
Learning Beyond the Classroom in a Senior School Setting

We are now in an age of knowledge era schooling. The critical skills required for the knowledge era include self directed learning, adaptability, collaboration, risk taking, negotiation, formal and informal communication, as well as self reflection, management and discipline. These skills will be attained by a paradigm shift in thinking and practice that changes the notion of schools as “purveyors of information” to a curriculum that has meaning and purpose for young people. Students explore and experiment within a supportive environment that empowers students to make decisions and take risks which could, at times see them fail. This preparedness to take risks as part of life long learning is critical to success in the knowledge era.

The Australian Curriculum and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards both acknowledge the importance of these skills: “students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours which will prepare them for success in a world which is complex, rapidly changing, rich in information and communications technology, demanding higher-order knowledge and understanding and increasingly global in its outlook and influences. To succeed, all students need to develop capacities to:

- Manage themselves as individuals in relation to others.
- Understand the world in which they live.
- Act effectively in that world.”

Senior Schooling is a key phase of education where students take greater responsibility for their own learning. How then do traditional notions of ‘homework’ fit into a knowledge era school? Self directed learners must develop critical skills to manage their time, and classrooms and all learning activities should focus on teaching for self directedness. It should be seen as a critical part of the learning process that is being managed by each young person.

Therefore, home study should:

1. Be relevant, meaningful and purposeful.
2. Be skills focused.
3. Enable students to develop emotional intelligences, risk taking, collaboration, problem solving, self reflection, team work and a commitment to life-long learning.
4. Involve self reflection.