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OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

HEALTHY TOUCH
Challenging current policies?

AUSTRALIA'S NEW CASTE-ISM
Can teachers see it?

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE
Adolescent experiences

Ministry Of Teaching

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A Kempsey Adventist School Year 7 student participating in an Information Technology Class.

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Ministry Of Teaching

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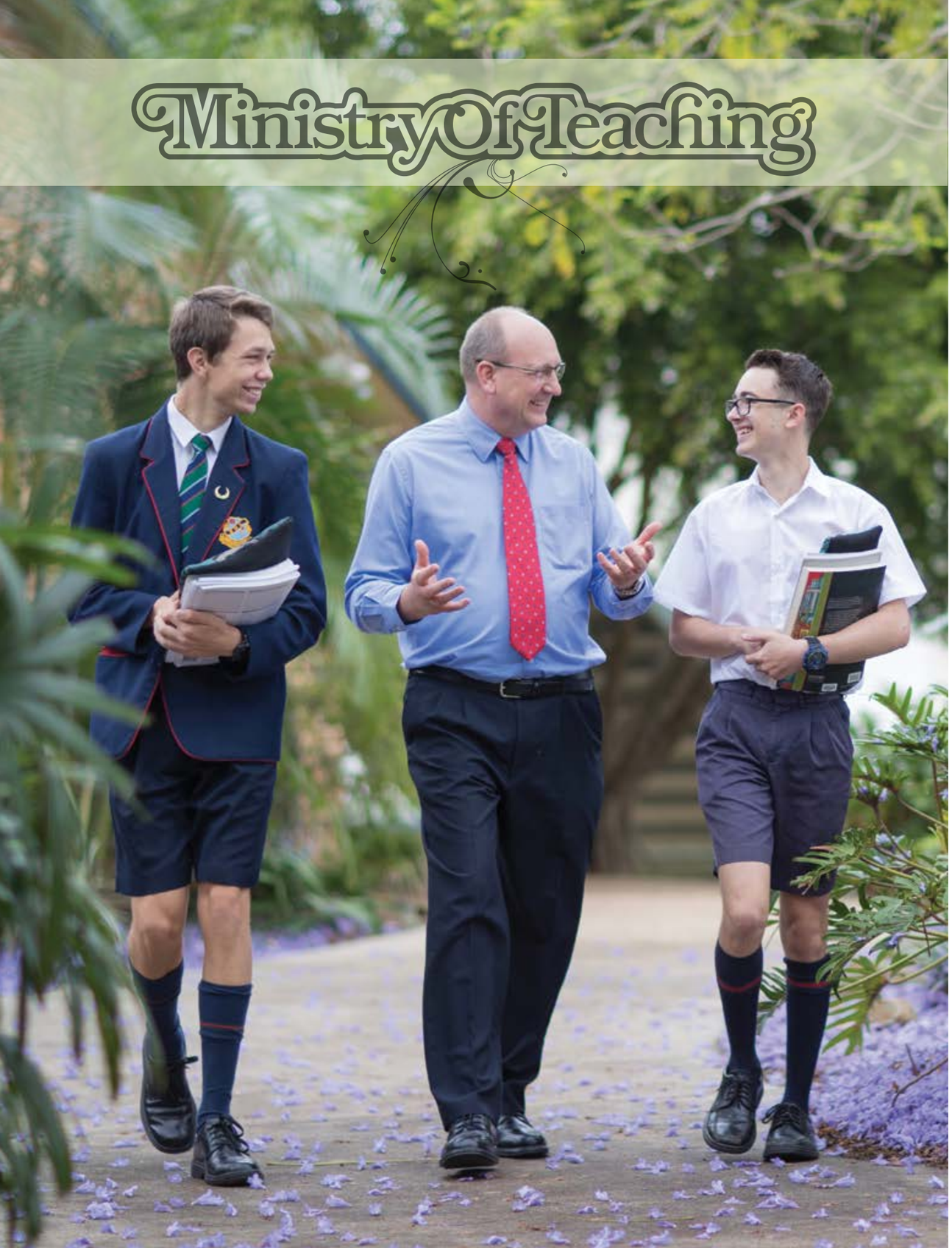

Teacher and students interact at Blue Hills College, Lismore, NSW. Photography: NNSW Adventist Education image files.

EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Popularly acclaimed Matt Haig, author of *Reasons to Stay Alive*, found motivation from his personal experience of depression to write another book *Notes on a Nervous Planet* (Haig, 2018). In premonition he asked:

> Couldn't aspects of how we live in the modern world be responsible for how we *feel* in the modern world?
>
> Not just in terms of the *stuff* of modern life, but its values too. The values that cause us to want more than we have. To worship work above play. To compare the worst bits of ourselves to the best bits of other people. To feel like we always lack something. (p. 8)

On the fly leaf of that book, the publicists ask, "How do we stay human in a technological world? How do we feel happy when we are encouraged to be anxious."

Haig in a very personalised narrative engenders the 'sharks' of modern lifestyles and asserts "You're gonna need a bigger boat" (citing Captain Brody in *Jaws*, Brown, Zanuck & Spielberg, 1975). His work addresses time, overwork, anxiety shocking news, priorities, sleep, reality and wanting, then moves to engage a positive future perspective guided by 'i-managing' *psychograms*, an innovative unit for psychological weight (p. 209). Yet, presumably to meet a populist audience, the values that might create guilt, an awareness of right and wrong, and how to deal with guilt, are couched in seemingly human(ist) responses (pp. 288, 289). He does refer to values and that "we always lack something" but does not introduce the supernatural.

An even 'bigger boat" then is needed. A more effective salvation ark. One including both the 'sin storm' and the 'salvation rescue' planned from outside humanity. The perspective of a Christian, shared through schooling, includes that supporting "good news" providing certainty, enabling an assured God-confident awareness of the potential of living an abundant life. A personal wellbeing.

Multiple authors in this TEACH issue sense this lack of visioning of the 'bigger boat' to meet society's needs. Brown recounts a potential response to schools being "asked to shoulder an increasingly complex set of social responsibilities" (p. 4) within the initiation of an Invictus program within schools. Graieg recognises the inadequacy in the preparation of *The Graduate Standards*, AITSL defined 'classroom ready' teacher, in missing a view that "foregrounds God's good, creational, covenantal, and holy character as key elements defining any teacher" (p. 20). Reflecting faith-based school principals' concerns about reliably gaining new staff of 'good fit' (Baker, 2019, p. 3), Rieger (p. 42) evaluates initial teacher education, clinical training models, suited to meeting the needs of a school claiming special character.

Contemplating the practice of Christian educators, particularly in the early school years, Thompson and Beamish (p. 49) question the suitability of "no touch policies" that ignore the positive impacts on wellbeing of appropriate touch. They suggest a community conversation about establishing more informed differentiated polices, even with cognisance of a Royal Commission review of institutional abuse, that can enhance school experience.

Recent social changes, reflecting changed popularity of beliefs, led Fyson (p. 8) to warn teachers of expressions of human value that create divisive cultures of new caste-isms. Teachers are cautioned to be aware of attitudes increasingly isolating those with Bible based beliefs, and to prepare responses for students resolving challenges to national cohesion.

Young adults considering the consequences of their school's response to an earthquake crisis (Pratt, Fitzsimmons and Christian, p. 22) regret they were not supported optimally. As today's educators we accept the challenge to build an even "better boat". **TEACH**

> *"teachers in the 21st Century are confronted with mental and behavioural disorders that now account for about one-third of the world's disability due to all ill-health"*

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[Photography: Glenys Perry]

In search of a better story: Teaching wisdom to build wellbeing in an increasingly complex world

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Keywords: Anxiety, depression, happiness, stress, wellbeing, wisdom

Ancient questions

It seems entirely logical that human beings might seek out a fulfilling life that produces positive relationships, good health and a deep sense of meaning. Indeed, ancient cultures the word over have a history of enquiry related to the examination of 'the good life' (Seligman, 1998, p.1). During the 4th Century BC Plato outlined "a general theory of well-ordered human life" (Allot, 2011, p.1165) in his work *Republic*. From within the Hebrew tradition, Solomon urged his people to turn their "ear to wisdom" and apply their "heart to understanding" (Proverbs 2:2 NIV). This consistent call to wisdom is more relevant than ever in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world that seeks to understand and facilitate wellbeing for staff and students in an educational context.

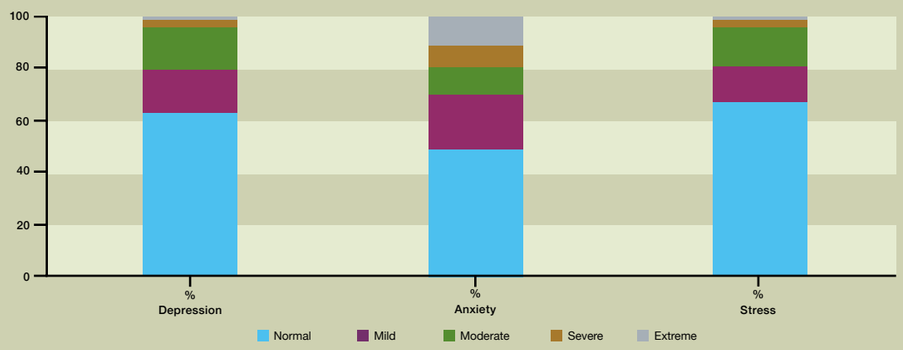
"teachers in the 21st Century are confronted with mental and behavioural disorders that now account for about one-third of the world's disability due to all ill-health"

Modern realities

Despite the long established psychological tendency to seek out the good life, teachers in the 21st Century are confronted with mental and behavioural disorders that now account for about one-third of the world's disability due to all ill-health (Anderson, Jané-Llopis & Hosman, 2011, p. i5). Additionally, depressive disorders are set to become the world's number one cause of ill-health and premature death by 2030 irrespective of national wealth and education (p. i1). The results outlined in Figure 1 reflect the rates of depression anxiety and stress reported by students at one coeducational private school in NSW Australia and are axiomatically parallel to wider results such as those outlined by Anderson.

Additionally, Dr Jean Twenge in her publication *i-Gen* subtitle, surmises that "today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy and completely unprepared for adulthood" (2017). Twenge's generational observations again echo the trend outlined by Anderson and the results displayed in Figure 1. However, Twenge acknowledges that commentators should not be too quick to pass judgement on this cohort of adolescents as 'good' or 'bad' or 'better' or 'worse' than previous generations. Rather parents and educators should note that they are different and therefore our approach to engaging with them may also need to be different. Within this context, schools are asked to shoulder an increasingly complex set of social responsibilities not limited to the shaping of knowledge, responsibility, social skills, health, kindness, and citizenship (Greenberg et al., 2003). It is possible that wisdom's ancient call is in need of amplification.

***Figure 1*:** Year 8 Pre-Test Results for Invictus Wellbeing Program Cohort



The role of wisdom

In order to understand the protective factor capacity of wisdom, an accurate definition needs to first be established. Until the 1970s empirical studies on wisdom had not emerged (Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013), possibly due to a prior emphasis on deficit models. However, researchers at UC San Diego have more recently conducted a longitudinal investigation of wisdom called the (SAGE) study (LaFee, 2017). The San Diego School of Medicine used the San Diego Wisdom Scale (SD-WISE) to assess an individual's level of wisdom based upon the following six domains: 1) prosocial attitudes and behaviors such as empathy, altruism, and social cooperation, 2) social decision-making/ pragmatic knowledge of life, 3) emotional regulation, 4) reflection/self-understanding, 5) tolerance of diverse values, 6) and ability to effectively deal with uncertainty and ambiguity in life (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 43-44).

Keeping this multi-part definition of wisdom in mind it is noteworthy to consider the ways in which an increase in wisdom could ameliorate the high levels of depression, anxiety and stress outlined above. Increasing urbanisation and loneliness (Anderson et al., 2011) along with risks associated with increases in technology use and family breakdown are all known contributors to these trend lines. Today's adolescents are growing up in a world vastly different from that of their parents. Life in contemporary Australia features "the cultural pluralism of late modernity, the information deluge, increased anxiety about personal and environmental risk, precarious employment, increased instability in families, rampant consumerism, greater individualisation and the emergence of the 'spiritual marketplace' (Mason, Singleton, & Webber, R., 2007, p. 41). It is within this societal context that teachers are aiming to facilitate the journey of students toward resilient adulthood and a deeper experience of wisdom, and therefore wellbeing.

From wellbeing to wisdom within new media and the consumer culture

According to the OECD (2015) 72% of OECD countries now explicitly include student wellbeing as a learning priority. Despite emerging and helpful insights such as Dr Martin Seligman's PERMA model (Seligman, 2013), Dr Darren Morton's SMILERS lifestyle medicine interventions (Morton, 2017) or Sir Richard's Layard (2014) utilitarian approach to wellbeing, without a structural acknowledgement of wider cultural forces all interventions may be operating below capacity. In the early 20th Century, journalist and essayist Edward Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud pioneered the notion that "manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses" could be used to drive mass consumption by instilling a psychological lack in the mind of his audience (cited in Gunderson, 2017, para. 4). In short, Bernays cleverly realised that through advertising he could "nudge" (Kosters & der Heijden, 2015) people to towards unhappiness, subsequently providing consumers with goods and services so they could purchase their way back to happiness.

The culture of widespread cultural dissatisfaction has been incredibly effective at making people feel they cannot be happy with how things are at the moment. It can be difficult for young people to navigate life in a culture of mass marketing, "consumption" and "individualism" as outlined by Hughes (2007). Furthermore, Twenge (2017) asserts that i-Gen are "growing up slowly" with "less responsibility" and high levels of "anxiety, depression and loneliness" (p. 290). It is possible that psychological distress on an epidemic scale needs to be met by both targeted wellbeing interventions and a broader shift in the dominant cultural discourse. Publicly funded and ubiquitously available education is the norm in most developed countries and provides an ideal platform from which to deliver a more positive cultural narrative that can subvert the economically driven social and mass media and entertainment industries that largely shape young people's ideas of reality. These companies have a profit motive to make their platforms as addictive as possible (Murphy, Illes & Reiner, 2008), therefore change is unlikely to come from within the industry itself.

However, schools can make use of explicit wellbeing programs to normalise life affirming outlooks and introduce a suite of new vocabulary allowing young people to unlock their inner worlds. The long term and immersive nature of the education system positions schools as the ideal arena for change. The Invictus Wellbeing Program is one

"schools can make use of explicit wellbeing programs to normalise life affirming outlooks and introduce … new vocabulary allowing young people to unlock their inner worlds."

Teaching & Professional Practice

> *In the journey to become a 'wellbeing school' it is also important to help students realise that it's OK not to feel 100% happy all of the time.*

example of a school-based intervention that seeks to reorient students towards a life of wisdom and therefore wellbeing. Wisdom can hold dualities in balance and live within the tension that exists between extremes. This capacity is increasingly important in an age of identity politics and polarities, Twenge (2017) warns that i-Gen tend to avoid the "middle of the road" position because "you might get run over" (p. 266). Contrastingly, wisdom is pro-social and empathic. Wisdom teaches the importance of "love[ing] your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). The reference to "yourself" highlights the importance of self-knowledge; the fourth domain in the SD-WISE Wisdom Scale. In fact, it could be argued that the entire SD-WISE Wisdom Model could be distilled in its simplest essence, into this one simple insight; love your neighbour as yourself. In the 21st century it may help to note that doing so in person is the best option, "online time [with friends] does not protect against loneliness and depression, while in person time does." (Twenge, 2017, p. 298).

Wisdom and happiness

In the journey to become a 'wellbeing school' it is also important to help students realise that it's OK not to feel 100% happy all of the time. This is pertinent in light of Dr Melissa Weinberg's discovery that "the setpoint for our happiness, according to the latest research, is about 80%" (Weinberg, n.d., para. 3). Much like homeostasis, the body regulates its mood based on efficiency and therefore it is not sustainable to feel euphoric all of the time. However, Weinberg notes that good mental fitness allows an individual to respond by "recovering their normal setpoint for mood" (para. 8). As established previously, self-knowledge is an important part of becoming wise. Understanding your own set-point for mood and having strategies to recover it quickly are skills explicitly taught to students through programs such as The Invictus Wellbeing Program (n.d.), Bounce Back (?), and Dr Paula Barrett's FRIENDS (n.d.) program and many others. The importance of these programs may not lie entirely in their explicit content, but in their capacity to create an ongoing enabling environment. Mochon, Norton and Ariely (2008), also note that "shifting focus from the impact of major life changes on well-being to the impact of seemingly minor repeated behaviors is crucial for understanding how best to improve well-being" (p. 642). Therefore, the wisdom domain of reflection and understanding becomes increasingly important to our sense of wellbeing. It is the ability to metacognitively reflect upon prior experiences and alter future environments that may impact on our wellbeing if we truly are as "predictably irrational" as Ariely suggests (2010, p.5). These connections are worthy of further investigation in an educational context.

Adolescence remains an increasingly complex stage of life, exacerbated by widespread cultural factors, the technology revolution and disruption of stable family life. As such, the imbedding of wisdom traditions and the explicit teaching of wisdom practices becomes increasingly important. Having an internal locus of control and being able to navigate the intellectual and practical tensions that exist in adult life are worthwhile pursuits for professional educators, curriculum writers and political leaders. TEACH

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Editor's Note

For more information about The Invictus Wellbeing Institute and its programs access:

- the website https://www.theinvictuswellbeingprogram.com
- an ABC radio interview on Invictus: https://www.abc.net.au/radio/newcastle/programs/mornings/invictus/11481202
- a Newcastle Herald article: https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6351780/wellbeing-program-founded-at-macquarie-college-wallsend-goes-international/
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Can teachers see Australia's new caste-ism?

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Keywords: Australia, caste, cast-ism, education, society

Abstract

We live in a world of social change. Within that world, Christian teachers are used to thinking of all people as made in the Image of God. That assumption has often meant practising a deep respect for all people. This respect has similarly extended to how Christians understand relationships in the classroom. Yet there are competing narratives about the design and purpose of life within our Western world. Part of this competition of ideas is caught up in implications that come from how we view human beings as persons. This article proposes that one of these new Australian alternatives to Christian ways of viewing life is creating an unstated but real caste system amongst so-called different kinds of persons.

Caste-ism as exclusion

It is a disturbing experience to be openly refused hospitality because of a perceived breach of non-violent public conduct. It happened to me once in India. A friend took me to a village where he had set up a school which included visiting medical teams and social support teams (including micro-finance programs). This village was part of what are called the Dalits of India. The Dalits are the traditional lowest social group of India, below the slave caste.

If I close my eyes, I can still see the aged and bent elder who came and took my hand, and with tears in his eyes, continued to thank me for what I had done. What was this marvellous thing? I had simply sat on a mat and played and interacted with some of the children of the village from that school. Earlier, I had been to their classroom and told them a story, via a translator. I and two young teachers had then walked through the classroom interacting with each student, including giving them a memento of our visit and shaking hands with each of them.

Why might this elder be so moved by this simple act, which we hopefully would consider routine? It was because we were the first people of 'importance' (they had never seen a PhD type person before) to treat their children the same as everyone else. And no leader had ever sat on the dirt on a cane mat to play with their children.

I felt completely inadequate, because I was simply doing what I had always done since my youth. My Christian parents taught me to respect all people. And they showed me what that looked like, even when they disagreed with others.

However, when the chief elder (of an upper caste) in that village heard that I had been to the Dalit part of the village first, he refused to meet with me. I had transgressed the social order. I later heard a Brahman priest explain that such conduct – of ignoring the social behaviours linked to caste - "destroyed the order of the universe".

Technically, any discrimination based on this structure is not legal in India – Gandhi worked to achieve this. Some Indian scholars believe that it was this part of his work that resulted in his assassination. Yet, I have seen such discrimination enacted in India.

These experiences taught me afresh that perhaps I should not take for granted the principles of respect that my parents taught me. On what did they base their beliefs and subsequent behaviour? It was because they believed every person was made in the image of the Creator God (see Genesis 1:16-17). Thus, despite any differences in capacity, rank, responsibility or authority, they believed all persons were of equal worth (see Galatians 3:26-28). This equality did not mean they assumed that everyone was the same, simply that they were to be regarded and treated with equal respect. My sister and I were taught that on this basis you treated people equally, without fear or favour.

This equality of respect did not mean that you would always agree with their opinions or their actions. But you always respected them as a person. I learnt much later, as an addictions counselling psychologist, that this also meant that I could respect people in deep pain, and yet learn not to be an enabler of their disordered thinking and conduct.

equality did not mean they assumed that everyone was the same – simply that they were to be regarded and treated with equal respect.

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Is caste-ism manifest in Australia?

Is this kind of thinking about differences and respect dominant in Australia? Or, put another way, is this kind of thinking about respect still "common sense" in Australia? Or is it now "less common" than it used to be? Nick Cater (2013) wrote that he saw a new elite growing in Australia. Cater explained what he believed was a shift from a previously generally egalitarian Australian society to one where a new 'elite' class was having disproportionate influence:

> For the first time there were people who did not simply feel *better off*, but *better than* their fellow Australians … Today, however, they call the shots, since their voices represent the majority view in the media, education, the law and the political class…. Sneering was taboo in the Australia I arrived in [1989]; today it is ubiquitous. (p. 7)

Does such a shift in social milieu have an impact on education? Cater believed so, stating, "The nature of today's presumptive ruling class that claims authority not by wealth or force, but by moral superiority, endows it with a deeply illiberal streak harmful to civic debate" (p. 10). Further, this lack of civic debate is, according to Cater, because of what I will suggest is an intellectual caste system:

> There is no difference in social status between brain or brawn. All honest toil deserves equal respect, and income is justly earned…. [This Australian] egalitarianism is threatened by the assumption that *some* citizens, the educated ones, are smarter than the rest, and that therefore their opinions should carry more weight. (p. 87)

How is this message that some people are worth more than others communicated within intellectual discussion? Cater nominated "ecologism" as the focal point to structure and limit debate, asserting, "public life has been taken over by an assertive minority who seeks to marginalise debate, unless it is conducted on their terms [quoting Codevilla]" (p. 85).

That is, Cater mapped how the sustainability of the planet has become a "cause" (which is more narrowly assertive / aggressive than defence of an "ideology") that transcends academic enquiry and advancement based on physical and intellectual effort. He also mapped how in this intellectual climate (excuse the pun) "Religious attachment is an uncannily accurate marker of the cultural divide in contemporary Australia" (p. 100).

Therefore, to be on the side of the "assertive minority" can lead to excluding others when they disagree with these "fixers" of society:

> Paradoxically, almost all progressive thinkers would imagine themselves as liberal and open-minded, tolerant of diversity and receptive to rational debate…. Yet in their disdain for other people's values and their presumption of a greater purity, they display pious disregard for the choices of their fellow citizens. (p. 113)

Caste-ism from ignoring God

Another Australian journalist has written a book reflecting on the current soul of our nation. He focussed on the risks of ignoring our religious heritage. Sheridan (2018) took up this last point of Cater's and tracked where he believed there has been an abandonment of Judeo-Christian understandings of society to the detriment of the advancement of critical reasoning within Australian education and society generally.

Sheridan noted that those of religious conviction have been increasingly encouraged to keep their faith at home stating, "the rules of the argument are rigged so that religion is not allowed to win any points with a certain kind of determined secularism" (p. 29).

Similarly to other authors before him (Hunter, 2000; Machuga, 2002; Hare, 2003; Blamires, 1963 / 2005; Swinburne, 2013; Scruton, 2014; Walsh, 2018), Sheridan (2018) noted that one driver of this situation is a betrayal of human nature. He summarised this dynamic as follows:

> But the soul – the embodiment of our deepest integrity and destiny – gave way to the self, as the therapeutic age replaced the age of belief…. From soul to self to brand is a steep decline in what it means to be human…. A certain panic at the existential emptiness of liberal atheism impels liberalism to a new authoritarianism. Everyone must genuflect to the same secular pieties…. Nothing is more powerful now in Western politics, or more dangerous, than identity politics. (p. 31)

From soul to self to brand is a steep decline in what it means to be human

Dalrymple (2015) also noted the self-focussed orientation that can be described within contemporary psychology and education:

> But the overall effect of psychological thought on human culture and society, I contend, has been overwhelmingly negative because it gives the false impression of greatly increased human self-understanding where it has not been achieved, it encourages the evasion of responsibility by turning subjects into objects where it supposedly takes account of or interests itself in subjective experiences, and it makes shallow the human character because it discourages genuine self-examination and self-knowledge. It is ultimately sentimental and promotes the grossest self-pity, for it makes everyone (apart from scapegoats) victims of their own behaviour… (p. 112)[1]

Sheridan (2018) went on to explain the impact of such a shift in terms of reductionistic thinking

processes, and a pretence of rationalism when explaining the stance of atheism – for atheism also needs presuppositions that take us to statements of faith. With reference to some of the moral issues of our time, Sheridan also noted that, in place of a centred ethical system based in the disclosed words from the Creator, the new elites prefer to medicalise evil:

> To medicalise evil is surely to misunderstand it profoundly, but it is the go-to response of our time… Only the spirit cannot be admitted into our explanations…. If our world is just atom and energy and evolution then whether we like it or not, it has no moral character at all. It's just a question of our paltry preferences. (pp. 126,129) (see also Szaz, 1974 / 2010)

I would suggest that these general reviews of Western and Australian social life provide a description of the platform for what is being suggested as a new Australian caste-ism. That is, these ways of thinking support structural shifts in our society towards a society less able to engage respectfully in the face of differences, at a time when different points of view seem to be more varied.

"The hushed but growing reality is that we are creating categories of persons amongst human beings."

My Indian experiences taught me first-hand that very large numbers of people could believe that the universe could be structured so that certain categories of people could be treated differently, in radical ways, because of their category of personhood. No-one debated that all those Dalit people in India were human beings. However, some (many?) were very clear that Dalits were less fully a person than other types of humans.

Caste-ism protected

This social construction - believing that humans can be placed into gradations of significance - validated the different treatment that each group received. Another personal example that I saw in India was Dalit students always being seated at the back of a classroom and not being expected to ask questions. This is why our shaking hands with all our students was so radical (unbeknown to us at the time).

How is such caste-ism reflected in Australia? One could argue that in our country the opposite is happening. We have increasing sensitivity to providing equality of opportunities for all people. We have more laws to protect us against certain discriminations than ever before. We generally avoid confusing our governance of the State with our governance of our faith-based institutions (although current debates about "religious freedom" vs. "sex discrimination" may challenge that). Personal choice in how we structure our relationships has rarely been so free (although one could argue that if one was wealthy and free in the time of the Roman Empire, our kind of personal moral freedoms were just as present there).

Yet we have secrets in dirty corners of our society. The hushed but growing reality is that we are creating categories of persons amongst human beings. For example, our laws are leaning towards sex-selective killings of unborn children. How is this caste-sim? It is caste-ism because we divorce the physical reality from our personal preferences – we separate facts and values, as Francis Schaeffer might say. We know that a foetus is a human being. Science tells us that there is a physiologically unique person being formed in the womb. The unborn child is a different human being to his or her mother. Yet she or he is not accorded unalienable rights as a person.

How real is this? Abortion laws in NSW allow any abortion up to the end of the second trimester, even though there are 'guidelines' to prevent sex-selection abortion. But parliament did not make it illegal to do so, and cooperative medical practitioners will find ways around the guidelines – even up to the point of birth (simply imagine a mother claiming she is pre-suicidal contemplating the birth of the child, and two medical practitioners will oblige her the abortion).

We have created our own Dalit children. Other Australian Dalit children are those unborn ones who may be physically or intellectually considered not perfect enough–for example, Down syndrome children. I have seen documented (from a WA senator) a child being aborted because one arm was going to be shorter than the other; and in the same research, because a child was going to be too short.

And our legislators are like the Brahman priest. Again, even though there are "guidelines", medical practitioners will be under increased pressure if they challenge these abortion practices, because the soul-less orthodoxy will claim that they have challenged "the order of the universe" and thus should be punished.

There is other growing membership of our Australian Dalit caste-ism. If one is considered not worthy to continue living, because of dysfunction of some kind (including pain that can be mostly controlled), then one can be defined as not worthy of the human right to life. It matters not that the person doing this categorising is the individual under consideration–the rest of society agrees with them, and thus enables that another category of personhood is not worthy of life.

How does this happen? It is not driven by physical science. It is driven by different "operating systems of the mind" (Poplin, 2014). One mind-set believes that human nature comes from chance physical events across time, and thus is based on disruption and fragmentation. If that is how we view our bodies, our personhood based on our physical reality can have no natural moral demands on us individually and as a society. Therefore, there is no moral dilemma in creating categories of persons that can be treated differently in terms of access to human rights.

However, if we have a mind-set that says that nature, including our bodies, exhibits a plan and purpose, then our physical realities can provide moral direction for us as individuals and as a society. Nancey Pearcey (2018) summarised these two mind-sets as follows, "In the academic world, a teleological view of nature as purpose-driven has been ousted by a materialist view that sees nature as devoid of spiritual and moral meaning" (p.162).

If we accept Pearcey's explanation, our morality, if it is purposeless with reference to its physical grounding, can be just a social construction. Whatever the majority in power determine to be real, is real. CS Lewis (1943 / 1978) predicted this kind of scenario almost a century ago:

> The last men, far from being heirs of power, will be of all men most subject to the dead hand of the great planners and conditioners and will themselves exercise least power upon the future…. Either we are rational spirit obliged forever to obey the absolute values of the Tao, or else we are mere nature to be kneaded and cut into new shapes for the pleasures of masters who must, but hypothesis, have no motive but their own 'natural' impulses. (pp. 36, 44)

Such redefining of natural law by social controllers helps us to understand another part of our growing Dalit group–that is, those people who insist that we must respect the physicality of our femaleness and maleness. They too will be considered not worthy of being able to appeal to a justice system based on grounded evidence. They will increasingly be sent to trial and judged on their 'sub-standard expressions of personhood'. These persons may be deprived of work, family and eventually freedom, because they do not believe the correct categories of persons as per the prevailing identity politics.

Sheridan (2018) continued to contextualise this for us in Australian society:

> For without God, human beings are no longer unique and universal, no longer special in nature. They are just one more chancy outcrop of the planet and its biosphere, ultimately no more worthy of consideration than a cockroach. If we lose God, we lose something essential of our humanity. (p. 32)

History of course reminds us again and again that such deprival of the belief in the purpose-driven sanctity of human life leads to massive oppression, and in many cases, killings. That is why the atheistic regimes of the twentieth century managed to kill more people than any other conflicts across human history. Jonathan Haidt (2013) has tried to explain this conundrum in terms of moral values formation. His conclusion is that we have lost the language to discuss these issues (and thus he has formed the *Heterodox Academy*). Jordan Peterson (2018) is trying to expose how the social sciences are misused when the operating systems of the mind are closed to historical and researched social patterns based on what he calls ancient wisdom.

Will these kinds of social psychology efforts be enough? Or will the categories of persons in our Australian Dalit caste-ism continue to grow? Will we as Christian educators be able to discern when these pressures are impacting on what we teach, and how we teach it?

When such forces were being seen in the early twentieth century, novelists picked up their pens and wrote in narrative form of their concerns. Huxley's (1932) *Brave New World*, or Orwell's (1950) *1984* are classics that foretold of such pressures and their impact on social life, including education. Bradbury's (1951) *Fahrenheit 451*, and in a similar vein, the more recent *Book of Eli* movie (Johnson et al., 2010), also reflect the impact of denying universal respect for all people, regardless of capacity or status. These narratives masterfully demonstrate that creating castes is intimately linked to restricting access to humanising literature, and the way men and women relate to each other (Michael Walsh's 2018 work, *The Fiery Angel*, unpacks the current attacks against humanising literature well).

Less well-known is Walter M. Miller's (1959) *A Canticle for Leibowitz.* Towards the end of the book we are introduced to "Mercy Camps", which are places of death for those who are too sick, as defined by those in political authority (echoing the Nazi gas-ovens). In this society, "Mercy Camps" become the only rationalised way of dealing with categorical difference in personhood through a lens of fragmented, purposeless and disrupted nature.

"persons may be deprived of work, family and eventually freedom, because they do not believe the correct categories of persons as per the prevailing identity politics."

[1]Such a critique has a significant history: see for example, Paul C Vitz (1977) *Psychology as Religion: The cult of self-worship.* Eerdmans; Gary R Collins (1977) *The Rebuilding of Psychology: An integration of psychology and Christianity.* Tyndale House; Mar P Cosgrove (1979) *Psychology Gone Awry: Four psychological world views.* IVP; John D Cater & Bruce Narramore (1979) *The Integration of Psychology and Theology.* Rosemead Psychology Series; John White (1987) *Putting the Soul back in Psychology.* IVP; Paul Kline (1988) *Psychology Exposed: Or the Emperor's New Clothes.* Routledge

Another (chilling) literary reaction to the vision of soul-less society where humans are placed into categories of persons is by the author of *Bladerunner*, Philip K. Dick. In his short work, simply titled *Pre-Persons* (written in response to *Wade vs Roe* in 1974), he imagines a future where the US legislators have decided that abortion is legal until the soul enters the body. The way this is determined, as decreed by the experts, is by whether a person has the ability to perform simple mathematics calculations (around the age of 12). The main protester—a former university mathematics major—demands to be taken to the abortion centre, since he claims to have forgotten all his algebra. However, deep in his soul, he knows that his victory in having three boys with him released from the detention centre is short-lived.

Or in the metaphor from CS Lewis' (1945) book on the same theme, the saviour turns out to be a ravenous, hideous strength (see also Tinker, 2018).

That is why I close my eyes and remember that old bent man in India. He had more beauty in his soul than any of the so-called leaders creating our Australian caste-ism in this land of plenty. Maybe in our classrooms, we need to learn to be hungry in different ways here at home. TEACH

> *Maybe in our classrooms, we need to learn to be hungry in different ways here at home*

Photography: NNSW Adventist Education image files

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Up a tree or in the mud: How nature-based free play contributes to the wellbeing of children

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"The risk that you take is something you have to sort out for yourself. If you climb a tree you have to get yourself down."

Dianne Hillsdon is an experienced classroom teacher and administrator who has noticed a decline in children's wellbeing during the last 30 years. Most children live a highly managed life, full of structured activities organised and supervised by adults and while these activities may develop specific skills, they do not necessarily build confidence and resilience that transfer to new situations. Dianne notes that we live in a risk adverse society and so children are often not open to taking acceptable risk.

Dianne, who has just completed her Forest School training from the UK, has read widely on the topic of building confidence and resilience in children and has found that "children who play outside are more confident and resilient risk takers." After introducing the principles and ethos of free play outdoors to her last school in Victoria, Dianne is now in the process of transforming Manning Adventist School, where she is Head Teacher, into a Bush School. Dianne says, "Bush School is an ethos that encourages the development of children's emotional and physical development through the outdoor space and activities including exploration in a bushland environment." At Manning school, the children spend an afternoon each week learning in nature through free play, except when weather conditions are dangerous, such as high winds. Rain does not stop Bush School. There is no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes. The children engage in "bug hunting, mud play, shelter and den building, knot tying and other creative and imaginative situations." As it is now winter, the children are learning to light fires with fire strikers (no matches here) and to cook over the campfire. This week they started learning the skills of whittling and tool sharpening. During this time the teachers act as facilitators rather than instructors. A few basic principles underlie the Bush School philosophy, including perseverance, trust, collaboration, team-building and resilience (Knight, 2013; Warden, 2012a & 2012b).

Dianne observes that confident children with high levels of resilience are also more likely to take acceptable risk. Acceptable risk is when the child learns to assess a situation, such as a tree, before deciding it is alright to climb; or a log, before walking across it. Dianne tells the students, "The risk that you take is something you have to sort out for yourself. If you climb a tree you have to get yourself down." Students are supported by staff standing by while the children negotiate the challenge. Although this may sound radical, Dianne maintains that children are very good at assessing risk and do not put themselves in situations they cannot handle.

Mud play enables the children to feel the water and mud between their fingers. To create dams and form bowls, cups and spoons. The feel of the mud on hands is a wonderfully sensory experience. There are plenty of smiles during mud play time. Mud play makes you happy, and new research suggests that the friendly soil bacteria in mud actually helps the release of serotonin which is a mood regulator (Lowry, Hollis, De Vries, Pan, Brunet, Hunt, . . . Lightman, 2007). Just another good reason to get grubby!

What are the observable outcomes of this type of program? Dianne has observed changes in children's confidence and resilience in "a remarkably short time." Some children take a little longer to feel the joy of outdoor experiences. More importantly, the attitudes and experiences from Bush School flow over into classroom learning. Dianne has noticed that the children are more open to taking risks with their learning such as speaking up in group work and attempting difficult tasks. Other observed benefits include better communication skills, an improved ability to work as a team, and an open tolerance—listening to the ideas of others. Over the last few weeks the older students have been learning about negotiation and compromise as they build 'their villages.'

Resilience is another outcome of outdoor play. "We talk a lot about persevering", says Dianne. While this value can be applied to many activities, nature provides an ideal environment for children to develop resilience. One activity Dianne encourages is den or cubby building using natural materials. This can be a challenging and precise activity using correct lashings and natural supports.

Dianne points out that the ethos behind the Bush School philosophy is child directed. She says, "It's about letting children have a look at the space and deciding what they may be able to do with it." Dianne would advise schools to start small. Choose a playground space and make some loose parts available. Then wait and see what happens. Schools do not have to have a bush setting. The importance of the program is the ethos and principles. The bush is just the tool that we use to support the imagination and creativity of students.

And what do the children think of Bush School? Dianne observes sparkling eyes, deep questions and engaged learners, and has her answer. The students never miss school on a Tuesday. When questioned about their favourite time of the week, the answer is always 'Bush School.' They often ask to go to the Bush School area on other days. It is truly a place where the senses are heightened, the imagination is let loose and creativity abounds. TEACH

Figure 1. Xavier Boyd (Year 4) Learning how to use a Bush Saw safely. Students observing Left to Right: Dean Thrippleton (Year 4), Tasman Clare-Cox, Liam Thrippleton (both Year 5).

Figure 2. Asher Service (Kindy), Oscar Howard (Pre-Kindy) working in their Bush School Journals

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"benefits include better communi-cation skills, an improved ability to work as a team, and an open tolerance—listening to the ideas of others."

What it might mean to be a ‘classroom ready’ teacher?

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Keywords: Christian schooling, classroom readiness, compliance, graduate standards, higher education, teacher, worldview

Abstract

Questioning what it might mean to be a ‘classroom ready’ teacher is prompted by the process of developing a Master of Teaching program for submission to TEQSA on behalf of a Christian tertiary provider. A challenge to compliance is understood as emerging from within a worldview derived from the story of the Bible, a perspective which creates space to observe difference, particularly in relation to teacher identity and the purpose of schooling.

> *previous teacher preparation is couched in terms including “inadequate”, “insufficient” and as having “gaps”*

Introduction

The Australian Government document, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (TEMAG, 2014) contributes to reforming initial teacher education in Australia. Instigated by the 2014 Ministerial Advisory Group it elaborates 38 recommendations in relation to pre-service or initial teacher education programs. The key findings frame previous preparation of teachers in Australia as “weak” and that “public confidence has been poor” with “poor practice in a number of programs” due in part to “insufficient integration” between schools and providers (p. xi). The critique of previous teacher preparation is couched in terms including “inadequate”, “insufficient” and as having “gaps” (p. xi). In their assessment Yeigh & Lynch (2017) add “poorly organised, irrelevant and insular” (p. 113). Such critique creates space for six key concepts underpinning the recommendations, being: national accreditation, rigorous program design and delivery, transparency of entry, integration and evidence as program elements towards shaping teachers as potentially classroom ready. The resulting AITSL initiative in, *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* (2015) reifies classroom readiness through rigorous parameters encapsulated by concepts including ‘performance’, ‘positive impact’ and ‘evidence’ which graduate teachers must demonstrate in order to teach in Australian classrooms.

In tracing a changing pattern in training Australian teachers from school-based ‘apprentices’ and ‘monitors’ through ideas of ‘teaching as a craft’ to current university programs, Aspland (2006) maintains that becoming a teacher in Australia has come under “an inordinate amount of scrutiny” (p. 140). Increasing pressure to present teachers as professionals led to the establishment of teacher colleges in the seventies which was attributed to the rapid expansion of “population and the Australian economy” (p. 148). The historical refinement of Government legislation is presented by Aspland (2006) as a mechanism whereby standards of performance have become regulated through a raft of reforms up to Dawkins (1987, 1988), established under the consolidating influence of economic rationalism. An implication which includes that such neo-liberal scrutiny framed ‘teaching as scholarly pursuit’ to impel a shift to the university as a base where, “outcomes focus necessitated the development of a number of course standards which reflect the emerging professional standards developed within the state, and which are elaborated as sets of teacher practitioner attributes” (Aspland, 2006, p. 155).

Consequently, the process of accreditation of teachers in Australia has come to require a developmental process of increasing intensity, complexity and length of ‘performance’ to ensure ‘impact’ so that the ‘pre-service teacher’ is ‘classroom ready’ by meeting *The Graduate Standards* (AITSL, 2011).

The following discussion, looking through a biblical lens, questions the possible worldview implications regarding teacher identity implicit in the AITSL Graduate Teacher Standards, as a mechanism of compliance in the service of a “neoliberal imaginary” (Mockler, 2017, p. 336).

Worldview and classroom readiness

Naugle (2002) defines worldview as “a semiotic system of narrative signs that has a significant influence on the fundamental activities of reasoning, interpreting and knowing” observing that “any view of ‘worldview’ is itself worldview dependent” (p. 253). His historical and conceptual review concludes that worldview “is itself a function of the actual worldview of the theorist or definer” (p. 253). Worldview, as a set of assumptions, is ‘looked through’ therefore ‘overlooked’ yet is powerfully and unceasingly at work, grounded in a foundational narrative enacting an experience that is rationalized, understood and reified. Wright (1992) in discussing worldview maintains that all cultures “have a sense of identity, of environment, of a problem with the way the world is, and of a way forward - a redemptive eschatology” (p. 123). In this discussion the claim includes that mandated policy documents act as frameworks encapsulating what is considered valid and important, suggesting solutions that orient the person toward a particular future. Therefore, policy documents emerge as intentional artefacts of a lifeworld; a set of assumptions that disclose the cherished, deep-rooted beliefs of a culture. Such a story frames a context to inform a sense of identity and presents solutions to perceived problems. In this case the problem includes ‘classroom readiness’ with the solution being *The Graduate Standards* as the instrument informing and forming teacher identity.

Consequently, documents including *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (TEMAG, 2014) and the resulting *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* (2015) are the legitimation of a presuppositional narrative about a context (the classroom), a person (the classroom ready teacher) whose problem, (poor practice and insufficient integration) might be solved by *The Graduate Standards*.

For advocates of the world-picture of the AITSL Graduate Standards ‘performance’, ‘evidence’ and ‘impact’ is presented as a high bar, denoting an excellence of teachers through whom quality teaching will flow for the benefit of the wider community. If the present form of global consumer culture is understood as optimal, then to form a teacher ready for a classroom whose primary function is to replicate compliant consumers then the AITSL standards may be an effective mechanism. Compliance with the standards may produce a teacher capable of equipping students to take their productive place in the machinery of a global society whose main function is the exploitation of resources for the ongoing generation of economic wealth. Such a view appears to be the politically driven dominant discourse (Sachs, 2002) of economic rationalism which holds schooling in its grip in order to produce human capital made in the image of ‘units of economic production’ informed by science and technology. If as Hiebert (2009) claims “consumerism reduces life to commodities” (p. 256), classroom ready teachers may be the means whereby the worldview of economic rationalism reflects through schooling the human as a consuming entity. Forming teachers who reflect a consumerist worldview governed by neo-liberal exchanges may be an assumption, or ‘social imaginary’ (Taylor, 2007), driving what it might mean to be ‘classroom ready’.

Mulcahy (2010) claims the standards have emerged as a framing of scientific practice and are “representative and the performative” (p. 95) suggesting they frame a context that scripts the acting out of a particular role. Mulcahy concludes, “standards do not simply describe pre-existing realities such as accomplished teaching practices or accomplished teachers; they actively produce them” (p. 96). The initial teacher *Graduate Standards* (AITSL, 2015) might then be understood as a defining narrative for schooling which scripts the ‘performance’ by actors labelled ‘classroom ready’ whose conformity to the standards is evidence of worldview assumptions and a presuppositional narrative. Essentially, a teacher is framed by the worldview of standards, constructed to fit the classroom; they ‘become’ the epistemic object or artefact of the culture that the standards represent. To be classroom ready therefore denotes being ‘assembled’ by the authority of *The Graduate Standards* based upon the performativity in relation to evidence. The teacher is deemed ready when proven to be scripted for enactment within a space representative of wider culture into which learners are also inducted. Being ‘classroom ready’ has become an imperative which frames an indicative; the concept of the classroom as a context determines the form of the teacher. Or, expressed in terms of control; the person becomes subordinate to text and context. Teaching standards as a means of implementing educational reform become for the pre-service teacher an ontological framing of the self through the classroom. If so, then the standards become, as proposed by Mulcahy (2010), the means to ‘assemble’ the teacher. If, however from a different worldview a richer story might be told about being fully human then to define a teacher as ‘classroom ready’ might suggest a reduction of human potential.

Gannon (2012) challenges the capacity of standards to address deficiencies of teacher quality claiming “in a Foucauldian sense” they “become a disciplinary apparatus through which teachers engage in surveillance of themselves” (p. 61). This thought gives rise to the conclusion that “it becomes difficult for those who are caught within the standards grid to see other dimensions of accomplishment in teaching beyond those prescribed by the standards” (p. 74). As a language specialist Gannon calls for standards to be “locally enacted and contingent” (p. 74, with an expansion of emphasis beyond the standards into affective factors including “insight, sensitivity…

> *it becomes difficult for those who are caught within the standards grid to see other dimensions of accomplishment in teaching beyond those prescribed by the standards*

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trust… persistence… enjoyment… enthusiasm and dedication" (p. 66) to avoid "homogenising [of] performance" (p. 75). Such a claim suggests being classroom ready through *The Graduate Standards* is also a limiting narrative about human agency.

Cumulatively, such critical appraisal suggests a one-dimensional replication of a teacher results when a reductive rendering is bounded by a limited script narrowly enacted. The resulting classroom teacher potentially becomes a cardboard cut-out, defined according to the template. Another less flattering analogy includes the cookie cutter; a device with sharp edges for cutting biscuit dough into a particular shape. One popular form is that of the gingerbread man usually with four stumpy limbs and rounded head. Once the shape is pressed out, cooked and decorated, the iconic image of a smiling gingerbread man represents the stylized or preformed caricature of the human. A common denotation is of the person mass-produced and lacking any distinguishing characteristics. The actual material used to form the dough is usually a metal band that has been pressed in by force, causing the material from which it is made to retain that shape. The suggestion includes that the AITSL standards act to shape the classroom ready teacher as the force which gives power to the mechanism of formation. If what forms the teacher creates a shape that has the capacity to replicate itself, then the forces that create the template, or the underlying presuppositional narrative, may need careful consideration in terms of an exercise of significant authority over teacher identity.

practices are not just 'things we do' but are objects that 'do something to us'

If the classroom ready teacher is equivalent to the gingerbread man rigidly framed for replicating an economic rationalist worldview then it might be concluded the mechanism of *The Graduate Standards* as a template intentionally reflects a limited assemblage with a limiting goal. If to be classroom ready is to reflect a neoliberal or 'social imaginary' then society, schooling and students may need a more hopeful and liberating story than simply producing more consumers.

The worldview of 'the Authority[1]'

An emerging premise includes that, whomever has authority over the formation of the teacher governs the shape of the classroom and by implication the formation of the student. The forces forming the teacher are replicated in students in a self-reinforcing feedback loop thereby endorsing the underlying narrative of a culture. The script will be enacted just as thunder follows lightning since it is the power of the narrative that provides a set of assumptions, reinforcing a way of being, a worldview or lived experience. The idea of classroom readiness if ideologically driven by a powerful presuppositional narrative, may as Goudzwaard and Bartholomew (2017) claim, be "always rooted in an orientation to an absolute goal or end" (p. 62). If so, the totalising nature of worldview suggests that if a different worldview contests the legitimated narrative, as in *The Graduate Standards*, then 'deep disagreement' (Godden & Brenner, 2010) may result meaning the authorised or legitimated story of classroom readiness represents elements of an imposition by benign force. To be deemed classroom ready by 'the Authority'[1] assumes the underlying narrative of *The Graduate Standards* has the capacity and right under accreditation for the authorised teacher to be marched to the beat of their drum to its destination. As Smith and Smith (2011) claim practices are not just "things we do" but are objects that "do something *to* us" (p. 15).

Disquiet with the preparation of teachers in Australia with cognisance of the complex demands of globalisation is also echoed by educators internationally. Groundwater-Smith & Mockler (2009) also propose teacher education globally is in the thrall of "an age of compliance", through what they describe as an "audit society" subsumed by the "rituals of verification" (p. 4). Their conclusion is a call for courage to stand against the "neo-liberal economic and social agenda" with professional learning that is somewhat ambiguously defined as "inquiry-based, rigorous" and "engaging" (p. 139). Zeicher (2009) identifies a similar impact upon teacher education as a struggle for social justice, which discussed briefly in terms of identity (p. 34), invests hope in a constructivist transformation through research.

Van Brummellen (2009) ironically states the problem in terms of a 'faith commitment',

> Technological progress has enabled globalization to occur. But it is also repeatedly forcing education into a technological straitjacket. The faith commitment behind this is that the world needs efficient educational strategies. Such methods will lead to competencies for the workplace that, in turn, will enable the world's gross economic product to continue to grow. The economy must continue to be profitable for larger corporations. Therefore, education must teach these competencies needed to contribute to a prosperous and sustainable economy. This is accompanied by the mass media shaping children and adolescents into individualistic, self-centred consumers. All this led to narrowing the meaning of education as well as how human beings are viewed. (p. 350)

The 'faith commitment' includes an ingrained demand for the certainty and method of the contemporary Western mind, grounded in a 'technological straitjacket' of science and economics which leaves little room for formation of other than persons in service of a global economic system. If the implicit pressure of the AITSL standards through an expectation of 'performance', 'positive impact' and 'evidence' allows little else to frame teacher identity or classroom readiness, it may confirm reductive pressure upon what it means to be fully human. The worldview of 'the Authority' may require a faith in schooling as the handmaiden to economic rationalism. The classroom ready teacher by this standard is authorized to teach when confirmation to the worldview of 'the Authority' is demonstrated.

Another worldview; A different proposal

Gee (2001) defines a teacher educator as "kind of person" in a "given kind of context" (p. 99), whose identity formation Dinkelman (2011) observes is a "remarkably complex" (p. 312) process largely produced "out there", meaning through wider cultural influence, for "in there" (p. 311) is indicative of the idea of the classroom. The elements of context framing identity highlights that existing forms of schooling represent a worldview whose capacity includes orienting the person within a larger narrative. This suggests that being human, if viewed through a lens of classroom readiness, tends to a reductive shaping of function to form, possibly limiting a challenge to changing deep structures of schooling or forming learners other than as 'economically' prescribed. The legitimating 'Standards' establish an authorised framework that facilitates a reductionist view of the person largely rewarded by compliance to consumerism. Such pervasive fundamental influences, if legitimised, weight the task of schooling in the favour of the neo-liberal imaginary at the possible expense of other ways of being. An implication includes that the cumulative effect of *The Graduate Standards* in authorising classroom readiness is limiting the rendering of teacher identity in terms of another story.

Sewell (2016) in his discussion of the reductionism of Evangelicalism as an element of Christianity in crisis concludes "the answer to the problem of the human condition is not to be found within humanity itself, and the answers to the multiple malformations of human culture are not to be found within our admittedly immense cultural resources" (p. 224). In like manner exclusive human authority seemingly claimed through 'the standards' if grounded in a scientific worldview represent a reductive narrative with classroom readiness the facilitation of a one-dimensional way of being in the world. In fore-grounding method and certainty as the primary means of establishing positive impact through evidence and the cookie cutter pressure points of *national accreditation, rigorous program design and delivery, transparency of entry, integration and evidence* other voices will be restricted. Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, & Edwards-Groves (2014) observe in relation to the mentoring of new teachers that "choice is not just a choice of a mode of induction, it is a choice about the kind of world and the kind of profession a new teacher is inducted into" (p. 163). Likewise, Bertucio (2017) in arguing the debilitating nature of "trends, fads and assorted vicissitudes of fashion" (p. 477) concludes "the hegemony of Bloom's taxonomy" has "transformed education into a Cartesian training facility" (p. 494). He also claims the legacy of Descarté is reflected in "modernity's narrowly industrial and dehumazing tendencies" (p. 478) which has been claimed are reflected through the idea of classroom readiness. If the worldview of classroom readiness through *The Graduate Standards* is a reductive vision, then so too will be the resulting teacher. The standards may result in a split vision of the world whereby the classroom becomes a space for mechanistic replication by the dualistic. If *The Graduate Standards* denote readiness of the teacher as an unreflective transmission of a dominant worldview which represents a validity of the classroom for ongoing global consumerism, a serious problem with character may result.

choice is not just a choice of a mode of induction, it is a choice about the kind of world and the kind of profession a new teacher is inducted into

Naugle (2009) maintains "the most practical and important thing about being human is his or her view of the universe and theory of the cosmos—that is, the content and implications of one's worldview" (p. 5). A key observation being that "life proceeds 'kardioptically' out of 'a vision of the heart' " (p. 16). This suggests that the worldview of the teacher is critical as through interaction with them a vision of life is transferred. If classroom readiness is limited to consensus, scientific rigour, clinical practice and evidence then schooling may continue to be a politicised tool reflecting a neo-liberal imaginary. What may also be highlighted includes a marginalization of being human from within 'a different story'.

Beech (2015) when discussing what Christians as teachers might look like argues for the idea of a relational epistemology. The key idea being that the 'perfect' teacher understands knowledge is relational and through careful enactment of the degrees of connectedness demonstrates "an understanding of knowledge that is integrated, holistic and dependent on the network of relationships that exist" (p. 90). In observing epistemology as web of connections, a case is developed for more than the flattened lines of connection of secular humanism to only that which can be measured through the senses. Beech maintains that knowledge is more than mere data and requires a connecting reference to God to bring greater meaning and value to what it means to be a teacher. Marsden (1997) concludes that with the

[1]The term used by AITSL (2015, p. 2)

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idea of God and his purpose factored back into any discussion, "the set of epistemological questions changes dramatically" (p. 88). Consequently, *The Graduate Standards* as a reflection of a prescriptive performativity, represent a limitation to knowing if a connection to the God of the Bible is not considered.

What is considered essential to effective 'classroom readiness' is a worldview that includes and foregrounds God's good, creational, covenantal, and holy character as key elements defining any teacher. An assumption based upon a biblical worldview of teacher readiness includes that God has a particular person, place, and practice in mind that He intends to 'form' and into which the human is invited to participate. It is to the end God has in mind, the renewal of all things, that the meaning of classroom readiness might find richest meaning and purpose. It may be that an authority greater than the all-consuming narrative of consumerism and the depletion of the earth's resources is the only antidote to the human condition.

> *teacher readiness includes that God has a particular person, place, and practice in mind that he intends to 'form' and into which the human is invited to participate*

Conclusion

The question framing this discussion about what it might mean to be a 'classroom ready' teacher is prompted by the process of contributing to a Master of Teaching program for submission to TEQSA by a Christian tertiary provider. The capacity to challenge compliance is understood as emerging from within a worldview derived from the story of the Bible which, it is claimed, creates space for critical distance to observe potential differences. While there are acknowledged positives to a desire for accountability and excellence through rigour and quality of initial teacher programs, it is the deeper narrative purpose of classroom readiness, that may be a critical concern. It has been claimed the worldview position of *The Graduate Standards* highlights the materialist assumptions made about concepts including 'evidence', 'positive impact' and 'performance' feeding into a deeper presuppositional neo-liberal narrative about classroom readiness. Such questions suggest that to be 'classroom ready' is dependent upon a worldview presented as 'normative' and 'authorised' emerging from a powerful story about the world that is in terms of establishing identity may be potentially antithetical to a biblical worldview. The flaw in the 'classroom readiness' story includes exclusive knowing through science and technology to instill confidence in method and certainty of understanding to ensure the promotion of economic rationalism. Such a story if held up to another perspective, such as a biblical worldview with the plans and purposes of God as a greater authority, may represent a story that calls into question the worldview impetus of 'the Authority' and *The Graduate Standards*. If the story of classroom readiness is driven by neo-liberal imaginary enlisting science and technology to drive consumerism then the evidence of resource depletion, climate change and human suffering needs informing by the story that includes the plans and purpose of God as a greater authority in the formation of identity, especially as a teacher. One of the many challenges facing Christian schooling in Australia includes wrestling over the formation of Christians as faithful teachers schooled in God's vision against another vision of what it might mean to be ready to teach. TEACH

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> *One of the many challenges facing Christian schooling in Australia includes wrestling over the formation of Christians as faithful teachers*

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TEACH[R]

After the earthquake: Adult reflections on adolescent experiences of a natural disaster

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Abstract

This 'living memory' study (Smith, 2018, p. 78) investigated the perceived psychoemotional experiences of four senior high school students at one Christian school during and after the February 22, 2011, Christchurch New Zealand earthquake. The literature revealed that children and adolescents might be impacted socially, emotionally and academically by earthquakes, resulting in mental health issues ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder to post- traumatic growth in the victims. Using a qualitative case study and narrative inquiry approach, participants were interviewed seven years after the earthquake. Responses were qualitatively analysed, and coded allowing for the emergence of an Earthquake Impact Profile (EIP) for each respondent. These profiles revealed several mitigating factors that helped the participants personally cope with the stress immediately after the earthquake struck, and in the following months and years.

Kia kaha (stay strong) became a popular phrase after the 6.3 magnitude Christchurch earthquake that killed 185 people

Introduction: kia kaha (stay strong)

This study had a nested twofold purpose: firstly to investigate the perceived psycho-emotional reactions of four senior high school students at one Christian school during and after the February 22, 2011, Christchurch New Zealand earthquake (hereafter referred to as the Christchurch earthquake): secondly, to use this qualitative data set to develop a set of Earthquake Impact Profiles (EIPs) for each participant in order to coalesce the "shared brokenness and reassemblage of the rhizomic reach of trauma" (Smith, 2018, p. 78).

Three questions were developed in order to guide and frame this study.

1. What support did the students access post-disaster and how did this impact them?
2. What were the self-identified psychoemotional impacts on the students?
3. What was the self-identified academic impact on each of the students?

Kia kaha (stay strong) became a popular phrase after the 6.3 magnitude Christchurch earthquake that killed 185 people (O'Connor & Takahashi, 2014; Shepherd, McBride & Lovelock, 2017). As Du Plessis, Sutherland, Gordon and Gibson (2015) found, this cultural, phraseology *kia kaha* became a symbol of resilience and hope for people experiencing the destruction of their city. Embracing the metaphoric intent of these words, school communities, at least outwardly, seemed to pull together and combine forces to help rebuild their damaged schools (Ormandy, 2014). For weeks after the earthquake, schools were without power and water while some had buildings that needed to be torn down. Others had broken windows and resources that littered their classrooms (Ormandy, 2014; Havell, 2012). This impacted both the mental wellbeing of the teachers and the students. As indicated *kia kaha* was the phrase used to remind earthquake victims that regrowth and strength are within them, and that while the journey is long, there can be an end (Barrer, 2012). However, is there ever a psychoemotional end to tragedies such as the Christchurch earthquake? While clearly implying the jury is still out regarding this point, Ruti (2014) believes "our personalities always carry the nostalgic trace of our losses" (p. 40).

Seven years after the Christchurch earthquake, this qualitative study investigated four young adults' retrospective memories of life immediately after the earthquake and its ongoing repercussions. All four were senior high school students in one Christian school at the time of the earthquake. The rationale for choosing an in-depth 'living memory' (Smith, 2018) method for the study of the immediate and long term effects on adolescents was threefold. First, the primary researcher had a particular interest in the earthquake, having survived it. Second, following on from this 'lived experience' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), it became clear that the literature pertaining to how natural disasters impact adolescents was limited compared to studies that explore the impact on adults. As adolescence can be a period of ambiguity, a time of life when identity and world view are being shaped and in particular wellbeing aspects such as resilience are formed, this area of research needs expanding. Third, there are few post-earthquake studies where an adolescent experience is ideationally developed and then critically examined through recall and reflection.

Review of the literature: kōrure (to change)

The distress caused by natural disasters impacts millions of people globally every year. Natural disasters disrupt daily life, demolish infrastructure and can result in injury, displacement and death (Falcone & Detty, 2015). In unique ways not fully understood, this aftermath disruption of morbidity and mortality are mitigated by geography, climate, structural and political resources, and socioeconomic status (Kahn, 2005). As highlighted by newscasts and social media the very old, the very young, and those in lower socioeconomic classes are typically framed as experiencing the worse outcomes from a natural disaster (Falcone & Detty, 2015).

Major earthquakes are one of the most devastating of natural disasters (Khatri, Tran, Baral & Fisher, 2018). Mutch (2015) explains the uniqueness of earthquakes as follows.

> What differentiates earthquakes from other disasters is that they are unpredictable and uncontrollable. They are elusive, in the sense that the causes are hard to see but the effects are highly visible. There is no warning and no set endpoint. On-going aftershocks continue to cause physical and psychoemotional damage long after the initial event. (p. 39)

Impacts of earthquakes on wellbeing

There are three broad areas where earthquakes impact humans: physical impacts, societal impacts and psychoemotional impacts. Physical impacts involve everything from minor injuries through more serious injuries to death, all of which may occur swiftly (Bartels & VanRooyen, 2012). These injuries may be life changing both in the short and long term. In Christchurch, 185 people died and 7171 were injured (Potter, Becker, Johnston & Rossiter, 2015), straining the health care services. Societal impacts are characterised by a loss of infrastructure, destruction of community and workspaces and a changing landscape wrought by geological process. Impacts of the 2011 Christchurch earthquake included land level changes, liquefaction, increased risk of flooding, rock falls, landslides, and air and water quality issues, along with contaminated land (Potter, Becker, Johnston & Rossiter, 2015). Added to this was the uncertainty of ongoing aftershocks.

Our personalities always carry the nostalgic trace of our losses

While the physical and societal impacts of earthquakes are devastating, even those individuals who may be physically unscathed can experience negative psychoemotional reactions. It is in this area that the majority of post-earthquake research has taken place (Silwal, Dybdahl, Chudal, Sourander & Lien, 2018). It is becoming increasingly clear that natural disasters negatively affect the mental wellbeing of adults, adolescents and children in the months and years after the disaster. Post-earthquake impacts on children and adolescents have been observed to vary greatly, ranging along a continuum from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to post-traumatic growth (PTG) (Bartels & VanRooyen, 2012; Dyregrov, Yule & Olff, 2018; Brown et al., 2017; Kar, 2009; Mutch and Garwith, 2014; Tang, Liu, Liu, Xue & Zhang, 2014).

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Clearly, post-traumatic stress disorder (hereafter termed PTSD) has the greatest research focus, revealing that the negative psychoemotional reaction children experience in the wake of an earthquake is a web of anxiety which includes intense feelings of nervousness, fear and sometimes anger (Kar, 2009). Unless treated, this may result in depression or other mental health disturbances (Kar, 2009). As mentioned previously, earthquakes can have long-term consequences for survivors (Arnberg, Johannesson & Michel, 2013; Khatri et al., 2018;

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> *PTG … includes feeling more capable and stronger which leads to greater confidence, strengthening of relationships and developing a better outlook on life.*

Mutch, 2015; Neria, Nandi & Galea, 2008; Sezgin & Punamaki, 2012). Furthermore, exposure to earthquake-related traumatic events increases the risk of psychoemotional disorders, including PTSD. While these conditions are devastating enough, Bonanno, Brewin, Kaniasty and Greca (2010) have also linked PTSD to compromised academic achievement.

Post-traumatic growth

Despite the weight of evidence revealing the negative mental health impact of natural disasters, there is another form of impact which is less discussed. It would appear that not all who experience natural disasters suffer long-term negative psychoemotional impacts. Post Traumatic Growth (hereafter termed PTG) is evident in some individuals who have experienced trauma (Bernstein & Pfefferbaum, 2018), where PTG manifests as improved change in an individual's personal life after exposure to a traumatic event (Bernstein & Pfefferbaum, 2018; Janoff-Bulman, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2014). PTG appears to have the characteristics of resilience and includes the idea of bouncing back; however, in this case bouncing back to a higher level of wellbeing than before the trauma occurred (Winstanley, Hepi & Wood, 2015). Thus, this PTG wellbeing aspect includes feeling more capable and stronger which leads to greater confidence, strengthening of relationships and developing a better outlook on life. Calhoun and Tedeschi (2014) have identified five possible PTG growth domains which include "personal strength, new possibilities, relating to others, appreciation of life, and spiritual change" (p. 5). Combined, these factors may contribute to PTG over a period of time up to nearly two decades (Bernstein & Pfefferbaum, 2018; Meyerson, Grant, Carter & Kilmer 2011; Cryder, Kilmer, Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006). Few of these studies have been directly linked to adolescents (Bernstein & Pfefferbaum, 2018; Cryder et al., 2006).

Mitigating factors on post-trauma wellbeing

The literature reveals several mitigating aspects related to post-trauma wellbeing which include the quality of social connections (Fergusson, Boden, Horwood & Mulder, 2015; Powell & Thompson, 2016; Revenson & Lepore, 2012), personality, dispositional optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985), and the nature of the immediate social environment (Revenson & Lepore, 2012). In specific terms, Terranova, Boxer and Morris (2009) found that secure and safe family support minimises the risk of PTSD in children.

While there is a developing set of research data describing the process of mitigation in the previous findings, an interesting core thread appears to have arisen in the school based work of Bateman and Danby (2013) who found that "story-telling sequences help both children and teachers to recover from their traumatic experiences" (2013, p. 6). Linked to the findings of the need for social support, storying gives both a voice to the victims and a community with which to share their anxiety (Mutch & Gawith, 2014). Prior to this, Leek Openshaw (2011) came to a similar conclusion, and added that creative expression through journaling, art and music were also valid ways for students to process their emotions. Long and Wong (2012) concur, but, indicated that children also need connections beyond school to the wider community and their families. It would appear that these aspects in tandem with social support assist students in the development of resilience after a traumatic event and can contribute to a lower rate of PTSD symptoms (La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg & Prinstein, 1996).

Pockets of research after the Christchurch earthquake identified the belief system of individuals as a mitigating factor in trauma. For some, the earthquake heightened spiritual thinking and they found comfort and potential answers in their faith (Sullivan & Wong, 2011; Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasello & Koenig, 2007). Similarly, data related to other earthquakes reveal that belief systems "can serve as a source of resilience and strength during a disaster and in its aftermath" (Furman et al., 2016, p. 75). Furthermore, individuals who connect to a belief system post-disaster are less at risk for developing a negative mental health disorder such as PTSD (Blanc, Rahill, Laconi, Mouchenik, 2016; Jakovljević et al., 2012).

While post-trauma psychoemotional and related issues in the aftermath of earthquakes are the topic of widespread investigation, there is still scope to explore this topic in the context of the experiences of adolescents looking back at an experience in which they were involved.

Research design: akoranga (learning)

The overarching paradigm for this research project was qualitative, under which a bricolage of case study (Yin, 2014) and narrative inquiry was interwoven (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). This methodology was deemed to be optimal in understanding the whole experience of the earthquake (Flick, 2014; Van Manen, 2016), allowing deeply personal and tacit richness and raw expression of the participants' lived experience, and 'living memories' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Smith, 2018) to be captured. As Barbour (2014) posits, there can be no 'objective' singular truth in traumatic events as each individual has their own reality and validates their experiences. The stories that they share have the potential to educate the self and others, including researchers who aim to understand the personal response to a traumatic event, and the context that surrounds the event (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This choice of method allows for flexibility and fluidity while venturing into new territories of understanding and knowledge (Minichiello & Kottler, 2009).

Participation in this project was based on a purposeful sample of students who met the criteria of being senior students at a designated Christian school in Christchurch during the 2011 earthquake. All were at school when the earthquake struck. Anonymity, confidentiality and freedom of participation were ensured with ethics approval for the research. Three participants were female, and one was male.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. This allowed a unique negotiation between the researcher and the participant as stories were told, retold and reaffirmed (Webster & Mertova, 2007; King & Horrocks, 2010). The analysis followed a modified grounded theory approach which allowed a small sample size (Charmaz, 2014; Glasser, 1998; Birks & Mills, 2013). The interviews were transcribed and coded through three levels (Charmaz, 2014) and from this process themes emerged which formed the basis of three Earthquake Impact Profiles (EIPs) for each participant. The EIPs were then used to respond to the research questions.

Results: kōrero pono (honest narrative)

Individual participant EIPs have been reported using tables which take the form of a shaded analysis matrix, supported by participant comments that provide rich data. Data has been reported in three distinct areas to facilitate comparisons encompassing all the data, and to form responses to the research questions.

Question One: Mitigating support networks

What support did the students access post-disaster and how did this impact them?

Table 1 provides an overview of the support networks the participants relied on post-earthquake. Each participant's responses have been represented in the form of a shaded matrix to visually present the extent to which they relied on the identified support networks.

In this investigation, family and friends featured as a support network for all the participants, especially in the initial, traumatic days following the earthquake. "*I remember that I never wanted to go anywhere without my mum, like, I resorted back to (it) being a child…I didn't want to be alone*" (A, ♀). This participant also relied heavily on her grandparents who lived with them at the time.

The support of the community was equally highly valued, with mention of neighbourhood support. "*When we got home from the earthquake… someone had already made soup… so they gave out soup to everyone which was really nice*" (B, ♀). Participant D (♀) noted that while they were shoveling silt, "*one lady dropped off some muffins*," yet none of the participants identified their school specifically as a support network (See Table 1). Reflective comments indicated that participants felt their school could have done more to support them in the weeks and months after the earthquake. In retrospect, the participants felt they would have benefited from access to an independent counsellor: "I don't think there was any … counselling services open to us" (A, ♀), "*I do think that they should have made a bigger effort to get a counsellor*," and "*It probably would have been good to have talked about it*" (B, ♀). Although the school

> *none of the participants identified their school specifically as a support network*

Table 1: *Participant EIPs for support networks*

Support Network	Participant A ♀	Participant B ♀	Participant C ♂	Participant D ♀
Friends and Family				
Community				
Belief System				
Involvement in service		Participant left Christchurch		

Key: Participant viewed support network as *very important*; Participant viewed support network as *somewhat important*; Participant made *no reference* to this support network

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did have its own counsellor, who tried to encourage and support, the participants felt the service offered was inadequate for the number of students. They also felt a need for group sessions where they could discuss the impact of the earthquake on themselves and others. One participant commented that he didn't "*really remember having any conversations with people or sitting down and processing what it was like, or anything like that in any way*" (C, ♂). One participant also felt that after they returned to school, "*I think the culture was to, like, ignore it* (B, ♀) *and act like everything was totally normal*" (B, ♀). In retrospect, Participant A remembered thinking at the time, "*Are you for real; there was an earthquake!*" (A, ♀). Considering these responses, it appears it was the wider community (media; national and local government; churches and associations; local neighbourhoods and individuals) beyond the school that was more significant in supporting these students than their school community.

All participants relied to a certain extent on their belief system to support them post-earthquake, though this had its challenges as indicated by the following comments.

> It was hard to continue my positive look on life with the Lord on my side. It just, it was really hard … I started to see slowly what the Lord had really done for us … it was a slow thing … I started to really praise God when I finally got out and saw what had happened. (A, ♀)

One participant asked, "*Why was it that person's time to die and not mine?*" (B, ♀), while another commented, "*It may have even strengthened my relationship with God… in a little bit of in a way*" (C, ♂). One participant felt that "*spiritually it was really wholesome for me to get the opportunity [to serve], even though it was really sad*" (D, ♀).

Involvement in service featured in the interviews of three participants, with one participant speaking very favourably of the support she felt when engaged in helping her community. The fourth participant (See Table 1) was sent to another city to stay with friends so did not join in community service projects. Of the participants who stayed and helped, this comment sums up the impact of service on their own wellbeing.

> I think there is something particular about helping others that just makes you feel more human, which sounds really weird but it really makes you feel more complete and whole when you're doing something for someone else and not expecting a return or anything for that service (D, ♀).

All those interviewed felt that family and friends, the wider community, their belief system and community service offered support during the post-earthquake days. There was less agreement on the role that their school played as a support structure.

"It was hard to continue my positive look on life with the Lord on my side. It just, it was really hard ..."

Question Two: Psychoemotional reactions

What were the self-identified psychoemotional impacts on the students?

Table 2 provides an overview of the self-identified psychoemotional impacts on the participants immediately after the earthquake and in the months and years following it. The first three items relate to PTG and the remaining five elements are identified in the literature as relating to PTSD.

Collectively, the participants identified three psycho-emotional reactions that moved them towards PTG. Resilience was an emerging characteristic in the interviews with all four participants indicating moderate to high impact on this trait, as indicated by this comment.

> I think it's brought closure in a more positive way in my life because seeing the city go through something so terrible and then seeing it come out afterwards and what it's like now and what it's going to be in the future has kind of just made the situation less upsetting and more hopeful (D, ♀).

Self-reliance was also evident with one participant feeling that "*it was me just supporting myself, and that's not because other people didn't want to but it was just because I didn't really, you know, I didn't really ask for help*" (B, ♀). The participant who was formally diagnosed with PTSD (A, ♀), however, claimed little or no self-reliance. All participants remember comparing their reactions at the time to others in similar situations, "*and when I looked around, I saw people who were struggling much more outwardly than I was. So if people asked if I was all right, I would have just said I was fine*" (C, ♂). This participant is still living with reactions to sounds and movement and retrospectively feels that "*maybe if I had processed earlier [it] may have been able to help with that*" (C, ♂). All participants recognised some PTG as a positive outcome of their earthquake experience.

Between them, the participants identified a total of four psychoemotional reactions that moved them towards PSTD (See Table 2). Each participant was impacted in unique ways by their 'reactioning' to different extents, so forming personal profiles. After the event, three participants identified that suppressing their emotions had impacted them, although they did not recognise this at the time. One participant acknowledged, "*I was always one of those kids that kept things to themselves and didn't like to talk about things that you're struggling with and things that you're going through*" (B, ♀).

Table 2: *Participant EIPs for self-identified psychoemotional reactions*

Self-identified psychoemotional reaction	Participant A ♀	Participant B ♀	Participant C ♂	Participant D ♀
Self-identified psychoemotional reactions related to PTG				
Resilience	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
Self-reliance	No to low	High	Moderate	Moderate
Comparison to others	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Self-identified psychoemotional reactions related to PTSD				
Suppression	Moderate	High	High	High
Worry/anxiety	High	High	High	No to low
Fear	High	Moderate	Moderate	No to low
Anger	No to low	Moderate	No to low	Moderate

Key: High = Participant self-identified as *high impact* reaction; Moderate = Participant self-identified as *moderate impact* reaction; No to low = Participant self-identified as *no to low* impact reaction

"Most participants experienced high impact worry/ anxiety … moderate to high fear … but only two … experienced anger"

Most participants experienced high impact worry/ anxiety (but not D), moderate to high fear (but not D), but only two (B and D) experienced anger and then only with moderate impact. One said of aftershocks, "*there's that anxiety builds up … where it's like, is this going to get worse?*" (C, ♂). Another admitted, "*I got too scared even to go to the toilet by myself*" (A, C). Along with fear came anger. "*I think I reacted with anger weirdly enough, and it has made me a bit anxious to go out by myself*" (B, ♀). Participant A (♀) was the only person who acknowledged experiencing PTSD, and who was formally diagnosed. Words and phrases used by this participant confirmed this diagnosis. "*Never wanted to go anywhere … didn't want to be alone … too scared … what if something happened … too terrified … I was really anxious and panicky for a while… I would wake up with uncontrollable shakes*" (A, ♀).

In summary, each participant self-identified a range of psychoemotional reactions which varied in intensity and duration and worked to move them either towards PTG or PTSD. The level of psychoemotional reaction, suggests three (A, B, C) experienced PTSD related reactions overall, and only D experienced PTG as a dominant outcome. No obvious relationship between Support Networks and Self-identified Psychoemotional Responses is apparent, though D reported a lower importance for networks and the lowest emotional impact. The lower negative emotional impact for D is potentially associated with higher PTG and the uniquely higher valuing of involvement in service networks.

Question Three: Impact on education

What was the self-identified academic impact on each of the students?

Table 3 indicates the varying impact on each individual's perceived academic achievement post-earthquake.

Individual comments reveal a variety of responses to the self-identified impact on the respondents' academic performance and refer to the modifications allowed for final year students. One student felt her last year of high school was "*really hard*". She didn't pass and commented, "*I felt like I had been robbed*" (A ♀), although she also admitted that she "*struggled*" before the earthquake.

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In contrast, another participant didn't think it "*impacted my grades or anything, it just, it was like another burden to carry… . It was disruptive*" (B ♀). Participant C remembers "*being completely over it*" [school], and further offered that, "*Now that I look back at it … it must have impacted me because I don't actually recall much of my final year of being at school*" (C ♂). The least academic progress impact was reported by B and D. Overall both valued networks less and indicated high to moderate self reliance. For the most part, the degree of impact on schooling aligned with each participant's perceived PTSD associated psychoemotional impact of the earthquake, participant B, however, being an exception. No relationship between impact on academic progress and overall valuing of support networks was apparent.

> *emerging clearly as a separate support network in its own right, was involvement in community service.*

Discussion: tūhuratanga (discovery, revelation)

In answering the research questions, three areas contributed to each participant's Earthquake Impact Profile (EIP)—mitigating support networks, self-identified psychoemotional reactions and self-identified academic performance. Participants identified the mitigating role of support networks on their psychoemotional reactions, which, in turn, may have contributed to their perceptions of academic performance in 2011 and beyond.

Mitigating support networks

All four participants recognised the influence of multiple mitigating support networks, in three unique combinations. The finding that friends and family offer very important support for adolescents post-earthquake agrees with studies that parental input makes a difference to how children deal with trauma (Long & Wong, 2012; Silwal et al, 2018). As the participants' stories were tracked in this study, it became apparent that a wide network of family and friends assisted adjustment to post-earthquake life. Participant A's family and friends' support network consisted primarily of her mother and grandparents, and in retrospect she felt that having others in her support group would have helped her cope better.

Community was also a very important mitigator for all participants and potentially included school and church communities amongst the broader elements of community. This concurs with Terranova et al. (2009), who posit that social support is the most important factor in mitigating PTSD. It was noted; however, that the recollections of organisational school support were of weaker influence. Lack of independent counselling services; limited opportunities for sharing and storytelling; and a reluctance to discuss the situation or listen to questions pertaining to faith were noted. On reflection, the participants felt they would have coped better if some of these strategies had been implemented. On the other hand, participants claimed school friends provided strong support for each other. Given the lack of warning when the earthquake struck, and the ongoing confusion in the following weeks, the school community was most likely doing the best it could to support both students and staff under very difficult circumstances.

Related to social support but emerging clearly as a separate support network in its own right, was involvement in community service. Three participants were actively involved in service. Involvement in service potentially strengthened community connections, self-identity and spirituality, and also reassured the participants as they helped restore the city. One participant highly valued her community service, while two others considered it to be somewhat important (See Table 1). Although community involvement has been studied in the context of natural disasters, most studies revolve around the benefits for infrastructure (Lawther, 2009), or motivation of volunteers (Barraket, Keast, Newton, Walters & James, 2013). Community service as a support network for emotional recovery is scant within the literature, although service has been identified by Leek Openshaw (2011) as a helpful post-trauma strategy. For the students involved, the opportunity to serve others provided purposeful activity which helped them cope to varying degrees. Community service as a support network is an area that deserves further consideration.

Support networks often overlapped, with participants finding this helpful. Sometimes family members joined together in serving the community within community organisations and church congregations, a three way union that adds an additional dimension of service to the findings of Benson et al. (2015) and Sullivan and Wong (2012), that belief systems help provide comfort and community. While the belief systems provided very important to somewhat important comfort, and theological answers to why the earthquake happened, in some cases they also raised challenging questions for the participants to work through.

Most participants considered mitigating support networks as very important to them, with Participant D rating service involvement as very important, while the other two participants who became involved rated this network as somewhat important.

Table 3: *Participant EIPs for self-identified academic progress post-earthquake*

	Participant A ♀	Participant B ♀	Participant C ♂	Participant D ♀
Self-identified Academic Impact				

Key: High impact; Low impact; No impact

Self-identified psychoemotional reactions

Self-identified psychoemotional reactions covered everything from resilience to anger forming individualised participant profiles (see Table 2). Resilience and self-reliance which are contributors to PTG were attributed by participants to their support networks that provided social belonging and emotional support post-earthquake through family and church activities, including food distribution and cleanup, a prior finding within the literature (Fergusson et al., 2015). Self-reliance is a personality factor that can play a major role in the development of resilience as identified by Scheier and Carver (1985) contributing to PTG. This may explain participants attributing lower (moderate) impact to Self-reliance than both Resilience and capacity to compare personal need to that of others.

A reaction that is not apparent in the literature relates to how the participants compared themselves to others, and then acted accordingly. It may be that this is an adolescent trait, but it has implications as at least one of the participants (C ♂) felt he could have dealt with some issues that still bother him, if he had accepted help when it was offered, instead of seeing others worse off and refusing the help offered. Altruism expressed then, had a negative impact.

Suppression (a potential contributor to PTSD) was another coping mechanism that was recognised of high impact when reflecting during interviews, but not one that was always apparent during the event. On participant "*found it easier to go for counselling*" at her tertiary institution after schooling, and remembers "*that was a hard year too*" (A ♀). Participants felt that counselling, storytelling and sharing could have helped (Bateman & Dandy, 2013), but did not mention journaling, art and music activities as promoted by Leek Openshaw (2011).

All participants remembered experiencing worry/anxiety, fear (moderate impacts) and/or anger (lower impact) in the days and weeks following the earthquake. This cluster of emotions is related with fear prompting worry or anxiety, and anger emerging as a result of worry or anxiety. There were high levels of worry, anxiety, fear and suppression that affected some of the the participants both short and long term. This is a finding supported by Neria et al. (2008) and Arnberg et al. (2013) who both identified that victims of natural disasters could experience impacts for six or more years after the event. While all could be assigned moderate overall impacts, only participant A was formally diagnosed with PTSD and anxiety. Her mitigating support structures though strongly recognised, were more restricted, and combined with predispositions influenced both her psychoemotional reactions profile (low PTG, high PTSD), and highly impacted academic progress. This supports the position of Powell and Thompson (2016) who found that smaller social support networks can contribute to a higher likelihood of PTSD. All participants identified that their support network could have included a professional counsellor or psychologist who had no affiliation with the school they attended. They all felt that this would have helped lessen the intensity and duration of their negative psychoemotional reactions and allowed them to share their stories and receive professional advice on how to move forward after the earthquake.

> *The only participant who was formally diagnosed with PTSD also felt severely impacted academically, … other participants … experienced no to low impacts … for a short amount of time*

Impact on education

A range of psychoemotional reactions pushed the participants either toward PTG or PTSD and this effected their academic progress. It is important to note that the New Zealand government put measures in place for final year students to allow an aggregate score based on their performance pre-earthquake. One participant viewed this "*as improving my chances of getting a pretty good grade*," at the same time admitting that "*it [the earthquake]was pretty disruptive*"(B ♀). This alleviated some stress about completing their final year of schooling. The only participant who was formally diagnosed with PTSD also felt severely impacted academically, a finding consistent with Bonanno et al. (2010). All other participants in this study experienced no to low impacts that only affected their academic outcomes for a short amount of time. This reflected their wider support networks which helped PTG and alleviated a strong negative psychoemotional reaction in all three of these other participants but most clearly in D, the participant attributing greatest importance to involvement in serving others.

As PTSD is more likely to adversely affect academic achievement and delay a return to normal functioning, this study highlights the importance of

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adequate support structures for the adolescents in this study. Though all valued support networks similarly as important, the actual adequacy and predispositions differentiated outcomes. In this study, support networks including community service, moved the senior high school students towards PTG and consequently fulfilled and happy lives after the earthquake. This was most apparent for participant D.

Recommendations

Although it is recognised that the data collected from four participants in one shared experience cannot be generalised, the collective data analysed in this study can be clustered into four recommendations. As the participants all attended one Christian school, the recommendations focus on the role of Christian schools that may find themselves dealing with the after-effects of an earthquake or other natural disasters.

The participants in this study recommend that schools intentionally act as a support to complement other support networks by:

1. creating opportunities for students to explore, in multiple ways, the relationship between their faith and their situation;
2. creating opportunities for involvement in age appropriate community service;
3. facilitating access to an independent psychologist or counsellor for all students post-earthquake, and furthermore, encouraging students to participate in either individual or group counselling; and
4. providing a nurturing environment for students and staff members where stories and experiences can be shared.

“support networks including community service, moved the senior high school students towards PTG and consequently fulfilled and happy lives after the earthquake.”

Conclusion: whakatepe (to finish off, conclude)

This qualitative investigation which analysed adult recollections of four adolescent experiences during and after the 2011 Christchurch earthquake resulted in four unique EIPs. It identified the role of support networks, including involvement in community service, in helping the four participants cope with the aftermath of this disaster. The support networks served to ground the students in reality and helped to ameliorate the psychoemotional reactions of resilience, self-reliance and diminish more negative psychoemotional reactions. Flowing on from the psychoemotional reactions, a varied impact on academic achievement was found, ranging from no impact to high impact. Negative psychoemotional reactions with a limited support network resulted in a high negative impact on education and minimal or more positive psychoemotional reactions coupled with strong support systems resulted in low to no academic impact. This study, although limited in its scope, reminds Christian schools to include intentional planning and service provision within formulated disaster and critical incident policies to most effectively integrate with, and complement, other social support networks protecting student wellbeing. TEACH

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“This study … reminds Christian schools to include intentional planning and service provision within formulated disaster and critical incident policies to most effectively … protect … student wellbeing.”

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The lived experiences of students and faculty of a Christian college who participated in a short-term international mission trip

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> *mission trips … [are] rituals of intensification, where goals are chased, physical and spiritual challenges are faced, and personal transformation can occur*

Keywords: Impact, international, lived experiences, missions, mission trips, short-term mission trips.

Abstract

Short-term international mission trips (STIMTs) are increasing in popularity. Likewise, educators and health care workers are increasingly concerned with obtaining an understanding that improves culturally competent care. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of participants of a Christian college who travelled on a short-term international mission trip (STIMT). One open-ended inquiry guided the interviews: How would you describe your experience as a participant who travelled on a STIMT? An in-depth, one-on-one interview of participants occurred until data saturation was reached. Colaizzi's strategy was used to analyze and organize the data. Leininger's sunrise model was used to guide this study. Themes that emerged from this study included cultural adaptation, relationships, spiritual factors, and personal gain.

Participants from Christian colleges who have returned from STIMTs often report their life was impacted by a broadening of their outlook on culture and diverse levels of poverty, while also having their own self-awareness increased (Swartzenruber, 2008-2009). Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, and Brown (2006) addressed mission trips as rituals of intensification, where goals are chased, physical and spiritual challenges are faced, and personal transformation can occur (p. 434). In a study of the faith-based short-term medical mission trip, Harner, Mann, Whitten, Abraham, and Gillum (2019) illuminated seven themes and pointed to the importance of pre-trip planning. In the current study, a personal transformation that may have occurred after returning from a STIMT is postulated and investigated through participant's exposition of their varied experiences.

Background

Scripture has led some people to believe the first Christian mission trip occurred after Christ's death. The motivation and purpose for Barnabas and Saul's travelling are described in Acts 13:4-5, "The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues." Lee and Gretzel (2016) highlighted, " the purpose of mission trips is to convey religious messages to the people at the mission trip destination" (p. 2). STIMTs could be beneficial to the targeted communities; however, questions have surfaced from previous publications regarding the genuine influence of these trips.

Lee and Gretzel (2016) have asserted that mission trips are a form of tourism that allowed participants to gain a better understanding of the destination country, culture, and lifestyle (p. 1). STIMTs were thought of as a combination of two outcomes: tourism and fulfilling charitable deeds. A STIMT could also have resulted in an educational gain, personal transformation, formed relationships and a clearer understanding of both personal and visited culture.

Problem statement

Although STIMTs have assisted underserved populations, these task forces had been criticized for not providing sustainable services that focused on an underlying problem in the destination community. However, a Christian expects the focus of missions to be derived from Christ's command, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18). Christians have often chosen to live out Christ's command through short-term missions by caring compassionately for others. It is still unclear how STIMTs have impacted the lives of those who participate. Is the admonition to 'make disciples' affecting the 'mission team' too?

Purpose statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences among participants in a Christian college who travelled on a STIMT.

Research question

One open-ended question was used to guide this study. What are the lived experiences among participants in a Christian college who travelled on a STIMT? The interview question was: How would you describe your experience as a participant who travelled on a STIMT?

Prompts were used as needed which included: In what way do you think your team impacted the community? Do you predict a long term impact? How did you adapt to the culture and lifestyle? Explain the challenges and achievements while interacting with the destination community. What experiences were most influential, memorable, or valuable for you? What impact did this experience have on your life?

Review of the literature

Research studies, published from 2005 to 2017, were found using the college library databases including Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), American Theological Library Association (ATLA), and Google Scholar. Search phrases included *the impact of short-term mission trips, short-term mission trips, mission trips, cultural awareness, and cultural competence*. The purpose of the review was to inform and shape the planned research to enable the contribution of new knowledge within the current research context.

Understanding short-term missions: Some factors

A 2012 literature review of 230 articles, published from 1985-2009, sought to better understand the impact of short-term medical missions (Martiniuk, Manouchehian, Negin, & Zwi, 2012). This review asserts, citizens from the United States and Canada were the most frequent participants on mission trips. The country most travelled to was Honduras. Health care professionals responded to presenting health care needs, and the most commonly performed surgery was cleft palate repair (para. 3). Martiniuk et al. concluded by identifying areas needing improvement, including educating and training missionaries to relate to the destination's culture and language. In addition, they proposed that developed and affirmed policies regarding foreign medical missions should be specifically considered in the planning and evaluation of the STIMT (para. 4). Other research has addressed the level of professionalism evident in STIMT programs.

A literature review of 43 articles published between 1947 and 2014 established the role social, economic, and diplomatic aspects played in influencing short-term medical missions (Caldron, Impens, Pavlova, & Groot, 2015). The researchers reported a lack of professionalism that impacted all of the participants experiencing short-term medical missions. The level of collaboration that occurred between those who served and those who were served, may have resulted in a social and diplomatic gap that led to miscommunication, that could lead to an unsuccessful mission. Caldron et al. (2015) reported that for improvement to occur, an increase in preparation, planning, and effective

> *researchers reported a lack of professionalism that impacted all of the participants experiencing short-term medical missions*

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implementation of those plans are required (para. 3). Economically, participants were influenced because they were not paid for their work, instead they travelled to and from the destination, and further, supplies were funded and purchased for the mission trips. Therefore, participants had invested time and money, which altered their future engagement in mission trips. Social, economic and diplomatic aspects of short-term mission trips could have influenced negatively or positively the experience of any participant.

Caldron (2017) studied physician profiles which compared those who were paid with those who were unpaid in both long-term and short-term medical missions. Caldron's study considered the difference in intentions and reflections of participant physicians. The comparative data illuminated that all participants fixated on the impact that they were having on those they gave care to, as opposed to the potential financial gains or the real costs. This demonstrates the potentially principled focus of a Christian institution STIMT in accomplishing 'good works'.

> *Once students returned … students lacked support from their adult leaders to help them transition and apply the [STIMT] educational gains into their lives.*

Cultural impact of short-term mission trips

Lee and Gretzel (2016) evaluated the process of intercultural adaptation through snowball sampling of 10 volunteer participants with international mission trip experience (p. 5). Lee and Gretzel observed mission trips were an "emerging form of tourism" that required personal interaction with hosts to achieve cultural adaptation and pursue evangelism (p. 2). Five factors involved in the process of intercultural adaptation were identified: "predisposition, environment, personal communication, social communication, and personal transformation" (p. 6). Lee and Gretzel claimed these factors emerged as participants described themselves as: prepared for change, experiencing a welcoming environment, benefitting from previously established language ability and/or a willingness to learn the language, and aware of a correlation between the time constraints of a mission and opportunities to establish a relationship.

Likewise, Swartzentruber (2009) explored how cultural sensitivity was developed after participating in a short-term mission trip. Christian school participants stated they returned with a new perspective and way of looking at life. Three themes that emerged from description of personal transformation were: "development of relationships, awareness of poverty, and involvement in serving others" (p. 33). In a personal reflection, Swartzentruber emphasized the benefit of short-term missions for the development of cultural sensitivity. He suggested all Christian schools should consider integrating a mandated short-term mission trip within their school curriculum.

Educational gains

In a detailed review of how a mission trip experience impacted volunteer participants, Linhart (2005) addressed the educational gains of North American adolescent participants impacted by a short-term mission experience. The study was unique in that it allowed participants to record their thoughts and experiences before, during, and after their short-term mission trip; however, the number of participants was limited to a single team of 10 high-school students. Results indicated the curriculum that prepared the students for this mission trip was focused on personal spiritual growth rather than cultural adaptation (p. 267). Once students returned home from this mission trip, it was found that students lacked support from their adult leaders to help them transition and apply the educational gains into their lives. Linhart concluded with a recommendation to future short-term mission trip youth-workers to integrate support and feedback for students to apply the lessons learned to their lives upon homecoming (pp. 268, 269).

In a qualitative study Markey, Tilki, and Taylor (2017) reviewed the concerns nurses had when caring for patients of diverse culture and ethnic background. Four challenges identified through the interviews of 20 nursing students and 10 nurses included "uncertainty, lack of knowledge, ethnocentricity and stereotyping, and culture of the organization" (para. 12) that affected their professional learning experience. These results revealed the knowledge deficiency and characteristic shortcomings of the nurses, which related to their comfort level in providing care to patients within a culture and ethnic diversity. Markey et al. did not recommend improvement on the part of the nurses; yet, without doubt, it provided advice of opportunity to fill this gap and enhance patient care delivery through more suitably prepared professional learning opportunities and better informed contextualized guidance.

Truong, Gibbs, Paradies, and Priest (2017) interviewed 14 community health care workers and sought to understand aspects of cultural competence, as viewed by health care service providers. With these interviews, four multi-level factors were identified as relevant to cultural competence: "individual, professional, organizational, and systemic" (p. 37). These factors stressed the need for a health care worker to seek and attain an understanding of the individual's knowledge and cultural needs (both the individual healthcare worker and the patient); of the professional background and training required to achieve cultural competence; the organization's cultures and policies that affect cultural competence; and how the systems responsible for the community health model and funding affect cultural competence. One suggestion from participants proclaimed that a willingness to learn from each client would assist in providing culturally competent care. This study concluded that addressing the four aspects of cultural competence is essential to achieving culturally competent care (Truong et al., 2017, p. 42).

Summary of the literature review

The literature reviewed has provided some insight into the habits and traditions of STIMTs. The literature revealed personal transformations that occurred in individuals who volunteered on STIMT; in doing so, the literature explored the process and themes of cultural adaptation. The review indicated the culture of another country was better understood when it was lived in by STIMT participants. In addition, for an individual short-term missionary to gain the best-lived experience, he/she should be motivated to learn and should begin before the trip, continue through the trip, and be supported by fellow missionaries afterward in achieving the application of the learning in 'home' contexts.'

The theoretical framework

The 'sunrise model' is a conceptual model used to interpret components of Leininger's culture care diversity and universality theory (Leininger, 1988). The components addressed were "worldview, social structure factors, cultural values and beliefs, and folk and professional health systems" (p. 157). The purpose of this model was to gain an understanding and reasoning of patients' preferred care. This theory addressed how patient outcomes would be improved by seeking and applying an understanding of the patient's culture to coordinated care. Assumptive premises of this theory included: (1) care is essential to human life sustainability; (2) there are numerous expressions of human care that exist among various cultures; (3) care is the dominant feature of nursing; (4) culture care guides nursing practices; (5) knowledge of various aspects of culture are vital for a nurse in delivering patient care; (6) cultures have both folk and professional values; (7) it is possible and essential to care for a patient both when the goal in caring is a cure and when it is not; and (8) knowledge of different cultures is essential to practice nursing (pp. 155-156). Information was collected by a conversation with the patient, who was encouraged to share their ideas of care and how these components of the model related to care. Thus, Leininger's theory promoted an understanding of cultures and how care should be delivered to various cultures informing the interview process. The results of the study provided insight into trends among participants of a private Christian college from their reflection on a STIMT experience. These trends included how experiencing another culture through short-term missions influenced the participants and promoted cultural awareness.

Operational definitions

The *short-term mission trip* was defined as a time of 7-14 days, in which an individual travelled to and participated in mission work for a predetermined underserved population. The *impact* was defined as the perceived effect an action or event had on a person. *International* was referred to as a destination of another nation around the globe. A *Christian* was referred to as an individual who practices faith based on the biblical teachings of Christ Jesus. *Student* referred to an individual enrolled in courses of study for a degree or certificate; more specifically in this study, a student was an individual enrolled at the college. *Faculty* referred to the college teaching staff. *Lived experiences* were defined as memories shared of an event that occurred in their life.

> *for … [a] short-term missionary to gain the best-lived experience, he/she should be motivated to learn … begin before the trip, continue through the trip, and be supported … afterward*

Research methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study to gather data of deeper personal meaning regarding the lived experiences of participants involved in a STIMT. Approval from the college Institutional Review Board was obtained before the interviews. The researchers completed the National Institute of Health certification for "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Sample

The data were collected at a Midwestern college in the United States. The sample size consisted of 16 participants. As suggested by Schmidt and Brown (2019), data collection continued until data saturation was reached. This indicated the moment when the same themes reoccurred, and no new insights were obtained. The participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and met the requirements of having been on a STIMT. Faculty who work for the college were also included in this study. The sample was obtained through convenience sampling of the researchers' acquaintances. To ensure participation, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants in a public, distraction-free environment.

Data collection and analysis procedure

This study included in-depth interviews, that were

45 minutes to an hour-long. The participants in the study were interviewed by one researcher and responses were recorded, however side notes were also taken. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data were analyzed after each interview using Colaizzi's strategy (as cited in Sanders, 2003). Subsequent interviews were conducted if further clarification was needed. The analysis determined common and consistent themes among the participants' responses and was identified from the collected data.

Using Colazzi's strategy, the collected data were analyzed according to the following process taken from Sanders (2003):

1. Each transcript was read and re-read to obtain a general sense about the whole conflict.
2. For each transcript, significant statements that pertained to the phenomenon under study was extracted. These statements were recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and line numbers.
3. Meanings were formulated from these significant statements.
4. The formulated meanings were sorted into categories, clusters of themes and themes.
5. The findings of the study were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.
6. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was described.
7. Finally, validation of the findings was sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences. (p. 33)

"The term tourism occurred a few times in the literature review; however, that was not mentioned by any of the participants"

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Participant Demographics and Background*

Variable	*f*	%
Gender:		
Female	13	81.25%
Male	3	18.75%
Age range:		
18-24	9	56.20%
25-34	2	12.50%
45-54	4	25.00%
55-64	1	6.25%
Students and Year in School:		
Sophomore	1	6.25%
Junior	4	25.00%
Senior	4	25.00%
Faculty:		
.	7	43.75%
Note. (N=16).		

Interview instrument reliability and validity

An interview was scheduled to address the question: "How would you describe your experience as a participant who travelled on a STIMT?" This approach allowed for extended, authentic, descriptive responses as a result of using an open-ended question approach. The interview questions were sent to two peers and a faculty member who provided direct feedback, to inform the review and establish face validity.

Informed consent and confidentiality

The participants were asked to sign an informed consent statement before participating in the research and all information shared in the interview was kept confidential. All data collected were scanned into a computer, stored on discs, and submitted to the School of Nursing to be stored in a locked cabinet, in a locked storage room for three years. Only the nursing administrators or the research coordinator could access the stored records.

Description of results

In this study, 13 female participants and 3 male participants were interviewed. Table 1 lists the demographic characteristics of the participants. The participants who went on a STIMT included countries such as Belgium, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, England, Equador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Philippines, Romania Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland

Data analysis

Once the interviews were completed, data were analyzed into four major themes: cultural adaptation, relationships, spiritual factors, and personal gain, with sub-themes to describe and support each theme. Figure 1 visually presents how the four themes correlate with the research study topic. In the following discussion the results of this study were linked to the literature review. Biblical scripture was quoted and identified as a foundation of Christian beliefs and views, identified as themes in this study. Leininger's Theory model, which was integrated into understandings and taken into consideration when the interviews and data collection took place, further influences the following considerations. The term *tourism* occurred a few times in the literature review; however, that was not mentioned by any of the participants. Personal spiritual growth and the need for calling on God to lead were emphasized experiential outcomes pertinent to the following discussion.

Discussion of the results

Each of the four major themes (Figure 1.) form separate sections within the following discussion of participants lived experiences on STIMTs. For brevity participants are identified by a number prefix by "P".

Theme 1: Cultural adaptation

The cultural adaptation was a re-occurring theme among the interviews conducted for this research study. The most frequently described challenges of adaptation included: language, food, and time orientation. Figure 2 provides a visual understanding of the four subthemes that describe the surfaced theme from the conducted interviews: cultural adaptation. The language was both a challenge and an achievement in the minds of those interviewed. Twelve of our participants stressed the struggle of adapting to their culture's different language because of their lack of ability and knowledge to communicate in the local language. Martiniuk et al. (2012) discussed the need for improvement in short-term missions, related to missionaries' knowledge of the destination's culture and language. However, some participants overcame the language barrier and found ways to adapt and communicate effectively among the people they visited. Participants P3, P8, and P13 expressed confidence in effectively adapting to the cultural language of their destination community. P3 and P8 expressed common responses in terms of using "learned simple commands" or communicating through the "language of play" to effectively communicate with the destination community.

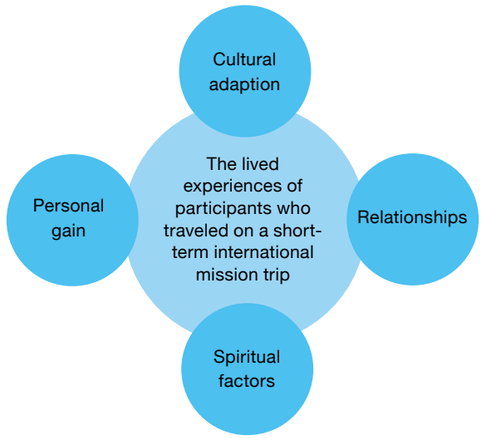

Figure 1. Four emerging themes from the lived experiences of participants in STIMTs

Food was another aspect of adapting to the destination community. Seven participants commented on the different kinds of food, what they could and could not eat, and expectations when eating the food. Two participants commented about the inability to consume some of the food and water because of concern for foodborne illnesses transmission. P11 discussed how they "were expected to eat everything on our plate otherwise it would be offensive towards the hosts." This typifies the development of cultural sensitivity development alluded to by Swartzentruber (2009).

Time orientation was a common cultural adaptation discussed by six interviewees. All contrasted the difference in time orientation between American and their destination community in their own words; however, P5 elaborated how different the concept of time was, "I had to learn to be patient and that it was okay to be late. In America, it is the end of the world if you are late. There, it was just okay."

Multiple participants described success in adapting to another culture by reflecting on the similarities between them and embracing the differences as something to admire. Multiple participants also elaborated over the importance of "being ourselves" while on the mission trip instead of "trying to fit in." Yet P7's explanation described that "There is this mission trip mindset that it is us and them...In reality, it is about we." Despite the different cultural adaptations each interviewer had to overcome, a few commonalities emerged. Stereotypes, as discussed by Markey et al. (2017), included a tendency toward narrow-mindedness, and the familiarities of one's own culture.

"There is this mission trip mindset that it is us and them...In reality, it is about we"

Theme 2: Relationships

Another theme identified through the conducted interviews was relationships. Almost every participant identified the formulated relationships, both within their mission team and the community they served, as the most valuable aspect of STIMTs. Figure 3 provides a visual understanding of the four subthemes that describe the relationships that surfaced from the interviews conducted. Ten participants detailed the valuable formulation of relationships among their team while on their mission trips. Four participants stressed the importance of team-building exercises that occurred before and during the trip, which helped strengthen the team bond and ability to work together when needed. P7 and P8 emphasized how, after the trip,

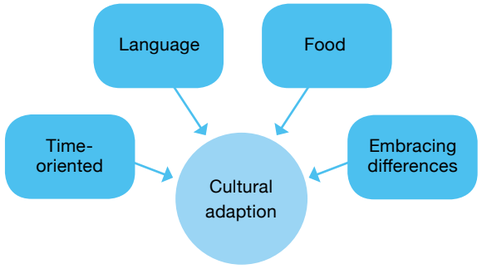

Figure 2. Cultural adaptation with subpoints addressed.

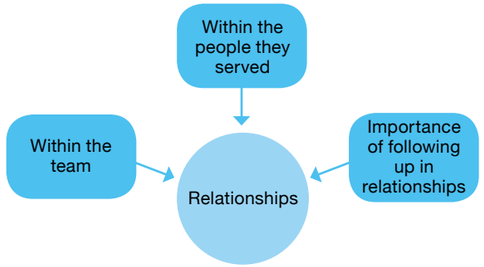

Figure 3. Relationship theme with subpoints found.

their team was able to strengthen the relationships formed and establish lasting friendships.

Ten participants claimed to have made long-lasting relationships with some of the people within their destination community. P2 stated, "I keep in contact with people I met from the state in Mexico we went to." The realization of relationships stemming not only from within their team or back at home from their family was defined clearly by P1 who stated: "Some things I think I learned from them is that family is not limited to biology, the group is viewed greater than the individual." P3, P7, and P9 reported they felt they left the most impact in the relationships they made within the destination community; whereas, P4 made a contrasting point that "The most impacting thing one can do is to sit with an older Christian individual in the culture, and get to know their story, their theology, and let them impact your life with their faith."

Participants of this study also shared how STIMTs could be improved by following-up in the relationships they established within the community they served. Participants identified the value in fostering relationships with the communities they served in STIMTs and exhibited the concern they had for how those communities were affected once they left. P6 went into detail to explain the ill effect of initiating bonds during STIMTs with children who are not yet able to understand why they were abandoned by the people who loved them. She described her concerns for these children, "I'll remember their faces forever, but to them am I just another white face who loves them and leaves them?" P6 later described how her experience in another STIMT, left a positive influence when she kept in contact with the community girls for several years. P15 stated "we weren't sure if they were going to receive follow-up care…we only did short-term medications" to describe how STIMTs plan their care, yet keep in mind the importance of follow up. Two other participants shared their opinion of the importance of following up with the relationships initiated overseas to have a sustainable impact on the communities served on short-term missions. P7 suggested how to make this realization applicable to life back home, "I learned the need to follow up with people. Even if it's interacting with the homeless community of South Bend. Making sure we don't initiate things you can't continue. Or at least don't make promises you can't keep."

> *I'll remember their faces forever, but to them am I just another white face who loves them and leaves them?*

Theme 3: Spiritual factors

Each of our participants expanded on God's role in short-term missions. A common belief shared was that being a part of a STIMT is becoming a part of something bigger than yourself. Many participants described how the Holy Spirit spoke to them during their experience in short-term missions. There was an emphasis on spiritual growth both personally and as witnessed in others. Participants detailed ways they had become overall, more like Christ. Figure 4 provides a visual understanding of the four subthemes that describe the spiritual factors theme that surfaced from the interviews.

Participants described their challenges and anxieties during their STIMT, frequently revolving around a lack of control over a circumstance within their experience. Circumstances, where participants experienced a lack in control, included: when they felt disheartened about their inability to fix the world's problems and when situations did not go according to plan. Through these experiences, participants reported a realization that God is in control. Seven participants made specific statements of personal confirmation that God is present in STIMTs and continuously within communities all over the globe. Most of these participants described their experiences with God through sight senses; such as, "Seeing God...," "He showed us," "witnessing God's love," and how they, "saw God's work." Five participants told stories of how God protected them during their experience, either from physical harm, transportation failures, or financially. These reports concluded with how each participant was reminded to include God in their STIMT experience.

Whereas, to understand God's role on short-term missions was described by participants through visual senses; six participants described interactions with the Holy Spirit either through auditory senses or intuitive prompting. While many participants describe their experience as hearing from God through the Holy Spirit, P7 states, "I felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit for the first time." P6 goes into a detailed description of how to know when the Holy Spirit is speaking:

> That morning we talked about listening to the voice of the Lord. And being sensitive, and being in prayer, and in the Bible often enough that we know the voice of the Lord so that when He speaks to you, you'll recognize it. So, that it will be a natural response to listen to what God says and being led by the Holy Spirit.

"Being Sensitive to the Holy Spirit" during these experiences was a shared statement between P4 and P6. Besides, P4 spoke on the value of entering time and atmosphere of being able to "open up to God's missional work in your life." A similar idea was shared by P1 when describing a STIMT experience as a time when the activity of the Holy Spirit was "heightened." These participants support the frequent claim that the Holy Spirit is having an active role in STIMTs.

The results of this study revealed personal spiritual growth and discipleship as fulfilled goals of Christian oriented STIMTs. Eight participants shared either stories or ways they felt there was spiritual growth in their own lives or how they witnessed it within their destination community. Lee and Gretzel (2016) addressed this motivation of evangelism for the social interaction that takes place, during these experiences. While 10 participants identified how 'discipleship of others' was a highlight of their STIMT experience, many also included how this experience led them to grow in their faith. P1 emphasized how we grow in our faith by sharing it with others, "We learned how overt we are in sharing the gospel... How do we adjust what we do daily? What does it do to our faith, based on what we experienced?" Other participants were more specific as to how their experience shaped their faith with statements such as P9 claimed, "It gave me a higher trust for God in my life," and P11 who said, "It taught me to spiritually rely on God more because of the fear of the unknown."

A goal of STIMTs revealed by participants of this study was to imitate God's love and show what it is like to be in a relationship with Him. Participants who went on a STIMT communicated the importance of being more like Christ during and after the trip. Since the participants came from a Christian college, many of them had been exposed to what it was like to be in an intimate relationship with God, which assisted in the pursuit of dispersing the Gospel among those who had not heard "the good news" (1Cor 15:1-2 ERV). Philippians 2:1-4, of the Easy-to-Read Version, described what 'being more like Christ' meant to Christians: "In whatever you do, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble, and honor others more than yourselves. Do not be interested in your own life, but care about the lives of others too."

Many participants spoke specifically about "demonstrating God's love" and detailed how they learned to "love better," in a more genuine, Christ-like, way. For some participants, this meant pushing aside their judgments, for others it meant expanding their circle of who they were reaching out to love. P14 mentioned how in all situations, specifically situations overseas, it is important how others might view our actions and presentations because we identify with Christ.

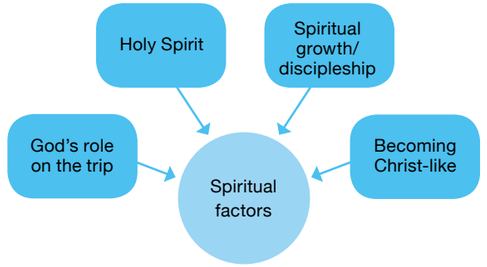

Figure 4. Spiritual factors with subpoints addressed.

Theme 4: Personal gain

Participants in a STIMT shared a common opinion after participating. This experience impacted them more than the community they served. This valuable impact is consistent with previous discoveries about short-term missions (Lee & Gretzel, 2006; Swartzentruber, 2009). Eight participants voiced they felt the community was better served through manual labor and immediate relief, but the ways they were impacted by what they learned from this experience had a more lasting effect. P4 stated "My opinion is, short-term missions benefit those who go, more than those who host" along with P6 who also voiced "As an adult I look back at those and I think that was a really good experience for me," and P11 articulated "The people impacted me more in the way of them allowing me to help their community rather than me impact them." These examples magnified the impact and personal gain achieved through the STIMTs taken individually. Figure 5 provides a visual understanding of the four subthemes that describe the personal gain theme emerging from the interviews.

Career and goal affirmation were a significant

> *The people impacted me more in the way of them allowing me to help their community, rather than me impact them*

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factor during the interviewers' experience. Nine participants expressed an impact in their lives, whether it was in the aspect of affirming their career path or deciding their goals when they returned to their homes. Some STIMT participants affirmed their career calling in the medical field, to pursue missions, or simply to work with people. Participants 2, 8, 11, and 12 conveyed personal affirmations of their career calling once they returned from their trip. P13 quantified "Finding those different cultures and beliefs in my work here (in America) and still appreciate it (the different cultures and beliefs) is the most memorable to me."

Participants reported how what they experienced overseas through short-term missions changed their knowledge and perspectives of global issues. Visualizing poverty and interactions with people of diverse cultures provided insight for participants about the difference between living in a developed country versus an underdeveloped country. P2 shared knowledge and perspective gained that related to many other statements from participants in separate interviews, "These experiences also impacted my view of consumerism, international relief efforts, and my global view."

In addition to gaining a new perspective related to global issues, participants shared a process of self-actualization encountered during their STIMTs. Six participants identified a better understanding of their character traits after participating on a STIMT. Being put in a pristine environment and the face of poverty allowed participants to learn more about themselves by how they responded to a new perspective of the world.

"*put in a pristine environment and the face of poverty allowed participants to learn more about themselves by how they responded to a new perspective of the world.*"

Personal growth was another trait participant's enunciated, impacts that occurred more in their own lives than in the lives of those they interacted with at their destination community. P4 emphasized the importance of personal growth in STIMTs yet at one point, stated while some studies included personal reports self-actualization is high, the actual change implemented in participants' lives after their experience is low. With that, P4 elaborated how a STIMT experience fosters growth in the lives of participants, including personal growth: "...missions are the seed planted into someone's life, and it takes about seven years to pop into something, and down the road, there is this maturation, this missional commitment or something more that fosters. I changed significantly."

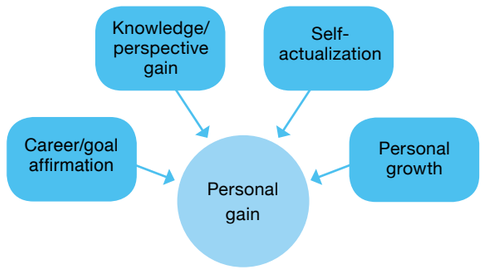

Figure 5. Personal gain with subpoints addressed.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the small sample size. Another limitation was the diversity among male and female participants (ratio 3:13). The demographics did not include ethnicity; thus, it was difficult to identify trends among ethnic groups. Faculty and students of only one Christian college were involved in the study. Self-reported data could contain several potential sources of bias.

Conclusions

Participants' lived experiences were impacted in short term and long term, by both positive and negative outcomes. Through the interviews, persisting long term negative impacts, described as an asserted need for follow-up within the targeted communities, were identified. Relationships established became highly valuable, whether it be with the destination community or between mission team members. As noted by Henry et al. (2016), reaching out to those individuals after the STIMT is finished, will sustain relationships and benefit an early stage of social development: creating trust versus mistrust.

The STIMT experiences were a rich learning experience for all who participated. Four major themes derived from this study indicated that the lived experience on STIMTs was impacted by cultural adaptation, relationship-building, spiritual factors, and personal gain. These broad themes and associated subpoints helped one understand the processes, challenges, achievements, value, and motivation behind including STIMTs within Christian college 'deep learning' contexts. TEACH

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"*Relationships established became highly valuable, whether it be with the destination community or between mission team members.*"

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TEACH[R]

Good? Different? Assessing the idea of an atypical Clinical Teaching Model of initial teacher education, using SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

Is a Clinical Teaching Model, characterised by a school-embedded, employment-integrated, alternative mode (SEAM), an opportune path for initial teacher education? A SWOT Analysis is used to address this question and engender discussion, as it relates to Christian faith-based schools.

Introduction

The quality of teachers and educational programs are the driving force that underpin nations' social capital, economic competitiveness, and progress (McGivney & Winthrop, 2016, Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). Currently, and over the latter part of the 20th century, this realisation has led to increased attention and focus on the initial preparation of teachers and their work. The move towards the professionalisation of teachers' work and current emphasis on professionalism and performance is noteworthy. This can be seen in the present regard for and status of teaching and the mandated requirements to enter the teaching profession (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).

However, a 'high' view of teaching has not always been this stance. Colonial North America (Butts & Cremin,1953) provides an interesting (but pejorative) historical case in point:

> teachers and schoolmasters were not guided by any particular professional or long-term motivation. Teaching … was looked upon as a waiting station until something better came along. … Young prospective clergymen would teach school for a time while waiting for a call to a pastorate … Then there were always the adventurers and misfits who had tried other enterprises unsuccessfully and then turned as a last resort to teaching in order to keep body and soul together … . (p. 133)

> *"the adventurers and misfits who had tried other enterprises unsuccess-fully … turned as a last resort to teaching in order to keep body and soul together"*

Sweeping changes have occurred since those times in all developed countries regarding how teaching is perceived, the qualifications required, and how these are attained.

Becoming a teacher

Historically there have been various models of preparing teachers. These models have changed substantially and developed over time, becoming qualitatively more 'demanding' and being increasingly regulated by local, state, or national jurisdictions. This is evidenced for example in higher course entry requirements; length, breadth, as well as in-depth courses' content; and mandatory degree and professional qualifications—among other aspects—as teaching has met almost all criteria for a profession except, notably, control of the workplace. Table 1 sets out some fundamental parameters and their elements that have shaped past and continue to shape present models of teacher preparation. It is evident that Table 1 can accommodate different permutations of varying levels of simplicity or sophistication to fit different perceived needs and contexts.

In Australia, presently, to become a qualified primary teacher requires a Bachelor of Education degree (a BA, plus a Master of Teaching is also a variation), whilst secondary counterparts generally need a BA/BSc (or other Bachelor degree in a teaching specialty area) plus a pedagogical qualification at the bachelor or master's degree level to meet Australian professional standards for teachers. The academic courses of study are normally undertaken at universities or accredited tertiary institutions, where students, excepting those in distance education mode, spend most of their learning time, with practicums being completed at schools.

The above has been the standard pattern for organising initial teacher education for some time. There have been some minor adjustments in some jurisdictions to this *mainstream model* to address teacher shortages in specific subjects, regional and/or indigenous needs, as well as in entry qualifications.

A non-standard pathway to becoming a teacher—one that does not follow the norm—has emerged during the last decade. The Commonwealth government has financially supported an employment-based pathway offered by Teach for Australia (TFA). The scheme allows "*individuals to work [in schools] while they complete their teaching qualification* … [TFA recruits] high performing individuals and places them in schools that need them most" (Robinson, 2019) (emphasis supplied).

Table 1: *Some basic parameters and elements of past and present models of teacher preparation*

Parameters	**Possible Elements** (Examples)
COURSE ENTRY	Life experience, vocational skills, high/secondary school award, degree
COURSE LENGTH	1-12 months, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, additional
COURSE DESIGN	Pre-school, primary/elementary, secondary, adult education
COURSE CONTENT	Curriculum areas; professional, pedagogical & practical content; specialist knowledge areas; school practicums
TEACHING AREAS	Literacy, numeracy, general curriculum, specialist subjects, special needs
COGNITION LEVEL	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis (education that includes basic and higher cognition levels)
SKILLS RANGE	A spectrum of mental, social, emotional and organisational skills and competencies
TEACHING FORM	Instructing, training, mentoring, coaching, educating
COURSE DELIVERY	Face-to-face, distance, on-line
COURSE PROVIDER	Businesses, local bodies, schools, institutes, colleges, universities
PROVIDER TYPE	Private, public, church-related and/or faith-based
AWARD GAINED	Certificate, diploma, bachelor's degree, higher degree
MODEL	Apprenticeship, mentorship, institutional professional preparation, a dual or eclectic model

The aim of the scheme is to place eligible candidates, who have completed degree courses at the Bachelor level applicable to secondary schools' learning areas, specifically in state government secondary schools located in low socio-economic communities in suburban, regional or remote areas. These schools typically find it difficult to fill staffing positions. TFA participants receive a salary *during* their two-year-training, which integrates pedagogical, curriculum and professional studies, provided by a partnering university, with their supervised classroom teaching. On successful completion of their training, participants receive a Master of Teaching degree and are required to serve in a disadvantaged school for an agreed time period. The significant difference between an TFA student and an ITE student enrolled for a MTch degree (for example, advertised by the University of Melbourne, among others) and not following a TFA path, would be ineligibility for school employment under current regulatory requirements, until *after* they had successfully completed the course, in contrast to their TFA counterparts.

In many respects, the path that TFA has followed in training teachers conforms to a distinct model of training professionals, to which the discussion now turns.

> *"In this model of ITE [CTM], the workplace—the school, vis a vis the university—becomes the central point of learning for ITE students."*

The Clinical Teaching Model (CTM)

What is CTM? The literature provides no authoritative definition, perhaps because of its varied application across professions, mainly in the fields of nursing, medicine, and allied health. Generically, CTM may be described as a learning approach in an actual, 'real world' workplace setting to develop professional expertise. In an environment that is characterised by reality, complexity, and experiences, CTM involves the interplay of theory and practice that incorporates the application of tested knowledge and multiple skills—including cognitive, social, technical and practical,—that lead to practitioners developing thorough competence and ultimately performance excellence.

What 'contours' does CTM assume in an initial teacher education setting? In this model of ITE, the workplace—the school, vis a vis the university—becomes the central point of learning for ITE students. An example of a specific Clinical Teaching Model, recently reported in the media

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(Robinson, 2019), has numerous distinctive, essential features as summarised below.

Before embarking on a description, this specific example should be differentiated from the TFA program. Eligibility, in this instance, does not depend on a University degree; it is a non-government supported program and participants are required to pay fees. At present, program enrolments are relatively low (in comparison to TFA's); a faith-based organisation offers the program and participants do not attend University. But there are also some similarities with the TFA program; these will become evident in due course.

The described CTM operates in conjunction with Alphacrusis College and co-operating faith-based schools, in the context of an accredited four-year tertiary level program. It gives priority to hands-on, in-classroom experience that is much more extensive than any 'regular' practicums. A school becomes the home base for participants who regularly work with, and are mentored by, an experienced classroom practitioner. Lectures—the theoretical components of the course—are delivered by a private provider, at the school; not at a university. Interestingly, participants are paid as assistant teachers during their course, on a pro-rata basis, up to two days a week, on a scale starting at $61,375. However, under this program participants are not eligible for Commonwealth government support. Total cost of the degree is approximately $60,000; with each subject costing $1,900. The program represents a niche approach—not a main pathway—to meet school-specific needs and covers the ITE of primary and secondary teachers. Currently the program, as reported, enrols 19 students.

The program represents a niche approach—not a main pathway—to meet school-specific needs and covers the ITE of primary and secondary teachers.

How should one appraise such a CTM as reported and outlined above? It is proposed that a SWOT Analysis—all-be-it limited in extent—may be an appropriate methodology in assessing the usefulness of the CTM concept *per se*, that is, looking at it as an *ideal type* that stresses or refers to certain elements common to cases of a given phenomenon. The central and common elements, in this case, are the use of a school-embedded, employment-integrated, alternative mode (SEAM).

The approach described above appears an interesting one and warrants further attention, principally for two reasons. First, because it relates particularly to faith-based schools and second because enrolees in the program, unlike TFA, are not required to have tertiary qualifications. This may be considered a different and unorthodox ITE path. It should be clearly understood, however, that the *specific* program associated with the institution is *not* under scrutiny here (for an evaluation see Twelves, 2019). It is the idea of a Clinical Teaching Model that takes a SEAM (CTM/SEAM) path for initial teacher education, with participants not attending a university, that is being evaluated *per se*.

SWOT analysis

Credited jointly to the Harvard Business School and Stanford University, SWOT Analysis is a useful management strategy (Gurel, E. & Tat, 2017).

> [It] identifies the critical *threats* and *opportunities* in its competitive environment. It also examines how competition in this environment is likely to evolve and what implications that evolution has.… [A]nalysis helps an organization identify its organizational *strengths* and *weaknesses*. It also helps an organization understand which of its resources and capabilities are likely to be sources of competitive advantage… . [italics supplied] (p. 994)

Strengths and weaknesses of, as well as opportunities for and threats to CTM/SEAM will frame the appraisal and discussion that follows.

Strength

One of CTM/SEAM's obvious strengths is its long-term mentoring aspect. It operates not merely for a 4-6 weeks practicum, or a semester, but for the length of the entire course! This *modus operandi* addresses a significant deficiency in many ITE programs, as identified in a recent report by the Grattan Institute that asserted universities needed to include more supervised classroom professional practice hours in intial techer education, a strategy improving preparation for effectively engaging their future students in meaningful learning opportunities (Goss, Sonnemann & Griffiths, 2017). The report also recommends a strengthening of "induction programs for all beginning teachers, and insuring they are led by expert mentors" (p. 4); furthermore, that opportunity for collegial collaboration and feedback exists for all teachers.

Research shows that support and collegiality are critical in the first years of teaching (Buchanon, 2013). It is evident that short-term practicums are unable to cater for the development of authentic, professional, collegial relationships between mentors and mentees, let alone genuine collaboration with other staff members, whereas a four-year CTM/SEAM program, can. Feed-back from mentors can be immediate and frequent, when required. In a sense, the model regards mentees as junior members of staff, who can benefit from long-term support and who are able to build up a network of relationships.

Similarly, familiarity and connections with primary/secondary students and their learning needs and dispositions will become almost routine for ITE students who, particularly in faith-based schools, will also grow into and identify with the culture, ethos, and 'special character' of their workplace and the system or faith tradition to which the school belongs. On this note, it should be recognised that the preparation of teachers involves more than competencies and should include the development of specific attitudes, and values. An O.E.C.D. report (2018) sees a need for teachers everywhere to demonstrate self-regulation/discipline and social and emotional skills such as empathy, self-efficacy, collaboration—among others—to meet the complex demands of society. Furthermore, in a faith-based school context, it is expected that teachers should be able to articulate a personal worldview that informs their professional practice and one which is in harmony with their professed faith tradition.

Attrition of beginning teachers is an acknowledged Australian phenomenon. It is estimated that up to one third of neophytes leave the teaching profession within the first five years (Moore, 2019). The explanations given (Bahr & Ferreira, 2018), which are also voiced in the UK (Tickle, 2018) include perceived heavy workloads, challenging student behaviour, an 'obsession' with standardised testing together with a lack of autonomy and an excess of record-keeping. It is reasonable to argue that being given a well-qualified mentor, over time, ITE students can be taught strategies to cope with increasing workloads and various challenges during their four-year CTM/SEAM course, without experiencing the unexpected, sudden shock often felt by university graduates on commencing their full-time teaching service. A similar argument can be made regarding the management of student behaviour.

In other challenging areas, the modelling of an experienced mentor will always be critical until the mentee has reached a level of confident autonomy. Overall, the process will be one of *gradual* intensification of work and personal and professional development, rather than being 'thrown in at the deep end'. Strategies of this nature should address what the Australian Education Union (2018) has been calling for, "Investigating ways to increase retention rates for the teaching profession and avoid "burn out" among early-career teachers" (p. 25).

The two-year, work based TFA model of initial teacher education showed encouraging early results. Principals reported (Dandolopartners, 2017) that "associates" (the preferred term for TFA participants):

- Outperform their peers [in conventional, non-employment-based programs] on all Australian Professional Standards for Teachers measures, surveyed by Dandolo [the evaluating organisation], after both have spent two years in the classroom.
- Demonstrate behaviour consistent with proficient standards 12% more frequently than their peers, and highly accomplished standards 18% more frequently than teachers with similar experience. (p. 12)

It appears valid to claim that the strengths reported in the two-year TFA program would likely be amplified in a typical four-year CTM/SEAM program operating in Christian faith-based schools. In the latter, ITE students may form strong bonds with mentors, not unlike the relationship that existed between the apostle Paul and young co-workers, such as Timothy; a teaching/learning bond which is clearly evident in the New Testament epistles, (1st and 2nd Timothy) that not only benefitted Timothy's own spiritual formation, but also the learning community entrusted to him.

Program size does matter, but 'big is not necessarily best'. Small CTM/SEAM ITE programs should ensure that participants receive individual attention, that their perceived needs—on a wide spectrum—are met, and that they don't feel lost, as they might among the many hundreds of peers on a university campus.

Another strength is that regional areas should benefit from this program. If participants, whose home is in a non-urban region, are trained at a regional school, they are likely to stay in that region, especially if they have a strong commitment to their faith tradition, worship at a local Christian congregation and have formed strong bonds within the community.

Whilst the above are some perceived strengths, what might some weaknesses be in a CTM/SEAM model, functioning in a Christian faith-based school?

students … particularly in faith-based schools, will … grow into and identify with the culture, ethos, and 'special character' of their workplace

Weakness

"Small" may be characterised as "beautiful", but it may also come with limitations. These may be evident in the lack of diversity of experiences and a scarcity of 'rich' interconnections that a relatively small pool of individuals might not be able to provide. *Depth* of relationships and experiences should ideally be balanced by *breadth*. In contrast, large institutions and organisations, whether schools or universities, may be judged to be able to provide a better balance between these two categories.

An example of lack of diversity of experiences for ITE students in a CTM/SEAM context, might be role plays. These represent one type of activity where students become more active participants in the learning process (Kilgour, Reynaud, Northcote, & Shields, 2015). It becomes problematic to conduct such exercises and experiences in cyberspace, although not impossible in an IT virtual reality world.

A legitimate question to ask is: In an CTM/SEAM situation, do ITE students have access to

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the quality of necessary resources readily available at universities, such as laboratories, libraries, IT facilities and specialist support (to mention a few)? In many cases, regrettably, the answer is not likely to be in the affirmative. It should also be recognised that the implementation of a faith-based CTM/SEAM model would prevent ITE students from gaining valuable experience in public schools; again, a lack of diversity of experience that may place limitations on their future employment and teaching service.

Practicality and affordability may be other issues. Whereas small faith-based education systems may be able to take advantage of a CTM/SEAM model, larger systems may find it difficult to operate in 'real-world' situations. For instance, the large number of placements involved in suitable schools, and experienced mentors required, quite apart from the financial implications, would make the model impractical. For the model to work effectively in larger systems would require the outlay of large sums of money to train qualified mentors and provide them with appropriate remuneration, at a time of widening demands already made on teachers, that include higher expectations and increasing workloads. Additionally, teacher unions are likely to raise objections on these grounds.

"The CTM/SEAM approach … for (very) small Christian education systems, … may be a means to provide a desirable 'end-product' and thus cater for a 'niche market'."

The very nature of the model, unfortunately, raises the suspicion that it represents a return to an apprenticeship or craft perception of teaching. Emphasis appears to be on practice *vis a vis* theory. A valid case may be made for *craft* as a useful metaphor for teaching in terms of a repertoire of practical skills and proficiencies—a special kind of pedagogical know-how developed through experience and reflection. However, *unless practice is informed by sound theory,* the quality of practice may be questionable. Ideally, there is a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice. An academic knowledge base is an absolute necessity for all professions, including teaching and it is even more important as teachers engage in advanced professional studies in their career. Thus, a lingering question remains: Does the model lay the groundwork for further professional development and study programs at, for instance, the post-graduate level?

Also, there is the matter of career expectations. The issue for committed Christians may become that initial teacher education *in* and *for* specific communities that may be socially, economically, environmentally, geographically, or otherwise disadvantaged, while gainful to those communities, would require a willing 'servant ministry' attitude from participants. Are the latter able to commit to the challenge of, and stay in such a teaching ministry in the longer term? There is the possibility that unrealised expectations of participants or schools, after considerable 'investments', might become problematic and turn out to be disappointments.

A further weakness should be recognised as arising in a CTM/SEAM setting. There is the likely tendency to prioritise school matters over academic requirements in relation to the formal teaching qualification. In other words, the urgent is given priority over the important; one must not be neglected at the expense of the other.

Having dealt with some strengths and weaknesses, the discussion now turns to opportunities.

Opportunities

The CTM/SEAM approach to ITE may not be suitable for a large non-government education system. However, for (very) small Christian education systems, it may be a means to provide a desirable 'end-product' and thus cater for a 'niche market'. The opportunity exists (not without risks, of course, as pointed out above) to enrol participants in the course to meet identified staffing needs and for school staff to be personally involved in participants' long-term professional and personal development. Mainstream ITE institutions are unlikely to be able to compete in supplying such 'tailor-made' graduates, as suggested by recent research (Ferns, 2018):

> Graduates and students [including a group of BEd primary] in all case studies expressed concern with a lack of preparedness, dearth of information, and an absence of support from the university in sourcing potential employment and preparing for recruitment processes. (p. 218)

Perceived shortcomings in one ITE sector, clearly provide opportunities for another.

According to a recent creditable report, the paradigm of universities' monopoly on access to information, resources, and qualifications is being challenged by rapid advances in technology and mass education (Ewan, 2016). There are thus good prospects that academic components of a CTM/SEAM model can be sourced from a range of single or multiple national and/or international accredited providers on-line. Consequently, the opportunity exists to construct quality curricula that are innovative and agile, address perceived needs, and are within budget limitations without compromising quality. The benefits of flexibility of academic content and sources are evident, but will require careful planning, co-ordination and continuous expert administration, as a business model of this kind would employ very few academic staff and faculty.

Such an approach takes advantage of students often regarding themselves (as do education providers) as consumers in the market-place (Ewan, 2016). This is consistent with a global environment of open education, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), open educational resources that are in the public domain, and the proliferation of educational providers and global online learning platforms such as Coursera, EdX, Learn2Study, among others, some of whose courses are free.

The dynamics of an educational environment that is in transition may give rise to opportunities that 'are there for the taking'. Having considered opportunities, it is instructive to examine likely threats.

Threats

Operating in a competitive environment implies facing both internal and external pressures. Internal pressures may come in the form of scarcity and/or quality of human and financial resources. On this point, it has been asserted (Ewan, 2016): "Minimum standards of administrative infrastructure that will be required to operate in disaggregated environments where smaller non-university providers do not have the critical mass to provide infrastructure, consortia might need to be encouraged" (p. 59).

Thus partnerships, perhaps with like-minded providers, would avoid the dangers inherent in 'going it alone'. Simultaneously, such collaborative efforts should ensure quality control of ongoing programs. The probable flow-on effects of implementing a remunerative employment-based CTM/SEAM program should also be carefully weighed up. Its implementation may affect the affordability of school fees and levels of student enrolment.

It is the likelihood of external pressures, however, which would pose a more serious and immediate threat. For instance, a serious downturn in the economy is likely to affect a small private ITE provider to a far greater extent than a provider backed by the government, as is evidenced in the wider business world. Also, consumers in the market can 'vote with their feet' for various reasons, including being attracted and persuaded by competitors' 'slick' marketing or historic prestige.

Another barrier, ("threat" may be too severe a term to use) may deserve consideration. One of the responsibilities of the Tertiary Education Quality & Standard Agency (TEQSA), as its name suggests, is to regulate and provide for national consistency and excellence in higher education across Australia. With emerging approaches to higher education increasing, TEQSA may adopt more conservative policies and regulations to forestall innovations that are judged to be 'irregularities' or 'aberrations', but which make a claim for recognition. Furthermore, state jurisdictions such as the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) may exercise additional quality controls. NESA has the regulatory function to approve ITE programs and oversees the processes of accreditation (2018) of all teachers in the state, ensuring that all graduates meet the Australian Standards for Teachers. (I am indebted to former colleague Dr Peter Beamish for some observations and suggestions in this area.)

It becomes evident that any sudden, unanticipated political changes and priorities that have consequences on the TEQSA and/or NESA level may stretch the resources of small faith-based systems, operating ITE courses in a CTM/SEAM mode, beyond their human or financial limits.

It is helpful, at this point, to coalesce the different facets of the SWOT analysis and provide an overall evaluation of a CTM/SEAM approach to initial teacher education as it might apply, especially to a Christian faith-based education system.

Conclusion and reflection

Observations and assessments fall into several broad categories.

First, 'one size does not fit all'. Uniformity or diversity per se do not qualify as preferred options unless the need, context and the capacity to deliver are carefully considered. If these three 'boxes are ticked', a CTM/SEAM approach seems advantageous over a conventional ITE model. In essence, if the process and end product meet the expectations of consumers and stakeholder/s as well as the criteria set by the regulator, the choice of a model that appears atypical does not prevent it from having real merit. The model is not put forward as a panacea; however, if it fits needs, why not use it to advantage.

Second, work and employment-integrated learning is generally experienced as relevant and authentic. The dichotomy of theory at a tertiary institution and practical experience at a school is averted. Through experiencing the regular, everyday life of a teacher, CTM/SEAM ITE students can decide early (not after several years of study) whether they are 'cut out' for this exciting, and challenging profession.

Third, the model under consideration presents distinct advantages for 'special character' schools. The development of certain values, attitudes, dispositions, and a faith-based worldview do not fall within the orbit of a secular university; whose assignment is to prepare ITE students for a profession rather than for a teaching ministry. The traits, virtues, characteristics and categories mentioned are best developed 'in-house', which the model has the potential to deliver.

Fourth, having endeavoured to see *possibilities* in the most positive light that the model presents, one must also be realistic. The model is analogous to providing a custom-built product (not unlike home schooling) that is competing with a well-

"TEQSA may adopt more conservative policies and regulations to forestall innovations that are judged to be 'irregularities' or 'aberrations', but which make a claim for recognition."

known established brand that, although by no means perfect, has stood the test of time, with a continuously reliable supply line. The 'elephant in the room' becomes feasibility—practicality, affordability, and availability of qualified human resources. The changes required to implement a large-scale CTM/SEAM approach would be considerable, with no guarantee of cost-effectiveness. With there being no strong high-profile advocates of the approach, lack of a shared vision, and the continued existence of prior and competing models, change theory would not rate the future of the atypical model as bright.

Fifth, one should also look at the bigger picture. We are witnessing a continuous and rapidly changing global learning landscape. This impacts students and teachers alike; indeed, in teaching/learning interactions, there are often role reversals! Future classrooms—"learning spaces" might be a more accurate term—will call for teachers who are continuously developing knowledge, skills and competencies so that they can teach effectively and facilitate learning in a technologically advancing, 'post-truth' world. Never-the-less, teachers will still be called to exhibit time-honoured attributes and qualities that make us authentically human. The corollary is that as the processes of educating new generations of students change, so will the role of the profession and how to prepare for it. However, despite (or because of?) these challenges, in uncertain times, decision-makers in faith-based systems tend to be conservative and stay with the known rather experimenting with an atypical model.

> *With … no strong high-profile advocates of the approach, lack of a shared vision, and the …. existence of prior and competing models, change theory would not rate the future of the atypical model as bright.*

Finally, after a SWOT analysis should we bestow the attributes of "good" and/or "different" on the concept of a CTM/SEAM approach to ITE? We may also be 'tempted' to speculate about its use-by-date. There is no question that the approach *is* "different". It stands in contrast to the current mainstream model of ITE that caters for an enrolment of approximately 30,000 students in Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018). Emphasis on a school-embedded, employment integrated, non-university based pathway with a different pedagogical approach constitutes a *significant* difference. However, whether it qualifies as "good" is questionable. There are too many misgivings: limited scope and diversity; perceived reversion to a trades training approach; doubtful affordability and cost effectiveness; and the threat of shifting regulatory barriers and changing political goal posts (a danger for small systems rather than larger ones). All of these tend to negate, counter or cancel CTM/SEAM's 'promises' and positives.

Ultimately, whatever one's viewpoint, in a constantly changing world it is likely that the approach may simply be one of the many markers in the historical evolution of initial teacher education. Whether it is merely a minor one—a deviation—time will no doubt tell. TEACH

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Human touch in the primary school setting

TEACH[R]

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Abstract

No touch policies in schools have created a dilemma for teachers. To investigate student, teacher, and parent attitudes to touch at school, ten Pre-Kindy students, seven K-6 students, four teachers and four parents at a small faith-based school were interviewed using a semi-structured interview style. Analysis of the responses indicated the majority of the participants in this study supported the use of 'healthy' physical contact, between teachers and students. Students, parents and teachers were mindful of appropriate ways to touch, arena of safety issues, and that touch may not be for everyone, all concepts which informed a proposition for policy review in schools to optimise student development and wellbeing.

Introduction

Abuse of children is a serious problem and notifications to child protection services in Australia are increasing each year (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). Many schools are adopting a minimal or no-touch policy with respect to students and teachers are discouraged from physically touching students, or instructed not to touch their students (Bloom, 2017; Graham, Bahr, Truscott & Powell, 2018; Hansen, 2007; Owen & Gillentine, 2011; Tronc, 2011).

The importance and benefits of touching

No touch policies have given teachers a dilemma. Child psychologist, Sean Cameron, along with psychologists from the British Psychological Society have called for schools to change their policies on physical contact (Cameron, 2017). They believe that touch should be an integral part of the teacher-pupil relationship and that what is missing is a recognition of the importance of touch, particularly for young children (Bloom, 2017). Student well-being and cognitive development and learning are impacted by the relational care that students receive in their classrooms (Noddings, 2013). Relational care requires teachers to demonstrate both empathy and compassion and involves closeness which is delivered through both verbal and physical means (Cekaite & Bergnehr, 2018; Keane, 2016; Noddings, 2013). In caring situations, physical contact is important as it acts as a pathway for human communication and socialisation (O'Hare, 2017). It is particularly vital to children's social, cognitive, and physical development (Field, 2014).

> *touch should be an integral part of the teacher-pupil relationship … what is missing is a recognition of the importance of touch, particularly for young children*

Professor McGlone, head of neuroscience at Liverpool John Moores University, agrees with this saying that physical contact is absolutely essential for children's brain development (Bloom, 2017). Lack of touch impacts adult emotional growth, and lack of healthy touch can lead to violence and aggression in adults (Hansen, 2007). Appropriate touch has also been found to evoke comfort, reassurance and pleasure (Hansen, 2010), enhance student well-being (Owen & Gillentine, 2011), and encouraged students to develop emotionally and socially (McGlone, Wessberg & Olausson, 2014).

The benefits of touch for children with special needs was highlighted by Daus & Sansone (2001) and Parker & O'Connor (2016). Deep pressure has a calming effect for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder as it helps them to self-regulate. Both Hansen (2007) and Owen & Gillentine (2011) agree that healthy touch is vital between teachers and their pupils. Teachers can use proximity to enhance classroom communication, and show students that they are valued (Hansen, 2010).

Healthy touch in schools

While the literature reveals that touch is important, and provides the students with real benefits,

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implementing touch into the classroom needs careful consideration. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse released its final report in December 2017, and throughout the almost five-year duration of the findings, the issue of abusive touch has been brought to the nation's attention. The country has been watchful of the findings, and a conservative approach to touch has been adopted by many areas of our society. For example, the school participating in this study has a policy that reads; "never touch a student of either gender, apart from inevitable situations such as PE, giving First Aid, or if requested by an authorised person" (Current Study School's Staff Handbook, 2017, p. 134).

What then is the place of touch in schools? Is it appropriate to implement healthy touch in schools and what should be the guidelines? Australian law permits healthy touch in the school setting, and lists a number of provisos surrounding it. For example, any force made to another person, either directly or indirectly has the potential to constitute a criminal offence (Department for Education, 2019). However, physical contacts made in the education setting, may be considered legal due to consent and lawful authority. Consent also includes implied consent, and this gives teachers the ability to engage in physical contact with a student in the school setting so long as: there is no improper motive; the physical contact is reasonable; and there is no withdrawal of consent. This was shown by a Queensland Court of Appeal case where it was suggested that students tacitly consent to receiving tactile encouragement, such as a pat on the shoulder, as part of normal everyday interactions in the school setting. Neither is it against the law for teachers to comfort students who are emotionally distressed by touching in a supportive way (Department for Education, 2019).

"The students all supported the concept of reciprocal physical contact with their teacher when talking about acceptable touch."

Another Queensland Court of Appeal decision declared that "teaching had to be a 'touching' occupation, with the touching of children a virtually inevitable part of daily classroom exigencies of the teaching process" (Tronc, 2011). However, it should be noted that if the school has implemented a no-touch policy, then employment contracts would usually indicate that teachers are expected to follow that policy.

What are the attitudes of students, teachers, and parents to touch at school? Educators have been debating touch in schools for a while. Carlson (2005) found that children considered the hands, shoulders and upper back to be the most non-threatening. They found that touch also needs to be age appropriate and appropriate to the individual. Permission should be sought prior, and a child must be respected when they decline. Hansen (2007) concurs with Carlson and adds that it is important to avoid danger zones, for example primary school aged children need to zip up their own zippers on their trousers. Other guidelines include never be alone with a child in a room where others can not see you, and give students a choice, for example a handshake, or a hug.

Are these still the attitudes of students, parents and teachers in 2019 and does school policy reflect these attitudes? Answering these questions is the focus of the present study.

Methodology

To investigate student, teacher, and parent attitudes to touch at school, 25 people were interviewed using a semi-structured interview style. This included ten Pre-Kindy students, seven K-6 students, four teachers and four parents at a small faith-based school. The students were selected for the study from a cross section of the school, with an equal gender balance.

To make the interviews age appropriate, the Pre-Kindy class, which involved students aged 4 and 5 years, was read two similar stories. One story involved healthy touch, and one story avoided and discouraged touch in a classroom setting with regards to teacher/student physical contact. In the first story the main character was a teacher bear called Mrs Hug Bear, where the teacher used touch such as high fives, hugs, snuggling up on the floor for a story, or allowing a student to sit on the teacher's lap. In the second story the main character was Mrs Bear, a teacher bear who avoided touch, however the teacher was kind to her students and loved them. Ten Pre-Kindy children were asked six questions about the stories.

For the Kindergarten to Year 6 students, one student from each year level was interviewed. In addition to the students, four teachers were asked their opinions regarding physical contact with students, and four parents were also interviewed. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was then used to find themes within the text. The various themes identified were then examined to determine the attitudes of the groups.

Results

What did participants think of touch at school?

The students all supported the concept of reciprocal physical contact with their teacher when talking about acceptable touch. They mentioned hugs, high fives, patting the teacher on the arm and in addition in the lower grades, holding hands. Their comments included:

"I love hugs."

"when I feel sad I like hugs."

The students felt that healthy touch helped them to feel 'nice and calm' from giving or receiving a hug. They saw the benefits of using touch to cheer someone up, making people proud of their achievements, comforting people emotionally, and the benefit of not getting in trouble was mentioned, as healthy touch has less or no chance of conflict.

All of the students agreed that when they witnessed physical contact between a teacher and a student, it gave them a positive message. Students commented that they felt good when they experience physical contact with their teacher because the teacher was proud of them, and there was a sense of achievement. Comments included:

"Well, if a teacher does it to a student, I think it means they are proud of them." (referring to a high five for good work)

"It would tell you, you have done a good job"

"you feel good."

"They are encouraging each other, and they are being happy."

In response to the two similar, but contrasting stories about Mrs Bear and Mrs Hug Bear, most of the Pre-Kindy students responded that the Mrs Hug Bear story was their favourite story. Responses included:

"cos I think she had fun."

"she said, can I give you a huggle?"

When asked if they thought the teacher bear liked her students more in one story than the other, they identified the Mrs Hug Bear story where the teacher gave hugs, high-fives, held hands, and snuggled up together for a story on the floor. The students gave reasons for their evaluations, which included,

"cos she said when she's doing the story she said to cuddle up."

"cos she gave them high fives and hugs"

"she wanted to play with him"

When asked, "If you were a little bear, which story would you like to be in?", almost all of the students selected the Mrs Hug Bear story.

The parents were unanimous with what they thought was acceptable touch in the primary setting. They all agreed that hugs were acceptable, and offered advice to make them appropriate like side hugs, or around the shoulders.

"if a child needs touch, they should be able to access it."

Other acceptable forms of touch included holding a child's hand, a hand on the shoulder to gently guide a child, patting their head in a soothing way if necessary, high fives, and fist pumps. The importance of soothing touch, when upset or distraught, was also highlighted by the majority of the parents as acceptable forms of touch.

"I think there's a vast difference between saying, 'you'll be right', and putting your hand on their shoulder, and even patting their head, kinda soothing, you know, I guess above the shoulders if you are going to lay out rules, above chest level."

The concept of comforting touch being especially relevant to the younger years was supported by all the parents, and most were concerned that the absence of comforting touch would be detrimental to a child's psycho-emotional development.

"if we are talking the younger years, it can be very detrimental if they don't have any touch"

Parents offered suggestions to make touch safe. The need to make male teacher to female student, or female teacher to male student gender divides appropriate was mentioned, particularly at the upper primary level.

The parents agreed that healthy teacher/student touch provides many benefits including a strong relationship between teacher and student, and provides a nurturing environment for learning, and building trust. The idea of the benefits being the greatest, but not limited to the early years was also highlighted. The benefits of touch when used as a comfort were also highlighted.

"where a teacher is comforting a child with touch, I think the benefits are great and I think there is an unknown effect of comfort with touch, and it's necessary."

Half of the parents pointed out that the arena of safety issues needs to be considered with regards to any form of touch, namely not being alone with a student and perceptions of other students at the upper primary level.

The majority of the teachers mentioned that hugs

"The parents agreed that healthy teacher/student touch provides many benefits including a strong relationship between teacher and student"

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personal touch can definitely have its place, but unfortunately, I guess because of the environments I've worked in, I don't even think about it like that.

were an acceptable form of touch for Pre-Kindy to Year 2. At the upper primary level, one teacher felt that,

> *"it depended on the person as to what was appropriate."*

The majority of teachers said that they currently either give or received a hug, a tap on the arm, a gentle embrace to the side, or a pat on the shoulder to say well done. One teacher currently using touch prefaced her use of touch with the fact that it must be in full view of others.

Some teachers did mention that it was best to use the least amount of touch possible, with touch being reserved for things like administering first aid, the shaking of hands for a certificate, and to stop a child from hurting another child. Reasons for this included to avoid possible litigation, and to follow recommendations.

The majority of teachers reported the benefits of touch and relayed how they are currently using touch to cater to their students when the child needs it. The concept that we naturally use touch to acknowledge people, and it is good for rapport, physical connection, and that it provides a part of normal human development was mentioned.

> *"I think people like to be acknowledged and touched. I think healthy touch is important for building rapport with people, people like to have physical connection."*

The opinion that healthy touch is important, especially for tactile children, was expressed, with the belief that touch was beneficial for students with anxiety. The idea that students' emotional needs must be addressed to maximise learning was raised also.

> *"I think that allowing the freedom of appropriate touch would definitely be beneficial to some students who walk through into school with higher anxiety issues and this would definitely help work through that."*

However, the recognition of the benefits of touch being beneficial were tempered by the litigious society in which we live. As one participant commented:

> *"So, personal touch can definitely have its place, but unfortunately, I guess because of the environments I've worked in, I don't even think about it like that."*

Situational response

The results so far suggest that all of the students, parents and the majority of teachers supported healthy touch interaction for the wellbeing of the students. The participants were then asked to respond to questions that explored interpersonal interactions when students were injured or emotionally upset.

In the case of physical injury, almost half the students wanted to be cleaned up and taken to the office without any mention of physical contact from teachers. Similarly, almost half the students relayed that a hug or a pat on the back would help them to feel better, while getting a hand up, and hearing verbally nice things from the teacher, were also shared as methods to comfort students.

> *"the teacher could give you a little pat on the back"*

> *"by bringing me to the office, and saying nice things, to encourage you to not be sad."*

> *"if the child is upset, they can hug the teacher."*

For emotional upsets, over half of the students said a hug would make them feel better and noteworthily, one student requested space to be allowed to process thoughts alone. Responses included:

> *"cheer me up, and maybe give me a big hug."*

> *"I just need some space."*

> *"sit next to you, ask you why you are crying or something."*

The parents agreed that they would like their child to be comforted with a hug or an arm around the shoulder. Other forms of comfort included a pat on the back, words of affirmation, and verbally solving the problem.

> *"I don't think putting a band-aid on their knee achieves the same level of comfort that positive touch does."*

The importance of reading body language was highlighted, and that each child is different in what they need. This, along with the concept of a needs-based, child-centred approach to physical contact was emphasised. One participant thought that teachers need to:

> *"have the ability to read that child and read the situation as to where they are at… being down at their level and feeding off what they are requiring."*

In the lower primary setting, most of the teachers thought that it was appropriate to give hugs, put an arm around the shoulders to calm, reassure and comfort students. When asked what forms of touch are acceptable, responses included:

> *"a hug, and you would probably end up with them on your lap depending on what they felt they wanted."*

> *"It would depend on the student and my relationship with them, but I am most likely to comfort them with a hug, maybe a touch on the arm and things like that."*

With regard to the upper grades, a more cautious approach was reported. One teacher felt comfortable comforting a student with an arm around the shoulders, if she had a rapport with the student already, and as long as they were comfortable with it. If she didn't know them, then physical touch would not be considered.

> *"I would put my arm around them to comfort them, maybe if I had a relationship with them and had a rapport already with them and it would have to be in public view as well of other people."*

> *"Older students, no, I wouldn't feel as comfortable touching them for a physical thing."*

Instead of using touch, one teacher relayed that she would spend time talking with the student who was experiencing an emotional upset, and would refrain from physical contact.

> *"I generally, personally, wouldn't be in a hurry to hug them or something like that, only because of my professional background and the advice we are given to be cautious of these things."*

In summary, it seems that at the lower primary level, touch is deemed appropriate if the teacher perceives a need, or the child requests touch. At the upper primary level, some teachers offer touch in a more cautious manner, or choose not to offer touch to protect themselves from possible misunderstanding.

Should schools continue with a no touch policy?

For the parents, the overall response to a no-touch policy was negative. The perception that comforting touch is necessary and needed was expressed. Parents highlighted the notion that to follow a no-touch policy would be cold and heartless, as

> *"it would be horrible if a teacher said, 'you'll be fine' but kept their distance"*

> *"The maternal or paternal instinct is to comfort a child, and it is a bit cold to say no to touch when both sides of the equation say it's a positive thing."*

Along the same theme, a similar but lesser supported view point was that while it would be disappointing to have a no touch policy, it may be necessary due to the society in which we live, as good touch is often misunderstood or misconstrued.

Teachers were mixed in their responses. Most of the teachers did not support the idea of a no-touch policy, especially in the lower years. The idea of hugs being a normal part of growing up in the school setting was raised, and it was felt it was a positive thing since students in the beginning years of school are often still missing their mum and dad. The need for teachers to be able to respond to a child's needs for physical touch was highlighted:

> *"if teachers were not allowed to respond it would feel like a very cold and unresponsive place."*

The majority of parents agreed that guidelines for different age groups was a helpful idea.

Should there be policy differentiation?

The concept of a no touch policy possibility was discussed as being a necessary thing in the upper primary setting. Therefore, should there be differentiation in policy for different aged children? The majority of the students thought that younger children needed to be treated "more delicately" or more gently.

The majority of parents agreed that guidelines for different age groups was a helpful idea. The concept that even upper primary students can benefit from touch if they are in a distress situation was also highlighted by some parents as they didn't want their child to be treated coldly in a crisis:

> *"if we look at a Year 6 student, if they have hurt themselves quite badly, possibly a level of distress, both situations they are going to have the same emotional distress which I think can be benefited from some sort of touch."*

The parents talked about forms of touch that would not be appropriate for older students, for example, holding their hand.

> *"I do think there should be guidelines, especially the pre-teens, like Year 5 or 6, especially for boys, with a female teacher, you know they are going*

through the hormone changes, maybe a full-on hug may not be appropriate. But like side hugs, high-fives, handshakes, everything like that will be ok."

The need to be cautious with 'hormones' at the upper primary level and opposite gender, that is, male teacher to female student and female teacher to male student was raised as an interaction to be aware of, requiring cautious professionalism.

The teachers all agreed that there needed to be different guidelines for different age groups. Reasons for this included younger children need more nurturing and reassurance:

"the younger children, they are naturally drawn to hug you, although older children still like a hug."

"I think that younger children will come up for that reassurance."

"you wouldn't just brush them off because it wasn't appropriate because we are human. We are full of emotion and we need to respond to what students are experiencing at that time."

"I may allow a pre-kindy student to sit on my lap, I would not allow one of my kids to do that." (when referring to an older student)

Some teachers raised the concept of commonsense as a necessary element regarding what is appropriate for older age groups, to ensure any touch was not being misconstrued.

"So, I think it comes down to the common sense of the teacher and making sure they are keeping themselves safe."

It would seem from the results of the interviews that the overall consensus of all the groups interviewed, was that younger children need more nurturing touch, and there should be guidelines to facilitate this.

Discussion

From the literature we can conclude that healthy touch is beneficial in the school setting, (Cameron, 2017; Hansen, 2007; Owen & Gillentine, 2011). All of the participants in the current study also saw the importance and the benefits of healthy touch. But, implementation can be difficult. Many schools have a code of conduct policy that reflects a cautious viewpoint, and this is entirely understandable in light of the past four and a half years of findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Abuse. So, what can we learn, and where to from here?

What is needed is policy clarity

For some of teachers in the current study, the fear of litigation was the underlying reason for not using healthy touch with students.

"We may know what the research says, but we also know what the current climate is about, what parents are likely to do, what the laws allow them to do"

Owen & Gillentine (2011) found that fear of false accusations was an issue for teachers. The teachers acknowledged the benefits of touch for their students, however the majority of teachers were not prepared to take a risk by using touch.

Too often teachers felt confused (Johansson, Hedlin and Åberg, 2018), and where schools do not define safe touch, then all touch becomes suspicious. As all of the teachers in the present study referred to following some kind of guidelines to ensure that touch is appropriate, it was suggested that rather than having a no-touch policy, it would be better to have a 'safe touch policy,' particularly as touch was seen as a necessary part of lower primary school life. The attitudes of students, parents and the majority of teachers supported a safe-touch policy being implemented. Teachers feel that they need more support from policy to properly understand touch in the classroom (Ohman & Quennerstedt, 2017) or in the sports field or playground. Particular instances were raised indicating the need for touch in developing skills, for example putting a student's hand in the right position to hold a pencil, pen, brush, saw or javelin. Having clear guidance as to what policies and procedures will guide appropriate and beneficial touch, does allow teachers to feel more comfortable offering appropriate human contact.

In a Christian school, policy needs to appropriately accommodate the gospel record: "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these' " (Matt 19:14 NIV).

There should be policy differentiation

From the results of this study, the overall consensus was that younger students need more nurturing, comforting and protecting touch than the older students and there is support for the concept of more nurturing touch being needed for younger children (Owen & Gillentine, 2011). Also, the results from this study highlighted the importance of touch with children with special needs. In the present study, children with anxiety responded positively to healthy touch, and this should be available to children who need it. The literature supports this notion, as some children with sensory processing disorders can benefit from deep pressure touch that helps them to reach their sense of equilibrium again (Daus & Sansone, 2001; Parker & O'Connor, 2016).

Arenas of safety

The overall consensus was that the majority of the participants believed that healthy touch was important and beneficial, and both parents and teachers offered ways to make it appropriate through the idea of an Arena of Safety. The parents referred to making hugs appropriate by giving a side hug, or a hug around the shoulders.

"I guess above the shoulders if you are going to lay out rules, above chest level."

This view was supported by teachers as they talked about always being in view of others and never being alone with a student. Parents and teachers both referred to appropriate touch between genders, especially as students reach puberty. Seeking permission before bestowing physical contact was also highlighted and this is widely supported in the literature (Cameron, 2017; Hansen, 2010; Owen & Gillentine, 2011).

While this study focussed on teacher-intiated-touch of a student, further research and additional discussion should consider the broader arena of touch in forming a school policy: There is a case for students, especially at an upper primary level, to seek permission for a hug from a teacher. There is a need, however, to educate students regarding appropriate ways to hug teachers. A full front on hug is not appropriate, however, a side-hug, A-frame or round the shoulders hug is. With students aware of these guidelines, it may be less embarrassing for teachers and students if a student tries to give a hug to a teacher that is inappropriate (Hansen, 2010).

Social awareness is important

While the present study does support the use of healthy touch, a healthy social awareness is needed. Teachers need to be able to read the situation accurately to ensure the needs of students are met. Teachers must become kid-watchers to familiarise themselves with their students' nonverbal communication patterns (Hansen, 2010).

A parent in the current study concurred with this, and provided insight and regarded the area of touch as a complex area. This was because teachers need to be able to read the needs of the child, in a variety of situations, and at different times.

"It is exceptionally complex. There are so many variables that can be brought into the situation."

It was felt that teachers:

"have to have the ability to read that child and read the situation as to where they are at, … being down at their level and feeding off what they are requiring."

It is also important to consider, that just like some students may not want healthy touch in certain situations, some teachers may not want to give or receive touch either. As one student in the current study indicated, he did not want any physical contact to comfort him from an emotional upset, and said;

"I just need some space."

Conclusion

The majority of the participants in this study supported the use of physical contact, in a healthy way, between teachers and students. Students, parents and teachers were mindful of appropriate ways to touch, arena of safety issues, and that touch may not be for everyone. It is important to recognize that 'teacher-initiated touching' is only one part of a 'touching' culture and is influenced by that culture.

At the lower primary level, there was an overwhelming support for healthy touch to be integrated into school life. It was noted that some teachers were fearful of being misunderstood or misconstrued when it came to physical contact with students, especially at the upper primary level. They either refrained from touch altogether or were cautious with how they offered or accepted it.

Currently, Australian law does not prevent teachers from touching their students in a healthy way, however, schools are struggling for policy clarity. The abusive forms of touch, physical abuse and sexual abuse, have shocked so many of us, and as a result, current schools' policies have moved teachers toward a no touch approach. Within this environment students may be missing out on the power of positive touch and teachers, especially in lower primary, left to apply their own versions of safe-touch policies. It is time to review current school approaches and confirm that we are delivering education with maximum benefit for all. TEACH

"*it was suggested that rather than having a no-touch policy, it would be better to have a 'safe touch policy'*"

"*[teachers] have to have the ability to read that child and read the situation as to where they are at, ... being down at their level and feeding off what they are requiring*"

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The writer's labyrinth: A reflection on the principles of academic writing - II

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The writer's pruning tools

Nothing more or less than what you really mean is the art and joy of writing —C.S. Lewis,
(cited in Till We Have Faces Quotes, n.d., para 21)

Hemingway said that the 'hardest thing about the writing endeavour is 'getting the words right'. But 'right' can mean different things to each writer and reader. It is understandable how writing may be received as positive prophecy by some or critiqued in the extreme as apocalyptic poison by others. Our cultures and conventions are often confusing in life as in writing and our readers come from such diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

This afternoon as I walked, I chose not to follow the footpath – sidewalk. It turns out that when Americans name things, they mean you to do what the name suggests. Sidewalk means you only walk on the side (the actual concrete pathway) not through the middle of a field. Feeling guilty I turned my head to see if anyone was watching or following – green grass was grown to walk on in New Zealand where I was raised. Americans have a stronger respect for conventions than New Zealanders (in my opinion). While we speak the same English there are differences in our naming and pronouncing of things. When I say 'knackered' – meaning 'I'm really tired' – my American friends think I'm saying naked. I have received some rather curious looks! We need to be mindful of our audience as speakers and writers by leaving little room for misunderstanding. I am adding another language to my repertoire: American English.

Grammar, punctuation and editing are all tools I use but not properly, especially for American styling. This was shown in the poor mark I received for recent tests in punctuation and grammar. Editing done well builds self-respect. This is what I tell myself. You are presenting yourself in your paper to the reader – it is important that it meets the standard writing conventions. Read out loud. This is how you find the missed out, miss-spelt, miss-matched or misplaced words. And 'when you're done you've just begun'. You revise and edit and edit some more: swapping a phrase here and switching a paragraph or point there. The editing on my papers was quite excessive, and for this I am truly grateful! Commitment to self: learn more about the fine details of grammar and punctuation. I am stepping up. Review constructive criticism. This is one way I hone my craft as a writer. It is hard work. Ideas that flow have been born out of some kind of struggle in order to have their day in the sun. Which ideas should survive?

I have applied the metaphor of the vine and the pruning process to the editing process. Dr Cloud, a renowned psychologist, compared the reasons for the severe pruning process of grape vines to the training required to produce fruitful leaders. A vineyard manager painted a picture for him of the pruning process and what could happen if it was not applied in a timely manner.

> Even some very healthy branches may get pruned so that the best vines get to have all the resources. … pruning makes the vine prosper and yield the best grapes, … irrigating can help the vine too much. When the vine does not have to work for its water, it becomes weak and will not be able to stand tough weather and other elements. The roots do not have to go down far enough to find water, so the vine fails to build a foundation of strength for more growth and survival in the future. … The vine needs to build a lasting foundation of strength for more growth and survival in the future. You have to let the vine work to find what it needs and not make it too easy. (drcloud.com, 2017)

Nature artistically inspires, reminds and clarifies life's lessons for us. Just like winemakers who tend their vines, hoping for a great harvest to create their best wine – writers also need to tend their craft in order to reap the reward of publication. Nature's principles apply to writers just as they do for the winemakers.

Writers – like vines – can experience loss when editors cut treasured paragraphs in order to bring clarity to the finished manuscript. The roots must go down deeper, to develop strength and substance to the writing. Perhaps the writer needs to research further to find a new perspective or to bring better evidence as support for their thesis. Pruning also ensures that the vine doesn't grow wild, rampant

Read out loud. This is how you find the missed out, miss-spelt, miss-matched or misplaced words. And 'when you're done you've just begun'.

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and fruitless over boundary fences. Boundaries are helpful when one is trying to grow a vineyard. Editors are like the vineyard manager who carefully prunes the vines. Just like the vine I must develop my strength and talent over time by building upon a strong foundation. Pruning – great editing – is part of this process.

I have revised this paper many times and continue to make changes. Even in this last edit I want to slip in the advice of C.S Lewis who aimed for clarity by preferring the plain 'never use an abstract noun when a concrete one will do' and proportionate diction 'don't use words too big for the subject … good writing does not aim at being clever or artificial' (cited in Latta, 2016. pp. 5, 6). I think I need to edit that 10% again through reworking and nit-picking. But perhaps I will leave that to my editor! I appreciate feedback from well-versed critics. I hope truth upholds my hope that old vines make the best wine!

Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.

Writers write:

A writer is someone who is able to write
and has written something
(vocabulary.com, n.d.)

Writing is easy:
All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper
until drops of blood form on your forehead.
– Gene Fowler
(Quote Investigator, n.d. para. 34)

The very young and those more mature in years are seen making their way through the labyrinth staying with the process and allowing the ebb and flow of the original design to guide them at their own speed and in their own time—each thinking their own thoughts.

C.S Lewis (cited in Latta, 2016) claimed that "Writing a book, is much less like creation than it is like planting a garden, or begetting a child. In all three cases we are only entering as one cause into a causal stream which works so to speak in its own way!" (p. 165). While the committed labyrinth walker remains in constant motion—committed writers remain in constant composition. Writing is thinking. Learning to write by writing makes sense of course—we learn to read by reading and to talk by talking. Borrow a phrase from here—a quote from there—weaving thoughts as unique as works of art. Creativity takes place in the act of writing. Flowing through ten fingers, paragraphs merge and stories are slowly exposed or created.

The world is full of untold stories many of which need to be told. C.S Lewis claimed:

> There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations – these are mortal, and their life to ours is as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. (cited in Latta, 2016, p. 232)

As a writer I make a choice with respect to how I value people everyday and how I translate their stories into writing.

In *The Writing Life*, Godwin (Olsen, Ed., 1995) makes a moving statement about the commitment to start writing:

> In my experience, the angel does, almost always, come – if I keep faith. On some days, keeping faith means simply staying there, when more than anything else I want to get out of that room. It sometimes means going up without hope and without energy and turning on my computer.

There are all kinds of writers' blocks – avoid them when possible: technology, distracting tasks, endless snacking, and busy work. Too easily—nothing gets done. Pablo Picasso warns us to "Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone." Lewis (1962) describes the enormity and potential of each moment in our day, "the present is the point at which time touches eternity" (p. 75). There is so much to write about and so little time to do it.

Writers read, research and reflect

The reflective mind … improves its reading
by reflectively thinking about how it is reading.
It moves forward and then loops back upon itself
to check on its own operations. It checks its tracks.
It makes good its ground. It rises above itself and
exercises oversight on itself.
(Elder and Paul, n.d., para. 6)

The *Thinker's Guide to How to Read a Paragraph* (Paul & Elder, 2013) has been a great help to me both for my own development as a reader and writer but also for the guidance provided to inform the professional practice of pre-service teacher education students. In many ways my reading and writing skills have developed naturally with little attention to guided conventions or interventions. I read and reflect on this article with a renewed sense of purpose. Writing and reading are twin processes. Just as the pathway of a labyrinth winds forwards and backwards so is our conversation between reading and writing. Reading for purpose and mapping knowledge are critical processes for thinking and writing. Labyrinths, as illustrated above have many different forms, as does each reading and writing task. Yet these tasks should be characterised by focus, order and clarity to enable readers and writers to follow the process to the end with engaged and reflective interest. There are other parallel purposes for writing and labyrinth walking: 'sheer pleasure'—with no particular skill level; to figure out a simple idea by engaging in a process; to gain specific technical information (like how to move around corners); to enter, understand, and appreciate a new world view (each labyrinth is different); to learn a new subject (perhaps the labyrinth has new embedded learning). I am honing my skills of summary, synthesis and analysis, effective paragraphing, outlining, drafting and revising for the next 500,000 words (a dissertation) and counting.

Writing is worship

Beauty descends from God into nature:
but there it would perish and does
except when a man (woman or child)
appreciates it with worship
and thus as it were sends it back to God:
so that through this consciousness
what descended ascends again
and the perfect circle is made"
(Collected Letters 1. 931-932 in Latta, 2016, p. 145)

Lichtenwalter (2008) suggests:

> Listening is a spiritual act far more than an acoustical function. Revelation calls us to the act of listening. … If I love Jesus I will be glad that He has something to tell me about the time and place and circumstances of my life, the church and the world, … I will love Him because he is there already speaking–affirming, correcting, motivating. How better to respond to His love than to hear and heed and hope? (p. 82)

Perhaps to respond through writing.

Writers—hear his voice

Writing is undeniably spiritual. …Writing isn't an ephemeral endeavour. It's an essential one taken up by those made for eternity. … Words spring from minds destined for immortality.
(Latta, 2016, p.145)

We all know the feeling of being lost. I was lost as a two-year-old but I didn't know it. I didn't know what lost meant as I always had parents or grandparents who were looking out for me. I was following my father down the shingle road in my short black gumboots. Apparently my parents and grandparents were really worried as they had not seen me go and so I was missing to them for over 2 hours. They searched the farm scouring every creek and water trough. I have vague memories of shuffling along in the dry dust kicking at the stones that formed a ridge along the centre of the road. Small stones dropped one by one into my gumboots bringing my bold adventure to halt. A shadow appeared over me as I sat in the middle of the road, emptying out the bothersome stones. Looking up I saw the bright loving eyes and kind smile of my wonderful Papa as he helped me to put my gumboots back on. He picked me up and put me on his shoulders so that my parents who were constantly scanning the horizon could see that he had their lost treasure.

Knowing that a father or kind Papa is looking out for you brings assurance in life but also more specifically in leadership and in writing. I can feel quite lost in the writer's labyrinth unless I realise that there is a third dimension shining a guiding light as I make my way in and out of the maze. Just like the walkers on a journey through the two-dimensional labyrinth, many writers reflect a shallow earth-bound and earth-framed horizontal perspective. Gazing upward into our Creator's plans provides a multi-dimensional perspective for reconciling past experiences, managing our present realities and imagining a more fruitful future.

John by his words identifies Jesus as "The Word". The fingerprints of God are not only found in and upon everything He created but are also identified through His voice: and His voice was heard from the beginning of creation. "In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word (Logos) was with God, and the Word (Logos) was God" (John 1:1). In the Greek worldview, … the use of the term Logos was thought of as a bridge between the transcendent God and the material universe … bringing forth the idea of a mediating principle between God and the world" (biblehub.com). Christian leaders may view their role as writers in the same way that Jesus was received as the Logos: a bridge or a mediating principle between God and the world. His role as the Logos or bridge was to lead others into a relationship with Him who is also identified as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). Our words can be powerful and inspirational when they lead our readers to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Lichtenwalter (2008) asserts the Word of Jesus is as good as the voice of Jesus.

Randy Seibold (2017) believes that "God puts his fingerprints on everything He creates". As Christian leaders Randy encourages us to reflect on the ways God has given leadership gifts to us in order that we might develop a heart for the things that move Him. Opportunities and possibilities are endless with regards to the ways I could acknowledge God's fingerprints more frequently in my writing. Unobtrusively at times, but boldly when a voice for

Blessing, by empowering and affirming others, including through writing, is a unique part of 'the ultimate service'.

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justice should be heard. Blessing, by empowering and affirming others, including through writing, is a unique part of 'the ultimate service'. It becomes a fulfilling purpose.

Published writing brings satisfaction with tangible 'mission' accomplishment. Just this morning, I received word that an article written for an online magazine for children, youth, parents, artists and educators has been distributed in four countries. It wasn't an academic journal but I am looking forward to seeing it in print, in the form others will view it. Further, personal reflection suggests one of the most important academic contributions made through my leadership in early childhood education, was to develop a philosophy document to provide leadership for early childhood educators in New Zealand and Australia. The document was used for many years in our teacher education programmes at Avondale University College and as leadership documents for professional development in early childhood services. Having presented at Christian Early Childhood Conferences, my current writing is developing papers to present at the inaugural conference for the Association of Christian Early Childhood Educators of Australasia. These conference papers will be submitted to TEACH Journal of Christian Education. If accepted for publication my hope, trust and goal will be fulfilled—being for Him a blessing and inspiration to other educators.

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Writers review

God is the source, inspiration,
and empowerer of revolutionary love
To love is to act intentionally, in relational response to God, others, and creation more generally, to promote overall wellbeing
(Oord, 2019, para. 58)

Self-reflection is an important discipline for writers and for teachers and leaders. During my writing retreat on the edge of the woods, I had time and space to focus on why I choose to write and how to make it happen. I know it will take at least '10,000 hours' as Gladwell boldly stated about the theory of expertise (Gladwell, 2008). In reflecting on this process one of my main aims has been to make my writing engaging (Course Syllabus, 2017, p.23).

Referring to the various pictures of labyrinths as a way of guiding my thought processes has provided a meaningful structure to my writing while enabling me to capture and illustrate key ideas through visual images. The images provided a lens to reflect deeper into diverse learning processes and purposes and to study the design of good writing. The labyrinth is a way of creating mystery and has prompted stories to flow in and out of my past, present and future experiences. I was careful to choose precise and specific words – many of which have been pruned or regrafted. Some of my questions I left unanswered realising that we each discern a different purpose and position. While I have recalled memorable details for my own learning I trust that some details will also be memorable for others.

Just as the labyrinth has an entry point, I have described my early beginnings as a writer, identified my struggles and pinpointed places for improved commitment. But the centre of the labyrinth has drawn me to reflect upon the source of creativity and drawn me to recommit to the focus of my writing: my love for God and His love for me. I view writing and reading as a way of tracing His love through the past, present and future. I realise that my attempts may be like small fingers making invisible marks on cold glass. But I trust that God in His love and by His Spirit will breathe upon my efforts. This is my grateful worship for having been found and caught up into the never-ending circle of His creative love. TEACH

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I view writing … as a way of tracing His love through the past, present and future. … my attempts may be like small fingers making invisible marks on cold glass. But I trust … His Spirit will breathe upon my efforts.

Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

BOOK REVIEWS

Make your choices better than chance: here's how to get it right

Kido, D.K. (2018).
Aimee Leukert, Sandra Blackmore, Clifford Goldstein (Eds).
Riverside, CA: Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education. 132 pp.
ISBN: 978-0692147306

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This book is about worldviews and how a worldview affects a person's decision making. Humans have free will and are therefore able to choose a worldview. In life, although there are factors beyond a person's control, for example, their birth or their parents, among other things, but there are factors that can be controlled. This book focuses on what a person can choose to do and the decisions that a person can make.

Choices and decision making involve reason and emotion, and sometimes both. Understanding a worldview and what drives decision making is important in realising why certain decisions are made. Interesting questions, such as: "How is it that we have been gifted with the potential to think critically and make good choices for ourselves, but still find ourselves failing time and time again?" or "How can we make the best decisions possible?", are addressed and explained in this book.

The author defines worldview and then outlines four groups of worldviews, namely: rules-oriented people (ROPE), "me first" oriented people (MOPE), slippery-oriented people (SOPE) and helping-others-oriented people (HOPE). In identifying these four groups the author acknowledges that although there is a proliferation of worldviews he asserts that these can be sorted into the above four groups. It is also interesting to note that individuals are not 100 percent one of these four groups of worldview as sometimes unexpected decisions are made.

Throughout the book the author provides anecdotes showcasing various approaches to decision-making and the choices that individuals make. The choices made determine the individual's future and the kind of life they will live. Kido provides a model for the decision-making process highlighting the impact bias and thinking anomalies have on the solutions that are chosen. He believes that biases and thinking anomalies are related to specific worldviews.

The reason for this book is to make the reader aware that the worldview they choose affects all aspects of their lives. Whichever one of the four groups a person uses to look at the world reflects their values, priorities and their relationships with others. Knowing a person's worldview assists in understanding their perspectives and choices more clearly, as well as being insightful when relating to that person. The author also discusses how worldview is linked with happiness. Kido states that it is up to each person to decide which worldview they believe leads to the best possible long-term outcome.

The author does present the worldview that consistently leads to good decisions that provide the individual with contentment and satisfaction. In addition, choosing to use this worldview results in less pitfalls, less anomalies and fewer thinking biases. Kido believes that when one has an accurate picture of reality then there is less energy and 'fight' spent on defending self-esteem and therefore less vulnerability for pitfalls. By ensuring that one's focus is on others provides a clearer life purpose and fosters more contentment. The final chapter of this book discusses how to change to a better worldview addressing the barriers to change, the reasons why changes are possible and how the author was able to change his worldview.

Life has so many possibilities and the author challengers his readers to move away from poor choices, regrets and disappointing outcomes to rather experience genuine joy and long-lasting feelings of contentment. The layout of this book is easy to follow and systematic in leading the reader through each point illustrating it with clear examples. I recommend this work as a read for all as each person engages in choices, decision-making and relating to others on a daily basis.

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> *"outlines four groups of worldviews, namely: rules-oriented people (ROPE), "me first" oriented people (MOPE), slippery-oriented people (SOPE) and helping-others-oriented people (HOPE)."*

Imperfect leadership: A book for leaders who know that they don't know it all

Munby, S. (2019).
Williston, VT: Crown House. 320 pp.
ISBN-13: 978-1785834110

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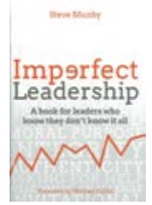
From Steve Munby's perspective, "Imperfect leaders know that they don't have all the answers they - ask for help" (p. 7). Munby's book, however, in spite of its title – Imperfect Leadership – presents a series of reader actions that will result in what Mundy labels as effective school leadership. These suggested actions, though, are not derived from a research study or from reviews of research studies. They are derived from observation and personal experience of, and reflections on, school leadership.

The scaffold for the structure of the book is Mundy's reflections on his time as CEO of the National College for School Leadership in England, between 2005 and 2017. Each chapter of the book records Munby's reflections on what was happening in the English school leadership scene in that year and has as its centre-piece, the transcription of his annual keynote speech to school leaders. Each chapter focusses on a limited number of leader actions prompted by the respective year's events that, in Munby's assessment, will contribute to effective school leadership. By its very nature, then, this book is not a systematic presentation of the characteristics of an effective leader or effective leadership. Rather it is a presentation of a series of leadership suggestions that are somewhat randomly presented, sometimes repeated and sometimes critically reviewed.

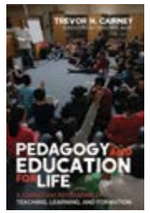
There are, however, three leadership themes that appear across most of the chapters. Firstly, it is a view that: "It is time we expect that believing one person can and should be this type (all conquering leader) of leader is unrealistic" (p. 51). From Munby's perspective it is now time for collaboration and the adoption of a distributed approach to leadership. Secondly, Munby highlights that leaders must take into consideration the context in which their actions take place; one size does not fit all. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, for school leaders to be effective their mission and motive must be based on moral purpose. Certainly, something that resonates with Christian educators.

In the last chapter Munby attempts to bring his reflections on school leadership over these 12 years together. This review of effective school leadership as practiced by imperfect leaders is concise, well presented and self-contained. It is refreshing to read a leadership book that highlights, warts and all, the practitioner's perspective; that presents potential actions that are doable. For school leaders and school leader aspirants, the book is worth a read and if you are time poor at least take time to read the last chapter. TEACH



Photography: NNSW Adventist Education image files

> *"It is refreshing to read a leadership book that highlights, warts and all, the practitioner's perspective"*



Pedagogy and education for life: A Christian reframing of teaching, learning, and formation

Trevor H. Cairney (2018).
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, Wipf and Stock.
pp. 198
ISBN: 978-1498283618

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> *Cairney … represents organic practice as an informed, engaging, interpersonal process towards God-centred wisdom and human flourishing*

A good title is a potential bait to hook a reader! Such is the case in Trevor Cairney's use of significant terms in his title to entice and engage his audience – *Pedagogy and Education for Life: A Christian Reframing of Teaching, Learning, and Formation. Over time, terms like pedagogy* may have lost their essential meaning through casual overuse. And formation in some circles appears to have become a popular buzzword without the deep understandings associated with its conceptual, seminal origins in such a context. Cairney's book serves as a powerful corrective to this possibility as it seeks to challenge, clarify, reframe and reform many existing conceptions of what it means to teach Christianly. Thus, it is not just 'another book' on Christian education. It is also significant that the author's apparent focus is on pedagogy, and not curriculum. This sends a subtle signal of the essence of his thesis.

Cairney's perspective owes its strength and authenticity to several interrelated fundamentals. First, its orientation is God-centred, Bible-based, and kingdom directed. Consequently, its purpose is redemptive, transformative and restorative for all participants involved in the educative process in the faith community that they represent. Thus, its target is personal with each student recognised and nurtured as creatures in the image of God, having uniqueness, dignity and inestimable value, but with the need of comprehensive transformation.

While to some, Cairney's presentation may first hint at being overly theoretical, this is not the case. Certainly, the writer's breadth and length of experience – by his own estimation, the book is a life-long work – is reflected in his familiarity with seminal thinkers from the fields of sociology, theology, philosophy, psychology, and history. But this rich tapestry gives the work strength and rigor. It does not take long to appreciate the author's passion for his calling. He has something worth sharing! The theoretical foundation provides an important rationale that leads smoothly and logically into the practical implications of the respective concepts. But although there are practical suggestions, it is not a technical manual or checklist. The pedagogy that Cairney is talking about represents organic practice as an informed, engaging, interpersonal process towards God-centred wisdom and human flourishing. The approach Cairney has taken also models the pedagogical style he is advocating. This refreshing reminder of what constitutes authentic Christian education is timely and important, given the propensity of commonly-held instrumental views of education as the imparting of sterile, factual information.

The concluding chapter, 'The Framework for Evaluating Classroom and School Life', provides a useful, systematic bank of questions to stimulate thoughtful reflection and application of the foregoing wisdom in a range of situations: to individual Christian practitioners and their personal enrichment, and especially, for adoption as a device to guide and support school review, evaluation, and strategic planning towards authenticity.

Trevor Cairney's book has potential value for several audiences. It earns a rightful place as a resource for pre-service teacher education or those transitioning to Christian education from other agencies. It also serves as a helpful theoretical bridge for those engaged in post-graduate studies in specific aspects explored in the book. But perhaps most of all, many of the subtleties and nuances it brings out will resonate in the minds and hearts of long-serving Christian educators with the potential to invigorate their continuing ministries.

In short – highly recommended. TEACH

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