

Yallourn Primary Students come to the Big Smoke

Principal of Yallourn North Primary School, Ian Whitehead writes of his students visit to CXS.

Primary school students touring CXS at the University of Melbourne?

Seems a bit odd doesn't it? But the idea was an inspired one according to the teachers of Yallourn North Primary School, a school of a 160 students in Gippsland's Latrobe Valley.

Once through their secondary education few students from Yallourn North Primary School pursue the option of enrolling at a university. Yet state wide evaluation and the staff's own testing program reveals many students have the capability and potential to go to university.

The problem at Yallourn North and many schools like it is that family cultures do not usually consider university for their children; it's just not on their radar.

Every two years the grade 5 and 6 students at Yallourn North Primary come to Melbourne for a 3 day camp. The students were asked to closely observe the university students and try to imagine themselves in their place in ten years time.

We walked across the South lawn and past the Law buildings on the way to the Physics building where Simon Bell from the Atom Optics group in the School of Physics, and Lachlan Whitehead from CXS were waiting to show the students their laboratory and explain their work.

The students were enthralled with Lachlan's lasers and blown away with Simon's tour of the Atom Optics lab and his explanations. We hope we have put the seed of a thought in the mind of the students.

Did the visit have an affect? Well, all the boys bought those cheap lasers from Victoria Market. That's a start.