Schooling ideas!

Headst@rt News in Education

The Courier Mail

Tuesday 21 October 2008

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THE inaugural Scholar-in-Residence program at Brisbane Girls Grammar School recently provided senior economics students with the opportunity to interact and be challenged by Miriam Lyons.

She is the director of the Centre for Policy Development, a think tank dedicated to injecting new ideas into Australian public debate.

Prompted by Ms Lyons’ recent appearance on the ABC’s Question and Answer program, Dr Bruce Addison, director of social and environmental studies at the school, issued an invitation to Ms Lyons who accepted the opportunity to excite young minds.

Dr Addison said: “At Brisbane Girls Grammar School one of our goals as teachers of the social sciences is to provide them with the imagination, skills and insights to think holistically about problems.

“We want to encourage creative and courageous thought in our students and one of the ways of achieving this is to extend the confines of the classroom into the real world. Ideas will be the essential currency of the future and there is no reason why secondary school students can’t begin to think dynamically and creatively about issues.”

The all-day workshop allowed the students to analyse and question democratic processes, different political systems, Australia’s fragile economy, ways of changing the world and the power of ideas.

Students were impressed with Ms Lyons’ belief that young people can change the world and advice on how to find work they are passionate about and how to deal with the “boys club” mentality.

Comments from students

“It was exciting to hear from someone young with a different perspective”

“Ms Lyons made our classroom economics relevant; we debated issues from trade protection to government intervention in Aboriginal communities”

“We’re always talking about negatives – the economics crisis and climate change – what impressed me most was she was positive about the future”
“As a young woman she has had to try twice as hard to get her message across; she encouraged us to embrace the boys club and crash through the glass ceiling”

“Ms Lyons urged us to take a wider perspective, to listen to and read things we don’t agree with so we can form our opinions based on evidence and fact”

“My Lyons was able to make a real connection with the girls. She challenged their beliefs and opinions. It was a very successful day which Dr Addison hopes to repeat next year”