All Saints Catholic Primary School

An eat well be active - Primary Schools project school

Our thanks go to ACHPER for this article from ewba Newsletter Feb 2013

Over the last 3 years as part of the eat well, be active – Primary Schools Project.

This unit of work initially came about with Simon Lovett (classroom teacher) attending a workshop at the ACHPER (SA) Primary Years Health & PE Conference where he came back to school enthused and motivated to doing something about changing current practices in our School regarding PE. Simon and Sue, the Numeracy coach, discussed a way that we could improve the level of physical activity our children are involved in at school. Whilst we had limited power over what happens when children go home, we wanted to capitalise on the positive effect we could have with students whilst at school.

Initially the aim was to encourage teachers at All Saints to do more PE with their Students. However, we realised we would need some data and statistics to back up this proposal. With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum and the soon to be introduced HPE coming about, this was a good time to begin. As the Numeracy coach, Sue felt we could easily integrate PE with Maths in a meaningful and informative way for students. Simon organised for Cheryl from ACHPER (SA) to come out and present at a staff meeting and our job was to support Cheryl’s ideas and information by presenting this unit the following week. We decided that as we wanted to get the children involved, they should do the presentation. There was also a bit of strategy here as we didn’t want teachers to feel like we were telling them they weren’t doing enough; rather we wanted the data to speak for us.

We found plenty of research to show the positive effects of regular physical activity but we wanted to make it more purposeful and relevant to the All Saints community. This was where the Math became crucial to the investigation. The children created questionnaires surveying students on how much PE they did at school, what they did when they got home and the different sports they played. They collected this data and created graphs to represent the information clearly and effectively. We then wanted them to compare this information with that of their parents/grandparents as to what activities they did at school and after school. Students then created comparison graphs to clearly reflect the significant differences. They then made inferences from the comparisons and drew hypothesis as to why children 40 years ago were fitter and healthier than today.

The next step was to convey this information to the teachers at All Saints. Simon got permission from parents for four representatives to present the findings at the staff meeting. The students worked hard to practice their parts and were enthusiastic and committed to getting the message across. The four students did a brilliant job explaining the process they used and the graphs they created. It was a powerful presentation which engaged all staff and got PE on the agenda! Teachers began talking about ways in which they could integrate PE into other subject areas, how to develop programs to get kids and their parents more active, and what sorts of things we could offer here during lunch and recess breaks.

Cheryl presented our four budding presenters with some gifts and they received positive comments from all teachers and the Principal of All Saints. Simon then took the staff over to the hall to share some of the games he uses with his class. The combination of practical suggestions together with evidence based theory created a powerful Profession Learning session that supported the work Cheryl has been doing here over the last 3 years as part of the eat well, be active – Primary Schools Project.

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eat well be active - Primary Schools Project, a joint SA Health and Department for Education and Child Development project from 2008-2013.