



Principal's Update

12 August 2019

Our mission - building a caring and safe learning environment where great teaching supports and inspires all students to grow, develop and succeed.



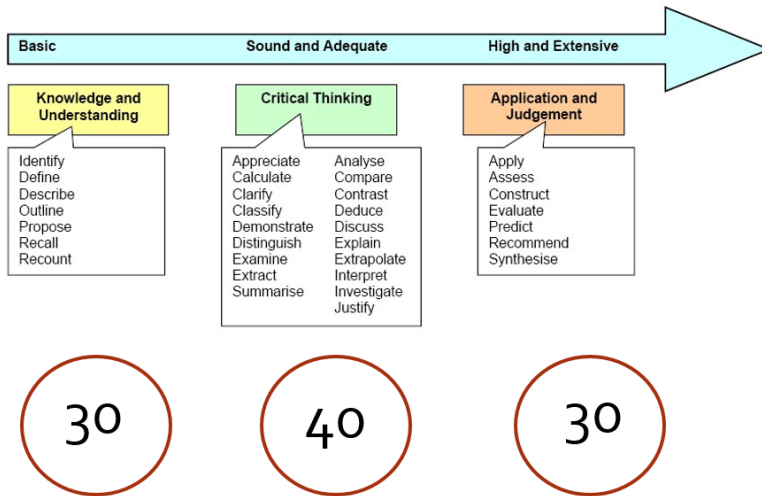
The Hawkesbury Learning Journey

The Hawkesbury Learning Journey is a visual representation of the key skills and capabilities students are expected to learn at school. The Journey uses the metaphor of the Hawkesbury River to emphasise that learning is a progression, that students can be at different points on their learning journey, and that different students may choose different destinations along the river, depending on their learning goals. The journey starts near the origin of the river, marked by Pitt Town, and continues through Cattai, Lower Portland, Wiseman's Ferry and, finally, Brooklyn at the mouth of the river. Each stage of the journey is a reference point that adds a layer of complexity. From gaining knowledge, to critical thinking, to synthesis and evaluation, the journey down the Hawkesbury River visually represents a roadmap that guides our students to their learning destinations. The Hawkesbury Learning Journey will assist our students to map their progress, set clear goals, and form a better understanding of what they need to do to achieve their learning goals. **The official launch of the Hawkesbury Learning Journey will take place at the beginning of Term 4.**



Hawkesbury High School

Caring Learning Connecting



The three stages of the Hawkesbury Learning Journey

The graphic on the cover page of this update is divided into three parts – Knowledge, Critical Thinking, and Judgement – with each part linked to specific skills and capabilities that are graded from least complex to most complex. A closer analysis of NAPLAN and HSC examinations shows that the number of marks or types of questions are closely aligned to the three parts and the relevant skills. For example, about 30% of questions or marks are linked to knowledge, 40% to critical thinking, and another 30% to highly complex skills where students are required to synthesise information or make judgements based on a range of evidence. The Hawkesbury Learning Journey identifies clear reference points that will help students know where they are and what skills they need to master if they are to progress down the river.

Why do students need to know where they are?

Knowing one's current location is essential if we are to know how to get to our destination. For example, if we use our mobile phones to navigate, the first thing the phone app will do is determine our location before it gives us directions on how to get to our destination. Also, these directions may not always be the ones we would choose. If there is an accident on the way, or roadworks, the app may re-direct us to ensure we take the best route. Similarly, The Hawkesbury Learning Journey maps key skills which need to be mastered before students can reach their destination. This mapping process happens when students complete classwork, when they work on assignments or tests, and when they receive feedback from their teachers.

Throw a life raft, teach to swim, or build a bridge?

When supporting students in their development as learners, the metaphor of a journey down the river can also help us reflect on the support strategies available to them. While at times it is appropriate to throw students a symbolic life raft to stop them from sinking, this is only a temporary, short term measure. Teaching students how to swim is far better. Also, directing students to the nearest bridge, or helping them build bridges to help them access their chosen destinations, is a far better long-term proposition.

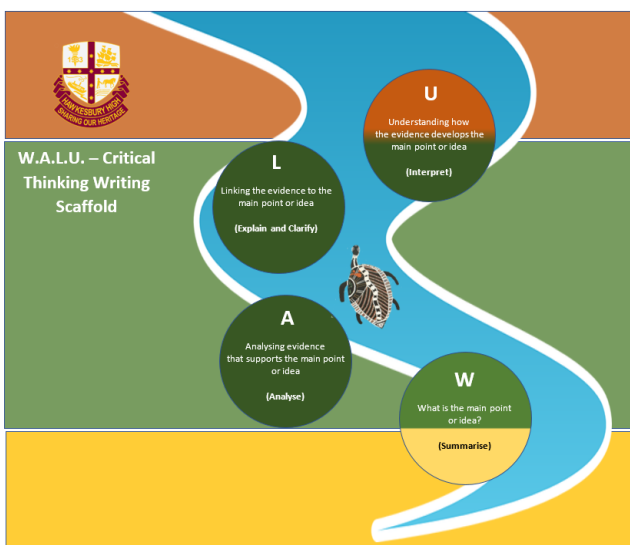
Throw a life raft – short-term intervention



Teach to swim – a life-long skill



Build a bridge – connect to long-term goals



WALU the long neck turtle



Walu is the name of the long neck turtle that guides our students on their learning journey down the Hawkesbury River. W.A.L.U. is also our critical thinking writing scaffold that helps students structure their writing, moving from knowledge through to analysis and interpretation to show understanding of a topic. The four steps in the W.A.L.U. scaffold explicitly guide our students to focus on higher order skills and bridge the gap between knowledge and critical thinking.