eNews

Quarterly

March 2020

Follow us on twitter
@handsonlearn

LAIDLEY STATE HIGH SCHOOL, QUEENSLAND

Tool testing

Our team has developed a new series of tool testing and safety videos that are available online for all HoL schools. Click these links:

- clamps
- drills
- hammer
- handsaw
- square
- tape measure

Training

The team from the Sorell School in Tasmania travelled to Melbourne in February for training and visits to established HoL precincts. Central to our quality assurance, our support team also delivered training at schools in Ballarat, Benalla, Swan Hill, Koroit, Frankston and Batemans Bay during Term 1.

Tables

Nothing beats the power and impact of lending a hand and celebrating the work of others. Our Term 1 edition of Toolbox Talk for artisan-teachers championed making outdoor tables for local fire brigades to acknowledge and recognise their work. It has been fantastic to hear of local Bunnings stores supporting the initiative with donations of materials!

Our cover

Wow is the best way to describe the tremendous team at Leeton High School in New South Wales. This new kitchen servery window, and the patent happiness of their team, encapsulates just how much they have achieved in their first six months.

Updated Project Kit

Click here to take a fresh look at our revamped HoL Project Kit, packed with project ideas, instructions and images, all more accessible than ever with an new easy to use index.

Welcome

Welcome to the first of our quarterly eNews for 2020. It's inspiring to witness how Hands on Learning teams are fostering confidence, connection and community, as captured in the pages that follow. As the rapidly evolving response to the COVID-19 crisis impacts us all, we will keep you posted as we introduce new ways to support students and our partner schools in the weeks and months to come.

New schools

It has been wonderful to welcome new schools starting HoL in 2020 including:

- Leongatha Secondary College
- Padua College, Rosebud
- Echuca Primary School
- Damascus College, Ballarat
- Phoenix P-12 Community College
- Swan Hill College
- Lavington East Primary School
- Dederang Primary School
- St Patrick's School, Port Fairy

eLearning

Our eLearning initiatives in 2020 will include podcasts, webinars and virtual collaboration opportunities, and will be delivered remotely via each school's HoL SharePoint portal.

2020 Conference

Unfortunately, we have cancelled our annual conference planned for Friday 12th June and in its place we will continue to develop new eLearning initiatives to support the professional development of Hands on Learning teams. We look forward to delivering a great conference in 2021!

Thank you

A big and ongoing thank you to our partner schools and valued supporters for making Hands on Learning possible.

Hands on Learning School Support Team

Save the Children

HoL IN ACTION:
Six weeks

The first six weeks are all about establishing your Hands on Learning precinct and the culture of your team.

All hands on deck at Leongatha Secondary College

It's literally been all in from the 'get go' as this energetic team set about establishing their Hands on Learning precinct. After moving into part of a school storage shed the team identified what was to stay among the unwanted materials, and dismantled furniture and old chip board they plan to reuse to line the shed. Their local Home Hardware supplied all their work gear at cost, and they purchased a fridge for $25 and have had a microwave and toaster donated. They've now started to install partition walls for their kitchen and will plumb in a sink and an agi pipe for grey water.

According to Braeson, Year 9, "There's already a huge before and after difference that makes you feel you have really achieved something." "It feels good and it's so different to normal school-work," Georgia added. From Allira's perspective, "It's better than me getting distracted or distracting others in class. I'm more focused down here. We are always working together. Someone's measuring, cutting, drilling, bringing the materials over, we are always a team." "I love it" Year 8 student Zac, chimes in.

Assistant Principal Brad Hutchinson encourages any school considering HoL to visit established HoL programs and plan well. "Our staff picked up so many ideas and tips from visiting Elisabeth Murdoch College and then we planned well. The framework, support and materials provided by the HoL team gave us real confidence in the program and our intake interviews went like clockwork. Most importantly though, nothing beats having the right people as artisan-teachers. We have struck gold in Mark and Stuart."

Swan Hill Secondary College

It might be really early days, but the students are engaged and happy measuring and fitting out their new space, according to Assistant Principal Kristen Le Gassick.

"Having the right people with the right skills in the right positions and dedicating solid planning has been critical. We appointed the staff last year and they've had the time to plan the space, interview kids, and talk with parents. We started small with a real mix of kids so we could build a positive and productive culture."

Padua College, Rosebud

"I totally love it here. I like being out using my hands. It's great. It gives me something to look forward to in the week. I hate sitting still. We have taken over a space that hadn't been maintained and we had to dig down and find this path. It was hard as we dug through crushed rock, but it's so rewarding when you look at what you've done. This is our space now and we're going to build a brick path next." Kaden, Year 9

Dederang Primary School

All eighteen students from Prep to Grade 6 participate in three multi-age Hands on Learning groups every Friday. The students remain in the same groups for the year and rotate between building, café and gardening each term. As a spontaneous activity on national ride to school day the building team decided to construct an obstacle for their bikes in the playground. After listening to all the ideas, a jump was the common theme. Lots of problem solving led by the students identified available materials and the building plan.

Principal Monika King reported that although the kids loved the building tasks, they got more from their Focus Plan reflections.

"We have always weaved 'hands on tasks' into our curriculum, but we were missing the framework and reflective practice of the HoL methodology. That reflective time and focus on working together, not giving up, no put downs, is such a great learning experience. When I think Hands on Learning, I think engagement, application of real-life skills, connectedness to school and peers, and confidence. Our students are becoming much more confident applying mathematics in real world contexts. We absolutely love it. Hands on Learning is all about helping kids build personal and social capabilities."

There's no stopping this team. Next term the building and gardening teams will work together to build a waste transfer stations with a $1,000 grant from Landcare, while the café team will be preserving seasonal fruit and providing afternoon tea for everyone. Literally loving learning!

HoL IN ACTION: Six months

After six months Hands on Learning teams develop a wider range of projects and connections with their local community.

Collaboration rules at Beaufort Secondary College

Collaborating and sharing the load is a real trademark of Beaufort Secondary College with most projects featuring strong student input in the design process. The team began by reclaiming a former agricultural shed at the rear of the school, transforming it into their HoL home, selecting paint colours and painting all four walls. They've moved on rapidly to building tool, bird and planter boxes, along with designing and constructing a chair.

The variety of projects has helped sustain student interest and allows different kids to flourish in areas where they may be more engaged. The team has now added enterprise into the mix recently refurbishing a donated trailer, adding a tyre holder, filling gaps, welding and spray painting so the finished product can be sold with all profit going straight back to sustain their program.

Yea Primary School

"I'm pretty pumped about the whole program. It's kicking goals for the kids for whom the normal curriculum just doesn't quite work. It is the smiles on the faces and the fun we have that makes it special. It's a happy family," says HoL artisan-teacher and school chaplain Graeme Veal. They are obviously a pretty productive family too, having just dug the footings for their pizza oven, and starting work to install a second hand kitchen that has recently been donated to the team.

Padua College, Tyabb

Establishing a functional HoL space was the priority for the HoL team at Padua College's Tyabb campus. After cutting a hole between their meeting and shed spaces this enterprising team upcycled a pile of lining boards, held together with a timber frame, to create a flash new door that makes their space so much more useable. Not stopping inside, the team have also added corrugated vegetable beds and a pergola outside.

Warrnambool East Primary School

Reaching out and connecting with their community has been a powerful experience. After hosting a family Hands on Learning celebration attracting parents who never came to the school, the team put on morning tea for residents of the local aged care facility. "Many of our kids don't have grandparents and to see the two-way engagement was wonderful," according to artisan-teacher Jodie Carey.

"We have established our HoL hut, put together a garden shed for the kitchen garden, planted out the entrance to the brand new prep space and connected hoses across the school, but nothing beats the power of building your personal and social skills and connecting."

HoL IN ACTION: Six years

Six years in, Hands on Learning programs become integrated and part of the culture of the school.

Mount Eliza Secondary College

Six years on and Hands on Learning is flying with an energetic team and an impressive precinct including a stunning hand crafted table, kitchen, vegetable garden, pizza oven, bird aviary and materials storage.

According to Assistant Principal Dani Vaughan the secret to success is threefold:

1. **THE PEOPLE.** "It's all about the WHO. We have a passionate and dedicated artisan-teacher team in Loren and Steve who are very creative. They both work across schools and are constantly germinating great new ideas. They also never have too many things happening at once. There is always a clear product and students see a beginning, middle and end – and ultimately experience success.

2. **WEEKLY COMMUNICATION.** We foster a really collegiate partnership meeting every week with our HoL team to share student wellbeing issues, propose new ideas and constantly review the progress and impact on students.

3. **STUDENT INTAKE.** Getting the mix of kids right isn't automatic. In the beginning we had too many kids who struggled with behaviour in the classroom, then we had too many with complicated learning needs, now we have a genuine mix of students and real productivity. Some are real leaders, some are fantastic working with their hands, some are socially reserved, but all relish the teamwork and problem solving of Hands on Learning."

Wodonga Middle Years

"Hands on Learning is evolving into a prestigious program at Wodonga Middle Years College with students striving to be selected to participate. While our intake originally focused on disengaged students with challenging behaviours, we have worked hard to identify students with high aspirations to undertake apprenticeships who relish the opportunity to experience the hands-on nature of a trade. Former HoL students now undertaking VCAL are returning to mentor younger students, and the program has become a great way to scaffold kids into the applied learning that VCAL can offer. HoL is a genuine opportunity in the middle years to help students develop the practical and personal and social capabilities they will need for work and life." Sarah Kilner, Assistant Principal.

Fitzroy High School

Watch this video to see how an iconic W Class tram has become the centre of the Hands on Learning precinct at the school that also includes a pizza oven and a wheelchair accessible kitchen garden complete with raised wicking beds.

It is awesome to see the team now look outwards and find new ways to lend a hand in the local community. Upcycling builders' offcuts into children's toys for local kindergartens has been a huge hit. "Every student made one. It was problem solving with redundant blocks of wood and I can't believe how creative the students were, or how much they loved doing it," says artisan-teacher Penny Stray who established the HoL program six years ago.