VCE Psychology
Unit 3 Learning
Story 2010
A Museum Victoria Strategic Partnership Program

Summary
The “Psychology Unit 3” program is offered to VCE classes during Semester 1. This program supports the teaching of VCE Psychology Unit 3. In this program, designed in conjunction with VCE Psychology teachers and the VCAA, students investigate a range of concepts found in the VCE Psychology Unit 3 course.

These include:

- Depth Perception
- Monocular cues
- Distortions of visual perception by illusions
- Patterns of sleep
- The role of brain imaging techniques
- Gestalt principles
- Uses and limitations of the polygraph

The session starts with a museum staff led introduction to key ideas surrounding the activities that students will explore in ‘The Mind: Enter the Labyrinth’ exhibition. In this exhibition space, students complete a series of investigations, followed by a final session with a museum staff member, where students’ findings and conclusions are discussed.

Purpose
It was intended that the program would meet the needs of students by providing firsthand experience of psychological principles in the Mind Gallery at Melbourne Museum. There are very few cultural institutions that offer a program for VCE Psychology students.

The following intended learning outcomes for the program were developed:

- Knowledge and understanding: Stereoscopic Vision, Monocular Cues, Medical Imaging, States of Consciousness and the use of a polygraph.
- Skills: to work in teams, and to work scientifically by observing carefully and discussing and implementing Experimental Design.
- Attitudes and values: to have an appreciation of the contributions made by scientists to our understanding of psychology.

The following elements of the program were considered as important in the development of the program:

- a strong hands-on aspect in the program
- information presented in a well organised way
- well trained presenters

leading to an engaging and fun learning experience.
Challenges
The challenges in designing the VCE program were to ensure that the program met the needs of different learning styles, language abilities and student prior knowledge, given that students could be visiting before covering theory in class or having already finished the course, depending on when the visit occurred during Semester 1. The expectations of teachers for a visit to the museum also had to be met.

Sessions needed to be provided to meet the demand for places and many schools missed out because of competition for places in the sessions because there are very few places where Psychology students can undertake an excursion.

Outcomes
For the teacher evaluation, more than 50 teachers were asked to fill in an evaluation form during the session. They were asked 10 questions relating to their profile, their perception of the program and suggestions for improving the program for the following year when a new Study Design is to be implemented.

The results were extremely positive – 100% of teachers rated the session good to very good in terms of its relevance to the VCE curriculum, meeting the needs of the students, providing a unique learning experience, and providing an engaging experience for the students.

Nearly 2900 students attended during Semester 1. About 80 schools from all sectors attended the sessions during Semester 1. About half of the schools were returning after a positive experience from previous years and half were new schools that were attending for the first time. Teachers were happy to bring their classes as a learning experience or for revision depending upon when they were able to book in. Teachers reported that this program supported and enhanced their VCE teaching in a way that could not be achieved in the classroom.

Conclusion
To date, the program is proving to be very successful in meeting the needs of students, as indicated by the views of teachers and the enthusiastic participation by students. Evaluation results suggest that this is largely because of the hands-on style, level of information, quality of presenter and engaging experience that students enjoy through exposure to learning in the Museum Environment.

Attachments
- Sample teacher evaluations (available from Museum Victoria)