

Teachers' Guide 2011

The Learning Curve Planners and supporting website have been created and written to support teachers and parents to cultivate resilient, resourceful and reflective lifelong learning habits in students. They provide the **'hows'** to explicitly teach students to learn how to learn; they are **enhancers** of schools' individual programs.

As an initiative for 2011 to further support teachers, detailed **Lesson Plans** have been written for every focus in the planners. They are in the Teacher section of the site.

A structured whole school approach with a weekly, fortnightly or monthly theme based on the focuses in the Planners; ensures that all students have the opportunity develop these essential learning habits and dispositions. This in turn enables collective staff practices in building effective learning and teaching school wide and provides an answer to the question; what can we do together that we can't do as individuals?

Adolescent brains are often turbulent places that don't adapt well to changes in expectations and practices from class to class; the Learning Curve's consistent and predictable strategies and routines benefit student engagement.

Top 10 'Must Dos': A Great Way to Start 2011

To cultivate planner and website habits that will enable students, teachers and parents to optimise the resources provided in the Learning Curve, following is a suggested list of 'must dos' at the beginning of the school year:

1. As a class read "How to best use the Learning Curve" (page 3), and "Checklists" (page 5) to learn about the structured approach for daily, weekly, monthly, term and semester learning and teaching.
2. Download the "Quiz" for each planner from the Student section of the website and as a class complete it to gain a clear understanding of what is on offer to assist them in the planners.
3. Ask students to read the Student Guide for their year level from the Student Section of the website and discover the resources available to help them shine.
4. Open the Teacher Section and read the Teacher Guide to learn about how to use the planners and website to explicitly cultivate powerful learning habits.
5. Go to the Teacher section of the website, log in and open Lesson Plans; there is a Lesson Plan for every weekly focus and for the focuses in the front section of the planners.
6. While in the Teacher Section open Pastoral Care to view the 100 life values worksheets available.
7. Also in the Teacher Section open Teacher Resources to view the vast array of activities and strategies available to reduce workload and enhance whole school consistency.

8. Open the Newsletter section and then Monthly Themes to view the following whole school options available for a weekly, fortnightly or monthly approach to using the Learning Curve. Choose the time span which best suits your school:
 - **Weekly** - read Weekly Whole School Focus Articles (link with weekly lesson plans)
 - **Fortnightly** – Secondary Newsletter Articles
 - **Monthly** - Monthly Themes (links for students, parents and teachers)
9. Open Professional Readings to view the down to earth articles to assist your professional learning. A new reading is posted on website every fortnight and sign up on the left hand side of the web page to receive them by email free of charge.
10. As a class go to the “Personal Learning Goals and Reflection Time” pages in the planner and read personal learning goals. Ask all students to set three learning goals for semester one.

There are two implementation strategies that are very effective:

1. During the first week of school organise a ‘**Study Skills Days**’ for every year level to implement the processes in the planner. The time allocated for each Year Level will vary and following are suggested times:

○ Primary	1 hour 30 minutes
○ Junior Secondary	3 hours
○ Middle Secondary	4 hours
○ Senior Secondary	a full school day

On these ‘**Study Skills Days**’ rotate students in equally sized groups through a series of stations; these would be run by teachers and the Lesson Plans in the Teacher section of the website would support teachers very well. The stations would correspond with the order of focuses in the front of the planners.

2. The second method of implementation is to discuss the processes in Home group lessons, whether for 10 minutes before first class of a morning or in full lesson Home group classes.

An excellent idea is for **all teachers** to complete one of the year level Student Quizzes to provide them with ‘a hands on’ understanding of the resources in the planners.

Following are suggested teaching approaches:

Using the Learning Curve: The Best Way - is in the front of all the planners. This is the backbone of the planners and is best delivered by the Year Level Advisors/Coordinators team teaching with Home group teachers in all classes to ensure school wide consistency early in the year. Ask students to open to the 'Using the Learning Curve' page, then lead them through each section by opening the relevant pages so that students can see clearly what everything means and what is expected of them.

Index of Focuses – in Home group make a random list of focuses from the Index and ask students to find them and explain what they are about; a good strategy is to ask every student to present to the group on one of the focuses for between 1 to 2 minutes in a lesson. Explain that's it's a Do It Yourself (DIY) for them.

Weekly Focuses – the content of the focuses for each particular week in the Secondary planners are the same or very similar. To develop a consistent whole school approach that will reduce the variation in learning outcomes between classrooms, ask all Home group teachers to look at the specific lesson plan for that week and discuss the weekly focus with their students. A good strategy is to ask a pair of students each week to present to the Home group how the focus can be used in their life and learning. This drip feed approach will inspire school wide practices and expectations among students, parents and teachers.

Lesson Plans – there is a detailed lesson plan written for every weekly focus and also for those at the front of the planners such as Multiple Intelligences, Habits of Mind, etc. These plans were created to support teachers to explicitly teach the focus and ensure school wide consistency. While all classes would have the same weekly focus, the sophistication of conversations on the focuses between year levels would vary considerably.

Newsletter Articles – there are articles to support differing times schools may wish to spend on particular themes:

- **Weekly** - Weekly Whole School Focus Articles (link with weekly lesson plans)
- **Fortnightly** – Secondary Newsletter Articles
- **Monthly** - Monthly Themes (links for students, parents and teachers)

Download the article about the whole school focus in the planners to include in the school newsletter; it will nurture effective and trusting home/school relationships and enable parents to understand and be more involved in their children's education. Inserting the **Weekly Whole School Focus Articles** in the Staff Bulletin ensures all staff are on the same page in establishing whole school expectations and practices.

Helpful Hints for Parents – in Home Group ask students to show their parents the page in the planners which is titled "Helpful Hints for Parents" to empower parents to be involved in their children's education. Also, in the school newsletter inform parents that there is a weekly focus in the planners that is written to assist them in helping their children; they will appreciate the help. It is an opportunity for parents to be involved in their children's education without their children's permission.

Vocabulary Bank/Builder – each week ask English teachers to ask students to look up the meaning of the word in a dictionary, use it in a sentence and find another word that means the same. Asking parents to assist and correct their children's learning, builds partnerships and reduces staff workload.

Number Skills and Problem Solving – each week ask Math Teachers to ask students to complete the Number Skills (Junior) and Problem Solving (Middle) exercises, and ask parents to assist and correct them. Should students encounter problems, they can ask their Math Teacher to clarify any uncertainties; these are the building blocks of Numeracy. The weekly Number Skills exercises can also be downloaded from the Student section of the website.

Weekly General Knowledge – in Home Group, discuss with students its significance and ask three students each week to research it and present their findings for 2 minutes to the group. Rotate this activity through the class; each student will present once per Term.

Daily Priorities/Due In and Things to Do - every night at home ask students to plan for the main things that they must complete or hand in the next day; aim for them to build this as a resilient learning habit. Asking parents to check their children's planning is also partnership building.

Study Timetable – having an awareness of where their time goes and being self-managing and self-correcting in their time management habits are essential characteristics of an effective learner. There are lesson plans to explicitly teach these skills such as Prioritising and Study Timetable. It is important to explain to students that sticking to their Study Timetable will actually give them more time for themselves because they are in control of and aware of where their time goes.

Home Learning/Study Log – as students complete a study session at home, ask them to cross it off the Log. At the end of the week have it signed off by the student, parents and the Home Group Teacher. It builds student ownership, conscience and parental involvement.

Dreams: Making them happen in 2011 – it is too easy for students to be in 'drift' mode and float along like a leaf in a stream. In Home Group brainstorm with the class the outcomes they want for themselves. Then ask them to write a letter to themselves describing what they want 2011 to be individually and how they will achieve their dreams.

Checklist – ask students in Home group to look at 'My Checklist' and discuss with the class the things that they should do daily, weekly, monthly and for the Term. It is a visual organiser which will prompt students to monitor what they are doing on a regular basis; it is their path to follow.

Assessment of My Performance Last Term/Year – ask students in Home Group to reflect on how well they met the challenges in each of the questions, rating themselves from 1 to 10 currently and then set a rating to achieve for later in the year. This will require discussing what's involved with each question. This will nurture in students reflective habits to own their lives and education.

Guidelines – from their reflections, ask students in Home Group to summarise areas where they do well and things that need improving; this will require class discussion and brainstorming. From these discussions ask students to set the 'How's' to achieve their new guidelines.

Goal Setting: What are My Goals - ask students in Home Group to think about what things they want to get out of this year for themselves personally, for their education, for their sport and leisure and other pursuits. A brainstorming session with the class to start the process always stimulates students' minds with creative ideas. Ask them to write down their goals for Term One and repeat the exercise at the beginning of each Term. For Senior Students there is a much more detailed Goal Setting Planning tool on page 193.

Goal Action Plan – because students' minds are still developing and they don't yet have the capacity to consistently make sound decisions and think through a series of steps on their own, the action plan provides the scaffold they require to set realistic and achievable goals.

Career Planning: Thinking about Careers – in Home Group do a brainstorming exercise with the class on the multitude of interesting careers on offer; encourage them to visit the websites provided for ideas. Ask students to identify careers that may interest them and those that don't. The main thing is to initiate a spark in students to value their learning as a means to achieving their dreams. Treat career planning as another subject.

Tips for Healthy Living and Health Review - ask students in Home Group to read the sections relating to their health and run a class brainstorming session to identify what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and what doesn't. Then ask students to complete a review of their health and set targets to aim for.

Multiple Intelligences: Understanding Myself – in Home Group initiate a class discussion on the special qualities and abilities that human beings possess. Explain that we all have our own individual Dominant Intelligences and knowing theirs will benefit their life and their learning. Discuss with students the eight different Multiple Intelligences and ask them to complete the self-assessment themselves. Then ask them to summarise their findings in the 'Score and Ranking' section to identify their own dominant intelligences; self-discovery is very powerful.

Learning Styles and How I Learn – in Home Group read 'How I Learn' and 'My Learning Style' and discuss with students how they learn in different ways. Ask them to complete the 'Learning Style' section so that they can identify for themselves what their individual preferred learning style is; once again, self-discovery is very powerful.

Habits of Mind – to get students thinking about their thinking, brainstorm in Home Group whether they think in different ways when faced with different situations. Discuss each of the Habits of Mind. An excellent strategy is to ask students in pairs to present to the class what type of thinking each Habit describes and how and when it is used. In all subjects encourage students to identify when a member of the class is using a particular Habit. This encourages them to think about their learning in terms of Habits of Mind to link thinking and learning. Ask them to complete 'Habits of the Mind: Where am I at?' so that they can see what stage they are at and areas to build on.

Bloom's Taxonomy and Thinking Tools – in Home Group explain to students that they're not little adults and that their brain circuitry will not be complete till their early twenties. Therefore, to assist them to think through issues step by step and reach sound conclusions they should use the Thinking Tools in the planner.

Go through each Thinking Tool with the class and explain how to use them; an excellent strategy is to assemble 8 to 10 issues that need discussing and ask students in groups of three to analyse them using the different tools. Then ask each trio to present to the class using the tool they used; peer role modeling will embed the tools.

Emotional Intelligence – in Home Group initiate a class discussion about how students manage and control themselves, feel about issues and relate to other people. Then ask them to complete the self-assessment of their personal emotional intelligence and what they need to focus on; once again, self-discovery is very powerful.

Learning Goals Reflection - is to be completed in Home Group time; ask students how they are progressing toward their learning goals and whether they achieved their targets for the month. Also, ask students to write down which Habits of the Mind they used over the month; getting students to think about their thinking benefits them immensely.

Ask students to set a new target for each of their goals for the upcoming month.

Reflection Time – at the end of each month, ask every subject teacher to give their students 5 minutes to complete a reflection of how they believed they have progressed over the previous month; The intention is to cultivate reflective learning habits in students. It is a perfect opportunity for teachers to ask students to include their observations, such as, “your assignment was very good”, “you are not completing all of your set learning” etc. The classes have a reflection week in which to do this and then it is signed off by the student, parents and Home Group teacher. The 5 minutes **‘lost’** is more than compensated for by enhanced relational team learning and students taking more ownership of their learning.

Sun Sensible – as this is a relevant health issue for all students, initiate a Home Group discussion using the focus as a starting point; it will raise their awareness of this issue and hopefully influence their behaviours positively.

Sustainability: My World – as our students will be one of future generations responsible for caring for our world, the focus is a stimulus to a class discussion on the subject in Home Group. Initiate discussion also on sustainability of our society and themselves.

Experiences this Year – in Home group, discuss with the class how every experience and every person they meet will contribute to their personal development and add a scene to their big life picture. Ask them to record special experiences, what they learnt and how they felt in the ‘Experiences this Year’ section.

Key Competencies (Middle & Senior) – to further cultivate resourceful and reflective habits in students, included are personal competencies essential for them to reach their potential. They are cumulative works in progress and regular reflection will build their self-awareness of their progress in developing these competencies.

Cyber Safety – to assist students, parents and teachers to develop safe cyber habits and shared expectations and behaviours a focus on Cyber Safety has been included. The intention is to stimulate discussion both in Home Group and at home on this potentially destructive issue.

Well Being Tip – each week a tip is provided for students on ways to look after their well-being. With the bombardment of advertising directed at teenagers, the intention is to raise their self-awareness of their personal well-being.

Weekly Rating – to cultivate reflective habits in students, students are asked to think about the past week and rate how they thought they performed. Home Group is the ideal forum in which to do this.

“Follow effective action with quiet reflection, from quiet reflection will come even more effective action.” Peter Drucker