. 3P
Landrie Z.5H   Jasmine Z. 2L     Jessica S. 6C

If your child receives 5 Values in Action Awards, please send them in so that your child can receive their Bronze award at their grade assembly.

Mrs Jessica Maakaroun – Assistant Principal
Welcome back to the 21st Century Learning corner for 2016! This semester we are continuing with our focus of the ‘4Cs for 21st Century Learning’ by looking specifically at Critical Thinking. Our aim with this “C” is to develop students’ critical thinking skills to further their academic success. As an introduction, I have provided an excerpt from one of our curriculum documents to explain it further:

“Critical thinking is at the core of most intellectual activity that involves students learning to recognise or develop an argument, use evidence in support of that argument, draw reasoned conclusions, and use information to solve problems. Examples of critical thinking skills are interpreting, analysing, evaluating, explaining, sequencing, reasoning, comparing, questioning, inferring, hypothesising, appraising, testing and generalising.”

To facilitate the development of critical thinking skills the teachers at HPS will be focusing on improving students’ ability to answer and form a variety of questions.

As an example, listed below are some examples of Bloom's Taxonomy Question Starter List – This list moves through 6 levels of questions. The first three levels are considered lower order questions; the final three levels are considered higher order. Higher order questions are what we use for Critical Thinking Problem Solving (Source: Pohl, Learning to Think, Thinking to Learn)

**Level 1: Remember** – Recalling Information
- List of Question Starters:
  - What is...?
  - Who was it that...?

**Level 2: Understand** – Demonstrate an understanding of facts, concepts and ideas
- List of Question Starters:
  - Can you explain why...?
  - Who do you think?
  - What was the main idea?

**Level 3: Apply** – Solve problems by applying knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a unique way
- List of Question Starters:
  - Do you know of another instance where...?
  - What questions would you ask of...?
  - Can you illustrate...?

**Level 4: Analyse** – Breaking information into parts to explore connections and relationships
- List of Question Starters:
  - Which events could not have happened?
  - If ... happened, what might the ending have been?

**Level 5: Evaluate** – Justifying or defending a position or course of action
- List of Question Starters:
  - Judge the value of...
  - What are the consequences...

**Level 6: Create** – Generating new ideas, products or ways of viewing things
- List of Question Starters:
  - What would happen if...?
Can you see a possible solution to...?
Do you agree with the actions?...with the outcomes?
What is your opinion of...?

Over the duration of this semester I will be providing more information on questioning strategies and teaching techniques that HPS teachers are using to develop the dispositions of critical thinking with their class. Keep watching this space!

Mrs Amy Mortimer - Teacher

**Encouraging kids to unplug from screens and play!**

*Here are some simple things children and families can do to encourage us all to unplug from our screens and get moving!*

- Get green - help the kids make their very own backyard vegetable patch.
- Organise a neighbourhood roster so that you can take turns to supervise the kids while they play at the local park.
- Make sure there are some water balloons around for some summer fun.
- Make one day a week a ‘friends’ day where you encourage your children to bring their friends around to play.
- Don’t undervalue the simple things (like having balls or a skipping rope around). Often they’ll have so much fun they won’t even realise they are being active.

For more simple ways to reduce screen time and more information: