

EXAMPLE STORY

Education

Inspired Teaching & Learning with Mathletics

The Westport Club



HIGHLY COMMENDED 2018

Outline your unique story/project/program

For decades, clubs have been an important part of the social fabric of many communities. The Westport Club on the Mid-North Coast of NSW is no different. Community-minded individuals with generous hearts who come together to make life in their town better for everyone. Our Club is well-known within our community and has established strong ties with community, welfare, education, health and sporting organisations in our local area. Our vision, “to make a significant contribution to the quality of community life” and this underpins everything we do. We place great importance on our relationship with the community and want to ensure our community contributions have long-term impacts and help shape a positive future for our region.

Over the last few years, The Westport Club has channelled its community support efforts towards education, recognising the importance of literacy and numeracy as the foundation to learning and the key to creating a bright future for children in our region. Projects such as the “Write to Read Program” saw us partner with Quantum Technology to provide adaptive technology to 11 schools in Port Macquarie. The technology called WYNN, supports children with significant learning difficulties such as dyslexia, allowing them to convert text to speech, making learning at school much easier. Another significant community project was the Mobile Library Literacy Van. This saw us partner with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to provide a mobile library van to give over 700 children in remote areas of the region regular access to library resources. We also have a long-standing partnership with Dymocks Children’s Charities and over many years have contributed to the rejuvenation of 13 school libraries in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area.

A more recent project and the focus of this submission, has been the “Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics” Program. The program, which officially kicked-off in 2015, has seen The Westport Club collaborate with 3P Learning, founders of Mathletics. A contribution of \$120,000 in funding from The Westport Club over 3 years, has provided free access to the Mathletics on-line learning platform for 3,000 students across 13 local schools as well as a contribution to the Birpai Local Aboriginal Lands Council’s After School Program.

Why was this story/project/program addressed as a priority?

In the spirit of delivering our vision to make a significant contribution to the quality of community life, our team made a decision to continue our community contributions towards education resources in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Region. Through an Executive network, we formed a relationship with the team at 3P Learning, the Founders of Mathletics. This relationship assisted our thinking in relation to how can support both literacy and numeracy. Numerous government studies, reports and newspaper articles have shown Australia’s rate of literacy and numeracy amongst children is of great concern. Armed with this information

we created the concept for the “Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics” program. Our objectives have been:

- To help inspire local students from Kindergarten to Year 10 with differing levels of competency in maths (including children with special needs) and the Birpai Local Aboriginal Lands Council’s After School Program, engage with numeracy activities;
- To provide practical resources to assist teachers with student engagement in curriculum mathematics;
- To provide a tool that effectively tracks individual student progress and delivers modules in line with the curriculum;
- To make numeracy learning fun both in the classroom and at home.

Mathletics is an online learning space offering a captivating way for students to improve their numeracy skills whilst completing the requirements of the Australian Curriculum maths standards. The program focuses on both primary and secondary school students and allows for student-driven learning and teacher-led instruction. The program provides progress reporting for both teachers and students, helping to identify opportunities for further learning.

We undertook research on the benefits of the online Mathletics Program, with consideration to both students and teachers and how it would align to science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) based subjects in schools.

Through our prior interactions at local schools, we knew Mathletics was a resource schools were keen to use. We then conducted extensive consultation with schools. Meetings were set up by our Sports and Community Manager, Jenny Edmunds, with 3P Learning, as well as every local school Principal and/or Mathematics Coordinator to determine the following:

1. If they were currently using the Mathletics Program;
2. If they were to be offered the Program which classes would be targeted to have the subscriptions;
3. Did the school have the resources to accommodate the program i.e. computers and tablets.

Our research on the benefits of Mathletics uncovered that students who spend just 30 minutes per week on Mathletics improve their NAPLAN results by more than 5%. This was proven in a study by Dr Tony Stokes from the Australian Catholic University, when he examined over 8,000 Australian schools from all sectors, states and socioeconomic backgrounds and over 3 years and compared NAPLAN results between schools using Mathletics and schools who didn’t use Mathletics.

We also found out 96% of teachers agreed that Mathletics had been effective in improving students learning outcomes in numeracy. The local schools expressed interest in our Program and committed to partnering with us to help improve their access to numeracy resources.

Tell us what was contributed toward this story/project/program?

In our first year, 2015, we targeted 11 schools in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region, 6 Public Schools, 2 Catholic Schools and 3 Independent Schools to undertake the program. This saw 3,000 students and their teachers receive free subscriptions to Mathletics. Our contribution and the school’s engagement has remained consistent throughout 2016 and 2017, outlined in the financial table attached.

Total funding for the 3 year period inclusive of 2015, 2016 and 2017 has been \$120,000. We have also provided \$5,000 worth of prizes each year for the Annual Regional Mathletics Competitions. We have also conducted extensive teacher training and parent engagement sessions at The Westport Club, providing training rooms, catering and our team are on hand to assist throughout.

Our ICT Team helps with the Annual Regional Mathletics Competition, ensuring we have live feeds to beam the competition online, stable connectivity and help to create excitement for the event through audio and lighting.

The other project engagement strategy we created was the Annual Regional Mathletics Competition for schools. Our objective for the annual competition was again to partner with 3P Learning and participating schools to keep the students motivated and to give them another goal to aspire to with regards to numeracy learning. Now in its third year, we've found our objective has been achieved and the children in our region have become quite competitive in this competition! A Westport Cub Mathletics trophy is highly-prized recognition of their abilities and commitment to improving at numeracy.

The competition is held in two parts. The first is a competency contest where all students are invited to participate and try to reach 1,000 points within a designated period. In 2016, we had 129 students achieve this goal. In 2017 this number jumped significantly with 288 students accomplishing this competency! These students were eligible to be entered into a draw to win a variety of prizes for themselves and their school.

The second part of the competition is a live speed and accuracy challenge held at The Westport Club in front of their teachers, parents and peers. 3P Learning is on hand to adjudicate and score the live competition. Each school chooses representatives in 3 divisions (K-3, Year 4 – 6 and Open) to compete live and hopefully reach the Final. The children are incredible, they compete with great confidence and sportsmanship. In our most recent competition, Tacking Point Public School achieved the highest results overall and Hastings Public School won the 2017 Highest Achievement Award for its participation in the "Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics" Program. Hastings Public School outperformed all other schools in the region for individual student performances and curriculum activities with 5,025 hours online and 45,000 activities completed throughout the year. They received \$1,000 worth of Mathletics subscriptions to carry them forward into 2018.

At each of the Annual Regional Mathletics Competitions, the team from The Westport Club were on hand to support the event and helped cheer on students and played a role in presenting prizes to the students.

What was the measureable difference that the support made?

We have received wonderful feedback from schools since the 'Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics' Program commenced. Tony Johnston, Principal from Westport Public School has said "We embed the program into our weekly Maths lessons to provide extra differentiated learning for all our students. All students are highly engaged in both the curriculum activities and the online competitions with other users around the world. Overall we find the Mathletics program to be an engaging addition to our existing maths programs, which we would not normally be able to afford to buy."

Students and teachers alike from Port Macquarie Adventist School also sing praises for the Mathletics program. Engagement from teachers and students has been extremely positive with teachers accessing e-book resources available from the Mathletics site and children are engaging with the program outside school hours, averaging 2.4 hours a week improving their numeracy through Mathletics. Students from the school have also ranked in the Top 100 students in Australia for Mathletics and also in the World Top 100!

In its second year, the “Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletic” program saw 27,500 sign-ins from students at our 13 local schools, spending 7,721 hours and 2 hour and 4 minutes per student, per week. On average students were accessing the platform almost as much at home as they were at school, 55% at school, 45% at home. This is a testament to the engagement of the students and beneficial in their numeracy education. Our reporting through the Mathletics platform, also shows 48% of activities are assigned by teachers and 52% are attempted by students. This means that although teachers are assigning work (which is being completed), the students are going further and voluntarily completing further curriculum activities. These figures remain consistent in our third year of the program.

More wonderful Mathletics class results from our region include:

- Hastings Public School students in Mrs Starr’s Year 3 Class are currently ranked at 46th in the World Top 50 Classes in Mathletics!
- Two students from St Agnes Primary School are ranked #23 and #28 in Australia’s Top 100 Mathletics students;
- A student from Port Macquarie Adventist School is currently ranked #2 in Australia’s Top 100 students in Mathletics and #14 in the World Top 100 students!

The Wesport Club’s “Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics Program” has gained traction with local school in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area over the last 3 years. Our continual monitoring, training of teachers, wonderful relationships with local schools and provision of the Annual Regional Mathletics Competition has been a tangible demonstration of our commitment to encouraging local students to become inspired learners with the help of Mathletics and has helped show the children that maths can be both cool and fun!

Do you have long-term plans/goals for this story/project/program?

The long-term goals for the "Inspired Teaching and Learning with Mathletics Program" include:

- Ensuring children can have access to this exciting resource as they progress through school;
- To provide a supported resource that can enhance classroom delivery of the numeracy curriculum and also give the student opportunity to learn at home;
- To see an improvement in NAPLAN results for numeracy at local schools;
- To see children using the program outside school to further enhance their learning and connect to education/learning globally;
- For the children to be challenged, curious and encourage each other in a fun, creative learning environment;
- To continue to engage with our community and provide local kids with the Annual Regional Mathletics Competition. Bringing students and schools together to achieve together an inspire each other.