

Australia (Victoria)

Mordialloc College Quality eLearning Centre and Enquiry Zone

Mordialloc College's junior school employs programmes for Years 7 to 9 (students aged 11-16) that emphasize personalized learning, framed by using the Quality Learning (Quality Learning Australia) approach in the school. Characteristics of the organisation are: student self-management, team teaching and planning, and co-development of curriculum with students. The students work in large flexible learning spaces in Year 7 and 8. Structures include "family groups" of students with teachers as "family guides", neighbourhood learning within the whole year cohort, optional workshops, and parent conferences. While timetables in Year 7 and 8 are flexible and contain no separate subjects, flexible learning in Year 9 is organized around subjects, and includes community-based projects and expeditional learning.

Main focus of innovation: LEARNERS, TEACHERS, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

Other keywords: learning space

General Information

Name of the ILE: Mordialloc College Quality eLearning Centre and Enquiry Zone

Location/Address: 1 Station Street Mordialloc, VIC, 3195

Website: www.mcsc.vic.edu.au

ILE submitted by: Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, Victoria, Australia

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

Participation in this international research study would enable our organisation to:

- Engage with, learn from and share our experiences with international experts, innovators and reformers.
- Provide validation of our existing programs and enable us to further improve our practice.
- Provide another forum in which to investigate other innovative practice while we continue to reflect upon our practice.

Our learning environments respond to 21st century learning challenges by providing learning experiences that emphasise individualised learning, community, student ownership and student voice.

Our centres are highly resourced and provide fully integrated and interdisciplinary learning experiences facilitated by designated teaching teams. Students operate in flexible learning spaces as a community of learners. Within these centres students, parents and teachers develop a shared language of learning with which they are encouraged to reflect on and be meta-cognitive with their learning.

The learning programs challenge the traditional paradigm of secondary school and focus on the process of learning, rather than learning as a *product*, while developing student confidence and their ability to articulate their learning journey.

The ongoing research based curriculum is developmental in design and therefore the pedagogy requires students to be working at their own pace facilitated by strong relationships with their teaching team.

Framed by Quality in Schools (QIS) and Restorative Justice Practice, professional and student learning across the programs is now characterised by enquiry, application, reflection, independence and inspiration. Teachers receive in depth and ongoing professional learning in how to motivate students to investigate, analyse and research. Students are encouraged to use a range of QIS thinking tools such as Gantt Charts, Parking Lots, the PDSA Cycle (Plan, Do, Study, Act), Force Field analysis, Lotus Diagrams, Consensograms etc.

Teachers have opened their classrooms, creating opportunities for teams to model and share best practice, not only with their colleagues but also with their students and the wider community. Our College is concerned with a focus on purposeful learning and teaching, providing a stimulating and secure learning environment resulting in an inspired learning community with a common goal – continual and sustainable improvement of student outcomes.

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

Core learning aims and skills and knowledge we would like to focus on are:

- Working and communicating effectively with the community
- Sustaining innovation and new approaches to teaching and learning
- Consolidating collection of data to inform and drive improvement
- Skills and knowledge related to effective pedagogies used by alternate educational settings, with focus in senior school.
- Practices that build shared visions across internal and external community
- Practices that sustain innovative shared culture, induction etc.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

The innovative learning environment referred to in this Nomination Victoria, Australia is aimed at junior school students, Years 7 & 8. (In addition, we have established a community based innovative learning program for all Year 9 students, based within a wider Year 9 program that provides purposeful and gender specific learning experiences.)

There are approximately 230 students in the Year 7 & 8 program. (Additionally, 140 are involved in Year 9 MEX program.)

Student ages across the 3 programs range between 11 -16 years of age.

Learning needs of students

- Ability to connect learning to life outside the school gate.
- Literacy and Numeracy improvement
- Skills to monitor and develop ownership/responsibility within the learning process
- Student capacity to be reflective and meta-cognitive within their learning experiences
- Student capacity to use data to inform learning improvement
- Problem solving

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

1. Each program is staffed by a dedicated team which includes teachers (referred to as Family Guides,) a member of the College's education support staff (who works with the team and students with responsibilities that include resourcing and maintaining the program and facility,) and a teacher leader. At Years 7 and 8, the teaching team work exclusively within their designated year level program. Members of the Year 9 team may have additional teaching responsibilities within the senior school.
2. The leadership of the programs is distributed. One senior leading teacher, Director of the Junior School, provides over-arching mentoring and pedagogical support to the Year 7 & 8 teams. Both programs also have a designated Program Leader who is one of the Family Guides. In addition, all Family Guides have leadership responsibilities for specific areas of the curriculum, wellbeing and program processes.
3. The leaders' professional backgrounds are educational.
4. Roles and responsibilities of the leaders are many and varied. They combine curriculum, pedagogy, program development and student management and wellbeing.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

1. Each program operates within specially designed school buildings wherein the physical space supports the pedagogy and philosophy. Students in these programs are wholly involved in 'what', 'when' and 'how' they learn, carefully guided by designated teams of teachers who are known as Family Guides. Our programs occur in larger flexible learning spaces, which are different from traditional smaller classrooms.

The Quality eLearning Centre in Year 7 and the Enquiry Zone in Year 8 are each able to accommodate a whole year level cohort and so each student sees themselves as part of a learning community. This visibility of others reinforces the developing understanding by the learner of their importance as an individual within a group. The table below summarises the three programs and their key features.

Innovative Program	Key Features of learning program
<p>Year 7 Quality eLearning Centre TLC@MC “Thinking, Learning, Creating”</p>	<p>Family Guide, Minimal movement, Year 7 Student Centre (11-13years), Pedagogy-Quality in Schools philosophy, Wellbeing-Restorative Justice Model. Integrated, Interdisciplinary Approach, Inquiry Based Learning, ICT rich, Use of Thinking Tools, Personalised and Individualised Learning. Student led parent conferencing. Flexible timetable- No Separate subjects/classes. 3 Tiers of Workshop Based Skills and Knowledge. Self and Peer Assessment. Shared ownership of the culture and facility. Student learning portfolios</p>
<p>Year 8 “Active 8 Learning Centre “Experience, Experiment, Express”</p>	<p>Family Guide, Minimal movement, Year 8 Student Centre (13-14 years), Pedagogy-Quality in Schools philosophy, Wellbeing-Restorative Justice Model. Integrated, Interdisciplinary Approach, Inquiry Based Learning, ICT rich, Use of Thinking Tools, Personalised and Individualised Learning. Student led parent conferencing. Flexible timetable- No Separate subjects/classes. 3 Tiers of Workshop Based Skills and Knowledge. Self and Peer Assessment. Shared ownership of the culture and facility. Student learning portfolios</p>
<p>Year 9 “The Mordialloc Experience”</p> <p>“Discovery and Communication”</p>	<p>One term (10 weeks) Expedition Learning Experience for all Year 9 students (14-16 years), City Program with The Hub as inner city campus (2 weeks), Community placements (2 weeks), Local community exploration, The “Be Real Game”, ICT rich, Use of Thinking Tools, Personalised and Individualised Learning. Student runs learning expo. My Mentor Program. Student led Parent Conference.</p> <p>For all Year 9 students (14-16 years), Gender separation interdisciplinary program: Family Guides Discovery- Maths, Science, Personal/Interpersonal Learning, Thinking skills, Communication, Communication- English, Humanities, Personal/Interpersonal Learning, Thinking skills, Communication, ICT rich, Use of Thinking Tools, Personalised Learning</p>

2. Within each program, learners have specified times during which they work within their family group with their designated family guide.

For instance, at Year 7 each morning begins with a 72 minute period of Family Time in their area with their Family Guide. Each day, the family session begins with 30 minutes of silent reading followed by planning, pastoral care and learning time. Family time is followed by 2 x 72 minute sessions called Expedition Time. During Expedition Time, students are involved in a variety of workshops, individual or group work, demonstrations, incursions and inquiry based project tasks of their own design. During Expedition Time, students may work with different team teachers and groups of students as long as they can demonstrate that they have planned their time and are on task.

Family time is the term given to the first period of each day. During this time students meet together in their family group (class) with their main teacher- termed Family Guide in a designated area in the flexible space. The Family guide is responsible for the monitoring and assessment of this group of students learning across core subjects throughout year 7.

The guide and students spend the first 1/2 hour of Family time in silent reading. After this activity they are involved in a variety of tasks as a designated group.

These tasks may include;

- Planning - students document the learning activities and the workshops they have booked into for the day on their Gantt charts.
- Interpersonal skills-Restorative circle/relational circle activities to build relationships and team work skills.
- Directed learning of skills and knowledge -Focused group workshops related to areas of need within the group
- Learning/assessment discussions and/or literacy or numeracy rotations
- Organization- Students book into workshops, organize learning folders

Expedition time is the term used for the 2, 75 minute periods in the middle of the day. As students become independent learners able to demonstrate that they can plan their time well and work on task with in the centre, they are able to choose who and where they work within the centre. Expedition time is essentially a large block of 'learning time' where students are able to exert choice and make independent decisions about what, where and who they will be working with that day. These choices are closely monitored by the specific student's family.

Students during expedition time are not required to remain in their family group area. During expedition time, student learning is focused into elements of learning (English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, personal learning, thinking ICT etc) that are included on their current learning matrix. They may be accessing resources and activities that provide skills and knowledge acquisition or they may be working on independent or group projects that they have designed to allow them to apply the skills and knowledge they have learned within the scope of the current matrix activities to demonstrate their ability to apply the knowledge in a different/new/ integrated ways. It is during expedition time that students attend workshops (active learning classes) specific to various subject areas.

Expedition time is broken into 2 halves by a 10 minute musical refocus time during which a piece of Mozart is played that signals to the students that they should quietly check their Gantt chart and monitor the planned learning they had set out to achieve that day. Occasionally during expedition time the teaching team will run compulsory "Neighbourhood" workshops. Unlike smaller workshops, the whole year level attends neighbourhood workshops and they are most often related to the introduction of the new learning matrix, immersion activities, guest speakers, or specific areas of knowledge that the team identify as needed by the whole student cohort.

We would appreciate as well if you could send a narrative description (like you did for Year 7) about how learning takes place in Year 8, so that we can have a clearer idea of the innovative nature of this program.

The Active8 program

The year 8 program- Activate8 builds upon the independent learning skills the students have developed within the year 7 program and the expectation is that they are able to operate in a learner directed environment with their team of teachers facilitating their learning.

Unlike the Yr 7 program where students spend a block of the first 3 periods of a four period day in the centre together, the Yr 8 program timetable is more diverse. 5 groups operate in the EZ centre for 65% of their full week learning time. In this program Family time and Expedition time operate in much the same way as in year 7, however, the students having learned the quality processes and tools throughout year 7 are more adept at operating independently and complete their planning and organization at home in preparation for their planned week.

Family time each day for each of the 5 groups may occur different times of the day- family guides and students within the family group negotiate which period will be family time and which remaining periods will operate at expedition time during which they may attend workshops or work in groups of their choice. At any one time in the EZ there may be between 1-5 groups sharing the space and the resources. During Expedition time teachers may be working with their own groups, 1 on 1 or team teaching with other members of the team.

The Quality in schools processes and thinking tools developed and learnt by students in the Yr 7 program are embedded in to the Active8 program and Restorative Justice practice and relation circle processes are continued within the program providing for a consistent shared language and pedagogy.

Both programs are staffed by a team of teachers designated to teaching at the particular year level, however, the Year 8 teachers may have a small role outside of the centre teaching specialist subject such as Physical education.

Students in the Yr 8 program continue to be learner directed, making choices about how and when they will learn about specific learning elements included on current matrices and the design of their inquiry projects to demonstrate integrated application of knowledge. At year 8 the students come together at regular intervals to conduct an 'Expo' day during which they present their projects to their peers and the teaching team.

The Active 8 program consolidates the student's active role in monitoring and taking responsibility for their own learning in preparation for the next stage of learning in Yr 9 during which they will operate in term long program that requires them to demonstrate their ability to use these independent and collaborative quality learning skills within the wider community. (see Yr 9- Mordialloc Experience program description original submission.)

3. Quality in Schools, inquiry based learning and Restorative Justice Practice
4. Integrated and Interdisciplinary. Identification of individual student strengths and needs across all learning areas and individualised progress.
5. See Appendix 1 & 2 – Learning matrix and Resource matrix

6. The learning/resource matrices form the structure of the curriculum. Students use their curriculum documentation/matrices to plan and develop their personal learning process and to apply and demonstrate the skills and knowledge they are building.

The structure of the curriculum enables students to develop and apply independent learner qualities. 'Essential learning elements' from all domains and disciplines of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, (VELS) are built into the matrix sets.

Students have access to 8 matrices across the school year. Students are explicitly taught to, and can choose to, link any number of essential learning elements into planned projects to exemplify and apply their learning. This process is closely monitored by the student's designated Family Guide who monitors and assesses individual student progress.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

- The learning context is based on a shared vision of a learning organisation as a group of people who are continually enhancing their capabilities to create improved quality learning outcomes. Cooperation, effectiveness, engagement and inclusion characterise the culture of the junior learning centres.
- **The physical environment;**
Large flexible and open spaces. Year 7-bright primary colours, Year 8- increased sophistication of colour reflecting maturity of this stage of development. Student learning examples and processes such as Codes of Cooperation on display. Designated learning area resource spaces, mobile furniture. Student/teacher shared kitchen, office, science, literacy, numeracy, learning and resource spaces. Open and light filled. Highly ICT resourced and integrated usage. Designated quiet areas, well equipped group work areas. Designated workshop rooms. Hanging and fixed stylised sound proofing batts.
- Parents are encouraged to partner teachers and students in the learning process. Many parents visit after school. The College provides local primary school groups with the opportunity to visit and participate in workshops.
All Year 7 & 8 students conduct 45 minute student led parent conferences twice during the year to explain and demonstrate the centre processes and their learning progress and development.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The project was started in response to the College community's recognition of the complexity of individualising student learning and improving teacher effectiveness. We wanted to create a learning environment that provided rich, challenging and purposeful learning with which to equip our students for their future in a rapidly changing and globally connected world.

Our research into effective pedagogy led us to investigate the *Quality in Schools, (QIS)* program. Through principal class instigation, a small team of staff participated in the initial QIS four day training eight years ago. The College adopted the system based and continual improvement principles and processes of QIS as our whole school pedagogical approach and has continued to provide QIS training to all staff.

As trained staff began to investigate and trial new approaches within the traditional classroom to enable students, it became clear that transformation of the learning environment would be necessary to fully realise student learning potential.

As such, the College has been on a journey of innovation of curriculum and facility design to engage students and develop quality learning environments.

In 2004, MC successfully applied for *Leading Schools Funding* to research, design and develop a cutting edge learning program for students in Year 7. The Quality eLearning program was implemented in 2006. Further development of the program led to the school self-funding the building of the Enquiry Zone, a flexible learning centre for Year 8 students. This centre enabled us to expand the program into Year 8 and provide for continual and consistent implementation of the whole school active and enabling quality pedagogy. In the EZ Learning Centre, students are able to build upon and master the learner directed skills, knowledge and processes that were developed in Year 7.

(During 2007-8 the Year 9 program was consolidated. This included the refurbishment of a number of individual classrooms to allow for a designated flexible space for Year 9 use. In addition, the College redesigned the traditional library building to transform it into the Senior Forum, a flexible study space with staff supported study time for our VCE students.)

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

- The innovative learning environment is funded through the school's global budget.
- Sustaining these innovative programs has led the College to change many of the traditional processes of resourcing and budgeting.
- College leadership is responsible for funding and resourcing in collaboration with the needs of the teams teaching within the programs.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

1. Annual school level data sets as required by the Victorian Department of Education including Student, Parent and Staff Attitudes to School Surveys, NAPLAN (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy,) VCE (Victorian Education Certificate) study scores.
2. On demand testing, Literacy and Numeracy, Numeracy LAFF testing, PROBE literacy testing, QIS surveys, Student, parent and team feedback. Teaching team data portfolios at Years 7 and 8.
3. Students and teachers within the teams gather data on a daily and weekly basis. Various QIS tools such as Consensus grams, Correlation charts, Radar charts, Bone diagrams and Affinity diagrams are used to gather feedback/data for use in the ongoing evaluation and continual improvement of the programs.
4. Student learning is assessed both formatively and summative. Students, family guides, team teachers and parents all contribute to the assessment process for each student.