

Experimental Research – Junior

Section Coordinators: Asher Longney and Chris Rogerson

As first time section coordinators and members of the STS Committee this year, Asher and I had no previous experiences of the quality of research from Year 7 and 8 students in a state-wide sample. Of course we have monitored our own students and judged the section before, but it was a real privilege to see the creativity and effort from students in experimental research.

Biology experiments were popular, with investigations of mealworms, water temperature and plant growth, plant fertilizers, pollen filters and the powers of garlic, to name just a few. Physics was represented with investigations of viscosity, centripetal force, gravity, flights of soccer balls, basketball bounce height and how clouds form. Chemistry was resplendent in topics about icebergs, pH of seawater, chemical energy of foods and many more. It was good to see Psychology investigations in multitasking and the best methods of learning represented, too.

The addition of the Distinction category allowed those entries that were better than Merit Certificate, but not in the Minor bursary grouping to be given something more encouraging.

Successful entries clearly showed the students who had read the Handbook carefully and had made sure all sections of the report were clearly presented. If you are a student who did not achieve bursary status this year, please don't be disappointed for too long. There's always next year and there's always opportunities to improve and learn from mistakes. I like looking at the word 'FAIL' and reminding students that it could stand for First Attempt In Learning and there will always be opportunities for other attempts in learning. If you can, come along to the Exhibition and Presentation Day at La Trobe University on Monday 23 October to see what great ideas you could work on for next year.

I would like to thank all 21 judges from metropolitan and regional schools who gave their time to evaluate the projects, the teachers who encouraged their students to enter and of course all of the students who entered. Well done, all!