Dear Parents and Caregivers

Throughout the year I have mentioned Professor John Hattie’s research in a number of forums. In a nutshell, John Hattie’s book, Visible Learning, synthesizes the results of more than 15 years of research involving millions of students and represents the biggest ever collection of evidence-based research into what works in schools to improve learning. Of course, almost everything works to some degree, however, Hattie’s work uses effect sizes to place things that impact on student learning on a continuum that enables us to see those things that have the greatest to least impact.

Effect size is calculated by subtracting the average pre-test score from the average post-test score and dividing by the spread (standard deviation). 0.4 is considered an average or typical effect size and the minimum we should expect. A less than 0.4 effect size indicates the need to change what we are doing, while an effect size of 0.6 and greater is considered to be significantly high. What Hattie is saying is that our time, energy and resources should be spent on those things that produce a greater impact on student learning – and that, of course, makes sense.

In the area of effect size, we are talking about two applications – firstly, the results of Hattie’s research which informs our practice and secondly, the calculation of effect size of learning in our classrooms to reveal the impact that teachers are having on their students’ learning. In a nutshell, the research shows that the most significant impact on student learning comes with making learning visible and explicit to students. Examples such as providing work samples, use of concept mapping, providing quality feedback, the development of high expectations for each student, providing criteria for success and teaching meta-cognitive skills and learning strategies help make expected learning clear and explicit for students. In this way students are better able to see what learning looks like. It’s not a mystery to them. Once again, this all makes sense, doesn’t it?

Using effect size as an indicator of teacher effectiveness, on the other hand, opens our eyes to the need for change in our approach. It also takes a significant change of teacher mindset when viewing assessment. In fact this point is so significant that Hattie believes that the primary role of the teacher is to know the impact s/he is having on students and their learning. It’s similar to a doctor failing to monitor results of diagnosis and treatment; if the teacher merely continues to do what he has always done without regard to the subsequent impact on his patients’ health, then no doubt patients will fail to reach optimal health. Of course the doctor can blame the patients for this, but this is unhelpful.

It is similar for teachers.

Of course, no doctor, no teacher and no parent, for that matter, is God and despite the very best of intentions, commitment and care, not all patients recover, not all students learn as well as each other and not all sons and daughters walk a straight line to adulthood. But our willingness to assess the impact we are having on the lives and learning of those in our care (and then act on this knowledge) will go a long way to making a difference for the better. Surely, we cannot afford to act in ignorance or to assume that all is well. The preceding discussion briefly addresses one of the elements of a Visible Learning approach and makes a logical place to start.

As you know, five of us have attended three days’ in-service on Visible Learning and we are currently developing our plan for further implementation at Stella Maris. I am delighted to tell you that, in recognition of work to date and the fact that Stella Maris is one of only three schools in the Archdiocese that independently sought this professional learning, we have been given $10 000 to assist with implementation, as Brisbane Catholic Education moves to making this training available to all its schools. We are very grateful to Nello Raciti and other BCE staff for such generous support.

It’s an exciting and challenging time in education with so much research enabling us to be better informed. Stay tuned for further news over the coming weeks.

Have a great week everyone. Glenda

(As a matter of interest, of the 150 influences on achievement, those that rank the lowest in effect size include - repeating a grade (Number 148 with ES -0.18), frequent moving between schools (Number 150 with ES -0.34), ability grouping (Number 131 with ES 0.12) and class size (Number 113 with ES 0.21).

Staffing 2013 - It is my pleasure to announce three teachers joining the Stella Maris staff in January, 2013 as a result of the transfer, or change of school process as it is called in Catholic Education. They are: Mr Jeffery Ross, who is presently teaching in Ipswich. Mrs Paula Rowan is presently on maternity leave from Unity College at Caloundra and will join our staff mid-year or in 2014. Miss Frais Marinon has taught in Murgon since her graduation four years ago. Each of these teachers comes very highly recommended and we look forward to welcoming Jeffery, Paula and Frais to the Stella Maris team.

Library Extension Starts - Last Tuesday, the builders started work on the new extension which is anticipated to take 12 weeks to complete. The Prep playground equipment has been moved across the path to make way for the building and we are now awaiting installation of soft fall before student use.
Dear Parents/Caregivers,

When I think of the Virtue for this fortnight, Steadfastness, I think of a story from my Year 4 Reader, The Steadfast Tin Soldier, by Hans Christian Andersen. We had only one Reader all year containing short stories that we read over and over again. The local Council library built at Chernside the following year opened up a world of magic stories for me! This particular story though has stayed with me for more years than I would care to admit and has had a powerful effect on me. It is a story about overcoming the odds, standing fast against the flow of water and holding firm to hope and courage. It is available on the internet if you would care to read it at: http://www.bartleby.com/195/9.html. It starts off like this:

**THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they were the offspring of the same old tin spoon. Each man shouldered his gun, kept his eyes well to the front, and wore the smartest red and blue uniform imaginable. The first thing they heard in their new world, when the lid was taken off the box, was a little boy clapping his hands and crying, “Soldiers, soldiers!” It was his birthday, and they had just been given to him; so he lost no time in setting them up on the table. All the soldiers were exactly alike with one exception, and he differed from the rest in having only one leg. For he was made last, and there was not quite enough tin left to finish him. However, he stood just as well on his one leg as the others on two; in fact he is the very one who is to become famous…**

Thus the scene is set for the tin soldier with the one leg to become the hero of the piece, the one to prove his courage and steadfastness and to make the ultimate sacrifice for the one who is loved. A story like this stirs the spirit and stays with you as part of the fabric of your being forever. This virtue is one that is not spoken of often, but needs to be.

In practising Steadfastness:

- I choose my commitments wisely;
- I remain true to my purpose;
- I am faithful to relationships;
- I don’t allow doubts or tests to blow me off course; and
- I take what comes and persevere.

Steadfastness is being steady, persevering and dependable. It enables trust to be built between individuals and families on a daily basis, between people and their governments in times of natural disasters, and between nations in good times and in times of strife. Steadfastness grows whenever we rise to a challenge, remaining true to our purpose through whatever happens. It bolsters our will to keep going when life tests our resolve in choosing a direction, and then enables us to keep a steady pace. We are faithful and enduring with those we love and we make commitments to worthwhile goals for however long it may take. We are like a strong ship in a storm, holding on and riding the waves, rather than being battered or blown off course. We ‘keep on keeping on’, having the strength to endure.

So this week, please take some time to think about your commitments in life, reaffirm their value and persevere no matter what the obstacles. Like the steadfast tin soldier, you may find true love at the end of your journey.

God bless, Judith.
MUSICAL NEWS – ‘JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT’ - Our props and costumes are being developed and we are looking to borrow the following items for our show.

- **Sheep (not real of course)** – 3 or 4 of them large enough to act as a prop on the stage (will be returned)
- **Christmas Reindeer (wire frames)** that we may keep as they will be made into other props
- **Camel** – you never know, someone just may have a large wooden camel or even a camel costume to fit two adults?? (will be returned)

**Large artificial palm trees** (will be returned)

Don’t forget that our second afternoon rehearsal is Wednesday 22 August in the Hall for singers and dancers. Backstage crew are to meet at the Music Room.

All parents with students involved in ‘Joseph’ should have again received the rehearsal schedule for this week. If you did not receive an email, please contact Mrs Durrer to ensure you are on the email list and your details are correct.

**QCMF NEWS** - WOW and CONGRATULATIONS!!!! We are so proud of each and every students who travelled to Brisbane on Friday for the Queensland Catholic Schools’ and Colleges’ Music Festival at Villanova College in Coorparoo. Your behaviour was exemplary as was your singing and playing. We have received many comments from staff members from other schools (some of whom we don’t know), who congratulated us on your performances. It gave us great satisfaction knowing each of you could rise to the challenge of performing in front of larger audiences and with greatly improved stage presence. We were very fortunate to have received the following awards (in order of performances):

- Stella Fellas – Silver
- Piccolo Choir – Silver. Heather Smith was also awarded an Award of Excellence for her solo
- SM Singers – Silver
- Stella Maris & Siena combined Concert Band – Gold

Special thanks to the teachers and parents who accompanied each group on the bus, to the parents who travelled to Brisbane just to hear the kids perform, the staff of Stella Maris for their support, Mrs Durrer, Ms Worthy, and Mr. Wynyard for preparing the students for these performances, all parents and care givers for supporting the children in their musical endeavours, and finally to the children for their hard work. Well done, kids!

If parents have photos of the choir/band in Brisbane, could you please send copies to Mrs Durrer or Mr Wynyard?

**EISTEDDFOD NEWS** - Congratulations to the following students and their achievements at the Sunshine Coast Junior Eisteddfod. We know there are many other awards that are not mentioned below (as we haven’t heard yet of the results), but would like to congratulate ALL of the stuens who participated. Regardless of the outcome, you are all to be commended for taking the step onto the stage. Well done!

- **Tara Watson 6C** – 2nd - Original Character 10 Years and under
- **Jade Watson 3A** - Highly Commended Storytelling 10 years and under. Highly Commended Novice Poem. 3rd Memorised Set Verse 8 years and under
- **Sarah Martin** - 2nd in the String Duet 10 years and under
- **Genevieve Langford** - Highly Commended in Musical Theatre, 3rd Sacred Gospel, 2nd Set Piece, 1st Contemporary

**DATE CLAIMERS**

- **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat - Rehearsal Wednesday 22 August (3:00 – 4:30 in the Hall for all singers and dancers. Backstage crew will meet in the Music Room)**
- **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat – Friday 19 October & Saturday 20 October**

If you have queries regarding anything musical – please feel free to catch up with us before or after school, by contacting us in writing or via email.

Musically Yours,
Inez Durrer
Inez Durrer
Classroom Music Specialist
durrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

Todd Wynyard
Instrumental Music Coordinator
wynyard@bne.catholic.edu.au

**FOOTBALL NEWS**

End of season Break up Saturday 8th Sept from 8.30 to 11.30 at Stella soccer grounds. Free sausage sizzles, jumping castle, Trophies and more. Any questions call Damien on 0411283065

**LIBRARY NEWS**

Bookweek Parade this Friday at 9am in the hall for preps to Year 4. All welcome! Book orders for Dave Hackett (our visiting cartoonist & author) available in the library - orders due Mon 28th Aug. This week is our 50 cents 2nd hand book sale in library -profits to the Indigenous Literacy foundation!

From the Library desk
Joan Jenkins, Peta Neill, Kym Schemioneck

**Principal’s Awards**

August 23


**MOOLOOLABA SLSC**

Nippers Sign On Day
Sunday 9 September 2012
8.00am – 12 noon
Flyers available at the School Office for further information

**Tuckshop News..**

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**Ingredients Roster**

**Week Ending 24 August** – D Bury, D Cracknell, D Lusio, D Lyndon, D Mills, E Peters, E Rawlings, F Ellis, J Camp, J Collins, J Ellery, J Fuller, J Gilligan, J Lee, J Ratcliff, J Robinson, J Williams, K Elder, K Holzer, K Kapolos
Inside a Grade 2 brain! Part 2

A second grader's attention span ranges from seven to 25 minutes; boys usually at the shorter end of the range than girls. To encourage greater concentration capacity, encourage activities like meditation and board games — and limit TV. Studies indicate TV over-stimulates still-developing neurology, resulting in abbreviated attention.

Is your second grader demanding more freedom? Itching for a longer leash? That's good! This means your child is developmentally on course. Synaptic density in the frontal lobes is peaking this year, with neural pathways linking those zones to the limbic system. The result: Your child's rational brain areas are expanding in power and assuming more control over their wilder regions, which translates into improved impulse control, greater independence, and a better capacity to plan ahead. Helpful tip: Time to get your bigger brained second grader helping out more at home. Second graders can grasp orders that contain three separate components, which enable them to perform more complex chores.

Ha, ha. Finally your kid understands your sense of humour. By age seven, the Broca’s area growth is larger in the right hemisphere. This beefs up language's emotional and prosodic components. Your child's comprehension is no longer limited to the "literal" which means that sarcasm and irony are within their grasp. The upside: They'll just chuckle instead of freak out when you mutter, "I'm gonna sell you to the pirates." The downside: They might start turning sarcasm back on you, with requisite eye-rolling: "Really nice tie, Dad."

The memory capacity of your second grader is improving, due to dendritic complexity in the frontal and temporal lobes, which are growing at a stunning rate. Newly-gained "coherence" allows the brain to integrate the past with the present. Now that she has a deepening awareness of her own emotions and her "inner self," you can suggest he/she start keeping a journal or scrap book. Expose your second grader to music. If they demonstrate an interest, get them an instrument. Play structured melodic music for him and sing songs. The journal Neurological Research published a study indicating that second-graders given four months of piano training scored 27 percent higher on fraction tests than children who used math software. Another study, in the same journal, indicated 100 percent improvement over students who learned in the conventional manner.

Suggested reading
The Developing Brain: Birth to Age Eight, by Marilee Sprenger
Your Child's Growing Mind: Brain Development and Learning From Birth to Adolescence, by Jane M. Healy, Ph.D
Seven Times Smarter: 50 Activities, Games, and Projects to Develop the Seven Intelligences of Your Child, by Laurel J. Schmidt

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
email: ccraig@bne.catholic.edu.au