



## Message from the President . . .

Greetings Middle Schooling Colleagues

I sat down to write this newsletter article with some trepidation. After several years in the wings I was now the duly elected President of the Middle Schooling Association of Western Australia. I follow in the footsteps of Gaylia Mitchum and Mary Jo McNeil, who have both contributed so much to the association in their respective times in the chair. As I look to the future and the team we have to lead us, I know that this association will continue to grow and provide an important platform for Middle Schooling.

This newsletter heralds a whole new era for the association. It has always been our aim to provide relevant PD for teachers. The events of last year were most successful. We now want to take our involvement in providing good PD for teachers one step further by ensuring there will be excellent opportunities available for every term of 2005, and in 2006 we plan the first International Middle Schooling Conference for Western Australia.

Our executive for 2005-2006 consists of:

Christine Lee	President	Christina Kemp	Treasurer
Terry De Jong	Vice President	Gaylia Mitcham	Past President
Mark Jeffery	Vice President	Jody Crothers	Webmaster
Keren Caple	Secretary		

Over the next few newsletters, and by visiting the website, I hope you will get to know the people who are working for you a little better. Our contact details can also be found on the website.

Another exciting initiative, which we believe will facilitate the delivery of PD on a term-by-term basis, is the employment of Patricia Kershaw as our administrative assistant. Pat is an experienced teacher and a member of the association. We are very fortunate to have secured her services.

It is truly a humbling experience to sit as I have done and ponder the implications of my new job. I personally believe in the importance of this phase of schooling we call middle schooling and it is great to know that we have 243 members who think so too. I am sure there must be other teachers out there who share our passion. I would encourage you to talk to your friends and to colleagues in your school and introduce them to this association. The more members we have the louder our voice will become. This association is about we, the teachers, doing something more for the students we teach. We know our students and we know that things need to change. Middle schooling is more than just good teaching practice: just ask anyone who does it well. Middle school is evolving in Western Australia. Let us work together to support one another on the journey, so that we are better prepared to meet the needs of our students now and in the future.

Christine Lee

### Special Points of Interest:

- **A message from the new President**
- **MSAWA's e-publications - latest articles!**
- **Meet your new committee**
- **Find out how responsive your school is to the needs of young adolescents**
- **Discover 'Motivational Mates' - maths mastery learning**
- **A Year 9's impression of Kinross College**
- **Interesting internet sites**
- **Some exciting PD and the way to make PD pay!**

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## MSAWA's e-publications . . .

To look at current articles go to <http://www.msawa.asn.au> and click on **latest e-publications**.

**New** articles on the site include reviews of two useful books, *Assertiveness for middle school students* and *Anger Management for middle school students* by Elizabeth Morris; a review of a fantastic CD called *The Carers of Everything* by Noel Nannup (a Nyoongar story about country), some ideas for excellent excursions for middle years students and a full synopsis of *Motivational Mates*.

You are invited to submit an article on any aspect of the middle years of schooling to MSAWA's e-publications. Please send an electronic version of your submission to Terry de Jong at [t.dejong@ecu.edu.au](mailto: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 December contributions is 3 December. Please share your knowledge with your colleagues.

## Meet some of your new committee . . .



**Christine Lee** has taught students from K to 12 in Scotland, New Zealand and Australia. The majority of her teaching has been in secondary mathematics, where her specific interest lay with students in Year 7 and 8 who were experiencing learning difficulties, although she has also written programmes for TAGS students. She has taught in the government and independent sectors and is currently the Teacher in Charge of Religious Education at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School. She believes that true middle schooling philosophy must underpin teaching and learning involving young adolescents. Christine is the MSAWA President.

**Terry de Jong** is a MSAWA Vice President. He is a Senior Lecturer and Director of the Middle Years Program at Edith Cowan University. An educational psychologist with experience in South Africa, United Kingdom and Australia, he publishes and researches in the field of educational psychology, specialising in issues of student engagement and behaviour management. Terry is also the editor of the MSAWA Newsletter.



**Christina Kemp** is the MSAWA Treasurer, a position she has held for three years. She is Deputy Principal at Safety Bay Senior High School where she was instrumental in establishing their middle schooling learning environment. Chris is passionate about middle schooling and meeting the unique needs of young people in their early high school years. Chris has presented papers on middle schooling at both international and national conferences.

**Patricia Kershaw** is a teacher with secondary and primary experience. Currently working on her Graduate Certificate in Middle Schooling (*see page 4*), she is employed on a sessional basis at Edith Cowan University and also works as a relief teacher. Pat has a real commitment to the education of young adolescents and completed a Graduate Diploma of Education, Middle Schooling in 2002. Pat is the MSAWA administration assistant and co-editor of the MSAWA Newsletter.



### STOP PRESS! !

*MSAWA will be hosting an international middle schooling conference  
- Motivation Meaning & Management in the Middle Years -  
in Perth on 14 & 15 May 2006.*

*Watch this space . . .*

### *. . . Forthcoming PD Attractions . . .*

MSAWA is planning to offer PD workshops once a term next year. We have received several suggestions so far, such as: Neuroscience, the young adolescent brain and the adolescent learner; middle schooling and academic rigour; motivating young adolescents; showcasing best middle schooling practice; teachers working collaboratively; and Focus on student work: what does it tell us? If you have any suggestions, please email Christine Lee. [clee@jsracs.wa.edu.au](mailto:clee@jsracs.wa.edu.au)

**Please join us.**

If your membership has lapsed, or if you know someone who would like to become a member of MSAWA, please log on to [www.msawa.asn.au](http://www.msawa.asn.au) and select *Join* to download a membership form.

## Reflections . . .

In our quarterly newsletters we shall be featuring an item that aims to encourage reflective thought on the philosophy, principles and practice of middle schooling. Below is a questionnaire that can be used to facilitate discussion on how developmentally responsive your school is. If you have any comments about this questionnaire or feedback on your application of it, please let us know.

### *To what extent is your school responsive to the needs of young adolescents?*

Principles	Yes	Yes/No	No	Not Sure
Does your school written philosophy/mission state that its curriculum, pedagogical, and environmental practices are based on young adolescents' physical, psychosocial, and cognitive developmental characteristics?				
Do your school curriculum and pedagogical practices reflect the unique nature and needs of young adolescents, rather than perceiving 10 to 15 year olds as children or adolescents?				
Do your school's administration and teaching staff engage in professional preparation in understanding young adolescent development?				
Do your school's administration and teaching staff have the expertise to provide young adolescents with appropriate learning experiences?				
Does your school provide "communities of learning" where close, trusting relationships with adults and peers create a climate for personal growth and cognitive development?				
Do your school's policies and practices recognise and address young adolescents' cultural and gender differences, as well as their tremendous diversity in physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development?				
Does your school ensure some degree of success for all young adolescents in more than one developmental area?				
Does your school have functional strategies (i.e., appropriate for this particular developmental period) for reengaging families in the education of young adolescents?				
Does your school provide an organisation that includes cross-age grouping, alternatives to ability grouping and tracking, sub-school, and other organisational strategies that address young adolescents' physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development?				
Does your school actively seek to connect schools with communities and try to provide young adolescents with opportunities for community service?				
Does your school actively empower administrators/management to make decisions based on young adolescent development and effective middle school practices?				

Adapted from: Manning, M.L. (2002). *Developmentally appropriate middle level schools* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International. **Source:** Manning, M.L. & Bucher, K.T. (2005) *Teaching in the Middle School* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

## Motivational Mates . . . Read more about *Motivational Mates* in MSAWA's e-publication.

The little characters I have developed are gleaned from my experiences as a maths educator. My goal was to create little characters which would prove endearing to students and through these characters students would be motivated or encouraged to learn through the learning strategy of mastery learning. There are students who never get to higher order thinking because they cannot recall basic facts which are necessary for the task they are asked to work on. They do not see themselves as learners. The Mates are about building confidence and connection, besides rote learning. I have written short biographies of the eight characters and a couple of short books.



*Motivational Mates* was initially targeted at students aged between eight and twelve, and the set of mastery learning study cards are aimed at building fundamental literacy and numeracy skills.

The challenge is to allow students to become pro-active learners.

The challenge is to allow students to become pro-active learners. They must learn to reflect and measure their own learning. How can we get students to move from disinterest to interest?

- Positive reinforcement—I earned my next stripe
- Social motivation—Everyone else is doing it
- Achievement motivation—I'm at the next level

*Motivational Mates* mastery cards can help students build up a good content foundation. The mastery stands and the guidelines that accompany them give students the guidance they need. The books and stories about the Mates and their lives will help to build a relationship with *Motivational Mates*.

I printed off copies of the mates, laminated them and bought little stands to support the cut-outs.

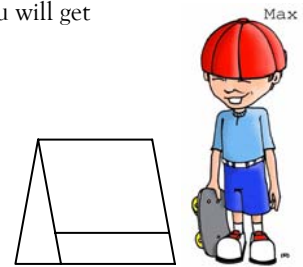
I dream of commercial interest, but for the moment I would like to share this idea with other committed teachers who see students struggle to learn.

If you want to know how the Mastery Learning works there is a set of instructions to follow. If you would like to know more, or have some suggestions to offer, I would love to hear from you.

*Christine Lee*

**How to use your *Motivational Mate*** (Read these with an adult.)

1. Place your *Mate* in your bedroom, in a place where you will see him or her with little effort, such as a desk or shelf.
2. Make sure you can see your *Mate* wherever you may be in the room.
3. Set up your *Mastery Stand* with your *Mate*.
4. Open your first set of *Mastery Cards* and read what you are expected to know when you have learned the information on this set of cards.
5. Take out card number one and put it next to your *Mate* on the *Mastery Stand* and put the others on the other side of the *Mastery Stand*.
6. You are going to work on one card at a time.
7. When you think you know what is on a card, change it for the next one. This way you will get through all the cards in the pack and you'll be ready to take the test.
8. Remember, you can take as long as you like to practise before you take the test.
9. Every morning spend 10 minutes learning the information on the card.
10. When you know all the cards it is time to test yourself.
11. Unpack your blue test envelope and ask someone to check your answers.
12. The answer card tells you how to rate your score and how to record your result.



When you have completed a full stack of cards to a successful level, you can apply for a *Mates Certificate* from your teacher.

Try some or all of the following ways to help you remember the information you need to know. You can make the difference. Are you ready? **Look** carefully at the information. **Think** about what it means. Can you **remember** when you **saw** it first? **What were you doing?** **Ask yourself** the question. Do I **know** what it is about? If the answer is **No**, **speak** to your teacher. **Read** the card over and over until you can close your eyes and repeat what is on it. **Write** out what is on the card until you can write it without looking at the card. **Ask someone** at home to test you.

## Opening of Kinross College . . This speech was given by Tessa Cowan, a Year 9 student, at the official opening of Kinross College.

As you heard, Kinross College is unique because it is the first government school in Western Australia that has been specifically designed for the needs of year 6 to year 10 students. I feel fortunate to have been one of the first students here.

My parents had known about middle schooling from New Zealand and were keen for me to have the opportunity to do a middle schooling program. As soon as my parents heard about Kinross College they were eager for me to enrol here.

As a student I can see that students have been consulted in the development and design of the school. The learning communities are open-plan, bright and cheerful and the feeling is of a safe and secure environment.

Any concerns I may have had about starting a new school quickly disappeared. Relationships are very important here - between teachers and students, parents, the administration—everyone is approachable and feels included, valued and respected.

The curriculum is interesting and teachers make sure that it is challenging as well as fun. We often discuss the ways that we want to demonstrate particular outcomes and we know our own preferred learning style. We are all encouraged to work independently and collaboratively and to become independent learners. Everyone—even the teachers—uses technology frequently. Everything we do is relevant to young people and transferable to the real world. At a whole school level I have enjoyed being a student councillor. I have had the opportunity to represent the college a number of times.

There are a lot of extra curricular activities available to us—drama, dance, art, academic extension, all kinds of sports, chess, band, choir, media. Over twenty clubs in all, which means everyone has the opportunity to connect and to discover and develop their individual talents and to be successful.

This school actively promotes strong values:

- Striving for personal excellence
- Concern for others
- Self respect
- Community responsibility
- Environmental responsibility

*The curriculum is interesting and teachers make sure that it is challenging as well as fun.*

And we have many opportunities to demonstrate these things through community projects and school programs.

I am now in year 9 and next year will be in the first group of students to move to the year 10 community. I have loved being in the middle school and am a little apprehensive about what lies ahead. But I know that with the skills I have learned I can work independently. I do work well with others and I have a clear understanding of the process of learning and of my own learning style. This means that everything will work out well.

I am ready and excited about the next challenge, and the next and the one after that. I am looking forward with confidence to my future.

## Interesting internet sites . . .

**[www.eddept.wa.edu.au/cmis/eval](http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/cmis/eval)** The Education Department's newly revamped online database for teachers. This is a fantastic resource, with everything from learning area information to PD links and everything in between.

**[www.npps.edwa.net.au](http://www.npps.edwa.net.au)** This is the North Parmelia Primary School site. As well as giving you ideas about how to set up your own school site, it has some valuable links for teachers.

**[www.abc.net.au/science](http://www.abc.net.au/science)** One of the many fantastic ABC sites. The general science page leads you to interesting stories and other resources, as well as Dr Karl's site and the Surfing Scientist's site.

**[www.british-museum.ac.uk](http://www.british-museum.ac.uk)** Looking for excellent S&E resources and ideas? Start at the British Museum site. All sorts of interesting and relevant ideas. For instance, the museum has a topical exhibition on Sudan at the moment. A good starting point for middle school students.

**[www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx)** Click on *Young People*. This site is about depression and the *Young People* link gives heaps of information about adolescents and depression. Invaluable information for teachers of *Australian* young adolescents.

**[www.cbc.org.au](http://www.cbc.org.au)** Children's Book Council site. It has the Book of the Year winners for 2004, as well as listing conferences and giving a link to a site for author and illustrator visits, plus much more!

## Professional Development for you!

Developing a reclaiming environment in our schools:  
Principles and practices for working with children in conflict within schools.

Dr Larry Brendtro

November 15–16, 2004



### WORKSHOP

VENUE: Edith Cowan University, Mount Lawley campus

COST: Option One: Workshop only - \$300

Option Two: Credentialing the workshop - \$380

Group discounts are also available.

**MSAWA is offering a 10% discount to its members!**

(Welcome coffee, morning tea, lunch and resources included.)

WHEN: November 15 & 16, 2004

9.00am - 4.30pm

CONTACT: To find out more about discounts, venue and registration, contact Vicky Houghton, Edith Cowan University. Phone: 9370 6479 Email: [v.houghton@ecu.edu.au](mailto:v.houghton@ecu.edu.au)

### DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP:

These two days will enable participants to develop a theoretical and practical awareness of the Circle of Courage model and identify how schools can create a 'reclaiming' environment, as well as developing skills and strategies in working with students with challenging behaviour. These two days will benefit senior administrators, teachers in primary, middle years and secondary, as well as those directly involved in pastoral care and student welfare.

### INTRODUCING YOUR PRESENTER:

Dr Larry Brendtro is President of *Reclaiming Youth International*. He draws on 25 years of experience working with troubled young people. Larry is a psychologist, youth worker and Professor of Special Education in the USA.. He has trained professionals worldwide. Dr Brendtro has written over ninety publications, some of which are translated into eight languages, including *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future*.

This is a unique opportunity to discover how the Circle of Courage transforms young people from REBELLION to RESPONSIBILITY.



**The importance of the Dr Larry Brendtro PD is recognised by your MSAWA committee. This PD can also be credited as progress towards a formal qualification. See the section below - *Make PD Pay!* - to find out how.**

## MAKE PD PAY!

### ECU's new Graduate Certificate in Middle Schooling



Every time that you participate in a Professional Development experience, you get a dot point for your CV and, maybe, a certificate. You can get more.

ECU offers busy teachers the possibility of crediting selected Professional Development experiences as progress towards a formal qualification.

This practice, known as CPL (Credentialled Professional Learning) lies at the base of the newly designed Graduate Certificate in Education (Middle Schooling), offered by ECU's innovative Middle Years team at Joondalup campus.

The Graduate Certificate consists of four units, all of which are taught flexibly, with on-line components, some weekend classes, action research and CPL. The course offers flexibility, convenience, and a Middle Schooling specific postgraduate qualification.

For more information, contact the Course Co-ordinator, Dr Bill Leadbetter on 6304.5173, or by email [w.leadbetter@ecu.edu.au](mailto:w.leadbetter@ecu.edu.au)