

Middle Schooling Association of Western Australia



MIDDLE SCHOOLING
ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)

Message from the President.....

Greetings Middle Schooling Colleague

Once again, many thanks to our hard working Editors, Tony Fooks and Chris Tonkin for their efforts in putting together our first newsletter for 2004. As you will notice from other information in this newsletter, MSA of WA is slowly making the transition to 'paperless' communication. The 4 newsletters published this year will be electronically published and personally "posted" to those members for whom we have an email address. During our transition period, as we update our data base with email addresses for new and current members, some members will continue to receive their newsletter in the post. By this time next year, we hope to have all communication happening through our website. (www.msawa.asn.au/)

I would like to publicly acknowledge the outstanding job one of our members, Bruce Bailey, and his superb staff at Roleystone DHS has done over the past three years in photocopying and distributing our newsletters. We are all aware that it's the 'hidden work' that often makes the biggest difference in an organisation. Many thanks, on behalf of all our members, are extended to Roleystone DHS, for their efficient efforts in maintaining our main communication channel. It has been very much appreciated.

Some other people whose efforts also deserve recognition are our new secretary, Keren Caple who has been co-opted to replace Donna McDonald. Keren is a L3 HOLA/Team Leader at Coodanup CC and really didn't have a great deal of choice in this matter following Donna's promotion to a principalship and subsequent move to Hedland SHS. Donna has retained her membership and is enthusiastically promoting our association in the Pilbara. One of Keren's first tasks, was to represent our association at the recent Induction Conference for newly appointed and aspirant leaders. Keren and our vice president, Warren Smith, manned a MSA of WA booth over the four days of January conference and managed to sign up several new members. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our past and current Web Master's - Martin Cleary & Jody Crothers. Martin designed our original site in 2002 and was responsible for its maintenance up until the end of last year. It's another one of those 'hidden' tasks that well deserves our grateful thanks and appreciation. If you haven't had the opportunity already, I would encourage all of you to explore and contribute to our website.

Finally, in terms of future directions, our executive is working hard to raise the profile of our association. We have reached agreement with our fellow associations in other Australian states to share the hosting of an International Conference. It will be our turn in 2006. (SA is hosting this year in Adelaide, July 31st-Aug 2; Qld will host in Brisbane in May '05). We will continue to develop our 'out of hours' PD program in Terms 2, 3 and 4. Our aim is to make this program as accessible as possible, by offering the PD in different venues throughout the metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas. Details will be posted on our website

Gaylia Mitcham

Volume 4, Issue 1

April 2004

Special Points of interest:

- *In the Middle of Middle Schooling. Christine Lee finds some great links to help Middle Schooling teachers*
- *MSAWA newsletter is moving into the 21st century. The editors tell you how this will affect you.*
- *MSAWA e-Publications. — Your contributions are needed to help launch this new area*
- *MSAWA Website The MSAWA web site has had a face-lift and is destined to become the focal point of our communications.*
- *Shifting Our Focus - Gaylia Mitchum describes the changes that have occurred at Coodanup Community College.*

In the Middle of Middle Schooling.....

I am currently studying externally for a Masters Degree in Education from ECU.

At the time of writing I am also working fulltime as Teacher in Charge of Religious Education at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School. After teaching Mathematics for many years I thought it was time for a change.

My new job not only gives me the opportunity to teach a subject I love, I have the opportunity to work with teachers from K to 12. This new turn in my teaching career does not mean I have left Middle Schooling behind. I am still a committed middle schooler because I believe the Principles of Middle Schooling best meet the needs of young adolescents.

I have been teaching since 1973.

This is a long time in anyone 's language. The wonderful thing about teaching is that if you are willing to, you can always be learning. I believe we are privileged to be a part of so many young people 's lives, even if it is for a short time. Research says that it is teachers who make the difference. Yep! That 's you and me and haven 't we always known this was the case. I can remember my favourite teachers, how about you?

I would like to point my fellow middle school enthusiasts, and that must be you if you are reading this, to a few of the terrific website addresses given to me when I attended a tutorial at ECU on Saturday. One of the two units I am working on this semester is " Context and Philosophy of Middle Schooling ". (MYS 5102).

When you get time, have a look. I am sure you will not be disappointed. Let us, the committee know what you think? Did you try some suggested strategies and did they work?

By the way, I can thoroughly recommend this unit of study. Contact ECU if you want to know more.

The websites are
www.softweb.vic.edu.au

Type in middle schooling in the search box.....Online PD!!!!

www.education-world.com

Can you find the Curriculum Article?

Fifty Great Things About Middle Schoolers!?

www.education.qld.gov.au

Search for middle phase of learning

Christine Lee

Letter from the Editors....

Hello new and old members,

Our newsletter is on the move again (definitely no moss gathering here). If you supplied an email address with your registration, you will be reading this newsletter via your email. If you did not supply an email address, you will have received this newsletter through the traditional snail mail. As we move along with technology we are moving our newsletter into the 21st century and will be posting it directly onto the Middle Schooling Association of Western Australia 's website at : www.msawa.asn.au You will receive an email reminder and link to the newsletter each term. Articles and information from members are most welcome by the end

of each quarter (end March, June, September, December) so the newsletter can be posted to members electronically at the beginning of each quarter- April, July, October, and January.



If you have not supplied an email address, please do so by emailing or contacting the treasurer with your details:

Chris Kemp

Deputy Principal
Safety Bay Senior High School
PO Box 6122

Phone: (08) 9527 1233

Fax: (08) 95924672

Email:

Christina.Kemp@eddept.wa.edu.au

We hope you are having a lovely break and are recharging for term 2.

Cheers

Chris and Tony

MSAWA Website....

Our website has been renovated and is now under the direction of our webmaster Jody Crothers.

Of special interest is the soon to be published e-journal, more details following from Dr.De Jong. Please go to www.msawa.asn.au to take a look at the rejuvenated site, or if you haven't visited MSAWA's site before, take time to explore and add to your favourites.

Whether you are working in a *Middle School* or perhaps implementing *middle schooling principles* in a traditional primary or secondary school, please add a link to your schools website to our **Schools Link** page

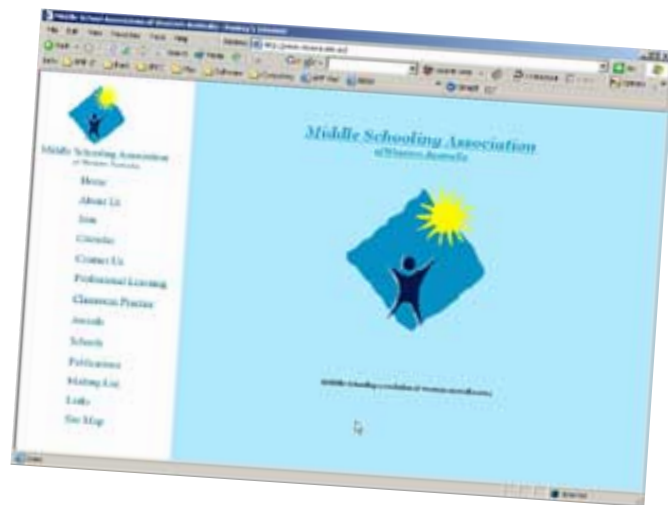
You will also find the site currently includes links to the following conferences around the state:

[Conferences and Events in Australia](#)
[- Boys in Education Conferences](#)
[- Fremantle-Peel DEO](#)
[- Goldfields DEO](#)
[- Rock and Water Program](#)

There are also links to other Middle Schooling Associations, Middle Schooling Resources, and Middle Schooling Discussion Lists.

Any questions or comments about the web site can be directed to:

Jody Crothers Email:
jodstar2000@hotmail.com



MSAWA's e-publications....

You are invited to submit an article on any aspect of the middle years of schooling to MSAWA's e-publications – a feature of the Association's website (<http://www.msawa.asn.au/>).

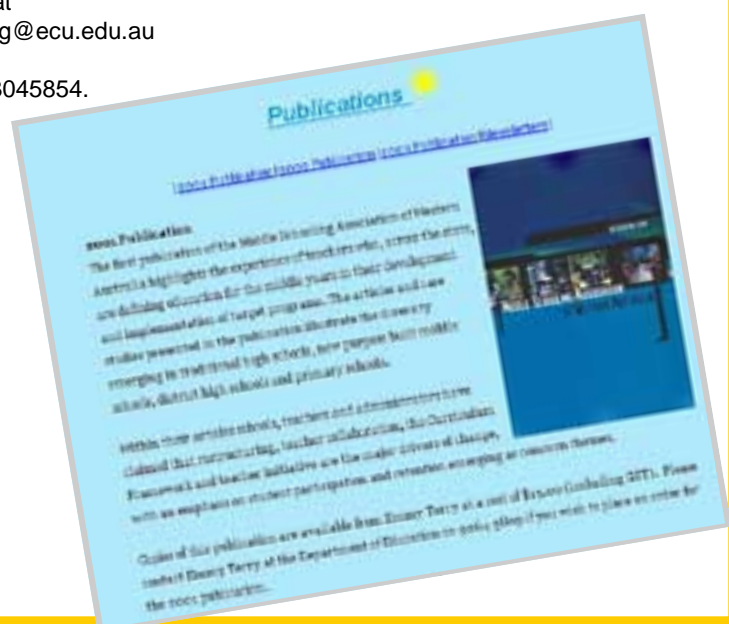
Please send an electronic version of your submission to Terry de Jong:

t.dejong@ecu.edu.au .

Suitable articles will be posted on the website at the end of April, June, September, and December.

The closing date for the forthcoming June contributions is 31 May.

Any enquiries, please contact Terry de Jong at
t.dejong@ecu.edu.au
 or
 (08) 63045854.



Shifting our focus from what kids are *doing*, to what kids are *learning* ...

Gaylia Mitchum

Coodanup Community College is 4 years old. Up until the end of 2000, we were an 8 to 12 SHS of around 850 students and 65 teaching staff. In 2001, the school was restructured into a "middle school" with around 530 students and 37 teachers. Our journey over the past 4 years has been quite remarkable. One of the most interesting aspects has been the gradual shift in our focus from looking at what students are *doing*, to what students are *learning*. Specifically, we are interested in what the work the students are doing tells us about their learning and our teaching. We have begun looking at their work more closely to see if the students are achieving the outcomes that our Teaching community are expecting. If notwhat is stopping their progress?

This is more complex than it sounds. We have been moving towards this point for the past four years, gradually developing the critical elements that characterise a professional learning community in a school. Current research clearly

indicates that where professional community is strong, teachers work together more effectively and put more effort into creating and sustaining opportunities for students learning. Like our colleagues down the road, Halls Head CC and Mandurah HS, we realised that very little would change in our schools, unless teacher's behaviour changed. In order to do that, the structural conditions in all three schools were changed so that there was more time for teachers (& administrators!) to meet and talk, planning, preparation and teaching spaces were co-located, teachers were assigned to teams, rather than departments, with increased autonomy, flexibility and responsibility for the learning outcomes of their students.

Our involvement in a classroom observation / peer support (CO/PS) process over the past couple of years has been the catalyst for developing some of the critical elements that characterise a professional learning community. It has helped us develop our skills in ob-

serving and describing (at least not too judgementally!) what is happening in classrooms, what students are doing (are learning!) when the teacher is teaching. It is more common to see and hear teachers sharing, observing and discussing each other's teaching methods and philosophies. The CO/PS experience, along with training in Behaviour management (Smilanich) and Co-operative learning (Bennett), among others, has given us new ways to talk about our work and build new relationships with our colleagues. We are just beginning to move into a situation where teachers are now starting to collaborate on the process they are going to use to make judgements about student work. That is leading us into exploring new and different approaches to staff development and the decision to restructure the role of at least one of the deputies, from a focus on operational management to a focus on mentoring teachers. Our new catch cry has become 'ask us about the student work!' At the end of the day, that's what it's all about.



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ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)

REGISTRATION FORM

To register as a member, please complete the following form and post or fax it, with cheque to:

Individual:	\$ 25.00
Student:	\$ 12.50
Organisation:	\$150.00

The Middle Schooling Association of WA (Inc)
c/- Safety Bay Senior High School
PO Box 6122
WAIKIKI 6169

Name: (First) _____ (Last) _____

School / Organisation: _____

Work Address: _____ (PCode) _____

Home Address: _____ (PCode) _____

Phone: (Work) _____ (Home) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email: _____