ENRICHMENT and EXTENSION NEWS: “WHAT DO YOU DO IN ENRICHMENT?”

When you ask your children, “What are you doing in Enrichment?” sometimes they may not give you a very informative response. I thought that I would help answer your question. This week I will give you an insight into our program for Years 5 and 6. Next term I will summarise the K-2 and the Years 3 and 4 programs.

The activities for Years 5 and 6 are designed to help prepare them for High School. They also promote teamwork and responsibility.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN LANGUAGE and EXPRESSION?”

The students have been producing a film to depict the central ideas and concepts within the story that they have written as a member of a team. The story has been planned around a theme and portrayed the characters that they created from clay in semester one. It has been a learning experience which involved applying creative editing strategies to images and videos by splitting, layering and providing an audio text in the background. The students have recorded reflections in their journal as an account of their individual and group progress.

The students are also completing a study of Parvana by Deborah Ellis which raises issues that exist in Afghanistan today. They are gaining skills in analysing and making judgements on characters and events that occur in literature. It is of particular interest at present with the question of refugees in Australia. This study also encourages and develops skill in presenting viewpoints that are backed by evidence. They are also comparing and contrasting cultures and addressing issues such as the status of women in Australia compared to other countries, religion, historical and geographical influences, wars and political control. This study poses questions that make the students look at some of the biased and prejudiced assumptions that are made about groups of people.

The study raises awareness of courage in the face of oppression. It promotes higher-order thinking and discussion.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN SOLUTION FINDING?”

This semester the students are completing research and using maths and design methods to create solutions to design problems related to climbing Mt Everest. The students are using the Engineering Design Process for each of these challenges. Some students are combining all 3 challenges into the one solution.

The challenges are to design:

- a coat to keep them warm and protect them from hypothermia
- a bridge that will allow them to safely cross a crevasse
- a device that will transport altitude-sick climbers from high up the mountain to the base.

The students are interpreting and analysing data from tables and graphs, posing and answering questions as well as making predictions. The students are using maths processes such as algebra, problem solving, reasoning, classifying, representing data on graphs and analysing this data.
They are planning, designing and testing their solutions, analysing their effectiveness and redesigning them as required.

Students are working in teams for this project-based learning and are presenting evidence for each step of the process. This type of project encourages the development of conceptual, critical and creative thinking processes. The teamwork is building cooperation, sharing and negotiation skills. Students are applying maths skills and knowledge in meaningful ways to develop deeper understanding of the concepts.

Students are working together and presenting their ideas to the group as well as listening to others’ ideas. This interaction is allowing them to evaluate and modify one another’s thinking and promote their own ideas. They will summarise and present their design solutions to the class at the end of the semester and reflect on their results.

A time is allocated in each session for students to practise and consolidate the problem solving strategies. They are following a step-by-step instructional program designed to help them become competent and confident problem solvers.

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