



Catalyst Clemente Newcastle

The Dawning of Knowledge



Are YOU interested in being a Learning Partner?

Since the beginning of 2009, the Sisters of St. Joseph Lochinvar have funded **Catalyst Clemente Newcastle**, a unique educational initiative offering a university education in the humanities to those who experience disadvantage and marginalisation. On the completion of four units, students are awarded a *Certificate of Liberal Arts* from Australian Catholic University.

Catalyst Clemente focuses on the person and their human potential, inviting them to personal transformation and re-connection with others and society. In the words of the founder Earl Shorris (2000):

Education in the humanities is about thinking and beginning, rather than doing and following. If one has been "trained" in the ways of poverty what is needed is a beginning. The humanities teach us to think reflectively, to begin to deal with the new as it occurs to us, to dare. If the poor are to make the leap out of poverty, it will require a new kind of thinking – reflection. That is a beginning.

Through intellectual engagement and reflection, the humanities provides participants with opportunities to develop new ways of thinking, enabling people to break out of old understandings and patterns of behaviour. With increased self-esteem, confidence and purpose, with a better understanding of self, others and society, with hope and an ability to see a different way ahead, people are better able to make the most of job opportunities and housing placements, and to develop better relationships with others.

Learning Partners are key to the success of Catalyst Clemente, volunteering to support students in their study by assisting them in developing research and computer skills. Currently Learning Partner sessions run at CatholicCare, 882 Hunter Street, Newcastle, on Thursday afternoons in two shifts: 1.00 – 3.00pm and 3.30pm – 5.30pm. Other times could be negotiated. For more information about this role and Catalyst Clemente visit: http://www.ssjl.org.au/what_we_do/beapartner.htm

Catalyst Clemente is transformative for all involved: lecturers, learning partners, agencies, students and Newcastle itself.

Currently there are about 16 students enrolled in *Australian Literature*. The lecturer is Dr. Jean Talbot. This unit will culminate in a drama production at the end of the semester. Last year students studied *Introduction to Ethics* and *Indigenous People Past and Present*. We anticipate studying sociology in Semester II.

Catalyst Clemente invites cross sector collaboration in the delivery of the program. To date in Newcastle the following groups have worked together in various ways: the Sisters of St. Joseph Lochinvar, CatholicCare and the Catholic School's Office, Compass Housing, Mission Australia, Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers, Australian Catholic University, and various groups within the Catholic and Anglican Dioceses. Westfield and Officeworks Newcastle have also recently contributed to Catalyst Clemente.

If you are interested in being a Learning Partner, or you know someone who might like to be involved, please contact Louise Gannon rsj

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We are also keen to involve a corporate sponsor who would like to be involved in this program and commit to providing some recurrent funding for a negotiated period of time. Contact Louise if you can help in this, or any other way.

Many thanks, Louise Gannon rsj