

Powerful ePlanner challenges the school diary



The reign of the printed school diary... loved, lost, used carefully, scribbled over, decorated and ignored by generations of students is being challenged by new mediums.

Of Years 10–12 students responding to the fifth National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health, published on pages 13–17 of this issue of *Education Today* only 2 per cent reported that they did not use any form of electronic device to communicate; 93 per cent use social networking sites; 91 per cent send or receive instant messages; and 72 per cent use email.

- One in three primary school children have their own mobile phone;
- 94 per cent of 16- and 17-year-olds have a mobile, and most have a smart phone.

So why issue a printed school diary when, clearly, that's not how students get their information?

Enter Daisy, an ePlanner developed over three years by Product Dynamics. Long a leading supplier of school diaries, the company developed and released Daisy to 40 Australian schools last year. It has since been licenced in the USA, UK and Europe. Priced at a modest \$8.95 per student per year, it comes with free parent and teacher access.

Managing director Michael Berry says: "Daisy is arguably the most sophisticated school ePlanning system currently available. This is

Daisy can be used anytime, anywhere, online or offline. It self syncs on all devices allowing the free flow of information 24/7 between teachers, students, parents, and administrators

not just an electronic diary; it's a user friendly, fully customised, powerful planning system that is set to revolutionise the relationship between student, teacher and parent.

"Laptops purchased under the *Digital Education Revolution* are nearing the end of their useful life and schools are embracing BYOD, so Daisy can be used anytime, anywhere, online or offline. It self syncs on all devices...web portal, desktop applications Microsoft/Mac, iPad, iPhone, Android phone and tablet, allowing the free flow of information 24/7 between teachers, students, parents, and administrators safely and securely."

For students, device push notifications mean homework, assignments, tests, notes and other communications are received directly into their planner, ensuring they always have accurate and up to date information about requirements and deadlines.

Daisy enables teachers to take control of their classroom administrative tasks – to create, set and track homework for a single student or a class group, and there's full synchronisation with Drop Box and Google Drive for easy

attachment management.

Parents can access their child's planner from any web enabled device too, to encourage them to stay on top of due, overdue and completion homework. It's also an efficient two-way method to send and receive messages to/from parents.

Daisy integrates will all major timetabling and school information systems including: Timetabler, FirstClass, TimeChart, Edumate, Edval and Cases21. It is delivered to the school fully branded, with professionally designed unlimited HTML school custom content, or with Product Dynamics' weekly study/personal development or Catholic content, all of which can be updated through the Administrator Portal.

Used as a school community messaging system, Daisy facilitates instant communications between students, teachers, administration staff and parents. News items and announcement alerts can be sent to different audience groups such as year level, campus, students or teachers as required.

www.daisy.productdynamics.com.au

Karaoke adds learning to musical fun

Whitney Dorothy, national sales manager at Karaoke Home Entertainments wants school students of all ages to learn how to use a Karaoke machine to develop their singing and presentation skills, and build self confidence.

She says: "An opportunity for the student to come out in the open, in front of their peers and teachers to showcase their speaking and singing skills, is sure to eradicate stage fright and develop public speaking ability."

While students can follow the music in time and sing along with the on-screen lyrics when a Karaoke machine is used, the CDs and digital downloads can also be used without a machine as professional backing tracks for school shows, plays and musical productions.

As well as the fun that a Karoke machine will add to social functions like discos, formals, dinners and camps, Dorothy stresses the learning potential: "Karaoke enable students to alter the key notes to suit their voices and even to record their performances. This will empower them, their parents and



teachers to gauge the talent of a budding singer, stage performer or public speaker."

Some models can also be used as a public address system with wired or wireless microphones for a multi purpose solution,

with music on tap when it's needed while avoiding expensive sound equipment hiring charges.

Call Whitney Dorothy (03) 9557 5110
Visit www.khe.com.au/edu

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KidsMatter initiative aims to enhance children's wellbeing

Growing evidence shows that children who are mentally healthy are better able to meet life's challenges, are better learners, and have stronger relationships. And schools have a crucial role to play in nurturing mental health and wellbeing, says Jeremy Hurley, KidsMatter Primary National Director.

KidsMatter Primary is a national initiative for primary schools that focuses on building and sustaining children's mental health and wellbeing. More than 2000 Australian schools are currently part of the KidsMatter network.

"When we focus on the wellbeing of our kids we see great results not only in student behaviour, but also in their ability to learn at school," Hurley says.

"We're focused on what we call a whole-school approach. If you set the foundations right in primary school, kids carry that with them into secondary school and throughout their lives.

"If we teach kids the right foundation blocks – like how to be resilient, self-aware and empathetic – we set them up for life."

KidsMatter Primary is a collaborative initiative between beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society and Principals Australia Institute, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and beyondblue.

www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary

New resources extend kitchen and garden learnings

How do we manage time when we're cooking? How are the seasons created? Why does an egg become solid when we heat it? The answers can be found in the latest set of Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation curriculum resources, *Tools for Teachers 4*.

The series addresses the Australian curriculum by providing learning opportunities for students in the kitchen and garden. Each book features comprehensive units, lesson plans and proformas linked to the curriculum.

The Foundation has also created a curriculum matrix that lists every activity in the *Tools for Teachers* series against the relevant Learning Area and Strand of the curriculum. It is available free on the Foundation's website.

Recipes for Literacy includes recipes laid out with clear photographs of each ingredient, item of equipment, and step to help beginning readers. The simple format supports students with literacy special needs as well as reluctant readers who may be hesitant about reading, but are keen to cook.

Copies of the teaching resources are available at the Foundation's online shop:

Tools for Teachers 4: Years 3&4 RRP: \$39.95



Tools for Teachers 4: Years 5&6 RRP: \$39.95

Recipes for Literacy RRP: \$39.95

Discounted Complete Suite of *Tools for*

Teachers 2, 3 & 4: \$205 (RRP: \$229.70)

www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au

eSmart
Schools

Is your school cybersafe?

eSmart is now in one in five schools across Australia.

eSmart Schools, an initiative of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, is a behaviour-change framework that guides the introduction of policies, practices and whole-school change processes to support the creation of a cybersafe environment.

A survey of over 500 principals found that **over 90 per cent** agreed that eSmart assists schools to embed the smart, safe and responsible use of technology across the curriculum.

For more information or to register your school:
www.esmartschools.org.au
esmart@amf.org.au
 1300 592 151

An initiative of
The Alannah and Madeline Foundation
 Keeping children safe from violence

LW Reid adds to girls sportswear choices



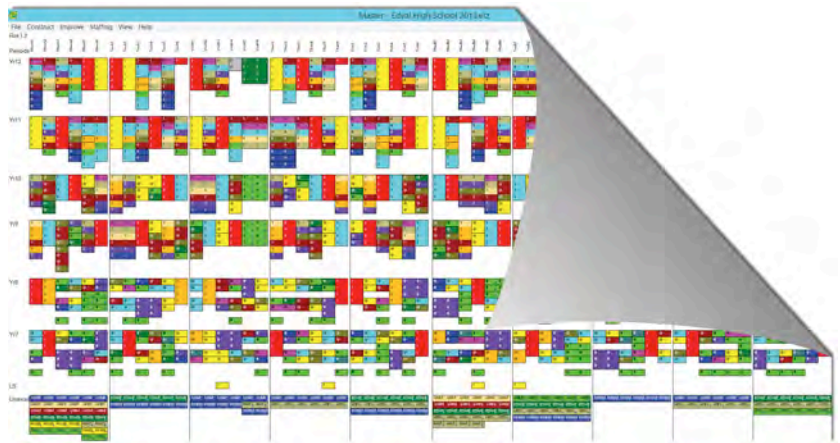
The latest innovation in a 90-year history of supplying school uniforms is LW Reid's expanded girls sportswear uniforms, with bike shorts, two sports skirts and added a polo to the range.

Made from cotton and spandex, the garments stretch where it's needed while absorbent cotton makes them comfortable for all day wear. The bike shorts look and feel good when worn under a school dress or with a polo over the top.

LW Reid has several options for girl's sports uniforms. As well as the classic netball skirts and skorts, the new sports skirts add choice. Both have hidden boy legs and there are A-line and pleated designs.

www.lwreid.com.au 

Edval adds to two-week timetable flexibility with Unfolding



Edval allows schools to create timetables with cycles of one week, or two weeks (more common), or anything in-between. But what about schools that can't decide if they should run a one-week or two-week timetable? The scenario here is a school where most things would work well with a one-week cycle but a very small number of items would need to change between week A and week B. Ideally a one-week timetable would be built then replicated to form a two-week timetable and then adjustments made for the one-period-per-fortnight and three- (or any odd number) periods-per-fortnight classes and activities.

This is the recently added feature called Unfolding, launched in March as an enhancement to the Edval timetabling system. Essentially, the two week cycle is first 'folded' into a single week and the timetable constructed, this is then 'unfolded' to the full two week cycle and optimised. MD Catherine Elliot-Jones said: "Though Edval works toward two-week symmetry with class spreads, and especially

with part-timer days off, you can often achieve an even better result using Unfolding.

"Whether you should in fact aim for strict symmetry with the timetable, is another question. Many students like the variety that the two-week timetables give them.

"We launched Unfolding early in the year to give users plenty of time to get used to the added flexibility before they start working on their 2015 timetables in Term 4."

Edval is currently used by several hundred schools in Australia; almost one in two NSW state schools use the system and the number of Victorian schools is increasing rapidly. Outside Australia, more than 100 Irish schools are already using Edval and Elliot-Jones is forecasting that number to double over the coming year, with sites in the UK and Europe expected to follow.

Edval users can find this new feature in the 'Grid > Master grid (F11) > Construct > Folding' menu.

www.edval.com.au

Maths and informatics students train for Olympiad

The top performing high school mathematics and informatics students from around Australia travelled to Macquarie University in Sydney to participate in selection schools from 13–22 April. These schools teach a variety of advanced problem-solving techniques and places are highly prized. At the end of each school, teams will be selected to represent Australia at this year's International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) and International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO).

Four students will be selected for the IOI

team, and six for the IMO. The successful Olympians will be officially announced and presented with their Australian team blazers at a special ceremony in Parliament House, Canberra, on 16 June.

The IMO and IOI are part of the UNESCO-sanctioned International Science and Mathematics Olympiads, annual worldwide competitions for exceptionally talented secondary school students.

This year the IMO will be held in Cape Town on 3–13 July and the IOI will take place in Taipei, Taiwan on 13–20 July.

YHA turns 75 in Australia

Richard Schirrmann, a school teacher, hiker and lover of the outdoors conceived the idea of youth hostels in Germany in 1909 as a means of fulfilling his dreams of the 'roaming school'. The first Australian hostel was opened in Warrandyte, Victoria in 1939 and the Australian network now has almost 100 locations.

As a not-for-profit organisation, YHA is very aware of rising costs and has developed a new domestic school pricing structure at selected properties. All primary and secondary school groups travelling with a professional coach company now receive a free private room for the coach captain. A private twin room for accompanying teachers is also provided free for every 20 students.

Improving security is also a focus, with projects such as the purpose built Sydney Harbour YHA and Brisbane City YHA offering separate group dining, lounge, conference facilities and ensuite multi-share rooms.

Canberra City YHA is the latest property to receive an upgrade. Schools can now book an exclusive area separate from other guests. Complete with multi-share rooms, twin share teacher's rooms and secure bathrooms, these areas are available across two floors, with a swipe card security entrance.

For larger groups, exclusive use of an entire YHA is available at 13 regional properties, many in or next to national parks, through the Rent-a-YHA scheme.

www.yha.com.au/group-bookings



YHA Sydney staff

Eureka Skydeck offers day and night viewing deal

Which captures Melbourne's heart and soul better – day or night? The introduction of Eureka Skydeck's new Sun and Stars Package means that school groups may have two visits for the one ticket.

Skydeck Educator Nilsen Ozcan says "it's a fantastic opportunity for students to experience Melbourne's most spectacular views. School groups now to come in between 10 am-5 pm to see the sights and then return between 5 pm-9.30 pm to see the city lit up."



Eureka Skydeck's Education Program *Education with Altitude* is also making it easier for teachers to plan a school city experiences by offering 9.00 am sessions.

Sun & Stars (double entry on same day) prices

- Self-guided tour
- Kinder - Year 12 \$12.50
- Self-guided tour
- Tertiary \$15.50
- Guided tour
- Kinder - Year 12 \$13.50

www.eurekaskydeck.com.au

Registrations open for ELH SchoolTech



Beautiful Lorne, Victoria

Registrations are open for the annual Computelec and Expanding Learning Horizons ELH School Conference in Lorne, Victoria from 17th–19th August 2014.

Now in its 21st year, the three-day meeting is recognised as a definitive event in the educational calendar and an opportunity for school leaders, principals, assistant principals, curriculum heads, directors of IT, business managers, ICT coordinators and teachers to share experiences and benchmark their performance against others.

The conference will be hosted by industry veteran Bruce Dixon who

will be joined by influential speakers from around the world including Stephen Harris, founder of Sydney Centre for Innovation in Learning; Will Richardson, expert in online learning networks for personal and professional development and Dr Gary Stager, award-winning educator, speaker, consultant and author.

This year's theme is *It's time for Changerous ideas*; the conference aims to deliver a rich program that explores ways of implementing positive change through dangerous thinking.

Computelec's Chief Executive Officer, David La Bozzetta said: "There have been many examples of dangerous ideas and shared practice that have been passed around schools which have resulted in positive educational outcomes for students. This year we want to accelerate that thinking and push these innovative boundaries even further."

New to the conference this year is the Award for Innovation, which has been created to recognise and honour schools that are at the forefront of ICT integration and to foster innovative teaching practices using embedded technological learning activities.

The inaugural 'Future of the Classroom' will display all of the technology components of a real-life, digital classroom together in the one room and demonstrate how it can be effectively used in the education environment to deliver improved 21st century learning.

For registration, sponsorship and speaking opportunities contact: Lulu Dowell at Computelec tel (03) 8645 7109.

www.computelec.com.au/elhschooltech2014

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Beyond the Schoolyard – National Bullying Conference



The National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) will host Australia's pre-eminent conference on bullying at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday 6th and Thursday 7th August, 2014.

The 2014 conference will bring together academics, policymakers, practitioners and young people from around the world to explore how bullying affects people of all ages and to share the latest research on strategies and solutions to help reduce the prevalence and impact of bullying.

Keynote speakers

- Dr Justin W Patchin PhD, Co-director, Cyberbullying Research Centre, Professor of Criminal Justice, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
- Dr Sonia Sharp, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria and Leader of the Early Childhood and School Education Group, Victorian Government
- Dr Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett, Lecturer and Director of Learning and Teaching, Macquarie University
- Dr Kevin Runions, Assistant Professor, Education Psychology and Leadership Studies, University of Victoria, British Columbia

Other speakers

The Hon. Alastair Nicholson, Chair of the National Centre Against Bullying; Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, adolescent psychologist and author; John Caldwell, Australian of the Year 2014 (Vic), anti-bullying advocate, author and TV producer. Tickets are on sale at the conference website.

www.ncab.org.au/ncabconference2014

Creativity is employability

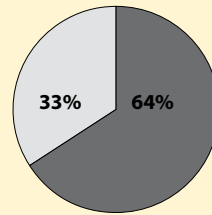
So you want to prepare kids for the workforce? Getting creative is a great place to start as proficiency with digital tools and an ability to think on one's feet are now seen by employers as being as important as numeracy and literacy.

Australia and New Zealand rank highly when queried on the importance of an education that fosters creativity and on the importance of teaching skills with digital tools, according to a survey of 1531 educators across the Asia Pacific region conducted by Adobe Systems.

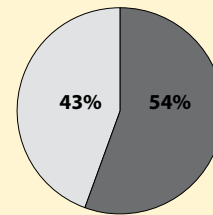
Educators in Australasia were unanimous in their agreement that that creative expression is a must for all students regardless of the stream of study. Overwhelmingly (97%) educators felt that creative tools help students to better grasp theoretical concepts and enhance their overall understanding.

Most respondents (87%) indicated that the current education system does not do enough to integrate creativity into education revealing an opportunity to tackle this aspect of education. Some 95% were convinced that students need these skills to tackle the challenges of the modern workplace and 92% said that these skills yield better opportunities for job seekers.

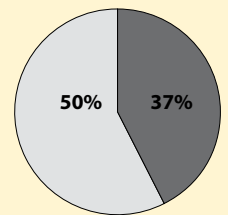
Alongside Australia and New Zealand, Indian educators were heavily in favour of the need for creative expression in the classroom and the need for creative tool to clarify concepts. This contrasts with those from China and South Korea who are less convinced as to the importance of teaching creatively and using creative tools, however educators from these areas still expressed strong support for the use of creative tools to support learning in the classroom.



Creative expression for students is a must



Creative tools enhance understanding



Not enough emphasis on creative expression

Trevor Bailey Senior Director Worldwide Education and Government Adobe Systems says that he has seen first hand the power that proficiency with digital tools has when trying to find work.

“One of our tertiary clients had been running a digital publishing program took the opportunity to visit a company to show them what they had been doing. The visit was opportune as the company had been looking to address its tablet publishing strategy. The students’ work was very much in line with what the company had in mind and they were given jobs on the spot, that’s what practical digital skills can offer,” he says.

“Being a creative person changes everything: it enables us to tackle more complex problems and it allows us to boldly approach problems outside the scope of our experience. This is just as well because our global workforce is increasingly moving from muscle jobs to smart jobs. Smart jobs that require creativity at their core,” says Education Consultant Richard Olsen.

Wireless Emergency Alert System

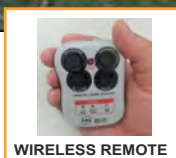
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ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards

Nominations have opened for the 2014 ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA). Parents, grandparents, secondary student councils, school boards/councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations can nominate teachers for an award.

Teachers who are nominated have the chance of going on to the State and Territory Awards and then the National Awards. Professional development and project grants are up for grabs, as well as one National Award recipient getting the opportunity to go to Space Camp in the United States.

One teacher is also awarded the Disability Inclusion Grant, which is awarded each year to a teacher working in the area of disability inclusion.

Nominations for the awards close on 31 July.

www.asg.com.au/nominate

Grass grants program on again



Australia and Landcare Australia are searching for the best 'pitch for your patch' - with the launch of the Perfect Pitch of Green - a continuation of a grants program for schools and youth groups wanting to green up their sporting field or reinvigorate an outdoor learning area.

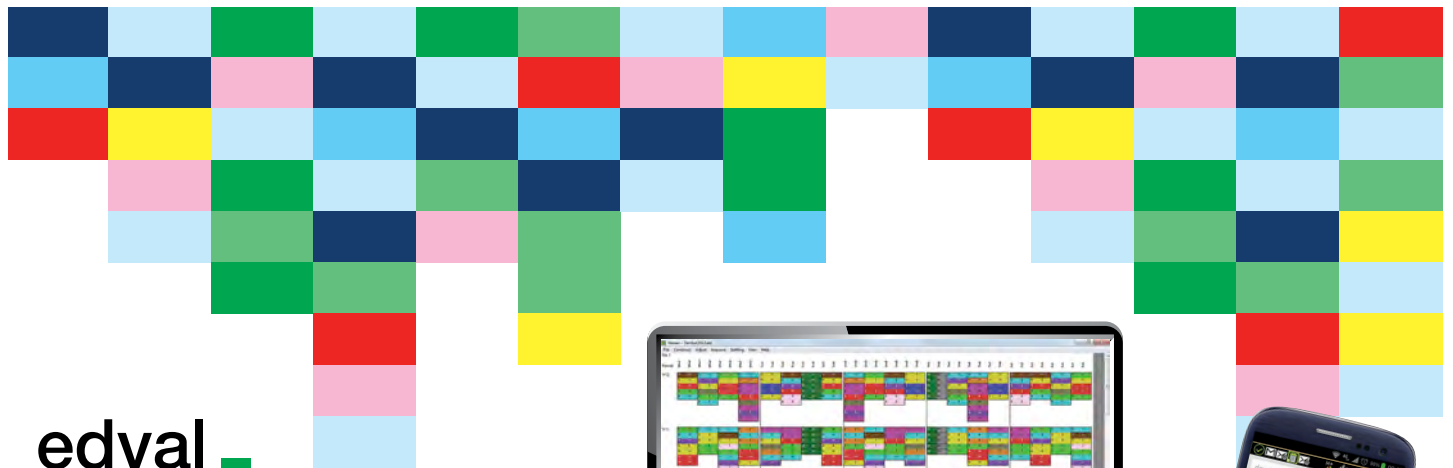
This year, 10 schools will be chosen to receive natural turf covering an area of up to 200 square metres - the equivalent to the goalmouth of a

standard sporting field. The grass can be used to update sports areas, enhance outdoor learning areas, or create more space for outdoor play.

Since 2012, 30 schools and youth groups across the country have benefitted from new turf, donated by a local turf grower.

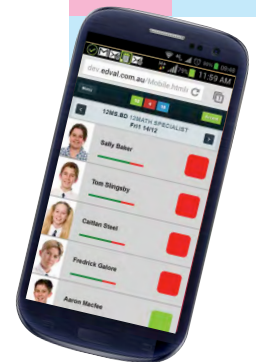
Applications for the 2014 Perfect Pitch of Green program close on 1 July.

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