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Hayden Peters, Adam Falduto, James DiGiacomo, Year 11 VET Outdoor Recreation students of Gilson College- Taylors Hill, negotiating technical terrain to demonstrate their mountain bike competencies at You Yangs State Park, Victoria.
Photography
Timothy Luszczak

Ministry Of Teaching

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EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Martin Luther, on 31 October 1517 nailed 95 theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg (D'Aubignè, 1849, p. 243). His plan was to initiate an academic discussion on the next day, in the town university. The action itself was motivated by Martin's judgement that Tetzel's entrepreneurial use of the sale of indulgences to finance the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica, was unethical. He was convinced that forgiveness and justification were acts of God based on faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on Calvary and expressed this in the Smalcald Articles, Part I, Articles 1-4 (cited in Henkel, Henkel, Krauth & Müller, 1854, p. 366). He defended his concepts against Tetzel's claims including "The very instant that the money chinks at the bottom of the strong box, the soul escapes from purgatory and soars to heaven" (D'Aubignè, 1849, p. 217).

Surrounding the historical event however there is some uncertainty. Nailed to a door? Which church? Erwin Iserloh (1961, cited in Treu, n. d., para. 1) after reviewing Luther's documents, notes no explicit reference to this act. However, Treu (n.d., para. 2) found in 2006 that George Rörer (Luther's secretary) had written a note in November 1544 on a revision of the 1540 New Testament, that "On the evening before All Saint's Day in the year of our Lord 1517, theses about letters of indulgence were nailed to the doors of the Wittenberg churches by Doctor Martin Luther." This broader circulation, fits with the idea of a widely informed and inclusive discussion of a high interest church difference of opinion, a dialogue that Luther sought. The only prior known reference to this event, was by Luther's friend Melanchthon, in an preface to Luther's Collected Works in (1546).

Five hundred years later, do we celebrate the historicity and scholarship surrounding the event? No, but historicity assures celebration. We celebrate.

Martin Luther initiated the reformation by flagging before all: an uninformed, corrupted, unrepentant populace; a religious-power-linked politic; and a sectored hierarchy of conniving, indulgent, profiteering priests - that scripture alone is the secure foundation of truth, and that justification for sinners is through faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on Calvary alone. The spread of these truths, revalidated in religious thought, emerging as the Protestant reformation of Christianity, empowered all the subsequent reformers and the gospel mission leading Christianity "to teach all nations" Matt 28:19. This is our celebrated Christian heritage.

Articles in this issue draw on our historic Christian heritage. Establishing and modelling ethical practice is informed by Green. Rieger provides Christian leaders a values-virtue lens through which perspectives can inform, support reflection and structure review of practice. Kilgour and Christian assert White's advantageous century-old educational principles are aligned with elements of current best practice. Pope suggests teachers consider socioscientific issues within a guided framework to support resolution in the minds of students, of the ethical conflicts emerging from social and technological change.

Responding to human need, a virtue aligned to Luther's 45th thesis, is advocated by: Shields and Lennox in relating appropriately to the Deaf, Arnold's guiding of second language learners and Hinze and Morton's 'Wellbeing' initiative for educators.

Luther began the reformation but did not completely reform himself (expressing anti-Semitism); his humanity captured by it's contexts. Yet God used him - in his incompleteness – to create opportunity and accomplish the sharing of His translated word.

Christian teachers too, conscious of personal sinful failings, choose to accept "you have been saved through faith, and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God" Eph 2:8 KJV, and overcome inadequacy by responding in the Spirit, living "this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" Col 1:27 NIV. This we all celebrate too!

*... in the year of our Lord 1517, theses about letters of indulgence were nailed to the **doors** of the Wittenberg **churches** ...*

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[Photography: Glenys Perry]

Strategies to address educational needs of students who are Deaf or hard of hearing

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Key words: Deaf, hard of hearing, education, strategies, wellbeing

Abstract

This paper addresses some of the educational needs of students with hearing impairments, for this group has unique learning needs especially in relation to language acquisition. Throughout the course of history there have been two dominant approaches to deaf education, oral (speech) and manual (sign language). Despite conflicting opinions between medical professionals and educators in the field of Deaf education, current research suggests that flexibility and an openness to utilise a combination according to the individual needs of the students is the best approach to forming language proficiency. This paper will use these findings to suggest a holistic range of effective management strategies for educators, which target the physical, academic, social, emotional and communicative wellbeing of deaf students.

> *Deaf history reveals the tale of a hearing world that has neglected to listen to the needs of students who are Deaf or hard of hearing.*

Author's Note:
The Deaf community (people who are deaf or hard of hearing) have a strong history of common interests, sports and culture; and mainly use AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language) for communication. In this article a small 'd' is used when referring to the medical definition of deafness, while a capital 'D' is used when referring to people who are culturally Deaf. While the term 'hearing impaired' was seen as politically correct, the terms Deaf and hard of hearing are more frequently used today. This paper has been written to inform and assist teachers in 'included classrooms' where some students may be Deaf or hard of hearing.

Introduction

Deaf history reveals the tale of a hearing world that has neglected to listen to the needs of students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. A description of hearing loss, its causes and available treatment provide helpful insight into a variety of ways of providing education and support.

Current research suggests the best educational methods for language acquisition together with important management strategies for teachers to consider, revolve around supporting the physical, academic, social and emotional wellbeing of Deaf and hard of hearing students.

Deaf and hard of hearing students

The Deaf community is made up of a diverse group of people who have a wide range of hearing loss. Some Deaf people are able to hear at lower frequencies (deep sounds like drums and bass), but are unable to hear at higher frequencies (high pitch noise like vocals and guitar) and vice versa. Then there are Deaf individuals who are 'profoundly' deaf (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d.), meaning that they are unable to hear any sound below 95 decibels. By definition, 'hearing impaired' classifies any individual who is "partially or completely deaf" (Hearing Impaired, 2017). Within the Deaf community, there are people with hearing loss who are 'oral' (primarily use speech) and individuals who primarily use sign language to communicate (as well as those who use both) (Edwards, 2012). These forms of communication represent the main approaches to deaf education, and have long been debated and pinned against one another throughout the course of deaf history.

History of Deaf Education

The first public school for the deaf was established

in 1755 by De l'Epée. Located in his Paris home, De l'Epée was employed to provide two deaf twin sisters with a religious education. The girls used sign language as a primary means of communication and De l'Epée learnt it from them. De l'Epée understood that sign and gesture could express human thought just as effectively as spoken language, and he regarded speech and articulation of lesser importance (Périer, 2013).

Samuel Heinicke was a pioneer of 'oral' education of the deaf. In 1778, Heinicke established a school in Leipzig, Germany. Strongly opposed to sign language, Heinicke's method placed emphasis on teaching students to speak and enunciate clearly. De l'Epée was heavily criticised by Heinicke and his followers, as they considered sign language a detriment to the development of speech and proper enunciation (Périer, 2013).

During most of the 19th century, there was controversy between advocates of oral and manual approaches to deaf education. In 1880 an International conference for deaf educators was held in Milan to discuss which method was more effective. Advocates for manual (sign) based education weren't invited to the congress and thus were outnumbered and out-ruled. A vote was taken and it was decided that the purely oral method must be preferred, in schooling of the Deaf (Edwards, 2012). After several decades, American Sign Language was accepted in 1960, re-establishing the basis for manual (sign) based education worldwide. Australia followed with the acceptance of AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language) in the 1980s and it is now included in the Australian Curriculum.

One could say that over the years sign language and 'oralism' may have learned to co-exist. However, the medical industry generally advocates for oral education, in conjunction with the advancing technology of assistive hearing devices. Some contemporary educators still fear that employing sign language will detract from the development of fluent speech (Smith & Scherer, 2013). However, these educators neglect to recognise that not all assistive hearing devices are effective for every child. This can lead to adverse effects where Deaf or hard of hearing students are denied a language to communicate and are left isolated and unable to express themselves (Humphries et al., 2014).

Today, Australia has many schools that cater for deaf education. Some of these schools contain a deaf unit that is an extension of their mainstream system. These schools have adopted their own perspective on oral or manual education and will teach accordingly (Harris & White, 2013). Parents of deaf children are given the autonomy to choose their child's school on the basis of which communicative approach is used.

Causes & Management

Medically speaking, there are two major categories of hearing impairment: conductive loss and sensorineural loss. Each category is defined by the location of damage within the ear, which impacts the hearing process. Conductive hearing loss occurs when there is a problem conducting sound waves anywhere along the route through the outer ear, tympanic membrane (eardrum), or middle ear (ossicles). Conversely, sensorineural loss is any damage that has occurred in the inner ear or the vestibulocochlear nerve. An individual can have either or both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss depending on where the damage is located (Harris & White, 2013).

Causes of hearing loss are classified as either congenital or acquired. Congenital hearing loss is present from birth, usually detected via hearing screening or from the family history (can be of genetic or non-genetic origin). In contrast, acquired hearing loss is not present from birth, but is acquired at some point during an individual's life (Moore, 2010). The causes of both types of hearing loss are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Non-hereditary causes of hearing loss

Causes of congenital hearing loss (non-hereditary) include:
1. Maternal infection
2. Kernicterus (severe jaundice)
3. Trauma during birth
4. Medication toxicity

Table 2: Causes of acquired hearing loss

Major causes of acquired hearing loss include:			
1.	Noise exposure	1.	Tymphanic (eardrum) membrane perforation
2.	Ototoxic medications	2.	Otosclerosis - abnormal bone growth in the middle ear
3.	Age	3.	Otitis media (inflammatory disease of the middle ear)
4.	Autoimmune disorders	4.	Obstruction of the ear canal
5.	Head trauma	5.	Cholesteatoma
6.	Acoustic neuroma	6.	Tympanosclerosis - calcification of tissue in the middle ear

not all assistive hearing devices are effective for every child. This can lead to adverse effects where … students are denied a language to communicate and are left isolated and unable to express themselves

Implications & Strategies

Deafness has a profound effect on a child's physical, academic, social and emotional development. In the context of a classroom, it is vital for educators to be aware of these unique learning needs, in order to implement effective strategies for improving language acquisition and education.

Physical Development and capabilities

In regard to physical development, some Deaf students experience difficulty with balance and gross motor skills. This is a result of dysfunction of the inner ear (Kid Sense Child Development Corporation, 2017). In the classroom environment, a teacher can assist students with these difficulties by modifying activities to the individual's physical ability level. Teachers should also ensure access to equipment which aids in developing balance.

Learning challenges

Academic achievement can also be a concern for parents with Deaf children. Research shows that students who are deaf or hard of hearing often experience difficulty in the following cognitive areas: language acquisition, speech development, sensory processing, literacy development (reading & writing) and sustaining focus for extended periods of time (Kid Sense Child Development Corporation, 2017).

Learning strategies and consequences

In acquiring a language to communicate, children with hearing loss will learn to speak and/or sign or a combination of both. Those individuals, who do select the purely oral method, will often use a range of hearing assistance devices to aid them (cochlear or hearing aids). In most cases, children who are born deaf are born into hearing families (Humphries et al., 2014). As a result, the purely oral method is often preferred. However, cochlear implants and hearing aids have varying success rates, and not all children who adopt this approach learn to speak and hear proficiently (Humphries et al., 2014). This fact can generate major consequences in relation to the student's language acquisition, academic achievement and psychological wellbeing (Kid Sense Child Development Corporation, 2017).

Similarly, students who learn sign language are mostly deprived of learning sign at a young age and don't learn it until they reach school age unless the family is committed to signing at home, therefore it is necessary for those around them to also know the language. In the case that family members, peers or associated teachers are unable to communicate through sign, the student becomes at risk due to a reliance upon speech alone (Humphries et al., 2014).

"students who are deaf or hard of hearing often experience difficulty in ,,, language acquisition, speech development, sensory processing, literacy development (reading & writing) and sustaining focus"

Current responses

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that current research suggests, that regardless of the method chosen, constrained language development contributes to behavioural and psychosocial difficulties (Fellinger, Holzinger, & Pollard, 2012). Furthermore, "the absence of early auditory stimulation and delay in acquiring language seems to affect neurocognitive processing domains, such as auditory and visual working memory, attention, and inhibition. Therefore, early access to auditory and linguistic experience is essential for development of spoken language, as well as cognitive and emotional control, planning, and organisation." (Fellinger et al., 2012, p. 1038). Currently paediatricians are recommending that Deaf children adopt both the oral and signing method for language acquisition in unison (Fellinger et al., 2012). This approach will ensure that children with hearing loss are not deprived of early language acquisition and are able to bridge the gap of communication with their families, peers and teachers.

Strategies for inclusive classrooms

Given that the large majority of hearing families do not teach their Deaf children sign language, it is of utmost importance for educators to understand how to cater for Deaf and hard of hearing students (Humphries et al., 2014). In the classroom environment, the teaching strategies listed in Table 3 can be used to assist Deaf and hard of hearing students.

The final concern for educators is the social and emotional wellbeing of Deaf and hard of hearing students. Statistics show that significantly higher rates of mental illness occur in people who are deaf than in hearing individuals (Alexander, Ladd & Powell, 2012). The language and communication environment of the family is a central element that impacts the psychosocial wellbeing of children with hearing impairment. When a deaf individual is unable to fluently communicate within the home, they are four times more likely to develop a mental illness than those in families who can. Fellinger et al., (2012) note that this same communication issue also leads to maltreatment in the school environment. Research shows that mental illness in deaf children is strongly linked with adverse experiences at school. Whether signed or spoken, poor language ability contributes to relationship difficulties with peers and teachers. Ultimately, mental distress can become increasingly worse in these individuals, contributing to behavioural problems, social exclusion and isolation (Fellinger, Holzinger & Pollard, 2012).

Table 3: Teaching strategies to assist the Deaf and hard of hearing

To optimise learning in the hearing impaired, implement the following strategies.
1. Teach and use an official sign language (Auslan).
2. Organise an Auslan Language Model (ALM) for classroom assistance.
3. Use closed captioned videos.
4. Visual emphasis should be provided in class. For example - written information – see 5, images and demonstrations.
5. Write instructions on the board for visual reference.
6. Use personal listening devices (PLD) and amplifiers in the classroom.
7. Close doors and windows, and also turn off any unused electrical equipment, all to avoid interfering with PLDs.
8. Make sure the classroom is well lit so the student can see you.
9. Proximity is essential for lip reading, so have Deaf students sit at the front of the classroom. Do not try speaking across the room.
10. Gain a Deaf student's attention before speaking to him/her - stand on a chair, stomp on the ground, wave your hand in their line of sight or turn the lights off and back on.
11. When speaking – speak loudly and clearly using simple sentences. Avoid any simultaneous commentary.
12. Always check for comprehension by the student.
13. Retain focus by having frequent brain breaks.
14. Develop an Individualised Education Program (IEP) that targets and develops the students challenging areas (place major emphasis on literacy skills).
Adapted from the sources: Nation Deaf Children's Society [NDCS], 2016; KSCDC, 2017

> *Organising an Individual-ised Education Program (IEP) is the effective way to begin involving students and their families in school-related decision making*

Social and emotional considerations – The IEP

In order to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Deaf students, educators must strategise to target the following key areas: advanced language acquisition, communication in the family environment (through encouragement and discussion) and positive peer based relationships (with teacher facilitation). Organising an Individualised Education Program (IEP) is the effective way to begin involving students and their families in school-related decision making if this process has not yet been established. Teachers should do their best to encourage family participation and engagement in the classroom. In addition, an IEP will give educators the opportunity to discuss the importance of exposing students to both oral and manual language development. Some possible ways to ensure a high degree of language acquisition are: learning proficient Auslan, ensuring attendance at regular speech pathology classes, the use of assistive hearing devices and the practice of frequent reading and writing (Nation Deaf Children's Society, 2016; Kid Sense Child Development Corporation, 2017).

In order to avoid adverse experiences at school, it is crucial that teachers actively focus on including Deaf and hard of hearing students in the school community. Teachers can help bridge the gap between the Deaf and hard of hearing students and their hearing peers by encouraging hearing individuals to learn some basic sign language and distributing learning resources. In addition to this, Deaf and hard of hearing students should be encouraged to socialise outside of the school environment. The Deaf community is a great way for students with hearing impairment to meet people and get involved in a variety of social clubs and sporting teams (Fellinger et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Overall, it is extremely important for family members and educators to be aware of the current research in Deaf education and its history. Archaic and ill-informed attitudes about spoken and signed languages among under-informed educators and other professionals can have severe consequences on successful language acquisition and overall well-being. Therefore, it is vital that educators implement strategies to support the physical, academic, social and emotional wellbeing of their Deaf and hard of hearing students. There are concerning rates of mental illness among individuals with hearing impairment, resulting from a lack of understanding from those around them and poor

> *There are concerning rates of mental illness among individuals with hearing impairment, ... Through ...effective management strategies, these rates can be reduced*

language acquisition. Through the implementation of effective management strategies, these rates can be reduced. Educators need to make a genuine effort to provide Deaf and hard of hearing students with more opportunities to become proficient in both oral and manual communication methods with the strategies suggested in Table 3. Further, encouragement and support for socialisation with their hearing peers in the classroom, will better facilitate the academic and personal success of Deaf and hard of hearing students. TEACH

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Establishing personal ethics: Modelling principles of spiritual leadership for a Christian educator

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Key words: Christian, educator, ethics, leadership, modelling, spiritual

Hyatt's (2012) statement "One of the most effective things about Jesus' lifestyle was that He didn't switch into another mode to introduce His disciples to the reality of God" (para. 5) is an important observation about the life of Jesus. Further, it is an example today to those in the role of a spiritual leader. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, asserted "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men: clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:2–3 NKJV). These words are believed to have explicit application to this author's life, and that of other Christian educators. Coupled with Timothy's admonition "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2), it clarifies that there is only one letter to be shown, no matter the situation within this role. The most important aspect of being a spiritual leader is not perfection in everything one does, but consistency in one's life and attitude, in public and in private.

As an educator, it is especially important to lead by example. Students come from various backgrounds and are dealing with numerous challenges. They are looking for someone to be 'an anchor that holds firm in the storms of life'. The modern college student is no longer just an older teen or young adult but may be the parent of young children or even the grandparent of older children. The one thing common to all of them is that, in some way, they are all dissatisfied with their present life situation. The reason they are attending college is to initiate change. This fact makes it important for students that their instructor can offer, informed guidance, with experienced stability.

There are a number of principles or character traits needed to be the spiritual leader God desires. Personal experience suggests the following important attributes, discovered and developed through the power of the Holy Spirit, bring about the consistency that is necessary to be the spiritual leader students need. Submission to God and His ways is the fundamental attitude of first priority. Followed by possession of wisdom and understanding; application of personal integrity and ethical practice; and demonstration of focus and perseverance. All of these principle attributes are dependent upon submission, to God. They will not develop without it. A cognitive analyze of the relationships between these character traits, suggests the model in Figure 1 (See p. 10).

Submission

Submission to God is a first priority, being an essential and crucial preparation for any role as a spiritual leader. Leaders can only truly act as spiritual leaders when they come to the understanding that they are simply instruments of God for service to Him. When contemplating an instrument or implement of service, the attributes of sturdy durability and an ergonomic fit in the hand of the craftsman stand out. The only conclusion that makes sense is that the will of the leader must be placed in submission to the One who will lead the leader. Solomon advises, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5–6).

The central quality of submission is the shaping of the spiritual leader to be able to lead as God would have him or her to lead. There are a number of occurrences, circumstances, and seminal experiences that can shape one to be God's spiritual leader. However, Blackaby and Blackaby (2011), assert the following:

> Although childhood experiences, physical strength, failures, successes, and even birth order can

> *One of the most effective things about Jesus' lifestyle was that He didn't switch into another mode to introduce His disciples to the reality of God*

Figure 1: Spiritual leadership attributes analysis
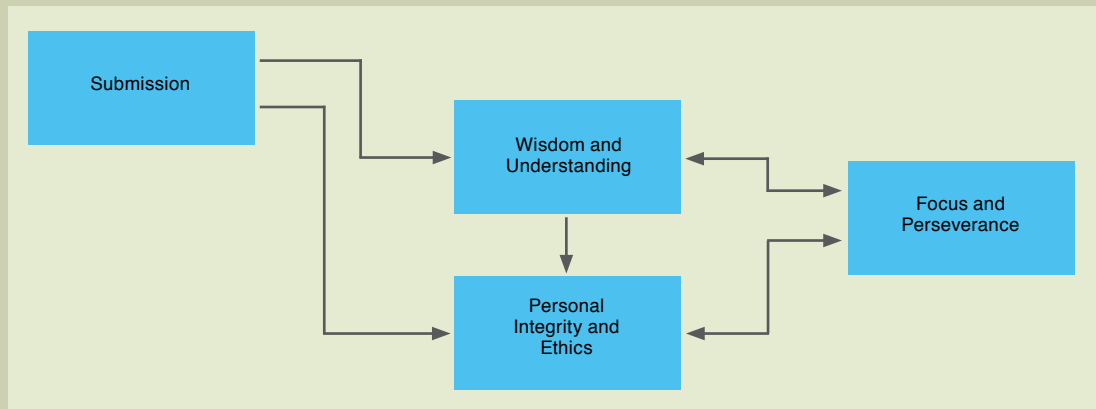
impact general leadership abilities, there is an added dimension to the personal growth of a spiritual leader not found in secular leadership development. That is the active work of the Holy Spirit.   (p. 67)

To be more thorough in description, the Holy Spirit uses these building blocks of character: the childhood experiences, physical strength, failures, successes, and even birth order; to mould someone towards being a spiritual leader. Further, He can use other pieces of the leader's life to fashion him or her for leadership through the supernatural connection of the human being with the Spirit of God.

For submission to work its complete handiwork on the spiritual leader, the leader must be totally committed to the transformation process. That reality is expressed by Paul's words when he writes,

> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
> (Romans 12:1–2 NKJV).

Reworded in modern language, a personal translation of these two verses says, "Give yourselves totally to God and allow Him to shape you to do His will."

When contemplating the requirement of surrender in order to be effectively used by God, it becomes evident that a dependent relationship between the stated principles or character traits emerges. Submission to the will of God in one's life leads to two branches in this relationship. The first branch is the development of wisdom and understanding (refer to Figure 1) and apparent in the admonition,

> See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.   (Ephesians 5:15–18)

Being filled with the Spirit of God enables the spiritual leader to gain insight and wisdom that only comes from the mind of the Author and Creator of Wisdom.

Wisdom and Understanding
In much the same way that the Holy Spirit can use one's experiences, successes, and failures to teach the spiritual leader to be submissive, He can also use one's education and formal and informal learning encounters, including professional development, to enhance one's wisdom and understanding. However, doing things and making decisions God's way is even more important. This underscores the principal position that submission holds in the life of the spiritual leader; in order to discern, understand, and follow God's direction, one must acquiesce to His leading.

Deckard (2005a) makes the point that Christian leaders are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, listening with spiritual ears for His wisdom. He draws from Proverbs 1:23, which says, "Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you." Those words make it clear that spiritual leaders not only listen to the Holy Spirit for wisdom, they submit themselves to the Lord and have the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom. One can deduce that submission precedes and facilitates wisdom and understanding. Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) reaffirm this view with the following statement: "You cannot be a spiritual

leader if you are not encountering God in profound, life changing ways" (p. 160). The way the lives of spiritual leaders are changed is by yielding to God's control for growing within their leadership roles.

The connection between God's role and man's responsibility to effectively enable growth in wisdom and understanding emerges from these words, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). Two key words formulate the basis of that spiritual connection, "fear" and "beginning." The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines the Hebrew words *yirah* (Strong's 3374), translated *fear*, as extreme reverence, and *reshiyth* (Strong's 7225), translated *beginning*, as first in order or rank. Therefore, to demonstrate one's highest honor and respect for God is of the highest or primary priority for the spiritual leader, expressed as submission – leading to wisdom and understanding.

Demonstration of one's uppermost honor and respect, submission before God, can and should be expressed through corporate and individual worship activities such as prayer and praise. It should also be exhibited through the everyday accumulation and application of the opportunities God provides to increase wisdom and understanding. A spiritual leader will seek to know as much as possible about how to effectively execute his or her responsibility as a manager and mentor every day.

From a human perspective, Rebore (2014) notes that an educational and historical perspective is important:

> The administrator should know the purpose of education and the role that leadership plays in society. He or she should know and understand various ethical perspectives, including the value of having a diverse school community. The school administrator should know the history and philosophy of education.   (p. 4)

This is the first of three stated requirements necessary for an educational leader to act with ethics, fairness, and integrity.

The first determination that leaders must make when making decisions is who they are going to listen to, themselves or God; every spiritual leader must come to the conclusion that what they think is best, is greatly inferior to what God knows is best (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011). In other words, it is important for spiritual leaders to know the purpose of education and the role that leadership plays in society, and the value of having a diverse school community, but this wisdom must be guided by biblical principles. Wisdom and understanding in these areas of concern must be informed by the doctrines of a Christian perspective.

Deckard (2005a) states that "Christian leaders must search for wisdom, discernment, and insight [and] trust in the Lord [to supply it]" (slide 10), drawing on:

> If you seek her [wisdom] as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.   (Proverbs 2:4—6)

When it comes to wisdom and understanding, the spiritual leader has an additional infallible resource from which to draw. He or she must rely more on God's input and leading for insight and comprehension than simply the accumulation of human knowledge available.

Extending from possession of wisdom and knowledge, the lessons learned from early in Proverbs 2, verse 9 asserts how these attributes are operationalised, "Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path." According to Deckard (2005a), Christian leaders understand their ethical foundation for behaviour is built upon the Rock (God) and the Bible. Ascertaining the connection between wisdom and understanding and personal integrity and ethics from Deckard's (2005a) statement, an arrow directly connects these two character traits in Figure 1.

Personal Integrity and Ethics

As stated previously, personal integrity and ethics is the second branch of dependency from the foremost principle of submission (as shown in Figure 1). The reason spiritual leaders are able to understand the Lord and His Word are the sources of their ethics, as Deckard (2005a) relates, is because they have submitted their own will to that of God, accepting His expression in His Word.

For the educator and Christian, a specific aspect of personal integrity and ethics can be defined as demonstrating consistently a high standard of decision-making and personal performance in the classroom, and requiring the same from students. According to Snow (2010), the words of Proverbs 4:10–13 make it clear to Christian leaders that doing what is right is the most important aspect of ethical behaviour. Of all the attributes and principles elucidated here, personal integrity and ethics are the most difficult to develop and maintain. Rendering an ethical decision is much more dynamic and fluid than making a simple choice by following one's conscience and always choosing to do what is morally right. There are many circumstances, perspectives, and precedents one must take into account. Every situation has its own dimensions for which the spiritual leader must account.

Rendering an ethical decision is much more dynamic and fluid than making a simple choice by following one's conscience and always choosing to do what is morally right.

When it comes to ethical decision-making, Rebore (2014) advocates the deontological approach, which calls on the decision-maker to identify the problem, analyze the alternative solutions, compare them to norms, and then choose the solution that matches the highest norm. This method appears to be a logical approach to any ethical judgment, but a spiritual leader must look beyond human logic for guidance. In fact, according to Wofford (2012), Christian ethics is not deontological at all, but is, in fact, virtue ethics, and "one of the great theological errors—it is the error of Pharisaism to be exact—is to see either or both of them [New and Old Testament] as deontological" (para. 5). This position puts spiritually grounded ethical decisions at odds with those of secular origin.

The ethical challenge for the spiritual leader is also his or her advantage when making decisions because the spiritual leader has a firm foundation upon which to base decisions. God's will is the missing element in the secular decision-making process. Rather than basing one's decision-making primarily on human norms, the spiritual leader must follow the leading of the "Holy Spirit [who] reveals God's will through four primary avenues: prayer, Scripture, other believers, and circumstances" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 221).

Even so, some exemplary secular practices are based on Christian principles. According to Decker (2005b), fact-finding is pre-eminent before making a decision. He draws from Proverbs 18:15,17, "The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him." Secular and spiritual leaders alike will agree that diligence in getting all the facts is one of the most important factors in making the correct decision. The practice of diligence in personal integrity and ethics, added to the wisdom and understanding that only comes from submission to the will of God, will develop the final principle or character trait to be discussed in this discussion – that of focus and perseverance.

Focus and Perseverance

The final principle of focus and perseverance is placed in a reciprocal relationship with the two branches of wisdom and understanding and personal integrity and ethics (as shown by the double-headed arrows in Figure 1). Both of these prior principles are necessary to develop the final principle, however the final principle helps to continue development of the two pre-requisite principles. Focus and perseverance is connected to personal integrity and ethics through the concept of consistency in one's actions, which brings growth to the leader and his or her followers; it is connected to wisdom and understanding through learning to do things God's way.

None of the principles or character traits will ever be fully developed during one's lifetime and the possibility of improvement is a constant state of affairs. The Apostle Paul relates that fact from within his own life,

> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"
> (Philippians 3:12–14)

Being a spiritual leader means seeing the work to the end. "Leadership is hard work. There are no shortcuts … The reason there are not more great spiritual leaders today is because too few men and women are willing to pay the required price" (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p. 192). Hence, the importance of focus and perseverance in the life and actions of the aspiring spiritual leader.

Spiritual leaders are also in the business of developing new leaders. Practicing the principle of focus and perseverance sets the example for their followers. The Apostle Paul knew that he had not reached the goal Christ had for him, but he constantly moved toward it. In response to his constant improvement, he told the followers of Jesus to "Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Focus and perseverance by a leader sets the example for followers. The leader needs to be consistent. Even with his secular viewpoint, Rebore (2014) understands the need for consistency when explaining about the need for congruency in the life of a leader. "Congruency refers to having one's external expressions in harmony with one's internal disposition" (Rebore, 2014, p. 306). It is this final principle of focus and perseverance that spiritual leaders use to show their followers the source of true leadership and how to develop these same characteristics in their own lives.

Conclusion

The principle of submission to God stands as the primary principle necessary for development as a spiritual leader. As an educator, I serve God as a catalyst of learning and character development for His students. To properly and consistently serve at the pleasure of the Lord, submission to His direction, guidance, and commands is paramount.

In order to acquire the wisdom and

> *Leadership is hard work. There are no shortcuts ... The reason there are not more great spiritual leaders today is because too few men and women are willing to pay the required price*

understanding necessary for conducting one's self and directing the actions and motives of one's followers from a spiritual standpoint, the educator or any spiritual leader must yield to the will of God in everything. Proper application of personal integrity and ethics is dependent not only on God's wisdom and understanding but first and foremost (once again) on exchanging human ideas of integrity and ethics for God's; total submission is necessary. Focus and perseverance operates in a give-and-take relationship with the characteristics of wisdom and understanding and personal integrity and ethics. They are dependent upon one another for full maturity in the life of the spiritual leader. Total submission to God; growth in wisdom and understanding; consistent acts of morality, ethics, and integrity; and constant focus and perseverance through the challenges of leadership set the example for one's followers. **TEACH**

Total submission to God; growth in wisdom and under-standing; consistent acts of … integrity; and constant focus and perseverance through … leadership set the example for one's followers.

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TEACH[R]

Improving the writing skills of English learners: An impact on student learning analysis

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> *all humans are created in the likeness of Christ and deserve to receive linguistically and culturally appropriate differentiated instruction.*

Key words: assessment, improvement, English learners (ELs), writing instruction

Abstract

In this action research project, English Learners' (ELs) progress is monitored with a variety of formal and informal assessment methods through the Impact on Student Learning Analysis (ISLA). The purpose of this ISLA is to: a) determine the effect of instruction; b) use assessment methods to guide instruction; and c) communicate the results to multiple audiences. As evidence of this, lessons centered on writing conventions were implemented, with formal and informal writing assessments to guide future lessons. Writing quizzes were given every week to determine the effect of the instruction. As a result of this analysis, how these formal and informal assessments methods worked for these ELs, was deduced. By directly focusing on writing conventions, all ELs showed an increase in writing convention knowledge and overall writing skills.

Context

The purpose of this action research is to refine and improve classroom practice, as it relates to the academic development and achievement of the students, through implementing an Impact on Student Learning Analysis (ISLA) (Sagor, 2000). This ISLA takes place in a sixth-grade English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom at a Title I[1] middle school in metro Atlanta, Georgia. The majority of the student population at the school is Caucasian and middle class. However, the students in this particular class are from Mexico, speak Spanish as their first language, and vary in ages from 12 – 13. There are three males and three females in this class. This class is divided with their interests; while some like to read, others do not.

Another common thread in this class is their writing scores on the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test for English learners (ELs), which is Georgia's annual, federally-required language assessment for ELs, who actively receive English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. The ACCESS test measures English language development in the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and determines placement and exit from the ESOL program (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2011). All ELs participating in this ISLA scored at a high Level 2/ Level 3 (high beginner – low intermediate level), out of a Level 1 (low-level beginner) to Level 5 (high advanced) range (WIDA, 2011).

Since these students scored low on the writing section of the ACCESS test, this class period is centered on writing: practicing and mastering writing conventions. The Georgia Performance Standard used for this unit was ELA6C1 (See Table 1).

Theoretical Foundations

The teacher conducting this ISLA holds the strong belief that all students deserve the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability and that all humans are created in the likeness of Christ and deserve to receive linguistically and culturally appropriate differentiated instruction. Therefore, she has chosen to approach writing instruction from a sociocultural perspective, as it allows ELs to learn language through interaction, observation, and experiences, which are representative of real-world interactions and the first-language acquisition process (Vygotsky, 1978). Presenting language instruction and practice through more natural language acquisition methods, provides ELs with opportunities to practice English in a less stressful,

[1] Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, (n. d., para. 1)

Table 1: Georgia Performance Standard ELA6C1

The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats.

The student: …
c.) Identifies and writes simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, avoiding fragments and run-ons;
d.) Demonstrates appropriate comma and semicolon usage;
e.) Uses common spelling rules, applies common spelling patterns, and develops and masters words that are commonly misspelled;
f.) Produces final drafts that demonstrates accurate spelling and the correct use of punctuation and capitalization

(Georgia Department of Education, 2015)

less anxiety-inducing manner, which ultimately leads to more language acquisition (Krashen, 2003).

Due to the nature of this ISLA's pedagogical sociocultural foundation, instruction of writing concepts must be explicit, hands-on, engaging, and interesting for the students to increase motivation and scores (Cooper, 2014; Kember, Ho, & Hong, 2008). Such instruction provides the teacher with a means to build background and scaffold (or provided support for) correct usage of writing conventions and present writing in a manner that increases comprehensible input for the ELs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

Comprehensible input is imperative in ESOL classrooms, as the literature suggests that ELs learn best when they are presented content and language in a comprehensible manner, including strategies like visual representations, hands-on materials, modelling, or graphic organizers (Krashen, 2003). From there, ELs are able to comprehend the scaffolded content and language, input it into their brains, and ultimately build upon it, which results in increased language acquisition and literacy development (Krashen, 1988, 2003).

It should be noted that academic writing skills are more difficult for ELs to develop than communicative listening and speaking skills and often require more time for mastery (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2011). This could be due to the sociocultural aspects of language acquisition, in which the ELs learn more communicative language (and less academic language) from the environment and cultural influences (Daniels, 2008).

Implementation

There is a large quantity of literature that highlights the benefits of differentiated instruction for ELs (Adesope et al., 2011). Research-based differentiation for ELs is supported with empirical evidence, but definitions vary for "*what* differentiated instruction actually looks like and *how* teachers can integrate it into their routines and procedures" (Baecher, Artigliere, Patterson, & Spatzer, 2012, p. 14). Because of this, a more concise definition of differentiation was developed and states that differentiated instruction is "generally tailored to specific subgroups of students rather than the whole class and involved the teacher in creating variations of the main activities of the lesson" (Baecher et al., 2012, p. 16).

The Pearson SIOP instructional model, which is followed by the teacher implementing this action research, explicitly includes language and linguistics in the methods of differentiation and presents language and content simultaneously (Echevarria et al., 2004). Because this ESOL small-group class consists only of sixth-grade ELs, this class tailors specific, language- and culture-based differentiated pedagogy to meet the needs of this 6th grade ESOL subgroup, adhering to the aforementioned definition of differentiated instruction. Therefore, all implemented strategies in the ISLA are differentiated and designed to meet the specific academic and language needs of the ELs.

At the onset of this six-week unit, the ESOL class only had access to laptop computers once a week, which was as often as the teacher could reserve them due to school policies. (Neither iPads nor ActivBoards/Smart Boards were available at the time of the ISLA.) Therefore, the overhead projector was frequently used (which the students enjoyed), as were handouts of proofreading symbols, practice writing samples, and a writing folder that the teacher assembled. This folder contained definitions, examples, and practice pages for each area of the writing conventions (i.e. capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and organization) and is where the students kept all writing assessments, including the pre- and post-tests. These resources allowed for modelling, explicit instruction, and addressing their prior knowledge of the writing process, which aid ELs in comprehending writing and new language (Echevarria, et al., 2004; Palmer, Shackelford, Miller, & Leclere, 2007; Townsend, 2009; Watkins & Lindahl, 2010).

Fortunately, during the third week of this unit, the ESOL department received an LCD projector, which completely redesigned the instruction in this class. Now, the teacher could use interactive writing and grammar websites filled with games

academic writing skills are more difficult for ELs to develop than communicative listening and speaking skills and often require more time for mastery

and activities for the students to participate in as a whole group. The ELs had a renewed excitement for this unit, as interactive websites became visual representations of the content as well as class competitions (Townsend, 2009). Whole-group and small-group games focused on writing conventions, and they allowed ELs the opportunity to work within the zone of proximal development where they were able to acquire more vocabulary and more complex language structures (Vygotsky, 1978). On days when the laptops were used in class, the students would continue to visit these websites to independently play the grammar "games". Little did they realize, they were improving their writing skills.

All were engaged during the lessons because they were able to manipulate the screen using the keyboard connected to the LCD projector. For other exercises, ELs were able to interact with the projector by writing on the board or having races of who can find the correct writing conventions the fastest. The lessons and methods were fun, engaging, and used innovative technology (Park & Kim, 2011).

Research Design
Conducting an ISLA as action research provides teachers the opportunity to implement instructional investigation in the classroom, analyze the findings, and reflect on the effectiveness of the instruction. In educational research, quasi-experimental research designs, like the ISLA, are most commonly used, as there is neither a control group for comparison nor control of other variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Quasi-experimental research designs employ naturally occurring groups that are already in existence and do not employ random assignment of participants to groups (Campell & Stanley, 1963; Gall et al., 2007). This type of experiment is less disruptive and more convenient for the teacher, and the quasi-experimental design was developed to "explore causality in situations where one cannot use a true experiment" (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2013).

Research Procedures
Throughout the nine-week unit on writing conventions, informal and formal assessments were conducted regularly. Students began the unit with a pre-test, which consisted of writing a paragraph on the topic of their choice. Using the one-group pre-test - post-test design allowed the teacher to determine the effectiveness of the writing intervention in a systematic manner (Rovai et al., 2013).

After analysing the pre-test, the teacher found the greatest areas of weakness were:

> *By allowing ELs to employ their background knowledge of the writing topic, they were able to produce more quality content, as they already knew applicable vocabulary and phrases*

spelling, punctuation, capitalization, organization, paragraphing, and overall writing conventions. As a means of informally measuring progress, students would have weekly informal writing assessments, during which they would write one paragraph. Their writing would be collaboratively proofread and edited by themselves and the teacher, where they worked within the zone of proximal development to increase their writing knowledge through explicit, individualized instruction and linguistically-appropriate scaffolding (Adesope et al., 2011; Barr, Eslami, & Joshi, 2012; Olson & Land, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Also, various proofreading activities and informal assessments, such as: whole group proofreading examples on the board, guided practice in flexible groupings, and again, explicit instruction of how to proofread and edit writing samples correctly, were modelled and practiced in order to introduce the students to the idea of reading through their work with the intent of correcting it (Olson & Land, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

Formal assessments, in the form of writing "quizzes", were given once a week to monitor the students' progress. All quizzes were graded with the same rubric, which focused on spelling, punctuation, capitalization, organization, and paragraphing. Writing topics were geared toward the backgrounds of the students, as they were provided an open-ended prompt and allowed to write a paragraph addressing the prompt while using their background knowledge on the topic. By allowing ELs to employ their background knowledge of the writing topic, they were able to produce more quality content, as they already knew applicable vocabulary and phrases (Echevarria et al., 2014; Ogle & Correa-Kovtun, 2010; Pacheco, 2010). By using the same rubric, students knew assessment expectations and were able to self-monitor their success, or lack there of. After nine weeks, the post-test was given. The format was the same as the pre-test, and students wrote on a topic of their choice, which again allowed them to address their prior knowledge and vocabulary (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Assessments
Both informal and formal assessments were employed throughout this ISLA. Informal assessments were embedded throughout each lesson and consisted of group discussions, whole group activities using the LCD projector, group proofreading activities, individual work with the teacher, observations, and self-assessments. Their purpose was to provide the teacher with on-going data and the students with on-going feedback on their mastery of writing conventions, so that teaching and learning could be adjusted and improved when

needed (Sleeter, 2005). Each informal assessment was designed to measure the ELs' writing skills progress and construct meaning by building bridges between their prior knowledge and writing experiences and new writing content (Colombo & Furbush, 2009; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). With these informal assessments, all language domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking were addressed, which allowed ELs to better internalize writing conventions and the writing process as they talked about writing, read passages that addressed and modelled writing, and listened to the teacher and peers discuss how to improve writing.

The formal assessments used were different from a generic multiple-choice test because this unit focused on writing. For the pre-test, students created a writing sample (a paragraph in length) on the topic of their choice. By allowing them to select their own topic for writing, which would ultimately connect to their prior knowledge, they would be more likely to use vocabulary and grammar structures that were more familiar to them and appropriate to the content (Palmer, Shackelford, Miller, & Leclere, 2007). The post-test was conducted in the same way, but was directed to be longer in length. Like the pre-test, the post-test was allowed to be a topic of the students' choice as well. Both assessments were graded using the same rubric, which provided consistency, reliability, and alignment.

Because the formal assessments provide for a more authentic assessment, as they are representative of natural written communication, the teacher was able to appropriately and purposefully assess each EL at his or her respective language level. Such assessments are appropriate and needed for ELs, as the assessment allows the teacher to create a culturally responsive writing prompt that connects to ELs' experiences and background knowledge, allows for comprehensible input provided by the teacher, and permits the ELs to provide differentiated output (i.e. their written responses) at their current academic and language level (Howard, 2014; Parkay, Hass, & Anctil, 2010).

Grading Rubric
The rubric focused on six criteria: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, organization, and paragraphing. The range of performance for each category was measured in points. For no errors, the students received ten points, for one to two errors, the students received seven points, and for three to four errors, students received five points. If there were five to six errors in the category, students received two points in that specific category, and no points if there were seven or more errors. The students were able to receive up to ten points for

each category, giving them a total of 50 points, totalling 50 points out of 50 points, equalling a grade of 100%. If all ten points were not received in each category, the amount of received points was divided by 50 (the total number of possible points). Therefore, the grade was a decimalized percentage of points.

The purpose of this discrete rubric (Appendix A, p. 21) was to assess the students' improvement, or lack there of, in writing conventions. It was differentiated based on the language proficiency levels of the ELs and what they are capable of writing at their respective levels (WIDA, 2012). The assessments linked directly to the standard used, and specifically addressed the problem areas of the students. The lessons and rubric were created after the pre-test was given in order to deduce which writing conventions needed to be included. Students were able to use any standard accommodations that were marked for them on their official accommodation forms, such as extended time, paraphrase directions, or using a word-to-word dictionary.

If the wording was out of order or impeded comprehension, this was addressed and included in the organization category of their rubric. Because organization was studied and assessed informally throughout the unit, the class practiced how to create organization through topic sentences and creating coherent flow of content throughout the paragraph with chronological order words, transition words, or how to provide support for topic sentences. This was another reason why students were allowed to write about topics with which they were familiar – they were able to more accurately discuss these topics in a coherent manner (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Results
Table 1 is a whole class summary of the results. It is shown that all students had at least a ten-point increase from their pre-test to their post-test. Student 5 led the class with a 78% increase or improvement from the pre-test to post-test. The least growth was achieved by Student 4, attaining a 19% improvement. On average, the class experienced a 39% increase in their scores. Each student was extremely proud of the growth from pre-test score to post-test score.

Analysing and Reporting Data
Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the whole group performance on the pre-test and post-test as compared to the tabulation (Table 1). All students had at least a ten-point increase from their pre-test to post-test. Only Student 6 scored perfectly on the post-test, though Student 5 showed the

all students had at least a ten-point increase from their pre-test to their post-test. Student 5 led the class with a 78% increase or improvement

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Data

Student	Gender	Pre-test	Post-test	% Increase
1	F	66	90	36%
2	F	64	78	22%
3	M	44	64	45%
4	M	52	62	19%
5	F	46	82	78%
6	M	74	100	35%

Figure 1: Whole Group Data

Figure 2: Subgroup Data – Female Students
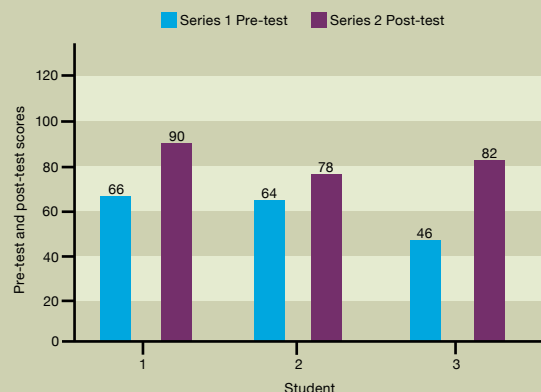
Figure 3: Subgroup Data – Male Students

> *female students had higher pre-test and post-test scores. The female students also had more improvement between the two scores.*

greatest increase in score.

The class was divided into the two subgroups of male and female (See Figure 2 and Figure 3). Because all students are Hispanic, speak Spanish as their first language, are in the same grade, have the same socioeconomic status, and have extremely similar language proficiency levels, the students were grouped by gender, and it proved to be the category of greatest difference. After analysing the two graphs (Figure 2 and Figure 3), it is evident that the female students had higher pre-test and post-test scores. The female students also had more improvement between the two scores. This could be due to a greater interest in writing. Over the course of the unit, the females became extremely interested in writing, and they excitedly worked to create long, elaborate stories. This could be due to sincere interest in writing or to the fact that they enjoyed the praise and compliments that came with improved writing scores.

The male students, however, showed less interest in writing and were more prone to talk or create short, simple writing samples that required minimal effort. Even though they were able to select topics of their choice to write on, the majority of the male students have a low proficiency level in writing, making it more difficult for them to complete their task competently. From previous experiences with these male students, they showed less interest in completing tasks or working to improve something (writing or otherwise) when it is difficult for them to do.

Comparing two students

The two individual students in Figure 4 represent different levels of performance. Student 1 is a male student, and Student 2 is a female student. Student 1 does have a slightly higher proficiency level in the domain of writing. Therefore, his extensive growth and improvement in writing was expected and the final score of 100% commendable.

Student 2 is at a lower level in writing, and

Figure 4: Two individual students
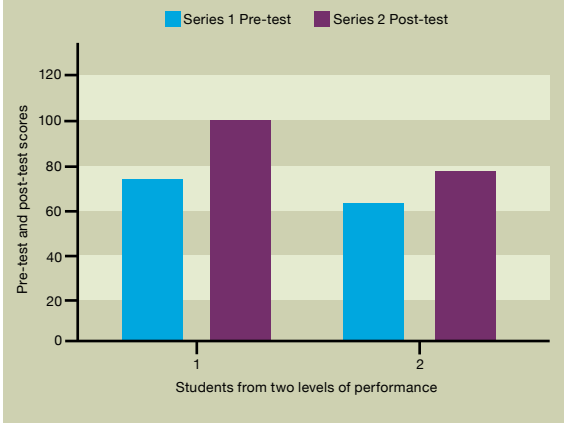
occasionally shows signs of language transference problems between her first language of Spanish(L1) and her second language of English (L2). Also, she exhibits letter and phoneme confusion and consistently has a great deal of difficulty with spelling, despite the content or familiarity with the words. However, Student 2 did show a great deal of improvement because, over the course of this action research study, she became more aware of the writing and spelling errors she would typically make and grew to be more knowledgeable about how to correct them.

Reflecting on the Data

After analysing the data, it can be determined that this unit was successful in improving the students' writing abilities through explicit, engaging, and collaborative instruction. Because this unit focused on capitalization, paragraphing, punctuation, spelling, and organization, each student improved in each of these areas, and increased their post-test scores. As a teacher, though, there are always some improvements in practice for future implementation, especially since SMARTboards, ActivBoards, and computer resources are now more available.

While the students were able to easily grasp the concept of indenting a paragraph or when to capitalize words, one area that needs more emphasis is spelling. Students were able to use dictionaries, ask peers, ask teachers, and keep a list of their "problem" words, which did prove useful as students soon were able to memorize these words simply due to repeated exposure.

Along with this unit, a separate unit on spelling, including definitions, and how to utilize these new words into the writing samples should be taught. Having spelling tests or vocabulary quizzes (and

to encourage them to study the words) would be beneficial as well. The learning and achievement gaps within this class could possibly be decreased with this emphasis on spelling and vocabulary. However, the vocabulary would need to be differentiated by student to meet the needs of all ELs in the class and to challenge them individually.

The learning objective in which the students were most successful was the improvement in punctuation and paragraphing. They already had a strong grasp on capitalization and organizing their thoughts. However, separate assessments on organization could be performed, and rubrics could specify how the paper should be organized. Also, the teacher should include lessons on verb tense when this unit is taught again. This could be listed under organization on the rubric, or perhaps another category needs to be created on the rubric so that expectations are clear.

The instruction was hands-on and visual. The class often used the LCD projector to work together to proofread writing samples (either teacher-created, student samples, or found online) or to play grammar, spelling, punctuation, or other forms of writing games as a class. Students also worked with partners, in small groups, and individually when it came to editing and organizing writing samples. The students spent a great deal of time on their own writings, and would work with the teacher individually to proofread and correct. As a whole group, volunteers would correct errors in paragraphs written on the overhead. Students were extremely engaged in each of these informal assessments embedded throughout the unit because they were able to get up and move around. More excitement and engagement from the students during each lesson correlated to higher writing scores on each week's formal writing assessment.

Conclusion

As a result of this action research, the teacher deduced that the instructional strategies and informal assessments directly led to higher formal assessment scores, as measured by the post-test and its rubric. Throughout the course of the nine-weeks, all ELs received comprehensible input, scaffolding, appropriately-differentiated pedagogy, and interactive, engaging, and explicit instruction in a variety of flexible groupings that reflected real-world writing skills and communication (Echevarria et al., 2004; Krashen, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). These methods allowed students to not only work at their current academic and language level, but to build upon that level and improve their writing convention skills.

While the female student group performed

Along with this unit, a separate unit on spelling, including definitions, and how to utilize these new words into the writing samples should be taught.

> *As a teacher, taking the time to implement action research has been an invaluable experience.*

at a higher level than the male student group, all students showed an improvement in their writing. As a teacher, taking the time to implement action research has been an invaluable experience. Reflecting on the data provided the teacher with the opportunity to conclude that explicit and engaging instructional practices were effective, particularly if the writing assessments (both formal and informal) were appropriately differentiated for students' language proficiency levels (Alber, 2017). With this information, the teacher can clearly and confidently construct the next writing objectives for these students. TEACH

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Appendix A

Conventions : Writing Conventions Folder

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	10 Points	7 Points	5 Points	10 Points	0
Capitalization	There are no capitalization errors.	There are 1 -2 capitalization errors.	There are 3-4 capitalization errors.	There are 5 - 6 capitalization errors.	There are seven or MORE capitalization errors.
Punctuation	There are no punctuation errors.	There are 1-2 punctuation errors.	There are 3-4 punctuation errors.	There are 5-6 punctuation errors.	There are seven or MORE punctuation errors.
Spelling	There are no spelling errors.	There are 1-2 spelling errors.	There are 3-4 spelling errors.	There are 5-6 spelling errors.	There are seven or MORE spelling errors.
Organization	There are no word order mistakes. The ideas are clear.	There are 1-2 word order mistakes. The ideas are clear, but there is some difficulty understanding what is being said.	There are 3-4 word order mistakes. Some ideas are clear, while others are difficult to understand.	There are 5-6 word order mistakes. The ideas are not clear and are confusing.	There are seven or MORE word order mistakes. The ideas do not make any sense and can not understand.
Paragraphing	All paragraphs are indented. Paragraphs are divided appropriately.	Most paragraphs are indented. Few paragraphs should be divided.	Some paragraphs are indented. Most paragraphs should be divided again.	Few paragraphs are indented. Paragraphs should be divided again.	No paragraphs are indented. There are no separate paragraphs.

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TRANSFORMING CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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A journey into the amazing world of seeds

"How can seed pods encourage a sense of awe and wonder in young learners?"

As a teacher within the room for 4 – 5 year olds at Avondale Early Learning Centre I am continually looking for a spark of interest within the children to foster their sense of awe and wonder, and a consequent choice to learn.

This journey began during a game of memory with natural objects. "What is this?" the children inquired, indicating a brown spiky object. I explained it was a seed pod. "But what is a seed pod?" Xavier queried. This simple question began a child-initiated journey of discovery that spanned a term. The children's investigation throughout the week led to an accumulative sharing at group time on Monday afternoons as they revisited and reflected on their weekly findings. Excitement, expressed as "What are

these wonderful things?" both prompted and enabled their natural curiosity and inquisitive natures into a quest for knowledge.

Utilising children's learning dispositions to explore and discover, I empowered them to determine the learning path that was applicable to their personal needs. By creating opportunities for the children to interact with technology, nature, peers and myself to research, gather, explore, draw and wonder at the diversity of the seed pods they encountered, each gained unique, yet shared learning. Following a project approach scaffolded the children's learning beyond their Zone of Proximal Development to interact, question, problem solve, communicate, reflect, and more as they marvelled at these wonderful objects found in God's glorious world.

Through the reflection and discussion with the children the seed pod collection grew beyond the Avondale Early Learning Centre to the children's homes and extended families, as children and educators formed collaborative partnerships finding and sharing contributions from many different environments.

The seed pod journey inspired many hypotheses regarding what the children could see, feel, hear, and their understanding of what they knew. The assistance of the other educators within the room created the opportunity for me to focus my attention on providing myself as a tool to enable the children time and opportunity to direct their means and style of learning. This included sharing their ideas to clarify their thinking, providing open-

> *Utilising children's learning dispositions to explore and discover, I empowered them to determine the learning path that was applicable to their personal needs.*

Figure 1. April and Hannah sharing Hannah's discovery with the class.

Figure 2. "Why are seed pods spiky?"

Figure 3. "What is this seed pod?" Charles April 14

ended questions such as, "What characteristics do you see?" and most importantly listening to discover what they required, wanted to know and had discovered.

Through the facilitation of their interest the children collaborated on future directions for learning. On a nature walk the children discovered a Liquidambar seed pod and asked "Why are seed pods spikey?" This provided the opportunity to resolve the answer through open-ended questioning; they have spikes on the outside to protect the seeds.

Presenting a seed pod from home, Charles raised the question, "What is this seed pod?" and requested the laptop to further his research. Provided support, Charles searched images, then followed links to reveal, "This is a Hakea seed pod".

Comparing Marigold flowers to similar ones Tayla had planted at home prompted her question, "Do these seeds come from a plant or tree?" This required hypothesising, observing and comparing the features of seeds. After sharing knowledge through discussion, Tayla determined they came from a plant similar to the ones found in her garden, as opposed to a large tree which has seed pods.

Jennifer's interest pursued, "How does a seed pod get from green to brown?" This was a reflection on the Lotus seed pods she had at home. Bringing in green seed pods, which her mother had retrieved from the dam with a canoe enabled Jennifer to develop her scientific skills as she observed the changes occurring and discussed these over the coming weeks. This partnership with Jennifer's family also provided opportunity for the children to see, smell, feel and taste the fresh Lotus seed pod. This journey lasted longer as at Jennifer engaged with technology and investigated the Lotus seed pod at various stages drawing the conclusion, "When they lose moisture the seed pod turns brown". She visualised this concept through her artwork.

My personal philosophy reflects that a Christian worldview in the early childhood setting is reflected within everything we encounter, value and share with the children. It is not a separate entity taught, but rather an acceptance and understanding that is shared daily with the children - that God cares for everyone, surrounds all of us, is seen everywhere and this is evident in the wonderful environment He created.

The acceptance of a Master designer is concluded beautifully by Tayla; "In the Bible when God made the world He gave us trees and seed pods on the trees, so that we could always forever and ever have His trees in our world. Seed pods are special".

Psalm 89:11 "The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all it contains, You have founded them". **TEACH**

> *God cares for everyone, surrounds all of us, is seen everywhere and this is evident in the wonderful environment He created.*

Figure 4. "How does a lotus seed get from green to brown?" Jennifer April 29

Values-virtues leadership & the Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Towards a distinctive touchstone for principals in Christian faith-based schools

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TEACH[R]

> *a public statement setting out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work*

Key words: Values, virtues, leadership, Australian Professional Standard for Principals, moral principles, service, Christian faith-based schools

Abstract

The article challenges school leaders in Christian faith-based (CFB) schools to live Jesus' kingdom values and virtues in their daily professional working and personal lives. To further this, the writer proposes an ethics, moral and spiritual purpose lens to 'refract' distinctive leadership profiles — *complementary* to the published Australian Professional Standard for Principals (APSP) — to encourage principals to engage in reflection and renewal, and bridge the gap between leadership rhetoric and practice.

Introduction and background

Two seminal documents developed by The Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning (AITSL) have delineated clear criteria for practising educators in Australian schools: the Australian Professional Standard for Principals[1], following in the wake of its earlier counterpart for teachers.

What is the APSP essentially about? A précis might best describe it as, "a public statement setting out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work"[2] and in their leadership role, to guide, "develop and support teaching that maximises impact on student learning."[3] In the presented AITSL model (see Figure 1, next page), principals are called upon to view their role through three leadership lenses: a) Leadership requirements; b) Professional practices; and c) Leadership emphasis[4] — each linked to its related focuses.

The outcome of using this 'frame of reference' is a set of detailed leadership behaviour, actions and descriptors, providing a comprehensive framework known as *Leadership Profiles*, with ascending levels of proficiency for a) and b) above, but not for c). Requirements and practices of the model are always situated in context and conceived as being "fully interdependent, integrated and with no hierarchy implied."[5] Perhaps, of particular interest, is the explanation:

> The Standard [APSP] is applicable to principals irrespective of context or experience. What will vary is the emphasis given to particular elements of the standard as principals respond to context, expertise and career stage.[6]

Noticeably, principals' work as set out by the APSP is characterised by a complexity that lies in the depth and breadth of tasks set in diverse social, economic, bureaucratic, financial, and political contexts, as part of the quintessential assignment of leading students' education. Also, it is evident that AITSL's APSP views schools implicitly as socio-technical organisations that conform to a social systems model, i.e. schools' mutually interacting and interwoven parts are in continual, dynamic interaction with their external environments, all of which impacts leadership practice in achieving schools' goals.

Historically, a draft of the APSP was initially piloted and subsequently endorsed for implementation by Ministers at the Standing Council of Education and Early Childhood. The present APSP (also referred to as *The Standard* in AITSL's twenty-nine page document) is intended for use in *all* Australian schools and education systems. This raises important questions for principals in Christian faith-based

schools: *Are these mandated APSP leadership requirements and professional practices, in addition to a 'veneer of religiosity', all that there is to being a quality educational leader; or is there more?* Moreover, what kind of narrative should shape leadership in CFB schools? — learning communities that have a Christian *spiritual* dimension.

In seeking to address the above posed questions, the article examines first the relevance and significance of values and virtues in leadership literature, initially from a secular perspective and then from a Christian viewpoint. This is the precursor to proposing a complementary modification to the existing AITSL model — to include an additional (fourth) lens — and thus, hopefully, offer enriched, transforming and more meaningful Leadership Profiles to principals in CFB schools. Ensuing profiles furnish insights about the relational side of educational leadership that give rise to a different narrative for leaders in CFB schools; before a general conclusion is presented.

A secular perspective

A scanning of current literature shows that the study of leadership is generally characterised by ambiguity, complexity and change (perhaps the 2016 US presidential election and its result being an interesting case in point). Contributing to this perplexity is the plethora of leadership styles and models that

exist. For instance, UCLA adjunct professor Murray Johannsen lists twenty,[7] even which, by no means constitutes the full extent!

AITSL — probably wisely — neither endorses nor mentions a particular leadership style or model for educators. It leaves role incumbents free to choose and adapt, *inter alia*, to suit personal characteristics, circumstances, contexts and cultures; instead, focusing on specific, expected actions and behaviours.

In the category of vision and values (a subset of the AITSL leadership requirements), The Standard is noticeably (and perhaps understandably) not extensive. Why? First, The Standard's intentional primary focus is on the quality of learning. Second, 'the elephant in the room' is the prickly question of values — the principles, beliefs, convictions and standards that consistently guide personal behaviour — but more specifically, which values and whose? Alain de Botton, philosopher and author observes:

> We are the inheritors of an idea, endorsed by both the right and left wings of the political spectrum, that the most fundamental reality of nations is their financial state ….[8]

Accordingly, it appears that education in many countries has increasingly become part of a pragmatic, economic efficiency paradigm.

In this context, The Standard for principals,

> *'the elephant in the room' is the prickly question of values … but more specifically, which values and whose?*

Figure 1: Modelling of Australian Professional Standard for Principals (APSP) - lenses and focuses
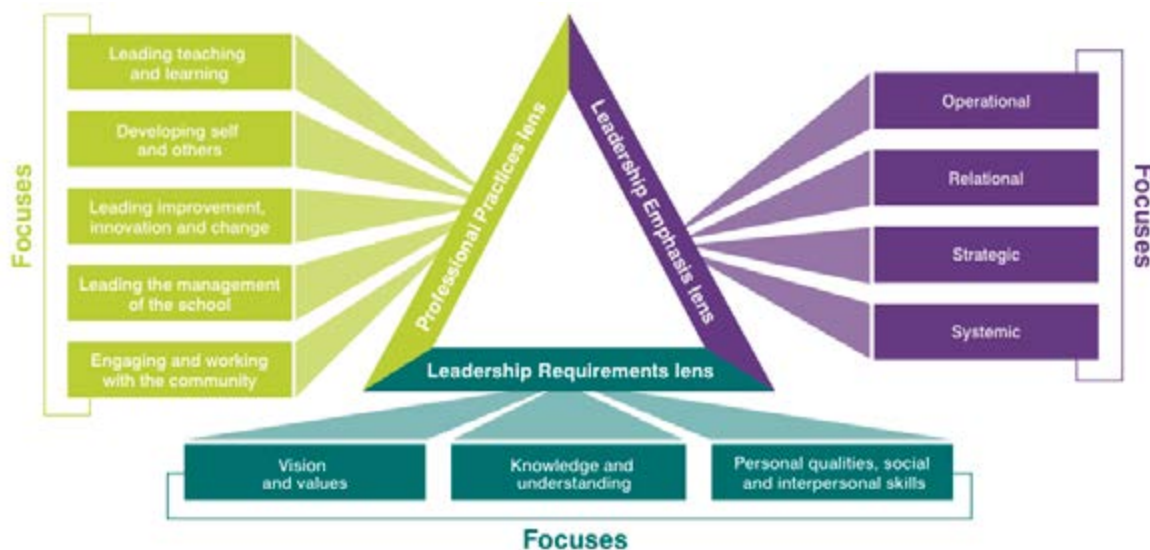
The leadership lenses, Professional Practices, Leadership Requirements and Leadership Emphasis, and the focuses linked to each lens

with the Leadership Profiles in particular, may be perceived as 'performance genre'.[9] Its language is one of competence, technical knowledge, skills and tasks together with audit requirements — much in the manner of the preceding APST document, standards for *teachers*. John Sullivan incisively comments on such language contexts:

> The use of technical or instrumental language assumes that *ends or ultimate purposes and values are either already agreed upon and can be taken for granted or that they cannot be agreed upon and are best left out* [emphasis added].[10]

The Standard for principals appears to straddle both of Sullivan's categories; although one could point to the nine values listed on the widely circulated poster, *Values for Australian schooling*.[11] But are these suggested values intended and/or sufficient for educational leaders? Furthermore, the diverse nature of multi-cultural societies (such as Australia) heightens the challenge to achieve a wide range of agreed, shared values; notably, to include those values that are perceived as moral or spiritual ones. Even acclaimed Canadian educational researcher and author Michael Fullan in his, *The moral imperative of school leadership* (2003)[12] and *Indelible leadership* (2016),[13] deals only with generalities. Fullan points to principals' need for a moral compass and exhorts them to consider and reflect on the purpose of life, work and being. For him, *moral imperative* is about commitment, identity and passion; he interprets *character* simply as *citizenship*. But beyond that, no further exhortation is presented, inevitably because of the wide variance in, or absence of clearly articulated agreed moral values in many western democracies.

Values are important. Especially is this the case when (not) espoused and acted upon by *leaders* — whether at a global, national or local level. The evidence provided at the hearings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuses (that included Christian education institutions) and separately, the reported cases of corruption and criminal behaviour in some state government education jurisdictions indicate, regrettably, the lack of integrity and 'moral fibre' by *some* leaders across the educational spectrum in Australia, and the need for, what noted psychologists Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman term "character strengths and virtues."[14]

Extreme failures in leadership behaviour highlight the importance of moral purpose and the significance of values and virtues. Similarly, but contrastingly, noble and inspiring leadership underscores and embodies them. Thus, one might readily conclude that society and perhaps the world at large, is 'suffering' not so much from a lack of knowledge and expertise, but experiencing a crisis of moral purpose.

Jean McNiff, international educator and action research exponent, expresses a widely held view in asserting: "… values are the beliefs and principles we live and explain how the living of those values turns us into virtuous practitioners."[15] Ethicist Arthur Holmes contends that a virtuous nature covers not only one's conduct; it also includes motives, intentions and underlying dispositions — inner states that are not merely cognitive but also affective.[16]

Among other voices that underscore the importance of values in the workplace[17], Shari Baig argues: "*Both competency and character are emerging as an indispensible set of critical necessities of contemporary educators*" (emphasis added).[18]

When intentionally lived out, positive values (*vis a vis* vices) no longer remain abstractions and, when habitually embodied in an individual, they develop into virtues. These constitute *arête*, the moral excellence esteemed by classical Greek philosophers; the very essence of the notion of *character*; not to be confused with *personality*, however. The *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* puts it as follows:

> On the assumption that what kind of person one is, is constituted by one's character, the link between moral character and virtue is clear. We can think of one's moral character as primarily a function of whether she has or lacks various moral virtues or vices.[19]

Shlomo Back, former president of Beersheba's Kaye Academic College of Education, in Israel, also argues for the *embodiment* of morality. Referring to Aristotelian conceptions of life that is meaningful, is good, has purpose and leads to wellbeing, puts educational leaders on notice:

> Educators have no option but to offer a personal example to their pupils who learn from their *behaviour* more than they learn from their words (emphasis added).[20]

It has been argued thus far that in a socio-economic culture (such as Australia's) steeped in *techne* — of technical competence and know-how — there is a critical need of *sophia* or *phronesis*; a need of wisdom that embraces values and virtues. It follows that the case for a fourth lens (an ethics, moral and spiritual purpose lens, additional to the AITSL model) which allows principals to view their decisions, actions, practices and behaviours, appears to be a valid and reasonable one. However, the question remains: Which values and whose?

For CFB schools, this does not represent a contested issue, but is worthy of closer examination.

> *the world at large, is 'suffering' not so much from a lack of knowledge and expertise, but experiencing a crisis of moral purpose.*

A Christian viewpoint

Moral excellence is significant in the teachings of all major world religions. For Christians, virtues are those moral principles that are in harmony with biblical teachings and are best exemplified in the life and teachings of Jesus — someone who always 'walked the talk' — for whom proclamation was synonymous with incarnation and whose life was integrated and not compartmentalised. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matth. 5:3—7:27) Jesus clearly articulates the values and virtues he wants his listeners and followers to embrace and *practise*, a point not lost by New Testament gospel and epistle writers enjoining believers to being doers and not hearers of the word only (Matth. 7:24, Luke 6:47, James 1:22, 23).

Practising lawyer and legal philosopher Iain Benson,[21] divides virtues into two major groups: natural and supernatural — those that are *perceived* by reason and those *received* by revelation, i.e. through the power of the Holy Spirit. By way of illustration, Benson[22] refers to Aristotle who, in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, names practical wisdom, self-control, courage and justice as four cardinal virtues (among other virtues). These are regarded as belonging to the first group, whereas the apostle Paul's admonition to the church at Corinth (1Cor 13), counselling his audience to practice faith, hope and above all charity (love) — later expanded in his letter to the church in Galatia (Gal. 5:22, 23) — belong to the second group, and are often referred to as the Fruit of the Spirit.

Benson also differentiates between values and virtues.[23] He claims, in post-modern society values have not only become relativised (a matter of personal preference), everyone has their own, with an origin in self, but they also have been trivialised. Trivialisation may vary from valuing a beautiful car, or the skill of playing Pokémon, to telling clever jokes. Hence, Benson counsels alertness to the possibility that values language-use in the domain of moral principles (*vis a vis* art, economics or music, for instance) can open the door to confusion. He argues:

> … all of what used to be called virtues, are treated as values, makes no distinction between justice and the colour of a T-shirt … Values language is an obscuring language for morality used when the idea of purpose has been destroyed.[24]

Clearly, values language is not necessarily moral language and does not have to refer to something that is true. Virtues, in contrast, make a claim for objective truth,[25] a category that is central to the Gospel and supported by Jesus' declaration: "… you will know the truth, and it will make you free" (John 8:32, NLT) — truth that will liberate people from being enslaved to sin and lead to freedom from falsehoods and vices.

Evidently then, it will be necessary for principals to "make sense of non-sense values that inhabit the cultural landscape."[26]

How should we regard values then? It is proposed that values being espoused by CBF schools' leadership in essence are kingdom values — i.e. they should fit into a biblical framework; harmonise with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount; and lead to shared purposes for human life and the particular community in which principals serve. Principals should also ensure that 'values' that are actually preferences — whether their own or those of others — do not pose as moral principles.

In their 2014 Australian research study of leadership in three faith-based schools, Striepe, Clarke and O'Donoghue report that participating principals' values had a distinctly religious dimension. Principals stated that their "personal faith or spirituality was continually connected to their perspectives on leadership"[27] substantiating claims in the wider literature[28] that faith can transform the meaning of values "beyond how they are generally understood within society."[29] The authors of the 2014 study dwell on the desirability for all leaders in faith-based schools to take time to identify their values and how these should inform and impact what they do. How then does one move from rhetoric to reality?

To live out virtues and noble values surely is a formidable challenge for CFB school principals. It is entirely a faith endeavour. For Christians, virtues are not self-generated, but grace-imbued (John 15:4). As also has been pointed out:

> The Holy Spirit gently works on people's hearts and minds. …By reproducing Christ's character in us, He thus brings to life Christlike virtues in our lives [if we choose to follow his prompting and leading].[30]

This kind of values-virtues leadership ministry is grounded in service and stewardship. If its practice appears naive and unrealistic in the *milieu* of everyday school life, then leaders may take heart from the testimony of the apostle Paul who claimed the promise: "My grace is enough for you. For where there is weakness, my power is shown more completely" (2Cor 12:9, J.B. Phillips Translation).

Despite the perceived challenges, interestingly, there is also some encouraging research evidence from the Christian schools sector:

> "… the gaining of status, power and financial benefit had very little influence on [questionnaire respondents'] decision to apply for school leadership positions … [rather] … being able to implement positive change, improve educational processes, and make a difference in the lives of students, were what prompted them [aspirants] to apply for leadership positions.[31]

Evidently then, it will be necessary for principals "to make sense of nonsense values that inhabit the landscape"

Having examined relevant literature from a Christian perspective, one can conclude again that there is a case for a fourth lens — an ethics, moral and spiritual purpose one — through which principals might view their practice. This idea is likely to resonate strongly with the client communities of CFB schools.

The fourth lens
A point of departure
Figure 2 shows an adaptation of AITSL's Australian Professional Standard for Principals model (depicted by Figure 1). The component parts of AITSL's model lead to sets of descriptors – Leadership Profiles — that delineate expected professional practice and specific actions by principals. The adaptation, represented by Figure 2 retains all of the categories and components of the original AITSL model; however it exhibits an *additional* fourth lens. If one were to use a photography analogy, it is intended to provide principals with a fast, wide prime lens i.e. with a focal length that gives a wide-angle perspective and an aperture that captures maximum light.

> *there is a case for a fourth lens — an ethics, moral and spiritual purpose one — through which principals might view their practice.*

The posited fourth lens, in harmony with the AITSL model, also leads to a set of Leadership Profiles, as displayed in Tables 1a and 1b (See pages 29-31), which show a congruence between values and clear, specific actions. The Leadership Profiles for principals connect with the Lead career stage of the Teacher Ministry Standards 8, 9 and 10 for focus areas 8.1 to 10.6, as delineated in *TEACH Journal of Christian Education 5*(2), 8-14. In a sense, the profiles represent a Weberian *ideal type*, which does not refer to perfect things, morals or ideals that are mandated, but incorporates the common elements of the many phenomena of desirable moral and ethical leadership in CFB schools.

The proposed adaptation does not claim to be or constitute a values-virtues model of leadership. Rather, the approach taken to leadership is an eclectic one, augmenting the AITSL model and underlining the critical importance that values and virtues play in effective, ethical educational leadership.

Also, a perusal of The Standard suggests that axiology is not one of its numerous strengths, i.e. in

Figure 2: Modelling of Australian Professional Standard for Principals (APSP) of Christian Faith-based schools (Adapted from Figure 1 Modelling of the APSP)
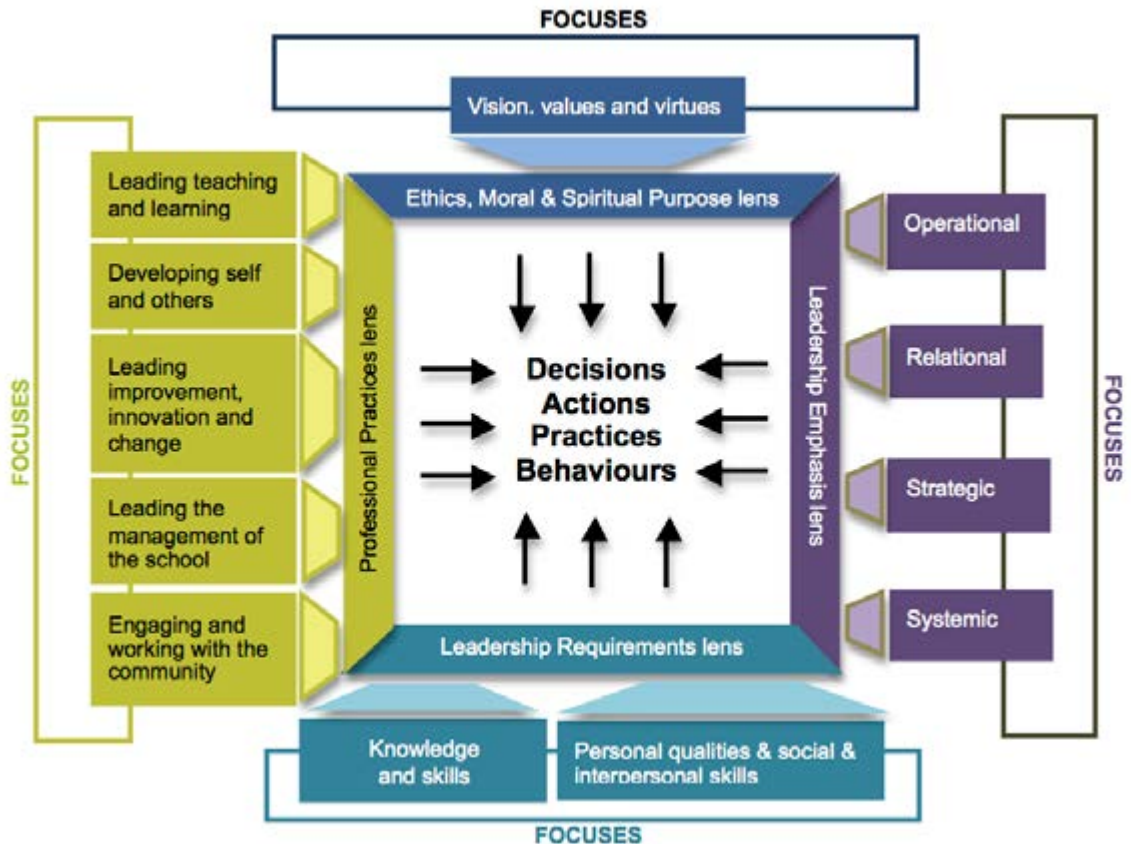
terms of moral purpose — what is of value? Under *Leadership Requirements*, AITSL's Standard paints "vision and values" in very broad brushstrokes. Leadership is perceived principally in terms of intellectual, organisational, technical and social competence. The use of a fourth lens should thus assist principals in CFB schools to set their sight in another direction; a new one. The specificity shown in Tables 1a and 1b — an ethics specificity not evident in The Standard — may be too large a

step for some leaders, but it should be noted that ethics commentators in the business world currently do not seem to have a difficulty in this respect, as the following *IVEY Business Journal* article abstract indicates:

> The sum of virtues, values and traits equals character. … For many, however, virtues, values and traits remain indefinable, even elusive. The authors define them; they also de-construct them, in the

Table 1a: Kingdom values, virtues & leadership profiles: The Australian Professional Standard for Principals viewed through a Christian biblical ethics, moral & spiritual purpose lens

Kingdom values and virtues	Kingdom leadership profiles
Examples of typical *biblical virtues and values* embodied by leaders in Christian faith-based schools	Examples of typical *practices and actions* of leaders in Christian faith-based schools

Leadership Requirements

Knowledge & skills

- *Dependence* on divine help and guidance, also human support; a recognition of our human limitations (Dan 1:17; 2Pet 1:5-6; Job 38: 4-41; Prov 3:6; Ps 119:73; Prov 15:22)
- *Accountability* for mental, spiritual, artistic, technological, scientific, financial, inter-personal, and communication aptitudes and talents (Luke 12: 41,48; 1Tim 6:20)
- *Truth, discernment*, and *wisdom*; these are gained from a study of, reflection on, and obedience to God's word (Prov 2:6; 2Tim 2:15; 3:16-17; James 1:5)
- *Others* (as perceived)

Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills

- *Friendliness, approachability, sincerity* and *authenticity* (John 15:15; Prov 17:17; Prov. 18:24; John 1:47)
- *Self-lessness* and *generosity* (Phil 2:7; Luke 6:38; 1Tim 6:18)
- **Honesty** and *candour* (Phil 4:8; Eph 4:25; 2Cor 6:11)
- *Courage* (Deut 31:6; Josh 1:7, Ps 31:24, Rom 8:31) is an essential characteristic of effective leadership.
- *Humility* (Phil 2:8; Col 3:12; Rom 12:3; 3:23; 1Cor 3:18)
- *Fidelity* and *integrity*; these are integral to sound and enduring relationships; the recognition of clear ethical boundaries and biblical standards (Matth 5:8)
- *Self-control* (Prov 16:32; Tit 2:12; 1Tim 3:8)
- *Resilience*: the ability to recover from setbacks; to keep going in the face of adversity (Nehemiah 1:1-4; 2:3-5, 8-10; 6:6-9, 15-16)
- *Others* (as perceived)

- *Praying* for Spirit-filled knowledge, skills and understanding, courage, patience and perseverance; accepting wise counsel from trusted friends and confidants
- *Recognising* and *modelling* that God-given abilities and talents are to benefit community and humanity, and not for 'ego-tripping'
- *Deepening* and *applying* one's knowledge and understanding of Old and New Testament scriptural teaching
- *Others* (as perceived)

- *Connecting* with people in a genuinely warm and friendly manner, *listening* to expressed perceived concerns & interests
- *Foregoing* prerogatives is following in the footsteps of Jesus.
- *Truth-telling* – done lovingly; a genuine concern for individuals
- *Acting* and *serving* courageously; moving forward confidently in faith; not being 'risk averse'
- *Being* humble, *repudiating* superiority and pretentiousness, for we all have sinned, being saved only by God's unmerited grace
- **Exemplifying** healthy bonds/links with professional colleagues, students, and friends while *maintaining* established 'arenas of safety' in all relationships
- *Exercising* and *modelling* self-control in all aspects of life
- *Believing* God's promises and facing challenges with staunchness, yet an open mind; *improvising* to reach goals
- *Others* (as perceived)

It should be noted that the above values and virtues (and leaders' practices/actions) will also intersect with the categories of Leadership Emphasis — operational, relational, strategic and systemic. Furthermore, they should be matched (according to AITSL's Standard for Principals framework) to the context, career stage and capabilities in, and with which principals exercise leadership.

> *The specificity shown in Tables 1a and 1b — an ethics specificity not evident in The Standard — may be too large a step for some leaders*

Table 1b: Kingdom values, virtues & leadership profiles: The Australian Professional Standard for Principals viewed through a *Christian biblical ethics, moral & spiritual purpose* lens

Kingdom values and virtues	Kingdom leadership profiles
Examples of typical **biblical virtues and values** embodied by leaders in Christian faith-based schools	Examples of typical **practices and actions** of leaders in Christian faith-based schools

Professional Practices

Leading teaching & learning*	
• *Ministry*, *vocation* and *commitment* (John 3:2; Ps 31:24)	• *Modelling, promoting* and *advancing* a relational school-wide servant-hood teaching ministry; making a difference
• **Excellence** in leadership & teaching; it is essential that all leaders & teachers support and model the values and mission of the school through best practice in their daily leadership/teaching and in virtuous personal conduct (Dan 6:3; 1Cor 4:1,2; Ex 31:2-6)	• *Prioritising* the employment of leaders & teachers who are: committed, caring, Christians; competent; critical-reflective; collegial; creative; culturally aware; contemporary-workplace-oriented; and change-responsive
• *Curiosity, co-operation, collaboration, interdependence* (Luke 2:46-47; John 4:9, 1Pet 1:10, 1Cor 12:14-25)	• *Questioning; action-researching; inspiring* and **applying** a team approach and a spirit of fellowship to learning and teaching
• *Meaning* and *wholeness* in life, vis-à-vis compartmentalisation (Phil 4:9; Luke 10:27; Eccl 12:9-14; Ps 119:105)	• *Embedding* the integration of a Christian worldview in the school's curriculum, learning and teaching, and 'daily life'
• *Respect; recognition* and *appreciation* of the individual giftedness of all staff and students (1Cor 12:28)	• *Respecting* others, *recognising* and *utilising* the diversity of God-given gifts of members of the whole school community
• *Joy, contentment* and a *sense of humour* (Ps 126:2; 1Tim 6:6)	• *Expressing* a positive attitude and *valuing* the privilege of contributing to students' Christian education; *seeing* the 'lighter' side of life and not taking oneself too seriously
Developing self & others	
• *Service, altruism, compassion* and *social justice* (Gal 5:13; John 6:9; Luke 10:33-34; Micah 6:8)	• *Serving* others voluntarily; *modelling* and *externalising* God's grace; *acting* equitably
• *Fraternity, community, yoke-fellowship* (Phil 4:3-4; 1John 1:3)	• *Building* 'ministry of teaching' ties with other (particularly Christian) educational leaders/teachers/schools for mutual benefits
• *Discipleship* and personal growth; the Spirit's fruit characterises the Christian life (Matth 4:19, Luke 2:52, Gal 5:22)	• *Promoting* and *celebrating* students' character development and *facilitating* their free choice to follow Jesus
• *Stewardship* of, *diligence* in handling resources — physical, financial and human (including health and well being; spiritual retreats) — have been placed '*in trust*' with leaders (Luke 16:2)	• *Demonstrating* wisdom in developing human resources (self and staff competence and qualifications); *monitoring* financial matters, grounds and property development and maintenance
• *Discipline* and *forgiveness*; restoration of wrongdoers (Gal 6:1)	• *Counselling* and *restoring, disciplining* (biblical) — when required — which is always redemptive
Leading improvement, innovation & change	
• *Reflection* on, and appraisal of the cultural, social and academic/learning environment in which we learn and live and in which the school operates (Romans 12:2; Dan 1:12-14)	• *Critiquing* modern and post-modern claims, beliefs, values, assumptions and current teaching and learning methodologies, with a view to excellence and faithfulness to biblical ideals
• *Self-assessment* and realistic *evaluation* that looks at the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the school community and its leadership (Gal 6:4)	• *Reviewing* (involving the school community) the school's mission, goals and programs; its overall performance and progress relative to its sponsoring faith tradition; *using* Teaching Ministry Standards* to advance staff and student improvement
• *Foresight* — a valuable virtue ('A stitch in time saves nine') (Prov 30:24-25, Gen 41:34-36)	• *Acting* proactively rather than reactively

> *Promoting and celebrating students' character development and facilitating their free choice to follow Jesus*

Leading the management of the school

- *Culture-formation*, as modelled by Jesus and the apostle Paul; it forms the foundation stone of a Christian faith-based school (Luke 10:27; Phil 4:9)
- *Trust(worthiness)* and *acceptance*; important building blocks of strong and loving Christian school communities (John 4:7-9; Mk 10:14; Col 1:9)
- *Nurture* and *care*; characteristics of healthy schools — where people are enabled to contribute, learn, and are loved and valued (John 21:15; Matth 18:12)
- *Empowerment, encouragement, inclusivity*; ensuring *continuity* of leadership; 'power shared, is power multiplied' (Ex 18:18-22; 1Kings 19:19-21; 2Tim 1:3-4; Ruth 2:10)
- *Responsibility* for and *ownership* of actions and decisions (Jer 13:20; Gal 6:7; Ez 3:16-19; James 5:16)

- *Transparency* and *openness*, in decision-making processes and actions (Matth 5:37; John 18:20; Acts 5:1-4; 2Pet 1:16; Acts 15:4-31)
- *Goodwill* and *reconciliation* in cases of discord or conflict (Matth 5:9, 23-24; Rom 12:18; 1Cor 6:2,4,5)
- *Perceptiveness* and *sensitivity* in relation to the context of learning and leading (Acts 17: 22-31; 1Cor 9:19-23)

- *Discernment* in regards to the school's 'fruitage' and mission (1Kings 3:9; Heb 5:14)

Engaging & working with the community

- **Gratitude, thankfulness;** awareness of the source of our benefits, joys, successes and achievements (Ps 26:7; Eph 5:20; Ph'm 4,5)
- *Witness* and *proclamation* to and *worship* with the **community** (Isa 43:10)
- *Others* (as perceived)

- *Building, developing, advancing* and *practising* a culture of love of God, self, and others; also a love for continuous learning and spiritual growth
- *Creating* and *developing* relational trust; believing in and supporting and praying for each other

- *Sponsoring, enabling* and *supporting* the school's program of pastoral care and well-being

- *Sharing* power/authority with, and *mentoring* others

- *Evaluating* outcomes; *learning* from achievements, mistakes, or even failures; *engaging* in continuous learning from and about effective administrative and teaching practices
- *Practising* organisational and personal transparency, while preserving confidentiality; *being* open to new ideas

- *Mediating; restoring* organisational and/or inter-personal harmony
- *Contextualising* learning and leading; *adapting* to the socio-economic and cultural environment without engaging in syncretism and compromising the mission of the school
- *Monitoring* and *ensuring* that the outcomes of the school's policies & practices align with its mission

- *Expressing* thanks, publicly, for God's blessings and gifts; and *affirming* community contributors and helpers

- *Articulating* the mission and ethos of the school, from the perspective of the school's sponsoring faith tradition
- *Others* (as perceived)

> " *there is the real danger that Christian schools become driven by market forces; defined by national standards … and formed by culture rather than acting to redeem culture* "

It should be noted that the above values and virtues (and leaders' practices/actions) will also intersect with the categories of Leadership Emphasis — *operational, relational, strategic and systemic*. Furthermore, they should be *matched* (according to AITSL's Standard for Principals framework) to the *context, career stage* and *capabilities* in, and with which principals exercise leadership.
* See *TEACH Journal of Christian Education, 8*(5), 8-14

process demonstrating how character fuels people in their personal journey to become better leaders.[32]

Similarly, there are some voices in academia that argue: "Character, not charisma is the critical measure of leadership excellence."[33]

Furthermore, the additional lens finds support in the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration*. The landmark declaration upholds the development of personal values; attributes such as honesty, resilience; empathy and respect for others; an expectation of acting with moral and ethical integrity, and an understanding of "*the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life*".[34] The lens thus serves as a reminder for the CFB schools sector of its *reason d'être* and the need for each school to have a clear mission and philosophy. Without these, according

to educational administrator Dr Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, there is the real danger that Christian schools "become driven by market forces; defined by national standards and accrediting agencies; and formed by culture rather than acting to redeem culture through the power of Christ."[35]

The Leadership Profiles, 'refracted' through the use of the fourth lens, largely speak for themselves. However, following their tabling, various observations, comments and explanations, some general and others specific, may be warranted to enhance clarity and comprehension.

Schools — learning communities living in relationship

Using the fourth lens intentionally not only accentuates the relational side of learning and

teaching, as pointed out by Professor Viviane Robinson: "Effective leaders do not get the relationships right and then tackle the educational challenges — they incorporate both sets of constraints into their problem solving;"[36] Also, in rightly incorporating the ethical, moral and spiritual dimension, the lens provides a wider perspective. Through the Leadership Profiles, the fourth lens shines a light on what it means to be human — to live in relationship with others (not forgetting God and the environment) — as underlined, for instance, by two educators; an author and a principal, respectively:

> The quality of the relationship that students have in class with their peers and teachers is important to their success in school.[37]

> Positive educator and student relationships outweigh content knowledge. Content knowledge can always be learned and mastered. Relationships are built on respect and trust.[38]

Practices should always be in congruence with claimed values, as the comments of a 2014 NSW Higher School Certificate student — whose school ranked in the top 40 in the state — reveal:

> [The school] Manufactures students to only care about careers, nothing else matters to them but good grades. Not at all a nurturing environment. It's the kids who top the class who receive help. The rest drop right through the system. Unfortunate waste of what could be one of the best schools on the central coast [sic].[39]

The student's comments should be seen in the wider context of the 2015 PISA[40] results. Australia has again dropped several places on some measures — behind Kazakhstan! Increasingly, there is a chorus of influential voices lamenting that Australia, inevitably, will be "left behind" in the educational Olympic gold medal count, as if scripted in some imaginary dispensationalist education narrative.

Ubiquitous comparisons, particularly with south-east Asian countries, rarely provide a complete picture. The data with the attendant rankings can be misleading, to say the least. Rarely is there mention of the human cost of rankings and test cultures. Conversely, wise principals always are aware that the unceasing quest for success, when narrowly defined, is harming young people.[41]

A different drummer

Principals in CFB schools participate in a different narrative when they view their leadership practice through the fourth lens, and act accordingly. In embracing kingdom values and virtues, principals are committing to kingdom actions and practices in keeping with their leadership ministry. They follow a different drummer on several major fronts:

Identity
Their *identity* and ground of their being is found in Jesus Christ, not in their knowledge and competence, important though these may be. A real danger exists that performance expectations and continual evaluation can result in identity formation that is dependent on comparison with pre-determined measures or standards based on unexamined assumptions.

Role
In their *role* as stewards, principals in CFB schools are entrusted with diverse responsibilities. These include human, physical and financial resources. As leaders they are expected to further the Kingdom of God, as they nurture, develop and grow their school communities. In so doing there is the 'temptation' that principals might see themselves as educational entrepreneurs rather than as servant-stewardship leaders. While there is a valid case for financial understanding and management, they may be attracted to buy into a business model for their school, replete with brand-type marketing and slick, feel-good slogans. CFB schools are faith projects (where the Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit are in evidence) and should never be confused with business enterprises.

Service
A calling to *service* is an integral part of values-virtues leadership that requires integrity and humility as manifested by Jesus' actions and words: "… the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many" (Matth 20:28, NIV). When a leader "who beautifully, though not perfectly exemplifies the life of a disciple of Jesus, we get the overwhelming desire to live such a life ourselves".[42]

Competence and expertise
For committed Christians, *competence* and *expertise*, in the form of abilities, accomplishments, expertness and skills, are means to an end — to serve the community — and acknowledge them as God's gifts. They may be developed to a high degree and accomplish much good.

Status and recognition
Pride goes before a fall, according to the book of Proverbs. Pride is probably the 'genesis' of all sin and perhaps the most destructive of all. Respect of persons should always be mutual. On the other hand, superiority, condescension or high-handedness have no place in CFB schools. Leaders should always be mindful that at the foot of the cross, all are equal, in case anyone may be enticed by *status* and *recognition*.

Power and empowerment
Power with others, and self-control accomplishes much more than power over and control of others. Thus power shared, is power multiplied. These principles from the secular and spiritual realms (Prov. 25:28, Matth. 28:18, Acts 1:8) are applicable

> There is a 'temptation' that principals might see themselves as educational entrepreneurs rather than servant-stewardship leaders.

to Christian learning communities. As leaders, principals have the task to *empower* and mentor others in their learning community.

Culture and conduct

Culture and *conduct* are fundamental elements of CFB schools; elements that wise leaders will develop and maintain. An effective principal will foster, build on and shape the time-honoured and cherished narrative — the collective memories — that invigorate and motivate the school community to live out its mission. Similarly, the spiritual truism of, "belonging, believing and being", will characterise the conduct of leaders and led.

Structures and communication

Effective principals will put in place organisational *structures* and *communication* channels that are in harmony with their CFB learning communities' shared values. These are made visible not only in policy documents, directives and digital newsletters, but also in the lives of school community members. Furthermore, when the scriptural principle of contributive structuring (1Cor 12:14-27) is applied to schools' various endeavours, principals should discover that the whole will always be greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Concluding thoughts

The proposal of using an ethics, moral and spiritual purpose lens to view the Australian Professional Standard for Principals has resulted in complementary, distinctive Leadership profiles. These should not be seen as dictated outcomes for leaders in CFB schools. Rather, they should be regarded as a challenge for *reflection*, a mirror for deep personal *self-examination* and/or an avenue for *renewal*.

It is hoped and it follows that principals in Christian faith-based schools are now challenged to 'interpret' this document, applying their own distinctive understanding of what comprises meaningful, holistic, values-virtues leadership practice, as servants and stewards to their own learning communities. **TEACH**

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> *The spiritual truism of "belonging, believing, and being", will characterise the conduct of leaders and led*

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Old school or cutting edge? An examination of Ellen G. White's views on education from a best practice twenty-first century perspective

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Key words: Ellen G. White, twenty-first century learning, neuroplasticity, metacognition, well-being

Abstract
Ellen G. White was an inspired writer who was influential in the development of Adventist education in the late nineteenth century. She wrote prolifically on the philosophy of Christian education, its goals and its practice. This article explores her views, as written over a century ago, and compares them with several twenty-first century educational concepts that impact pedagogical practice today. The concepts chosen are: neuroplasticity, differentiation, holistic education and well-being, metacognition, education for employability, visible learning and heutagogy. The comparison revealed that when White's views were analysed in terms of purpose or in terms of underlying principles, they aligned with several educational concepts that are driving pedagogical practice in the twenty-first century.

> *how would some of our modern day pedagogy align with the more than century old advice offered by White?*

Introduction
How would Ellen G. White, founder of Avondale College of Higher Education, and the most inspired, important, and influential advisor to Adventist education in the nineteenth century, relate to some of the most innovative education concepts and practices of the twenty-first century?

This paper seeks to report and expand on some of the most significant educational innovations of this century and relate them to the ideas and concepts that White presented as guiding principles for Christian education over a century ago. There could easily be a tendency to analyse some of her advice and instruction and make one of two conclusions. The first conclusion could be that some of the advice she gave is no longer followed by Adventist schools today. The other is that the advice she gave is not relevant to Adventist schools today.

There is a third alternative, however, which is the focus of this article. If the guidance White gave to Adventist education in the nineteenth century were to be analysed in terms of its purpose or in terms of its underlying principles, how would some of our modern day pedagogy align with the more than century old advice offered by White?

Overview of twenty-first century learning
The world of teaching and learning in the twenty-first century has become more complex than ever before. The casual observer would not know or understand the multiple layers of expertise and accountability that drive a teacher today (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This century has also seen the introduction of a national regulatory body in Australia, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2017). Established to monitor standards for teachers and school leaders, AITSL has imposed on teachers seven key standards (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, n.d.), each with multiple sub points, totaling 37 in all. In an attempt to meet these standards, teachers and schools are continually looking towards research and pedagogical approaches that indicate best practice for teaching and learning.

This article explores a range of current educational concepts that impact contemporary pedagogical approaches, and contrasts them to the advice that White gave to Adventist schools as they were established more than a century earlier. The educational concepts that form the focus of this paper are: neuroplasticity, differentiation, holistic education and well-being, metacognition, education for employability, visible learning and heutagogy.

It needs to be remembered that White gave this advice at a tumultuous time in American history when conservatism and traditional values were being challenged. To put things in perspective, the era being discussed includes the California gold rush, the civil war, abolition of slavery, and the invention of dynamite, the light globe and basketball. To even consider comparing twenty-first century pedagogy to educational advice given by somebody from that era is in many ways an unlikely endeavour, but that is exactly the purpose of this article. Table 1 summarises the main educational concepts and corresponding ideas promoted by White that are further elaborated in this article.

Neuroplasticity and implications for learning

During the second half of the 1800s, and around the turn of the century in the period when White was writing, it was widely believed that intelligence was fixed as a result of genetics. This resulted in a preoccupation with intelligence testing in order to be able to categorise children or to facilitate the choice or quality of the school they would attend (Chitty & Benn, 2007). Further, this was used as support for racist categorization and differentiation of opportunity.

Despite the result of the American Civil War that had the dual purpose of consolidating the states of America and also emancipating the African American slaves, slave owners and traffickers were encultured with the belief that blacks were

Table 1: Summary of educational concepts promoted by both twenty-first century educational leaders and Ellen G. White

Twenty-first century educational concepts	Twenty-first century educational position	Ellen G. White's nineteenth century position
Neuroplasticity	Intelligence is not fixed; therefore everybody can improve their learning capacity. (Doidge, 2007; Ganguly & Poo, 2013).	Exercising the mind develops it (White, 1903, p. 17).
Unlocking student potential through differentiation	Each student is unique; therefore teaching should be differentiated (NSW Education and Communities, 2015).	Each student is created uniquely in God's image (White, 1903, p. 17).
Holistic education and well-being	There is a strong connection between the body, the brain and the emotions; therefore all should be considered in the learning process (Seligman, 2011; Seligman, 2017).	"It [education] is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual power" (White, 1903, p. 17) and prepares students for service (White, 1903, pp.29-30).
Metacognition	Knowledge is easily accessible; therefore educators should spend more time teaching higher order thinking skills (Krathwohl, 2002; Caine, Caine, McClintic, Klimek & Costa, 2015).	It is important to teach youth to be thinkers (White, 1903, p. 17).
Education for employability	An outcome of education is employability; therefore schools need to be preparing students for success in the workplace (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008).	Educate for usefulness and employability (White, 1903, pp.29-30; E. G. White, personal communication, Letter 15, November 9, 1867).
Visible learning and heutagogy	Students need to take responsibility for their own learning; therefore student self-regulation and direction are essential (Hase, 2009; Hattie, 2009)	Discerning teachers will encourage students to discover their talents and take responsibility for using them to learn (White, 1903, p. 232).

a pre-occupation with intelligence testing … was used as support for racist categor-ization and differenti-ation of opportunity.

genetically inferior. Many believed that slavery was the natural order and indeed the very fabric of society for the good of all, including the slaves (Boxill, 2010). These racist ideas permeated western society and persisted into the twentieth century causing many written, verbal and even physically violent clashes with those who claimed that environment was the sole input into a person's intelligence.

While there are still white supremacist groups arguing in favour of genetic fixed ability, the far more popular perception today is that of an expanding brain and one where learning capacity can be improved independent of genetics. Called neuroplasticity, this scientific term indicates the way the brain actually grows as a result of certain stimuli. Ganguly and Poo (2013) define it as follows:

> Neural plasticity can be broadly defined as the ability of the nervous system to adopt a new functional or structural state in response to extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Such plasticity is essential for the development of the nervous system and normal functioning of the adult brain.
> (p. 729)

This understanding of how the brain can expand its capacity has changed the perspective of educators when it comes to learning, yet when we look back to the nineteenth century, we discover that White not only referred to the fact that the brain has the capacity to "expand and strengthen" (1903, p. 125), but she gave examples of both extrinsic and intrinsic factors that may cause this to happen. She refers to the Bible as a source of truth and to the avenues of naturalistic research as extrinsic motivators. Thinking about one's "duty and destiny" are sources of intrinsic motivation that, according to White (1903) will exercise the plasticity of the brain:

> Instead of confining their study to that which men have said, or written, let the students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation, let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny and the mind will expand and strengthen.   (p. 17)

The relationship between neuroplasticity and spirituality is further explored by Newberg and Waldman (2009), whose research at the University of Pennsylvania supports White's statement, and posits that "the more you think about God, the more you will alter the neural circuitry in specific parts of the brain" (p. 4). These researchers have tracked the effect of meditation on the brain and their findings indicate that contemplation has a positive effect on the brain, which increases

current performance … reflects what the unique brain has acquired thus far – not its ultimate potential to succeed at that task

when participants meditate on a God of love. This includes growth in the pre-frontal cortex which process emotions and reasoning (Newberg & Waldman, 2009). Jennings (2013) comments on these findings, and posits that thinking about God, as in prayer or meditation, helps the brain to "heal and grow" (p. 27).

This idea of an expansionary mind as put forward by White is fundamental to the philosophies of twenty-first century education. In 2007, Doidge's book *The Brain That Changes Itself* became a turning point in widespread recognition of neuroplasticity and potential for learning. It is exciting to imagine the potential difference brought about by teachers recognizing that "every brain is unique and that current performance on a task simply reflects what the unique brain has acquired thus far – not its ultimate potential to succeed at that task" (Wilson & Conyers, 2013, p. 16). Barbara Arrowsmith-Young (2012) reports on her own life as one born with very serious learning disabilities including an inability to deal with logic. By applying the principles of neuroplasticity to herself, she was able to experience the results of neuroplasticity first hand, and was eventually successful in implementing the same techniques with others.

Neuroplasticity is an important concept for educators to understand as it is the premise on which current approaches to education are built. It was also foundational to White's understanding of education, and opens opportunities for learning that are not possible if one subscribes to the idea that intelligence is fixed.

Unlocking student potential through differentiation

Linked closely to the evidence that neuroscience offers for neuroplasticity is the recognition that learning occurs in different ways, at different times, for different individuals (Subban & Round, 2015). Called differentiation, the practice of recognising the uniqueness of each student and adjusting teaching strategies to suit their learning needs, was not acknowledged in the nineteenth century where a factory model of education prevailed (Rose, 2012, para. 2). Throughout the twentieth century, a gradual shift occurred, bringing some innovations with the 'progressive education movement'. As a result, "educators became less focused on the outdated teaching methods of reading, memorizing and reciting; they instead experimented with new philosophies in order to better focus on the children" (Elliot, 2013, para. 2).

Towards the end of the 20th Century, differentiation, while already practised by some, became the focus of rigorous conversation in

education. Academics started trying to come to terms with what it actually meant. In 1996, Bearne stated:

> While there is currently much emphasis on differentiation in schools, there is no clear consensus about what the term means or implies. It is linked in many teachers' minds with 'mixed ability teaching' but there is nevertheless considerable debate about just what differentiation might look like in the classroom. (p. 1)

By 2015 schools, school systems and the public education sector had started to disseminate resources, guidelines and directives for differentiation. The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities sent out a document in 2015 that outlined the process of differentiating not only content but also differentiating product and learning environment. Each one of these categories contains definitions, what is involved, and how to implement the differentiation (NSW Education and Communities, 2015).

Appropriating differentiation is strongly linked to how one views the individual, and White recognised that each student was unique. She argued, "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator – individuality, power to think and to do" (White, 1903, p. 17). The fact that White recognised the individuality of students in this era of education was somewhat groundbreaking. As quoted above, White highlighted the fact that all students are individuals not only in the way they think, but also in the way they apply their learning. While her ideas reflected forward thinking, differentiation, linked to the philosophy of Christian education that White espoused, is now a classroom expectation. As teachers recognise the uniqueness of each student, they are positioned to better facilitate learning for every child.

Holistic education for well-being

Accompanying the recognition that each student is unique is an emphasis on nurturing the whole person. Frequently heard within the education scene is the term well-being, a word that embraces not only intellectual competence, but also physical, and social-emotional capability (Seligman, 2011; Wilber, 2008), with an increasing number of educators also recognising a spiritual dimension to overall well-being (Barrett, 2012; Kessler, 2000).

In the twenty-first century, increasing recognition is being given to the idea of positive psychology, an idea pioneered by Martin Seligman who believed that removing unhappiness does not necessarily equate to happiness. Furthermore, there are many facets to well-being that make up a balanced life. Seligman (2011) believes the components constituting a well-balanced life are positive emotions or the ability to be optimistic, engagement in activities, relationships or connections with other people, having a purpose or meaning in life, and having goals and ambitions. Of significance is Seligman's proposition that living a meaningful life, or knowing one's strengths and using them in service to others, is the factor that contributes to satisfaction and further, that the other elements of well-being will be stunted without the inclusion of a service component in the curriculum.

Like Seligman, but over a century earlier, White wrote about these aspects of well-being. For those who are familiar with the extensive publications of White in the area of education, one of her best known statements reads, "It [education] is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual power" (White, 1903, p. 17).

Further, White maintains that apart from the physical, mental and spiritual development of the student, education should also develop values and character: "True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character" (White, 1903, p. 225). Using twenty-first century language, it seems that White was really concerned with the well-being of students and with developing the whole person. While this is not new to current teachers and features in most Christian school philosophy statements today, in the early 1900s it was not included in the objectives of most schools.

The concept of positive psychology in the context of the Word of God appeared in many of White's books, journal papers and letters. An example of her understanding of the connection between positive emotions and happiness is:

> God's law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love. (White, 1956, p.97)

With regard to Seligman's concept of the necessity for people to have relationships or positive connections with other people, White (1903) wrote: "In the Lord's plan human beings have been made necessary to one another" (E.G. White, personal communication, Letter 115, June 6, 1903). Furthermore, when writing specifically about education, she added: "Christian sociability is altogether too little cultivated by God's people. This

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator – individuality, power to think and to do.

branch of education should not be neglected or lost sight of in our schools" (White, 1948. p.172).

What Seligman (2017) calls "a meaningful life" (p. 249), is aspired to by schools who now create intentional service opportunities in an attempt to encourage "transformative learning" (Hullender, Hinck, Wood-Nartker, Burton & Bowlby, 2015, p. 18). Service learning results in a more profound sense of meaning and contribution for the students involved than if participating in more self-indulgent activities (Hullender et al., 2015). White suggests a similar idea in a letter she wrote in 1903:

> To everyone God has entrusted talents. These talents we are to use to help one another to walk in the narrow path. In this work each one is connected with the other, and all are united with Christ. It is by unselfish service that we improve and increase our talent.
> (E.G. White, personal communication, Letter 115, June 6, 1903)

> *Teachers who continue to limit teaching to the basic level of Blooms Taxonomy … are … superfluous to the real needs of their students.*

Though White did not live at a time when student well-being was discussed or researched, the evidence from her writing indicates that each element of well-being put forward by Seligman is consistent with White, except for two differences: she wrote in the language style of her era, and she believed that God and his truth were the conduits through which each element of well-being was imparted to the individual.

Based on the understanding and recognition of the learning potential of students, well-being, achieved through a holistic approach to education has become a generally accepted aim of twenty-first century education.

Metacognition

Metacognition, also referred to as 'thinking about thinking' can be defined as "higher-order thinking that enables understanding, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes, especially when engaged in learning" (Metacognition, 2017). A hallmark of nineteenth century education was a strong focus on rote memorisation of subject material and it was not until 1956 when Bloom and Engelhart first put forward their hierarchy or taxonomy of educational objectives that the emphasis began to shift (Bloom & Engelhart, 1956).

This taxonomy was later revised and updated by Krathwohl in 2001. He included *creating* as a higher order objective (Krathwohl, 2002). Since then, the hierarchy has undergone further revisions and now offers verbs for each level that teachers can include in their classroom instructions to ensure balance across all the categories. Therefore, a teacher wanting to include metacognitive or higher

order thinking outcomes in an assessment may choose from thinking skills that require students, for example, to construct, design, create, develop, argue, or hypothesise.

This emphasis on higher order thinking skills accompanies the easy access to all manner of information and basic knowledge that students have from their personal devices. Teachers who continue to limit teaching to the basic level of Blooms Taxonomy of Educational Objectives are therefore superfluous to the real needs of their students. This is why organising classes to facilitate metacognitive or higher order thinking in students currently exemplifies 'a good teacher'. One place where thinking skills can intentionally be taught is in the classroom. If teachers fail to rise to the challenge, and are satisfied with teaching only lower order thinking to their students, then Caine et al. (2015) pose the question, "Where exactly do we expect them to develop the kinds of skills that help students develop higher-order thinking skills and prepare them to become responsible, thinking adults living and working in a technology-saturated world?" (p. 3).

After several decades of thinking about education, refining her thoughts and seeking God's guidance, Ellen White moved into the 20th Century convinced that higher order thinking was the key to quality education. Long before Bloom and Engelhart, and in an era of structured teaching and direct instruction, White (1903) was advising the teaching of metacognitive thought:

> It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. (p. 17)

White recognised that students needed to develop their metacognitive skills in order to reach their full potential, a concept that placed her out of step with educational practice at that time. Today, however, metacognition is recognised as an important inclusion in teaching methods, with strategies such as Ritchhart, Church and Morrison's (2011) *Making Thinking Visible*, Costa and Kallick's (2009) *Habits of Mind* and De Bono's (2000) *Six Thinking Hats* being implemented across the curriculum in many schools.

Education for employability

Education has many purposes, just one of which is to prepare students for employment. In an Australian context, the Melbourne Declaration for Educational Goals for Young Australians

articulated by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (2008) identifies two goals that set the educational directions for the period 2009-2018. The second of these goals is that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008, p.8). Closer examination reveals that included in this goal is the education of students, "leading to rewarding and productive employment" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9). Also embedded in this goal is the development of "personal values and attributes such as honestly, resilience, empathy and respect for others" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9).

In response to this and similar manifestos, there has been a push to introduce innovations that will bring learning and employment into alignment. In the same way that agriculture was still a key learning area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, information and communication technologies have become a student's passage to most careers available to them today. In the current era even agriculture cannot be implemented efficiently, effectively, or competitively without the extensive use of technology (Reddy & Ankaiah, 2005). To this end innovations such as STEM and STEAM have become cutting edge applications of the curriculum in this century. These words are acronyms for creating a learning experience that integrates different combinations of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics and has students, usually in teams, using multi-disciplinary skills and knowledge to solve problems or be creative in making technology based applications. This approach replaces the 'subjects in silos' methodology of the last century, despite the fact that the Australian Curriculum still presents learning outcomes in this way.

Another innovation of this century that schools are gradually incorporating into their program is project or problem-based learning which simulates workplace teams. Similar to STEM but with protocols that aim to help students understand workplace conditions, Laur (2013, p. 30) puts forward what an authentic learning experience would look like using project-based learning. Such experiences would be founded on a realistic project that would require students to use twenty-first century skills along with natural student inquiry and innovation to work on a project in teams. Findings will be publically presented and then modified according to feedback received. The student voice becomes much more audible than the teacher voice and students develop the skills, both workplace related and personal, that are in demand from employers.

It is true that Ellen White promoted the idea of students learning agriculture as a subject at school (White, 1913, p. 311), thereby engendering questions from some today as to why Adventist schools do not all currently teach agriculture. An examination of her writing reveals a primary reason for including agriculture in the school curriculum: to prepare students for employment beyond school. It must be remembered that when White was writing, she lived in a largely agrarian society. Therefore, if this idea is dealt with conceptually rather than literally, it is the manual labour, kinesthetic, employment-related tasks that are being referred to. White pointed out on multiple occasions that these additions to the curriculum should be included over and above "scientific knowledge or literary acquirements" (White, 1903, p. 225). In more detail White wrote:

> Useful manual labor is a part of the gospel plan. The Great Teacher, enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave directions to Israel that every youth should be taught some line of useful employment. Therefore it was the custom of the Jews, the wealthy as well as the poorer classes, to teach their sons and daughters some useful trade, so that, should adverse circumstances arise, they would not be dependent upon others, but would be able to provide for their own necessities.
>
> (White, 1913, p. 307)

Furthermore, White (1903) advised that all stakeholders who work for the education of children should endeavour to provide their students with the best of professional skills. Today she might recommend the inclusion of computer coding rather than book binding in the curriculum. Rather than denouncing the emphasis on integrated and project or problem-based learning that is gaining traction in schools today, it is quite possible that White would applaud these efforts to develop both the skills and character required for employment in the twenty-first century.

Visible learning and heutagogy

Two big ideas in education for the twenty first Century are those of making learning visible (Hattie, 2009) and heutagogy (Hase, 2009; Hase & Kenyon, 2001). Both of these educational concepts are about creating student independence and placing the responsibility for learning back on the student. This impacts the roles of both the student and teacher in the learning process, and creates an environment that prepares students to be self-determining.

Making learning visible is more than teaching and then moving on to the next topic. According to Hattie (2009), it is about: " 'what happens next' – the manner in which the teacher reacts to how

This [STEM] approach replaces the 'subjects in silos' methodology of the last century, despite the fact that the Australian Curriculum still presents learning outcomes in this way.

the student interprets, accommodates, rejects and/or reinvents the content or skills, how the student relates and applies the content to other tasks, and how the student reacts in the light of success and failure …" (p. 2). Teaching in a vacuum with no acknowledgement that students need to recognize and own their own learning is not effective. Learners need to understand what the learning intentions are for each class and what the success criteria look like in order to achieve the learning intentions (Nottingham & Nottingham, 2017). As stated by White above, the talents of many students 'lie hidden' because the learning process and the latent talents of individual students are not fostered by the teacher.

Taking the idea of placing the responsibility for learning back on the learner even further, the idea of *heutagogy* was introduced this century. "Heutagogy is the study of self-determined learning. It is also an attempt to challenge some ideas about teaching and learning that still prevail in teacher centred learning" (Hase & Kenyon, 2001, p. 44). The theory put forward by Hase (Hase, 2009; Hase & Kenyon, 2013) is that learning occurs at two levels. The first level is that of acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies which is more about pedagogy and more teacher-centred. The second level is more about deeper learning which is student initiated rather than teacher-directed. The objective is for students to take on the responsibility of learning, leading to positive outcomes:

> Learning, then, is probably enhanced by excitement and enjoyment, and when there is a gap in understanding that creates curiosity, confusion or a gentle unease. Thus, it is the questions that the learning experience raises rather than the provision of answers that are the primary concern of heutagogy.
>
> (Hase, 2009, p. 44)

This quest for students to design their own learning experiences caters for differentiation of learning as discussed earlier, but takes the concept further. This principle also espoused by White above, is about recognising that students may be far more than what teachers notice superficially, and by applying heutagogy, students may themselves exhibit that of which they are actually capable.

At the time that Ellen White wrote about education there was little talk about individuality and student responsibility for learning. Instead techniques revolved around whole of class learning with the teacher firmly in control. It was in this context that White wrote about the risk of 'untapped' potential if students are not considered

This principle also espoused by White… is about recognising that students may be far more than what teachers notice, … applying heutagogy, students may …exhibit that

individually and given the opportunity to excel.

> The same personal interest, the same attention to individual development, are needed in educational work today. Many apparently unpromising youth are richly endowed with talents that are put to no use. Their faculties lie hidden because of a lack of discernment on the part of their educators. In many a boy or girl outwardly as unattractive as a rough-hewn stone, may be found precious material that will stand the test of heat and storm and pressure. The true educator, keeping in view what his pupils may become, will recognize the value of the material upon which he is working.
>
> (White, 1903, p. 232)

Keeping the concept of visible learning and heutagogy in mind, teachers can look forward to a changing role in relation to how learning is presented, as self-determination is fostered in a positive way within classrooms.

Conclusion

Much of what has been put forward in this article as underlying themes from the written work of White revolves around recognition of the uniqueness of each learner, the importance of catering for the individual needs of students and the roles students play in their own learning. These ideas have been replicated in the twenty-first century and have been considered in this article as: neuroplasticity, metacognition, differentiation, holistic education and well-being, education for employability, visible learning and heutagogy.

The power of the individual brain to expand with learning is a concept that impacts the understanding of educators and resonates with White's position of students being created in the image of God. The concept of using differentiation to unlock learning potential requires recognition of each learner as unique. This recognition motivates teachers to foster holistic student well-being. White's challenge that teachers inspire students to be thinkers rather than reflectors provides an incentive to use teaching methods that drive students beyond lower level thinking skills into the realm of possibilities, while educating for employability provides both a process to follow and an outcome to achieve. Finally, as students develop self-determination in their learning, the classroom becomes less teacher-centred, allowing students to develop their potential as learners.

It may have taken more than a century, but if educators today follow some of the current theories of effective teaching and learning, they are also aligning with what some people have labelled 'Ellen White's blueprint for Christian education.' TEACH

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Editor's note:
Reflections on *Stories from Sunnyside* (see pages 62-64) introduce some life experiences from Ellen White's interaction with her context and community while living in Cooranbong and supporting the establishment of Avondale College.

TEACH[R]

Socioscientific issues: A framework for teaching ethics through controversial issues in Science

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Key words: Socioscientific issues, ethical reasoning, religious belief

Abstract

As science progresses, new techniques and additional information present society with new situations that require ethical analysis and judgement. More than ever before educators of today face the challenge of preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage with these issues. This paper explores the potential of the Socioscientific Issues framework for the teaching of ethical understanding within the science classroom of Christian or other faith based schools and offers some insights into what teaching with socioscientific perspective might look like in the classroom.

Two significant announcements in the field of biology marked the commencement and completion of my undergraduate studies. In late February 1996 researchers at the Roslin Institute announced that they had successfully cloned a sheep, which they named Dolly, from an adult cell using a technique called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT). Five years later I recall sitting in the library reading the February edition of Nature that marked the completion of the first draft of the Human Genome Project. It seemed to me then, as it still does now, that these two events would not only create a paradigm shift in the way we approach modern biology, but would forever shift the ethical landscape which scientists and laypeople alike, must negotiate. It is not that there was no ethical issue before Dolly and the Human genome project. Medical issues involving the beginning and ending of human life presented ethical dilemmas then and continue to do so today. However, with these two announcements the knowledge concerning how to genetically alter a human life was thrown wide open.

The reality that our students face today is a

> *Decisions about genetically modified food, climate change and conservation … will require … [students] … to be fluent in the science and the ethics of these issues.*

world where the genetic screening of embryos for genetic disorders and gender selection is not only possible but routine, to the extent that The National Health and Medical Research Council (2007) developed guidelines for its use. Increasingly couples will be looking to the growing range of artificial reproductive technologies, all of which to varying degrees involve ethical decisions. To make such decisions wisely students will need to be taught both an understanding of the science involved and the skills of ethical decision making, a task for which Driver, Newton, and Osborne (2000) suggest teachers are not well prepared. Indeed, the scope of ethical issues requiring an understanding of science goes much further than that involving fertility and the beginning of life. Decisions about genetically modified food, climate change and conservation, both in the private and public spheres, will require the young men and women that populate our schools today to be simultaneously fluent in the science and the ethics of these issues.

The words ethics and morals are often used interchangeably, particularly in general parlance, however they do have different but interrelated meanings. Morals are the beliefs of a group or an individual that provides general principles about what is right and wrong while ethics is a response to a specific issue and provides a set of guidelines or procedures to help determine what action should be taken in a given situation. Although these differences are not critical to the understanding of this paper the two terms are used here with the intention of maintaining their separate definitions.

To most effectively guide students into the necessary understanding and skills required to confront these present and future challenges it is appropriate to utilize an effective teaching framework that is grounded in research and which is also able to incorporate a distinctive Christian worldview. The Socioscientific Issues movement is capable of fulfilling both of these requirements.

It is the purpose of this paper to introduce this framework as a useful tool for science educators working within a faith based tradition.

Teaching ethics in the science classroom

Adventists educators in the field of science have always recognised the opportunities inherent in the teaching of science for the exploration of Christian worldviews. Unfortunately, for many science educators, this has been limited to the broader issues surrounding the origins debate. It is the belief of the author that such a narrowing of focus misses some of the greatest opportunities we have in the science classroom for exploring what it means to be a Christian in the modern world. There are countless issues across all fields of science that require ethical judgments to be made about current and engaging topics. The process of ethical decision making by which students, and indeed all individuals, come to conclusions about these issues is a direct result of the individual's worldview. It should be clear then that a discussion about ethics is a direct link for educators into a discussion about how ethical decisions are made and the role of religious faith in those decisions.

The importance of ethical thinking and ethical thinking practices was recognized by the writers of the Australian curriculum (The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), n. d.) which incorporates ethical thinking as one of the cross-curriculum priorities.

> In the Australian Curriculum, students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.
> (para. 1)

If the Australian Curriculum is to be taken seriously then within the context of ethical understanding it provides a mandate for faith based schools to explore the role of their religious traditions across all subjects, including that of science.

Within Adventist schools across Melbourne, Pope (2014) has shown that a disconnect exists between students' reported religious beliefs and their ability to incorporate those beliefs into their ethical reasoning about biotechnology issues. In this study, the first to explore socioscientific issues in Adventist schools, the author was able to show that considerably fewer students use religious ideas in

their reasoning than were identified as measuring high on a scale of Christian worldview. When they did incorporate religious ideas into their reasoning, the students rarely incorporated rational reasoning involving faith-based principles. Instead, most students would make vague references to religious belief or God, if they made any reference at all, with comments of the kind, 'it's against Gods will' and 'this goes against my religion'.

Such a lack of clarity between the students' religious beliefs and their informal reasoning is not necessarily surprising. Moral values and attitudes can ultimately be traced back to an individual's worldview and teachers might expect that students with Christian worldviews would naturally incorporate their beliefs into their moral judgements. However, most individuals do not stop to closely examine their worldview, which may direct the decisions and attitudes of an individual without the student's conscious awareness of the fact (Evensen, Hoban, & Woodrum, 2000). Although the expectation that students will be able to provide moral arguments that are able to offer clarity to their worldview may currently remain unmet, the deliberate teaching of ethical reasoning skills in the science classroom through the use of controversial issues provides an opportunity not only to fulfil the expectations of the Australian Curriculum, but also for the examination and transformation of worldviews. Cobern (1997) has suggested that it is the latter that should be one of the primary goals of education.

Introduction to socioscientific issues

Socioscientific Issues refers to both an educational movement and also a description of the particular type of issue that the movement utilises. Socioscientific Issues are issues that arise as a result of scientific endeavours, or in which science plays an important role and also contain elements that have a strong social context. Such issues are frequently controversial in nature with strong competing values and interests. They can be politically sensitive and often promote powerful emotions amongst the protagonists. These controversial issues are inevitably complex and their consideration may require specific scientific knowledge, awareness of self and a sense of identity. To make sense of such issues typically requires the balancing of ideas, the disclosure of pre-conceived assumptions, and taking a stance while accepting the differing views of others. Given the nature of these issues it should be clear that they are ideal for the exploration and interaction of worldviews, including Christian worldviews in the study of science.

The *Socioscientific Issues* movement

a disconnect exists between students' reported religious beliefs and their ability to incorporate those beliefs into their ethical reasoning about bio-technology issues.

emphasises the need for science education to incorporate the holistic development of individuals. In a critical review of the literature, Zeidler, Sadler, Simmons, and Howes (2005) argue "that any view of functional scientific literacy falls short of the mark if it ignores the fundamental factors aimed at promoting the personal cognitive and moral development of students" (p. 362).

Through the use of controversial issues in science, the *Socioscientific Issues* movement provides an ideal basis from which to teach science and to research the teaching of science from within a faith based tradition.

Historical Development and Scope of SSI

Science educators have long realised the need for students to understand the interrelationship that exists between science and society with research and dialogue in this area taking place for as long as the field of science education has been in existence (DeBoer, 1991). Gallagher (1971) was one of the first to highlight the importance of placing scientific knowledge within a social construct and since then ongoing research has continued to highlight the importance of this interaction between science and society in developing students' scientific literacy. Leading up to the 1980s, an effort was made to make science more relevant and appropriate to students. To achieve this end, a number of science courses and programs began including material that placed science in a social context in an effort to make science more socially and culturally relevant to students. In a review of the curriculum material then available, Ziman (1980) coined the term Science-Technology-Society (STS). The STS movement grew quickly during the 1980s, both in its popularity with science teachers and as a theoretical framework for teaching science. STS is essentially a method of teaching science that places the context of the issues as a central theme that can then be used as a mechanism for teaching not only science concepts but also the process of scientific inquiry (Yager, 1993). It was adopted by the National Science Teachers Association (1982) as a central goal for science education, stating that:

> The goal of science education during the 1980s is to develop scientifically literate individuals who understand how science, technology and society influence one another and who are able to use their knowledge in their everyday decision making.
> (p. 1)

Throughout the 1990s, the enthusiasm for STS started to wane with science educators such as Shamos (1995) noting that the movement did not fulfil its purpose of being exciting and relevant to

> *the Socio-scientific Issues movement provides an ideal basis from which to teach science and to research the teaching of science from within a faith based tradition.*

students. Moreover, Zeidler et al. (2005) identified that the STS movement had failed to give students a voice about the issues being examined, nor did it did allow for students to approach those issues from a personal perspective, grounded in the cultural background of the students. Zeidler et al. (2005) further suggested that STS, which lacked a grounded theoretical framework, did not provide for the moral or character development of the students. In what has largely been seen as a successful reinterpretation of the STS model, an additional dimension that includes the beliefs and life experiences of students was added to the STS framework (Zeidler et al., 2005). This reworking of the STS framework was titled socioscientific issues (SSI) and its main aim as a movement is to focus "specifically on empowering students to consider how science-based issues and the decisions made concerning them reflect, in part, the moral principles and qualities of virtue that encompass their own lives, as well as the physical and social world around them" (Zeidler et al., 2005, p. 360).

In a discussion about balancing the sometimes conflicting concerns and desires of the individual stakeholders associated with socioscientific issues, Kolstø (2006) outlines the underlying tensions that dominate much of the debate about these issues:

> Because we have different wishes, values, and beliefs, society is loaded with these sorts of conflicts. Such conflicts cannot be solved by means of value-free evaluations or calculations, but have to be negotiated; therefore, we need politics and discussion to weigh values that in principle cannot be weighed. (p. 298)

Kolstø's comment highlights one of the important differences between SSI and earlier attempts to incorporate society and science. Central to the SSI movement is the goal to provide students with the skills necessary for them to negotiate for themselves the science-based issues that they will inevitably be confronted with, if not at a personal level, then as a member of society that will be called upon to make judgements on the technologies (Driver et al., 2000; Kolstø, 2006). Socioscientific issues cover a broad range of topics; some of the examples of SSI's that have been studied in the literature include the applications of biotechnology (Pope, 2014; Sadler & Zeidler, 2005), climate change (Topçu, Yılmaz, & Sadler, 2011), nuclear power (Wu & Tsai, 2007) and other more local issues such as the reintroduction of bears into the Pyrenees (Simonneaux & Simonneaux, 2009).

Educational Benefits of SSI

The educational benefits of an SSI-based approach

to teaching science have been widely recognised by researchers in this field (Levinson, 2006; Zeidler & Sadler, 2008). Just some of the reasons for implementing an SSI approach include positive impacts on science instruction (Barab, Sadler, Heiselt, Hickey, & Zuiker, 2010), increased understanding of science content (Zohar & Nemet, 2002), improved argumentation skills (Venville & Dawson, 2010), and increased understanding of the nature of science (Khishfe & Lederman, 2006).

In addition, Fowler, Zeidler, and Sadler (2008) have shown that the use of a Socioscientific Issues framework can improve students' moral reasoning skills about controversial issues. Leaders in the field of Socioscientific Issues (Zeidler et al., 2005) have suggested that SSI creates cognitive dissonance by compelling students to consider claims that may be at odds with their own beliefs and values. It is thought that this may advance moral reasoning by empowering students to consider how science based issues and the decisions made concerning them reflect, in part, the moral principles and qualities of virtue that encompass their own lives, as well as the physical and social world around them.

A number of researchers and commentators have called for science education to better equip students in their ability to undertake the task of negotiating the ethical issues associated with biotechnology. These calls have come from science professionals and science educators, as well as religious leaders. Polkinghorne (2000), an accomplished scientist (FRS) and an ordained Anglican priest, commented that:

> It is important that society should seek to create forums in which ethical issues can be discussed in truth-seeking and non-confrontational manner. If this prospect of rational debate about biotechnology is to be realised, a considerable educational program will be required. (p.10)

Science education programs that use the socioscientific framework are ideally suited to provide the educational program necessary for students to negotiate the ethically complex world that advances in science will present to them. For students who come from a Christian religious upbringing or whose own worldview is dominated by a religious faith, teaching science using a Socioscientific Issues framework provides the possibility for students to approach controversial issues in an environment that acknowledges their core beliefs and recognises that those beliefs will help to shape opinion and behaviour about controversial issues in science.

Using a Socioscientific Issues Framework in the classroom

A number of researchers agree that one of the primary purposes of education is to provide an opportunity for the examination and transformation of worldviews (Cobern, 1996, 1997; Duschl, 1991; Peters, 1975). Because of the way that the socioscientific issues movement draws upon culture, including a religious understanding of controversial issues in science, it provides an opportunity for students to examine the presuppositions and cultural norms that are inherent in their worldview. As SSI's are explored, the interactions that an individual has between their peers, their teachers, and the wider community may play an important role in shaping an individual's worldview. The power of social interactions in shaping an individual worldview is emphasised by Haidt (2001):

> Because people are highly attuned to the emergence of group norms, the model proposes that the mere fact that friends, allies, and acquaintances have made a moral judgment exerts a direct influence on others, even if no reasoned persuasion is used. Such social forces may elicit only outward conformity, but in many cases people's privately held judgments are directly shaped by the judgments of others. (p. 7)

An appreciation of the role that formal schooling can have in shaping a student's worldview should give science educators reason to pause. As figures of authority within the classroom, there is significant opportunity to influence the development of a students' worldview; however, this also comes with a responsibility to respect the cultural values of the group so as to minimise the harm that dissonance within the students' worldview may bring.

Due to the nature of socioscientific issues, it is likely that two students may come to opposing conclusions about a particular issue, such conclusions are ultimately moral judgements that are the result of conscious thought and that reflect the individual's notion of right and wrong (Haidt, 2001). Through sound reasoning and the use of established ethical frameworks, general consensus and confidence in an ethical decision can be established (Reiss, 1999),

Research by Saunders (2009) and Yap (2012) have demonstrated the usefulness of ethical frameworks for teaching socioscientific issues. These two researchers used ethical frameworks, such as rights and duties, utilitarianism, autonomy, and virtue ethics, to guide students in their ability to critically reflect and analyse socioscientific issues and to make rational decisions that reflect their own ethical values. When combined with teacher

An appreciation of the role that formal schooling can have in shaping a student's worldview should give science educators reason to pause.

role-modelling of scientific reasoning, and through the creation of a collaborative and caring learning environment, the use of ethical frameworks can be a valuable strategy for teaching controversial issues in science (Reiss, 2008; Yap, 2012). Further to this, Saunders (2009) developed a model for ethical inquiry that incorporated ethical frameworks and which was successfully used to support science educators by providing them with a structural basis from which a unit of work involving ethical inquiry could be developed.

Reflections and strategies of a Science educator using Socioscientific Issues

As an active science classroom teacher, the author has utilised a number of strategies to effectively teach using the socioscientific framework including: maintaining an open and non-threatening environment, prior presentation of core knowledge, the use of debates and role playing, ethical frameworks, and media analysis. A consideration of each strategy follows.

Open and non-threatening environment

In any discussion about controversial issues it is important that students know that their views will be respected by both the teacher and the other students, otherwise they will be unwilling to share their views with the class. The development of an open and non-threatening environment is therefore a high priority when using a socioscientific framework in the classroom. Any open discussion about controversial issues needs to be bracketed with a clear statement made by the teacher asking students to respect the diverse views of the individuals within the class. Managing a group discussion about controversial topics is not necessarily an easy task for educators to implement with confidence (Osborne, Duschl & Fairbrother, 2002), for as Levinson (2004) points out, "science teachers tend to take an 'authoritative-non-dialogic approach" (p. 367).

Teachers may first need to develop the trust of their students by starting with less emotionally sensitive issues, such as the use of wind turbines, before approaching more divisive issues like those that require an examination of genetically modified organisms or Preimplantation Genetic Screening (PGS). It is also helpful for the students to see that the teacher is willing to show vulnerability by sharing their own views and the reasons for them. Such disclosure must of course be done with humility and caution so as not to place the teachers view as 'the right conclusion', but rather that of another voice in the debate. Ultimately the individual teacher must develop the skills of guiding classroom discourse

that respects the differing views of the students while still gently forcing them to question and analyse the presuppositions and ethical decision making that brought them to a conclusion about the issue being examined.

Understanding of the science behind the issue

While Sadler and Zeidler (2005) have shown that content knowledge may have a limited influence on students' final decision making about controversial issues in science, an appropriate level of scientific understanding is necessary for students to understand the issue and engage with the topic using appropriate ideas and terminology. A useful activity is to pre-poll students' opinions about a socioscientific issue and then get them to revisit the issue after learning more about the topic. This provides students with an opportunity to reflect on how understanding the science may have modified their ethical thinking.

Debates and role playing

The use of debates has a long tradition in teaching and this technique of exploring socioscientific issues is useful as it forces students to understand the topic and present an argument from a position that they may disagree with. An alternative method to achieve similar results is the use of role playing using the ABC's Q&A approach. In this example five to ten students would be given the fictional biography of a stakeholder in the issue being examined. While the audience (the rest of the class) asks questions of the panel each panel member must reply from the perspective of the biography they were provided with, all controlled by the teacher acting as moderator of the panel. This approach is in tune with the socioscientific framework and the Australian curriculum which calls upon students to examine issues from the perspective of other community members. Such panels can be both fun and insightful for the students, however it does require time for the students to research how a particular community member might feel about different issues. This is best done as a group with one member stepping up to join the panel and the remainder joining the 'audience'.

Ethical frameworks

Depending on the year level of students involved a number of different ethical frameworks can be explored. The typical pedagogy of the author is to present these ethical frameworks with a short definition and explanation, a description of the strengths and weaknesses of each, followed by a series of guiding questions that are important to that particular ethical framework. Table 1 describes

> " *The development of an open and non-threatening environment is … a high priority when using a socio-scientific framework in the classroom.* "

the ethical frameworks and the guiding questions typically used by the author. Most of these definitions and guiding questions were initially developed by The New Zealand Biotechnology Learning Hub (2011) which also provides a range of quality online resources for teaching ethical reasoning within a science context (http://biotechlearn.org.nz/). The definition and questions for the Christian ethical framework were adapted from a study guide produced by Gowing (2011) for the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

The development of a specific Christian ethical

Table 1: Ethical Frameworks and guiding questions

Ethical Framework	Guiding questions
Deontological Ethics What is right and wrong is what some authority says is right and wrong. This authority is sometimes referred to as the 'Ultimate reality' or 'God', but could be the laws or rules in a community.	Who or what has authority? How can the authority's will be known? What is the authority's will in this matter? (provide evidence) Who or what is under this authority?
Consequentialism* Weigh the benefits and harms resulting from our actions. Egoism: good for me Altruism: Good for someone else Utilitarianism: The most good for the most people.	Who or what is affected by this issue? What are the possible benefits for those affected? What are the possible harms for those affected? Which option(s) will produce the most good and the least harm? If one is harmed and another benefits, how do you decide who or what matters most?
Rights and Responsibilities* Rights and Responsibilities are closely related: the rights of one imply the responsibilities (or duties) of another to ensure those rights.	Who/what is affected by this issue? Which groups have rights associated with this issue? What are their rights? Do these same groups also have responsibilities? What are their responsibilities? Do we value some rights more than others? Whose rights do we want to protect? Do any codes, declarations and/or conventions relate to this issue?
Autonomy* Autonomy recognises the right to choose for yourself.	Who/what is affected by this issue? What effects might my choice have on others? What effects might others' choices have on me? Does everyone have to do the same thing? Will this cause problems? What is informed consent? Is it important here?
Virtue ethics* A virtue is something that the community accepts as being 'good', such as honesty, kindness and patience. Virtue ethics emphasise decisions that are in line with these characteristics.	Who/what is affected by this issue? What qualities make someone a 'good' or virtuous person? What decisions/actions in relation to this issue would make you a 'good' person? What people would agree that these decisions/actions are 'good'? What people would disagree that these decisions/actions are 'good'?
Christian Ethics** "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 (NIV) To determine what is 'good' or loving in a given situation, we must remember to seek the goal of mutually loving relationships. The Christian ethical principle should always be one of mutually loving relationships.	What are the relationships? What are the obligations to those relationships? What understandings and reflections do we have from the Bible? Are the situations directly addressed in the Bible? If they are not addressed in the Bible, what are the areas of theology that impact our thinking about the issue?

*Definitions and guiding questions adapted from Using Ethical Frameworks in the Classroom (The New Zealand Biotechnology Learning Hub, 2011)
**Definitions and guiding questions adapted from Developing a Christian Ethic (Gowing, 2011, p. 15).

> *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*

framework is problematic as the range of approaches to Christian ethics is as broad as the range of beliefs within Christian theology. It is the opinion of the author that a Christian ethic is expressed in the choice of ethical frameworks that are selected for a given issue and the decisions made whilst implementing those frameworks. Nevertheless, a Christian ethical framework based on 'Micah 6:8' has been included and provides a useful starting point for exploring a specific Christian ethical framework.

Students should be encouraged to utilise a range of different ethical frameworks, as some issues are better navigated with one framework than with another. Students can be asked to justify their decision to use the selected framework as well as attempt counter arguments using the same or a different framework, possibly from a different cultural or religious perspective. As the students become more proficient in using ethical frameworks the beliefs embedded in their worldview naturally start to reveal themselves. With appropriate questioning and discussion these beliefs can be drawn out, examined and compared with the beliefs of others in the classroom.

> *Students should be encouraged to utilise a range of different ethical frameworks, as some issues are better navigated with one framework than with another.*

Media analysis

The use of a media article from a newspaper, magazine, blog or news broadcast can be an engaging way for students to explore socioscientific issues. Careful selection of the media article, which could be written or multimodal, is required. Some consideration should be given to the length of the article, if too short it may lack the detail necessary for students to gain an appreciation of the issue, if too long the student may get bored or distracted by unnecessary detail. The article must also be at an appropriate reading age and be free of unfamiliar jargon and concepts that may limit the reader's ability to comprehend the issue being addressed. Typically, a student would be asked to identify and summarise the main ethical contentions in the article, identify who or what is affected by this issue and then utilise an ethical framework to make an argument outlining their opinions about the issue. When students are familiar with a range of ethical frameworks they can be directed to use a specific framework to argue for a given position on the issue. As an extension, the students understanding of ethical frameworks can be further tested by asking them to identify any biases in the reporting and the ethical frameworks utilised by the author of the media article. Discussions about why the author may have selected a specific ethical framework and whether it has been appropriately and convincingly used may provide students with an insight into their own and their classmates' worldview.

Conclusion

The implementation of SSI into the science curriculum is not without some challenges, however there is also much to be gained. To appropriately address socioscientific issues many science teachers will need to gain a better understanding of ethics and ethical arguments. Teachers may also lack the skills to teach ethical issues (Driver et al., 2000; Levinson, 2004), including how to manage classroom discussion about controversial issues and teach from a worldview perspective. Teaching with an awareness of the worldview of students in the classroom can be challenging as it demands that teachers respect students as thinking individuals, while also exposing students to a variety of alternative modes of explaining, so that students can test their personal views against other views (Proper, Wideen, & Ivany, 1988).

Additional professional development may be required to fill this gap in knowledge and professional practise, however the gains could be significant. Improvement in understanding of science content and the nature of science, along with improvement in argumentation skills and moral reasoning are of significant value, but of greater importance may be the opportunity to explore real world application of the student's faith beliefs and to develop students that have integrity in their ethical decision making such that it is in tune with their religious beliefs. TEACH

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Tim Pope asserts he is "imbedded" primarily in the world of secondary education [as a secondary teacher and administrator] but confides academic research remains a small, if not passionate, pastime. This article emerges from reflections upon his doctoral research studies that were conducted through Curtin University while in full time employment. He continues to challenge students' to resolve emerging ethical conflicts within current issues with informed understanding of their worldview. He invites colleagues into a dialogue about further developing classroom strategies and theoretical perceptions in this area.

> *of greater importance may be the opportunity to explore real world application of the student's faith beliefs and to develop students that have integrity in their ethical decision making*

TEACH[R]

Wellbeing education for educators

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of a 10-week multimodal wellbeing intervention (The Lift Project) on pre-service teachers' personal wellbeing and their perceptions of the value of the intervention when embedded into their course of study. Ninety-two percent of the 103 students (20.1±3.0 yrs, 29 males/74 females) indicated that the intervention positively influenced their wellbeing. Significant improvements were observed in all domains of wellbeing measured, including: perceived physical health (5.1%, p<0.001), physical health behaviours (7.4%, p<0.001), mental health (16.3%, p<0.001), vitality (18.9%, p<0.001), spirituality (4.4%, p<0.01), and life satisfaction (7.1%, p<0.001). Further, significant reductions were recorded in symptoms of depression (-30.6%, p<0.001), anxiety (-34.9%, p<0.001) and stress (-23.3%, p<0.001). The pre-service teachers indicated that the intervention would equip them to support the wellbeing of their future students. The findings of the study suggest that meaningful improvements can be achieved in the wellbeing of pre-service teachers by embedding experiential studies of wellbeing into pre-service teacher education.

> *teachers suffer significant challenges to their wellbeing with up to 30% being affected by burnout … resulting in up to 40% … leaving the profession in under five years of service*

Introduction

Within the Australian education sector there is a growing interest in the promotion of student wellbeing. This interest has resulted in the development of the Wellbeing Frameworks for Schools by the NSW Government (2015) as well as initiatives by non-governmental not-for-profits such as Wellbeing in Schools Australia (n. d.).

While numerous factors contribute to student wellbeing, McCallum and Price (2010) suggest that one important determinant is the wellbeing of the teachers. Alarmingly, numerous reports indicate that teachers suffer significant challenges to their wellbeing with up to 30% being affected by burnout and psychological distress (Milatz, Luftenegger, & Schober, 2015), resulting in up to 40% of teachers leaving the profession in under five years of service (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). Clearly, the promotion of teacher wellbeing is an imperative.

Avondale College of Higher Education is a private provider of pre-service teacher education. The institution is associated with the Seventh-day Adventist church, which has a rich heritage of advocating health and wellbeing. Accordingly, in 2016, when the education courses at Avondale were restructured, formal wellbeing education was embedded into the courses of study for pre-service teachers. Specifically, all pre-service teachers in their first year of study are required to undertake a subject titled 'Foundations of Wellbeing', that has the objective of experientially exploring a variety of evidence-based strategies for improving wellbeing.

To date, the wellbeing 'space' has primarily grown out of the 'Positive Psychology' movement, and hence has a psychological orientation. This is evidenced by initiatives such as 'Positive Education', initially piloted at Geelong Grammar under the guidance of Positive Psychology pioneer Professor Martin Seligman (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2011). Positive Education has been defined by the Australian Psychological Society as "applied Positive Psychology in education" (Green et al., 2011, p. 16) and involves a variety of strategies that aim to strengthen the wellbeing of students, staff and schools.

However, wellbeing is a broad construct that has more than just psychological underpinnings. For example, Positive Psychology interventions typically focus on psychological strategies such as expressing gratitude, reflecting on 'what went well' and activating signature strengths (Gander, Proyer, & Ruch, 2016; Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, & Ruch,

2015; Proyer, Wellenzohn, Gander, & Ruch, 2015; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) but do not include other important determinants of wellbeing such as physical activity (Blumenthal et al., 2007), nutrition (White, Horwath, & Conner, 2013), sleep (Neckelmann, Mykletun, & Dahl, 2007) and exposure to health-enhancing environments such as outdoor spaces (Nutsford, Pearson, & Kingham, 2013). These determinants of wellbeing belong to an emerging discipline referred to as 'Lifestyle Medicine'.

In the Foundations of Wellbeing subject at Avondale, the students are exposed to a variety of evidence-based approaches from both the disciplines of Positive Psychology and Lifestyle Medicine. The intent of the subject is to equip the future educators with skills to care for and grow their personal wellbeing in order to optimise their personal success and to equip them to be agents of change in the lives of their future students.

This study adopted a mixed methods approach to examine the impact of the subject on the pre-service teachers' wellbeing as well as their attitudes towards the subject.

Methods
Participants
A total of 127 students undertook the mandatory subject titled 'Foundations of Wellbeing' of which 103 (81%) consented to participate in the study, constituting of 29 males and 74 females with a mean age of 20.1 ± 3.0 years. Importantly, the students' grades for the subject were not linked to the outcomes of the study so as to avoid reporting bias. The study was approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics committee (approval number 2017:05) and the students provided informed consent to participate in the study.

Intervention
The Foundations of Wellbeing subject was conducted over a 13-week semester and included one weekly 1.5-hour interactive lecture. The first two weeks of the subject introduced the construct of wellbeing and then each week for the following 10 weeks (the intervention) the students were introduced to an evidence-based strategy for improving wellbeing from the Positive Psychology or Lifestyle Medicine literature.

For each of the 10 weeks of the intervention (The Lift Project) the students were given a small daily challenge and one larger weekly challenge that involved acting on the learning for the week. At the end of each week the students were invited to reflect on the impact of the challenges on their wellbeing and share their experiences with others both in and outside the class.

A novel approach of the Foundations of Wellbeing subject was that it used a Neuroscience underpinning to present the wellbeing-enhancing strategies covered in the intervention. Specifically, the intervention educated the students about their emotional brain (the Limbic system) and how the strategies presented in the intervention positively influenced this region of the brain. The reason for this focus on the emotional brain was that while wellbeing is a broad construct that involves several domains including physical, mental, social and spiritual health, it was rationalised that these domains ultimately support emotional wellbeing. Indeed, it has been asserted that 'wellbeing' is characterized by high levels of positive emotions, low levels of negative emotions and a high level of life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, & Sheldon, 2011), which highlights the predominance of emotional wellbeing.

An overview of the 10 weeks of the intervention, including the key messages and challenges, is outlined below:

Week 1: *Speak positively*
This session introduced the participants to their 'emotional brain'—the Limbic System—and described its basic function and structure. The influence of language on relationships was also explored, highlighting the work of John Gottman (Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan, & Ruckstuhl, 2000) and Marcial Losada (Losada, 1999), and the participants were challenged to 'speak positively' by offering a genuine compliment to someone each day for a week. The weekly challenge involved seeking out and memorising an inspirational quote or saying.

Week 2: *Move dynamically*
The proprioceptive influence of the body on the brain was presented and the mood-enhancing influence of good posture (Nair, Sagar, Sollers, Consedine, & Broadbent, 2015) and physical activity (Richards et al., 2015) were highlighted. The challenges for the week included reducing prolonged sit time and engaging in daily physical activity, including resistance exercise. Specifically, the students were challenged to undertake 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day or achieve 10,000 steps if they had access to a personal step counter. A video of a guided resistance exercise session that could be completed in their home environment with common house-hold items was provided to the students and they were encouraged to complete this two times during the week.

> *the intervention educated the students about their emotional brain (the Limbic system) and how the strategies … in the intervention positively influenced this region of the brain.*

Week 3: *Immerse in an uplifting physical environment*

The positive influence of natural environments on emotional wellbeing (Mantler & Logan, 2015), especially bright natural light (Vyssoki et al., 2012), was presented and the mechanisms through which it is mediated were discussed. The daily challenge involved the participants immersing themselves in a brightly lit natural environment for 30 minutes each day (ie. outdoors) and the weekly challenge involved seeing a sunrise in a natural setting.

Week 4: *Immerse in an uplifting social environment*

This session explored the socially contagious nature of depression and happiness (Fowler & Christakis, 2008) and the participants were asked to reflect upon their own relationships and the impact these had on their personal wellbeing. The participants were challenged to identify the 'love language' (Chapman, 1995) of someone close to them and proactively undertake one loving act each day for the week. The love languages, as described by Chapman (1995) include: offering words of affirmation, acts of service, (appropriate) physical touch, giving of gifts and spending quality time. The weekly challenge involved 'finding or forgiving a friend'. 'Finding a friend' was encouraged for those who had a limited social network and the challenge involved reaching out to inclusive community interest groups. 'Forgiving a friend' was the alternate weekly challenge and was encouraged for those who self-identified themselves as caught in cycles of forgiveness that were detrimental to their relationships. Forgiveness was defined as "giving up the right to hurt you for hurting me" (Tibbits, 2016) and was presented as a pathway to restoring relationships. It was acknowledged that forgiveness does not mean forgetting, condoning or excusing the consequences of a wrong action.

Week 5: *Look to the positive*

The interaction between thinking and feeling was explored (Garland et al., 2010) and the participants were guided toward looking to the positive in the past, present and future. The daily challenge involved the 'three good things in life' exercise described by Seligman and colleagues (Seligman et al., 2005) which involved journaling each evening three things that went well that day. The weekly challenge involved the 'Gratitude Visit' (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)—a commonly used Positive Psychology intervention—and involved identifying someone who in the past had a substantial positive effect on the participants' life, writing a few paragraphs about that person and their contribution, and then going to read it to the individual.

> "The daily challenge … involved journaling each evening three things that went well that day. The weekly challenge involved the 'Gratitude Visit' [to a mentor]"

Week 6: *Eat nutritiously*

The emerging evidence for gut-brain interaction, especially relating to the gut microbiome and its impact on mood (Mayer, 2011), was explored. In light of the connection between the consumption of fruit and vegetables and happiness (Blanchflower, Oswald, & Stewart-Brown, 2013), the daily challenge involved consuming eight serves of high-fibre, whole-foods each day. The weekly challenge involved preparing a plant-based meal and sharing it with someone. Recipes were made available to the participants.

Week 7: Rest *(sleep)*

The connection between sleep deprivation and depression (Neckelmann et al., 2007) was examined and the deleterious effect of exposure to 'blue' light in the evening (Bedrosian & Nelson, 2013), as emitted by screens, on sleep hygiene was presented. The daily challenge involved spending 8 hours in bed each night for a week without screen-based activity. The weekly challenge involved spending one evening by fire light, which is 'red/yellow' as compared to 'blue' and may promote sleep (Stothard et al., 2017).

Week 8: *Rest (destress)*

Numerous strategies for reducing stress were examined. The daily challenge involved taking 15 minutes each day to engage in an activity that promoted laughter or that involved being still and mindful (Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011). In the case that laughter promoting activities were chosen the participant was encouraged to seek out humorous internet-based video content, and links to appropriate content were provided. Mindfulness was described as "being more present" and the participants were instructed to choose either an external or internal mindfulness exercise. The external exercise involved sitting quietly in a natural outdoor environment and taking intent notice of their surroundings. The internal exercise involved sitting or lying still and taking notice of sensations in their body, especially with regards to muscle tension and breathing. The weekly challenge involved taking one entire day out—a Sabbath—from their usual activities of the week (ie. work or study).

Week 9: *Serve*

Evidence for the connection between serving and emotional wellbeing was presented as captured in the statement by Martin Seligman, former President of the American Psychological Association and pioneer of Positive Psychology: "Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable increase in wellbeing of any exercise we have tested" (Seligman,

2011, p.20). The daily challenge involved performing one random act of kindness each day for a week. The weekly challenge involved completing a signature strengths assessment and reflecting on ways to use these strengths in a new way for the benefit of others (Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, & Ruch, 2014).

Week 10: *What does it take to flourish?*
This concluding session overviewed Seligman's PERMA model that argues for five domains of wellbeing that according to the field of Positive Psychology contribute to human flourishing: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement (Seligman, 2011). There were no prescribed challenges from the session, however, the participants were encouraged to reflect on what gave their life meaning where meaning was defined as having a sense that they belonged to and contributed to something bigger than them self (Seligman, 2011).

Quantitative Measurements
The participants completed a wellbeing questionnaire at baseline and post-intervention that measured several domains of wellbeing (transposed to scores from 0 to 100) including:

1. *'Perceived physical health'* – derived from the subdomain by the same title from the validated 36-item Short Form Survey (SF-36) (RAND Health, 2017) and involved an aggregated score from six items.
2. *'Physical health behaviours'* – derived from eight items that asked about the participants' fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity levels, alcohol consumption, smoking and sleep hygiene.
3. *'Mental health'* and *'Vitality'* – derived from the subdomains by the same title from the validated 36-item Short Form Survey (RAND Health, 2017). The mental health subdomain involves five items and the vitality domain four items.
4. *'Depression', 'Anxiety'* and *'Stress'* - measured using the 21-item Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) that has been validated (Henry & Crawford, 2005). As implied, this instrument measures three domains—'depression', 'anxiety' and 'stress'—through seven items for each domain.
5. *'Spiritual'* – derived from five items that asked about the participants' spiritual practices and connection (Ohio State University, 2015)
6. *'Life satisfaction'* – derived from the five-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

Qualitative Measurements
On completion of the intervention the participants were asked the following open-ended questions:

> *Do you feel that your wellbeing changed over the course of the intervention? If so, what ways did it change and why did it change?*

> *Have you learnt anything over the course of the intervention that has better equipped you to care for your wellbeing in the future? If so, please explain.*

Data analyses
Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 22) and are expressed descriptively as mean and standard deviation. Changes in the nine contributors to wellbeing from baseline to post-intervention were analysed using paired t-tests. Cohen's d was also calculated for the baseline to post-intervention change in each contributor to determine effect size.

The open-ended questions were initially read over on several occasions before being coded (Creswell, 2014) and categorised into themes (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Results
In the open-ended questions, 92% of the participants reported that they felt that the intervention had a positive impact upon their wellbeing and this was the most dominant theme that emerged from the participants' open-ended responses.

Specifically, the participants felt that the skills and strategies they had learnt and experienced through the intervention equipped them to better care for their wellbeing into the future and make themselves more resilient. This was evidenced by quotes such as:

> *Over the course of this semester, I have learned a lot that will better equip me to care for my wellbeing now, in the future and also be able to share with others to help them care for their wellbeing (Participant 15).*

> *I am now able to overcome such situations and reduce my emotional distress by implementing strategies such as … learnt during the course. For this reason, I consider my wellbeing moderately high as I can now have more control over it (Participant 47).*

Furthermore, some participants indicated that they felt the learnings from the intervention prepared them to support their future students. For example:

> *Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable increase in wellbeing of any exercise we have tested*

Before doing the course, I used to struggle with depression and anxiety. My eyes have now been opened to how I can adapt my lifestyle to create a happier state of mind. When I become a teacher, I hope to be a figure that my students will be able to come to for advice, especially in relation to managing depression and anxiety (Participant 42).

The entire course has had a positive impact on my wellbeing. It has equipped me to be successful with the stresses that occur at University and I will take the things that I have learnt into my classroom when I become a teacher (Participant 67).

When I have my own classroom, I am going to try and adapt and incorporate this information into my lessons. I believe that it is important for young students to know this information when going through school (Participant 9).

Noteworthy, among those participants who did not report that the intervention improved their wellbeing, several indicated that they had experienced extenuating circumstances during the time-period of the intervention or that their wellbeing was very high at baseline so had little chance for improvement.

The positive impact of the intervention on the participants' wellbeing was further highlighted through the quantitative data. Table 1 displays the mean scores, and changes from baseline to post-intervention, of the nine measures of wellbeing measured in the study. As shown, significant improvements were observed in all measures, with moderate to large effect sizes recorded in some.

Analyses of the open-ended responses suggested three themes for why the participants felt that the intervention had resulted in a meaningful improvement in their wellbeing. These themes can be represented by: Consolidating, Challenging and Connecting.

Consolidating – the participant's felt that the intervention consolidated theory and practice. Participants commonly mentioned that they appreciated the neuroscience underpinning of the intervention that provided insights as to why the wellbeing enhancing strategies presented are efficacious. This is illustrated through quotes like:

My mother taught me that sunlight and exercise is good for your health and all the basic concepts, but in this class I was able to learn in deeper context the why of everything. It was very interesting to understand the way that our actions affect our brain. I loved learning about the (emotional brain) and how it works (Participant 23).

Challenging – the participants commonly reported benefitting from the experiential nature of the intervention that involved implementing learnings

> *Participants … appreciated the neuroscience underpinning of the intervention that provided insights as to why the wellbeing enhancing strategies … are efficacious.*

Table 1: Pre- to post-intervention changes in the measured domains of wellbeing

WELLBEING DOMAIN	PRE-TEST Mean	SD	POST-TEST Mean	SD	Change	Significance	% Change	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Perceived physical health	71.8	13.0	75.5	13.7	4	<0.001	5.1	0.28
Physical health behaviours	63.5	10.5	68.3	10.2	5	<0.001	7.4	0.46
Mental health	71.2	16.4	82.8	14.7	12	<0.001	16.3	0.75
Vitality	58.2	16.3	69.2	18.1	11	<0.001	18.9	0.64
Depression	14.9	16.1	10.3	12.8	-5	<0.001	-30.6	-0.32
Anxiety	15.1	14.7	9.8	11.1	-5	<0.001	-34.9	-0.41
Stress	24.4	15.5	18.7	14.5	-6	<0.001	-23.3	-0.38
Spiritual	73.1	20.1	76.3	21.1	3	0.004	4.4	0.16
Life satisfaction	74.6	16.3	79.9	15.1	5	<0.001	7.1	0.34

Notes:
1. Each domain is transposed to a score out of 100.
2. SD – Standard deviation.

and moving from theory to practice. This was evident through quotes like:

> (Previously) I had hit a massive roadblock, causing my mental health to derail and suffer. However, this quickly changed when the challenges of this class were given; forcing me to look to the positive, and realise the things and the people I am blessed with every day. I found myself being a lot more positive (Participant 14).

> Whenever I completed the challenges properly it really benefitted my life in many different ways (Participant 88).

Connecting – the participants enjoyed the social nature of the intervention as well as the emphasis on sharing what they were learning with others from within their circle of influence. For example:

> I have come home from class each week and shared these interesting facts with my family and made sure that they too are putting these life lessons into practice (Participant 19).

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that meaningful improvements in the wellbeing of pre-service teachers can be achieved through experiential wellbeing education embedded into their course of study.

The high percentage of participants (92%) who reported positive outcomes of the intervention is encouraging and the quantitative data is especially noteworthy. Bolier et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 39 randomized controlled trials that examined the effectiveness of strategies from the Positive Psychology literature and reported mean effect sizes of 0.20 and 0.23 for changes in psychological wellbeing and depression, respectively. Similarly, Blumenthal and colleagues (2007) reported an effect size of 0.20 for the impact of an exercise intervention on depressive symptoms. Clearly, a limitation of the quantitative aspect of this study is the lack of a control group to account for factors such as the Hawthorne effect, regression to the mean and placebo effect. Notwithstanding, the significant improvement in all the domains of wellbeing measured in this study, especially with the high effect sizes recorded in some domains, coupled with the relatively large sample size of the study, renders the outcomes noteworthy.

The substantially larger effect sizes observed in the present study, especially in the domains of 'mental health' (cohen's d = 0.75) and 'vitality'

(cohen's d = 0.64), suggest a compounding of the benefits of the various strategies incorporated into the intervention administered in the present study. This is an important finding of the study and indicates that when designing interventions for improving mental health and wellbeing, a multimodal approach is warranted. Indeed, the intervention used in this study was quite unique in the way that it blended strategies from both the disciplines of Positive Psychology and Lifestyle Medicine, and the findings of this study suggest that it is most efficacious and therefore this approach should be more widely used.

Several other learnings also arise from this study with regards to designing wellbeing interventions for optimal effectiveness. Firstly, given that a common theme reported by the participants was that the consolidation of theory and practice made the intervention more meaningful and engaging, attests to the importance of wellbeing interventions being evidence-based and having a scientific rationale for the wellbeing-enhancing strategies they present. Secondly, the value placed by the participants on the challenging nature of the intervention highlights the importance of making wellbeing interventions experiential. Finally, the element of social connection is important and hence it is important that wellbeing interventions promote social interaction, either with fellow participants in the intervention or with others from within the participants' circle of influence. Indeed, Fowler & Christakis (2008) demonstrated that wellbeing is socially contagious, even up to three degrees of separation.

It is hypothesised that the insights gained through this study, relating to the core components that should be included in wellbeing education programs for pre-service teachers, are also translatable to practicing teachers. Indeed, in light of the positive outcomes achieved in the present study, further investigation examining the effectiveness of the intervention among practicing teachers is warranted. As previously highlighted, practicing teachers face significant challenges to their wellbeing, characterised by high levels of burnout and associated attrition rates (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). Further, poor teacher wellbeing is associated with high levels of absenteeism and compromised job performance, and also has financial implications as a result of increased health care costs and mental health claims (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). It is unremarkable therefore that teacher wellbeing impacts student wellbeing (McCallum & Price, 2010).

Clearly the goal of a wellbeing intervention is to resource participants for long-lasting improvements in their wellbeing. As the intervention used in this study was only conducted over 10 weeks, a follow-up study is planned to determine whether the intervention resulted in long-term benefits. While

the intervention … was … unique in the way that it blended strategies from … Positive Psychology and Lifestyle Medicine, and findings … suggest that it is most efficacious

it is acknowledged that some of the challenges in the intervention do not lend themselves to being performed regularly, such as the 'gratitude visit', others behaviours do, such as increasing exercise levels, eating more plant-based foods and focusing on 'what went well'. Further research is therefore needed to better understand how to facilitate the retention of these behaviours introduced in the intervention and how to mitigate recidivism. For example, the effect of including wellbeing studies throughout a pre-service teachers' entire course of study, as compared to a single subject, would be valuable.

Lyubomirsky and colleagues (2011) concluded that interventions designed to increase wellbeing require both a 'will and a proper way'. Assuming the intervention adopted in the present study constituted a 'proper way'—being based on sound pedagogical and behavioural frameworks and incorporating evidence-based wellbeing enhancing strategies—an important area of study is how to leverage the 'will' of participants in order to optimise outcomes. It is pertinent that the participants in this study undertook the intervention as a mandatory part of their course of study. The study sample could therefore be assumed to include individuals with varying levels of 'will'. It would be beneficial for future studies to measure the participants' readiness for change at the beginning of the intervention, as a surrogate for their baseline 'will', to explore its impact on both their level of engagement with the intervention and the outcomes achieved. An investigation of strategies for engaging the 'will' is also warranted, and may include: offering frequent feedback, follow-up reminders and encouragement to participants in the form of text messages or other media; boosting social connectedness and interaction through a dedicated social media portal in which the participants document and share their experiences; incorporating gamification strategies and rewards through the awarding of points for the successful completion of challenges.

> *Providing wellbeing education to pre-service teachers may not only better equip them to care for their own wellbeing, but also enable them to be positive agents of change in the school*

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that meaningful improvements in the wellbeing of pre-service teachers can be achieved through a multimodal intervention that is embedded into their course of study. Providers of pre-service teacher education should therefore consider the inclusion of wellbeing studies into their scope of subject offerings. Wellbeing education should be evidence-based, experiential and promote social connectedness. Providing wellbeing education to pre-service teachers may not only better equip them to care for their own wellbeing, but also enable them to be positive agents of change in the school setting. All educators should be wellbeing educators. TEACH

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Author information:

Dr Morton is recognised as an international authority in Lifestyle Medicine, being an inaugural Fellow of the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine and one of four people selected worldwide to write the exam for Board Certification in Lifestyle Medicine for Physicians in the United States. Presently he is the Course Convenor for Postgraduate Studies in Lifestyle Medicine at Avondale. He was a key developer of, and is a presenter in, the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) which is a premier Lifestyle Medicine intervention targeting chronic diseases that now operates in over 10 countries around the world. Darren is a recipient of a government-awarded Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in Higher Education. For fun Darren enjoys family time and outdoor activities.

Dr Jason Hinze is a lecturer and Secondary Course Convenor at Avondale College of Higher Education. For the past 20 years he has made significant contributions towards Education as a Secondary Teacher, Community Educator and Initial Teacher Educator in Australia, Cambodia, England, India and Nepal. His current research interests include wellbeing education and the power of overseas professional teaching experiences on the development of pre-service teachers. Most of Jason's free time is spent playing 'hide and seek' with his two daughters (both still under three) and reading children's books using funny voices with the help of his wife Melissa.

THE ELLA BOYD SISTERHOOD

By Adelaide Parkin

LIVING IN THE WOMEN'S RESIDENCE AT AVONDALE GOOD FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I made one of the best decisions of my life two-and-a-half years ago. I enrolled to study as an on-campus student at Avondale College of Higher Education and moved across the country to join the vibrant Ella Boyd Hall community. I've found my place in the women's residence. New-found friends - who come from near and far - are now like family. They've helped me develop a stronger spiritual life, too.

In addition to our personal devotions, we meet together on Sunday evenings to worship and learn more about women in the Bible such as Rachel, Ruth, Naomi and Esther. We're encouraged to bring new interpretations to the stories.

Our monthly residence-wide worships are also a fun way to engage with the stories while building a sense of sisterhood.

Another great initiative: the War Room. This provides a space where we can escape busyness and pray for our needs and the needs of others while thanking God for all He has done. Notes under the headings "Prayer Requests" and "Prayers Answered" decorate the wall. It's encouraging to see the notes move from being requests for prayer to becoming answers to prayer. The residential assistant on duty visits the War Room to pray over the notes in particular and for the residence in general each morning.

A retreat hosted by the residents earlier this year—a morning worship service then afternoon program—built a closer sense of community. Inspiration for the theme, Gathered in His Name, came from Hebrews 10:24-25: "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near" (NLT).

The implications are clear: we're to build relationships with our sisters in Christ, encouraging rather than judging each other, so Ella Boyd becomes a place where we gather to focus on God rather than on ourselves.

My spiritual journey began before I came to college, but it's progressed immensely since I began living in Ella Boyd.

Avondale
COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Avondale creates community for Christian early childhood educators in Australia

Kaye Judge
Lecturer in Education (Early Childhood), Discipline of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

Brenton Stacey
Public Relations Officer, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

Avondale has helped establish the first association for Christian early childhood educators in Australia at an inaugural conference organised and hosted by its Discipline of Education. The inter-denominational Australian Christian Early Childhood Educators Association (ACECEA) will bring academics and practitioners together to network, collaborate on research and promote informed practice. "We recognise a key strength will be unity of purpose," says Kaye Judge, a lecturer in education (early childhood) at Avondale.

The vote to form the association came on the Friday of the eponymous conference (September 7-9). Judge and colleagues Beverley Christian and Sandra Ludlow used the arts in general and music in particular to build a sense of community among the 40 delegates—and to nurture their creative spirit—before the vote.

Photographer Dr Maurice Ashton, for example, created a slide presentation of birds from the local

Conference presenters included Kaye Judge, Elna Hale (Avondale Business School), Djuna O'Hern (Macquarie College Early Learning Centre), Jodi Humphries (ASA Encounters Curriculum), and Demi McCarthy (Avondale B Ed ECE Student - IT support).

area as a reminder of "the blessings that deserve our attention and the attention of the children in our care." Activist Lynette Holschier donated four portraits of children—one of an Aborigine, one of a Pacific islander, one of an African and one of a Syrian refugee—as a reminder of "the diversity of God's children whom we serve."

Julie Wylie, Director of Musical Play and Senior Music Specialist at Burwood Hospital's Champion Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand, introduced delegates to the language of music and presented music-only workshops featuring nothing but singing, sounds and dance. Her keynote, "Help me to sing my song," featured stories about musical play and its role in helping children with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Kylie Stacey, author of the *Playful Worship* series of books, demonstrated how to create loving experiences through music.

This focus on the arts—including the use of cards in each workshop venue with biblical messages of encouragement—as a "pre-suasive" technique will be a focus of future conferences.

Judge, Christian and Ludlow introduced at the conference a methodology called communities of practice. They hope this learning as social participation will help maintain a sense of unity of purpose as academics and practitioners "develop and implement pedagogical approaches where love is central to our belonging, being and becoming in community with children and families."

Four recurring themes—leading, exploring, creating and flourishing—provided not only the framework for the conference but also ideas for communities of practice.

Dr Darren Morton from the Lifestyle Research Centre at Avondale presented a seven-step wellbeing plan for early childhood leaders.

> *The inter-denomi-national … ACECEA will bring academics and practitioners together to network, collaborate on research and promote informed practice.*

Counsellor Kristin Thompson encouraged delegates to be the hands of Jesus by recognising their work as fulfilling His command to provide food for the hungry, water for the thirsty and hospitality to those "imprisoned" behind the gates of children's services. "The question, 'What does it really mean to feed a child?' challenged us," says Judge. "Do we give children our full attention in the moment of feeding? Do we feed them with our hearts, our minds and our state of being present in each moment with them?"

Marion Shields (Avondale Lecturer) and Deb Williams the Director of Hillsong Early Learning Services, two Avondale PhD candidates, gave presentations on critical leadership issues for the future development of Christian early childhood education practice in Australia.

Other presenters addressed leadership culture and how nature speaks God's language to children. One demonstrated how to use children's voices to share biblical stories.

Two Avondale students even presented workshops based on their experience in early childhood centres: Rachel Dunleavy addressed the needs of foster children and their families and Elna Hale education for sustainability and Christianity.

A Portraits of Practice strand in workshops and tours gave delegates firsthand and hands-on experience—they participated in spiritual weaving and visited the Avondale, Macquarie College and St Brendan's Lake Munmorah Early Learning Centres and the Narnia Christian Preschool and Early Childhood Centre at St Philip's Christian College in Newcastle.

A Middle East-themed agape feast with a reader's theatre demonstrated the power of ritual and sacrament for reflection and connection. And morning and afternoon teas—or pedagogical cafes—encouraged delegates to share their love of children and of the early childhood education in "planned and unplanned creative collisions."

The conference ended with a high tea that also served as a commissioning for the delegates.

Judge received a message of support from the National Coordinator of ACECEA's sister association, Christian Early Childhood Educators Association of Aotearoa. "May you grow in wisdom and in numbers, and may you have a clear sense of where God is leading and what He is requiring of you all as an organisation," wrote Thelma Chapman.

ACECEA will appoint officers, including a national coordinator, by the end of this year.

Editor's Note: For additional information contact **Kaye Judge**, Lecturer in Education (Early Childhood), Discipline of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW. Kaye.Judge@avondale.edu.au

> " *fulfilling His command to provide food for the hungry, water for the thirsty and hospitality to those "imprisoned" behind the gates of children's services.* "

Author information:
Robyn Priestley is co-author/editor of *Dearest Folks: Letters Home From a Missionary Wife and Mother*. Now retired, she lectured in history at Avondale College of Higher Education for almost 40 years. Her areas of greatest interest are in social history, particularly women's history and families; she has also specialised in the history of the English Reformation and the political and social dynamics of revolutions.

Editor's Notes:
1. Are you looking for a book to read to your students that shares how God is always present, guiding, strengthening and protecting? Is the inspiration of mission adventure something you wish to share with the girls (OK, boys too) in your class? You may purchase *Dearest Folks: Letters Home From a Missionary Wife and Mother* from Adventist Book Centres and hopeshop.com.

2. Are you aware of the mission history resource – *Journal of Pacific Adventist History?* It is available online at www.spd.adventist.org/journal-of-pacific-history
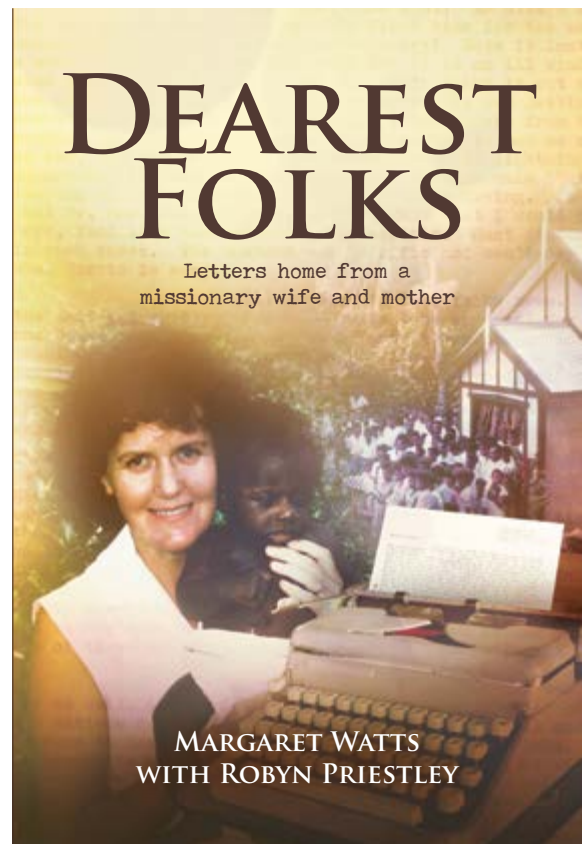
History in the details: A historian reflects on the value of letters

Robyn Priestly

Retired, Senior Lecturer in History, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

Key words: Letters, historical sources, missionary wife, family life

The humble letter proved a communication lifeline for Avondale alumna and missionary Margaret Watts between 1956 and 1966. She wrote letters almost every week to family and friends. For four years, the letters came from Redcliffe Mission Station on the island of Aobe in the New Hebrides, and for the last six years they came from Inus Mission Station on the island of Bougainville in the Territory of New Guinea. *Dearest Folks: Letters Home From a Missionary Wife and Mother* publishes almost 100 of these surviving letters, mostly from mid-1964 onwards.

Letters are an invaluable resource to historians, especially if they are written with no intended audience beyond those to whom they are addressed. They preserve a wealth of information, since memory recalls the big or traumatic events at the expense of the mundane and familial. Once the biases of the letters are understood, they offer a clearer account of situations—as they were understood by the writer—than can be obtained in any other way.

In the case of the letters in Dearest Folks, the bias is, in Margaret's own words, "for those at home to share in the thrill of mission service with us and feel part of our day-to-day family life as it unfolded during our years on remote mission stations. It was especially with the grandparents in mind as they would be missing the children's early years and unable to interact in their lives."

Letters preserve a wealth of information, since memory recalls the big or traumatic events at the expense of the mundane and familial. Once the biases of letters are understood, they offer a clearer account of situations—as they were understood by the writer—than can be obtained in any other way.

In the letters, we have an account of life on the islands of Aobe and Bougainville that has an immediacy and unselfconsciousness that makes it unique and invaluable. The letters cover a range of everyday events, family life and medical crises and treatments. The letters also include details of relationships with the mission station communities, neighbouring villagers, expatriate families and members of other Christian groups. Some of the detail might seem trivial, but respect for the value of the resource makes it important not to leave out details that could only ever be captured once, and in this way.

The letters also provide a glimpse of the last years of colonial life on Bougainville. This glimpse is limited mainly to the Seventh-day Adventist and expatriate communities. Its value, though, lies in the insights it gives into a culture and way of life that was not only changed by the passage of time, but also swept away violently by the brutality and disruption of civil war.

We are all shaped by our stories and our memories of them. Every story is important to the person to which it belongs, but many are also important to the communities from which they come. If the stories are not told, their absence creates a collective amnesia and, in Adventist mission history, this has often been a forgetfulness of the roles of mission wives and children.

The stories of Adventist missionaries in the South Pacific have been related for many years and several important recollections have been published recently, but none have been written with the intention of primarily recreating the family life of the missionaries. The letters preserved in this book provide an opportunity to put flesh and bones to the story of one of the many women who went willingly when their husbands were "called" to the adventure of mission service. Their stories are assumed to be known but are usually subsumed silently into the larger mission story without detail, and often without acknowledgment.

This omission has already been noted with concern by some of those who have written accounts of Adventist mission in the Pacific. Rose-Lee Power, the Adventist Church in the South Pacific's archivist and Curator of the Adventist Heritage Centre, has initiated a project to collect and preserve information on the role and contribution of women in the mission work of the South Pacific. The letters in *Dearest Folks* will be a valuable resource in this attempt to understand the contribution of women to Adventist mission in the South Pacific.

> *Letters preserve a wealth of information, since memory recalls the big or traumatic events at the expense of the mundane and familial.*

Stories from Sunnyside: Where it began

John Skrzypaszek
Director of the Ellen G White/Seventh-Day Adventist Research Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

> *Finding the authenticity of the prophetic voice in not just speech but acts of God's love*

Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneer Ellen White's connection with Australia commenced with a vision she received on April 1, 1874. She referred to it as an "impressive dream in which the messenger said, 'You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. . . . You must take broader views. The message will go in power to all parts of the world, to Oregon, to Europe, to Australia, to the islands of the sea.'" Fifteen years later, at the age of 64, she arrived in Sydney in December, 1891.

Politically orchestrated circumstances brought Ellen White to this distant land. Reflecting on the purpose of her journey, she said, "This morning my mind is anxious and troubled in regard to my duty, can it be the will of God that I go to Australia? This involves a great deal for me. I have not special light to leave America for this far-off country. Nevertheless, if I knew it was the voice of God, I would go."[1] The depth of her personal experience with God and confidence in His leading prevailed. She wrote, "I am presenting the case before the Lord, and I believe He will guide me."[2]

In 1894, providential guidance brought her to Cooranbong, a little village with a timber-cutting industry, a Catholic church, a school, a police station and a courthouse, where during the 1880s the population reached about 700 residents. In the context of the "impressive dream," Cooranbong was a speck in the vast ocean of human life. Following the Seventh-day Adventists' acquisition of the 1500 acres (600 hectares) to set up the education system, Ellen White built her home—named "Sunnyside"—where she resided from 1896 to 1900.

About five years ago, I noticed a lack of stories relating to Ellen White's experiences of these years written from an Australian perspective. I envisioned stories and images from this past that transmitted the emotions of the life lived in all its fullness—stories that shaped a legacy. With this in mind, I asked my administrative assistant Marian de Berg to commence the research and collection of data from letters, manuscripts and other resources.

Marian's 29-year experience and love for details equipped her with an in-depth knowledge of the subject. For the past 12 years, she has offered excellent support and assistance to my work as director of the Ellen G White/Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre. During this time, I have also observed her flair as a writer, so I challenged her to write a book. From my office desk, I often watched her unreserved passion and commitment to the task, and it is my pleasure to see the final product.

Stories from Sunnyside does not provide an explanatory framework of Ellen White's prophetic role, nor a theological charter for argumentative debates. It recalls the narratives in the life of a person engrossed in the depth of God's love. It recalls the memories, the colours and the sounds highlighting qualities such as personal uniqueness, giftedness and value. Perhaps it's in the places where the rubber meets the road that one finds the authenticity of the prophetic voice—a voice that does not only speak but acts the part of God's extended hands in the community.

The depth and simplicity of these stories touch my heart. The selected stories link with human experience, the story of our heritage. They recall the images of a person who translated God's love into practical Christian experience. Perhaps here one finds the heart of the impressive dream. I suggest it's not just another book, but a set of life-inspiring narratives challenging us to take a decisive step not only to read the story but to make those images ours.

References
1. Manuscript 44, 1891.
2. Letter 57, 1891.

Editor's Note:
Sunnyside is open for visits between 2:00pm to 4:00pm on Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Special visits and group visits (more than 10) are welcomed and can be arranged for other times by appointment.

Telephone (Office): +61 2 4980 2138
    (Sunnyside): +61 2 4977 2501

Introducing Sunnyside

Marian de Berg

Administrative Assistant at the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education and author of Stories from Sunnyside

As an administrative assistant working at the Ellen G White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre at Avondale College of Higher Education for the past two decades, I've been privileged to read Ellen White's correspondence and manuscripts. She wrote a large portion of her writings, particularly those on the life of Jesus, while living in Australia. I've been encouraged and moved by her life's journey while she lived in Cooranbong, a town near Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, where Avondale is located. Her correspondence during this time reveals Ellen White as a caring Christian woman giving her all to the work of the gospel.

She had a broad vision for the Adventist Church's work in Australia and was instrumental in helping establish Avondale—the Avondale School for Christian Workers, as it was originally known. The purchase of the bush land for the school came when Seventh-day Adventist membership in Australia had not yet reached 1000.

For the past six years, I've also been actively involved in various ways with her Australian home—"Sunnyside." I lead group tours for those ranging from Year 1 students to retirees. I train volunteers and organise a roster each month. Visitors come from all around the world to see the home Ellen White built and lived in for six years in the 1890s.

This is the background to my book *Stories from Sunnyside*. It's not a scholarly work, but it draws significantly on letters and other materials she wrote while in Australia. To this extent, the stories draw on primary source materials, which will be of interest to scholars of Adventist history in particular, and religious history in general.

Ellen White was born in Gorham, Maine, on November 26, 1827, and died peacefully at her "Elmshaven" home in California, USA, on July 16, 1915, at 87 years of age. During her lifetime, she ministered to many people in homes, churches and camp-meetings around the world. She lived in Basel, Switzerland, for two years in the mid-1880s and in November, 1891 set sail for Australia, intending to spend a similar amount of time assisting the newly developing church in the South Pacific. However, her stay—in Australia and New Zealand—lasted nine years, from 1891 to 1900.

The stories in *Stories from Sunnyside* come from this period, with particular emphasis on Ellen White's everyday activities at "Sunnyside" from 1895 to August, 1900, and her travels to various camp-meetings and speaking appointments. From the time she arrived in Australia, she travelled extensively along the east coast of Australia, from Rockhampton in Queensland to Hobart in Tasmania. She also ventured as far west as Adelaide in South Australia and spent 10 months on the North Island of New Zealand.

The colonisation of Australia began in January, 1788, when the British established a penal colony at Sydney Cove. The First Fleet of 11 ships left the shores of Great Britain on May 13, 1787, and arrived at Sydney Cove in mid-January, 1788. Free settlers arrived as early as January, 1793. By the 1890s, Australia was a group of six British colonies: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. It was not until January 1, 1901, that these states became an independent nation under Federation to become the Commonwealth of Australia. Queen Victoria, the reigning British monarch, was Australia's Head of State. By 1900, Australia's population had almost reached four million.

Transportation around the country was rough. Roads needed attention after rain and carriage wheels created deep ruts. Boats reeked of cigar smoke, and train engines spat out smoke and cinders onto people and clothing through the open carriage windows.

Seventh-day Adventism reached Australia in 1885, only six years before Ellen White arrived. There was a six-day working week, with Sunday considered sacred and a financial depression had hit hard with banks foreclosing many properties. Most working converts to Adventism lost their jobs for refusing to work on Sabbaths. Many of these had large families to support and wanted to build churches so they could worship on the seventh day. Young men and husbands were also being sent from Australia to South Africa to fight in the Boer War.

Times have changed dramatically over the past 100 years, from the horse and buggy era of Ellen White's time in Australia, to motorised vehicles, airplanes and ships. In *Stories from Sunnyside*, I

> *the stories draw on primary source materials, which will be of interest to scholars of Adventist history in particular, and religious history in general.*

invite you to come back in time with me and re-live Ellen White's life "down under" and the blessings she brought to this fledgling group of believers.

Truly, we can say her life here in Australia was an living example of Matthew 25: 35—40. Her farewells potentially included , "I was hungry … I was thirsty … I was a stranger … I needed clothes … I was sick … I was in prison …" And Jesus' affirmation, "When you did this for anyone, you gave me something to eat … you gave me something to drink … you invited me in … you clothed me … you looked after me … you came to visit me."

BOOK REVIEWS
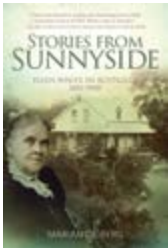
Stories from Sunnyside: Ellen White in Australia 1891-1900

de Berg, M. (2017). Warburton, VIC: Signs Publishing. 308pp.
ISBN 978 1 925044 67 6

Sonia Knight

Resources Manager for Adventist Media Network, Wahroonga, NSW

I'd never been to "Sunnyside" until a few weeks ago. So, the opportunity to tour Ellen White's Australian home excited me. As a guide ushered our large group through the historic building, I saw not only the room where the Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneer wrote a large proportion of her writings, including The Desire of Ages, but also other items she'd used in the running of her household. Our guide interspersed historical facts with interesting snippets and captivating stories of everyday life.

Only at the end of the tour did I realise our guide had been Marian de Berg, author of Stories From Sunnyside. I couldn't wait to get a copy of the book to immerse myself in more of the stories Marian had shared throughout the tour.

At an age when many people planned their retirement, Ellen White came from the United States to Australia to continue the church's missionary work—it began only six years earlier. She "saw no light in going to the South Pacific" but "knew that if God did not want her to go, He would close the door."

The struggles of establishing an Adventist

> "At an age when many people planned their retirement, Ellen White came from the United States to Australia to continue the church's missionary work"

community in such a distant country during an economic downturn proved Ellen White a true missionary, managing to settle her family and establish an Adventist college, health retreat, printing press and health food factory.

Stories from Sunnyside draws the reader into the human aspect of Ellen White through stories of her life and of her extended family. Her dealing with the poor and needy shows a depth of understanding of what it means to live a "Christ-like life." She opened her home to everyone and often sacrificed her own comfort to help those who were struggling. The result: many came to know Ellen White's God.

Ellen White the writer is well known. Stories from Sunnyside reveals, especially from an Australian perspective, more about Ellen White the person.

A revelation not of Ellen White as writer but resident. **TEACH**

Sunnyside, the historic residence of Ellen G. White, adjacent to the South Sea Island Museum.

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