MACBETH MASTERCLASS

In early August, 35 students were given the opportunity to participate in a Bell Shakespeare masterclass with one of the company’s touring actors.

Established in 1990, Bell Shakespeare is Australia’s national theatre company specialising in the works of William Shakespeare. As well as performing, the Bell Shakespeare Company tours schools running masterclasses. MacKillop was lucky enough to qualify for the Sharing Shakespeare subsidy program for a two-hour masterclass on Macbeth, the very play which grade ten students are currently studying in English. The masterclass was run by George Banders, an experienced actor and educator with the Bell Shakespeare company.

After introductions and a warm up, we launched into an abridged version of Macbeth. Eager participants were given roles, and we were guided through our own mini production of Macbeth. Reading excerpts from the play, we paused regularly to unpack Shakespeare’s writings. Students took on the roles of the three witches who foretold strange prophecies to the travelling soldiers, Macbeth and Banquo. The witches prophesied how Macbeth would become king, and that although Banquo would have nothing, his sons would be heirs to the throne. We meet Duncan, who announces Malcolm, not Macbeth, as his heir. Lady Macbeth assists her husband in murdering King Duncan. The story develops, and Macbeth’s greed and insanity grow. Lady Macbeth is unable to cope with the strain and takes her own life. The numbers of dead grow and grow until we come to the grand fight between Macbeth and MacDuff. MacDuff beats the witches’ prophecy, avenging the deaths of his wife and children who fell to Macbeth’s sword, and kills Macbeth. Malcolm is King, the royal lineage is restored and there is peace once again.

After our mini performance, we looked more in depth into the story, in particular into the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. We see how as their relationship deteriorates, so does Macbeth’s sanity. Another interesting note which was also brought up was how Duncan was a good King. Had Duncan been a bad king, we would have found it easy to sympathise with Macbeth, and since he was not, we sympathise more with Duncan than Macbeth.

Next we were given a drama workout. We split into groups and summarised the key scenes of Macbeth into four frozen tableaux, which we displayed to the rest of the group. To finish off the day we had a competition to see if we could read Macbeth in under 32 seconds. Two groups attempted the challenge, one group completing the play in 35 seconds while the other performed it in just 34 seconds, just two seconds off our goal! The fast play allowed us to really notice the amount of deaths in the whole play.

The workshop was a wonderful opportunity for us to develop our understanding of one of the world’s famous plays taught by Australia’s own Shakespeare company, Bell Shakespeare. We would like to thank George Banders, our wonderful actor, director and teacher; the school, in particular Ms Haig who organised the day, for providing us with this fantastic opportunity to gain greater knowledge and insight into Macbeth; and particularly the Bell Shakespeare Company for selecting our school for funding this workshop through their Sharing Shakespeare subsidy program.

By Lia Visentin and Ellen Noye

As part of their national tour, Bell Shakespeare will be performing Hamlet at the Theatre Royal in late September, including a special ‘meet the company’ event on 23 September. On 15 September, John Bell, acclaimed actor, director and founder of the Bell Shakespeare company, will discuss his life and experiences with the work of William Shakespeare. For further information, contact the Theatre Royal Hobart.

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Lindisfarne Cricket Club - Junior Registration Day
Season 2015/16

ANZAC PARK, LINDISFARNE
FRIDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER

FOR ALL INFO PLEASE CONTACT: MITCH SPONG
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Electronic devices such as tablets and mobile phones are ever present. They are heaps of fun, the source of so much knowledge and a great way to stay in touch with others. The flip side is that their hypnotic effect is powerful so that frequently all our concentration is directed at them rather than our kids.

There are five BIG opportunities available to you as a parent if you choose to be in the moment when you have children.

1. **Build their language**
   Recently, I saw a mother walking side by side with a young toddler playing a simple language game. She would make a sound with her mouth and her young son would mimic her. This is language building at its most natural and finest, and wouldn’t have happened if this mother was on the mobile phone rather than being present with her child. Whether you are with a toddler, primary aged child or a teen the language building opportunities are endless. You just have to focus on the one you are with and let things happen naturally.

2. **Teach your children about their world**
   Most children are naturally curious and will ask lots of questions. “Why do dogs bark?” “Why is the sun round?” “Where do babies come from?” Yes, some are simple, some are hard to answer and some you are just not ready for. But it’s through these simple interactions that you become your child’s first and most important teacher.

3. **Impact their thinking**
   Influential British educator Charles Des Forges says, “If you want to influence your child’s thinking then you need to talk to him. If parents want more influence then they need to talk more to their children.” According to Des Forges it’s through the conversations that parents have with their children that they impact the way they think, as well as influence their values. Nothing kills personal conversation with a child or young person like a mobile device.

4. **Build relationships**
   Relationships are built through common interest, good intent and respectful behaviour. I can think of no better reason for being in the moment with your child than the opportunity it presents to build some common interest and rapport. It’s reassuring to know that you’ve made plenty of deposits of goodwill to draw on, particularly in the tricky teenage years.

5. **Build memories for you**
   As a parent of adult children I now treasure the memories of times I was fortunate to have spent with them as young children. It’s strange how these memories resurface at the most unexpected time. Recently, I was in a supermarket and I remembered the time when I enthusiastically asked my youngest, who was three at the time, to get the box of cereal with the big red K. Off she went feeling all important and returned with a triumphant smile armed a box of dog food. “Thanks darling. Nearly!” was my reply desperate not to quell the enthusiasm to help that only a three year old can have.

The key to positively influencing your kids, building strong relationships and building enough fond memories to last a lifetime is to make sure that your mind is where your body is and be fully present when you are with your kids.