

# TEACH JOURNAL

OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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# Ministry Of Teaching

# EDITORIAL

Lana Hibbard

**Change is a factor in every aspect of our lives and the world of education is no exception. In many cases, we can choose whether or to what extent we will adopt or adapt new ways of thinking and doing. Teachers are urged to utilise best practice in planning lessons that enable students to learn desired skills and competencies. Considerable effort is also directed at effecting change in the attitudes, behaviour, values and beliefs of students.**

As professionals, teachers must remain up-to-date with developments in their field. However, it is easy to be consumed by changes such as the release of a national curriculum, developments in technology, innovations in pedagogy, or advances in assessment methods, and lose the central focus of Christian education—revealing Christ in order to evoke change in people's lives.

A significant number of those who enter the teaching profession do so because they want to influence the lives of young people. Teachers become proficient at identifying the need for change in students and are skilled at planning for such change; however, they tend to resist making changes to their own attitudes, behaviour, values or beliefs. Many will say, "I'm happy for things to change so long as you don't ask me to change who I am. Don't ask me to be someone I'm not."

Many fear change, yet God has clearly told us that spiritual growth is about change. "We... are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18). God has already planned many changes for you and I, and not just changes around us but, more significantly, inside us. An intimate relationship with God cannot leave us unchanged; He wants to transform us. God's ways of thinking and doing are so far removed from human ways that you cannot simply adapt to suit your preferences. A total transformation is needed.

By establishing an intimate, trusting relationship with the creator of the universe as our father, guide and friend, we will experience a transformation of our attitudes, behaviour, values and beliefs. Philippians 1:6 says, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This total life change is for all Christians, for every one of us.

Unfortunately, many Christians have failed to pursue a transformed life. "We live in a day when millions of people have made a commitment to Christ and yet few lives are really transformed by

his power...in the end most believers end up as much a part of the world's way as their nonbelieving neighbours" (Jacobson, p. 18).

Christian teaching that reflects today's postmodern philosophy offers a gospel without demands, a down-playing of our sinful nature. In this case, there is no need for a total life change, no need to live the radical discipleship of Jesus. As Jesus' followers, we must represent the alternative way of life He taught and lived. We need to have a Kingdom lifestyle both corporately and individually. We must give up the comfort of remaining who and where we are right now. We will only be credible Christians in the eyes of the world if we practice what we preach, if we present an alternative lifestyle, if we allow God to change us.

The distinctiveness of Christian education relies on the calibre, dedication and spiritual maturity of its staff. Christian teachers play a significant role in the lives of students and occupy a unique position of influence on individuals and families. As your life changes in the hands of God, you will be in an optimal position to act as a facilitator of change in the lives of others—students, colleagues, neighbours and strangers. Your interactions with students (and others) should reveal to them the character of Christ, arousing in them a desire for inner change.

Make change a part of your life and open yourself to the transforming power of God. **TEACH**

## Reference

Jacobsen, W. (2007). He loves me. Newbury Park, CA.: Windblown Media.

*“We must give up the comfort of remaining who and where we are right now”*



[Photography: Ann Stafford]



## Readers Theatre, Bible, and fluency

**Melvin Campbell**

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**Readers Theatre has been a dramatic genre for many years. Only recently, however, has it been seriously applied to educational endeavors and, even then, seldom to the teaching of Biblical themes and related values. In view of the mandate to integrate literacy into every area of the school curriculum, this article explores how expression, fluency, and intonation of oral reading may be improved using Readers Theatre in faith formation classes.**

### Readers Theatre: yesterday to today

Readers Theatre had its resurgence in the 1945 theatre world of New York with the production of *Oedipus Rex*. The stated purpose of the production was “to give the people of New York an opportunity to witness performances of great dramatic works which were seldom if ever produced.” Six years later George Bernard Shaw’s *Don Juan in hell* was produced with just four readers using scripts with a minimum of staging. The following year, with three readers and a chorus of twenty, Stephen Vincent Benét’s *Brown’s body* was performed (Coger & White, 1973).

English departments in American universities began taking Readers Theatre as a serious dramatic genre in the 1960s (White & Coger 1967). From there, the idea spread to middle and elementary schools as a means to teach content and fluency. However, it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that Readers Theatre became an instructional strategy that was taken seriously. Even so, it wasn’t until the twenty-first century that major language textbook writers began offering Readers Theatre scripts along with the reading series.

The number of returns from an Internet search for Readers Theatre scripts or books that address the writing, staging, or instructional implementation has increased exponentially over the past ten years.

### Benefits of Readers Theatre

Anecdotal evidence for the effectiveness of using Readers Theatre can be found in the literature (Rinehart, 1999; Moran, 2006; Tyler et al., 2000). Many teachers who use Readers Theatre in their classrooms have communicated with us concerning

its value in enhancing overall fluency. Only in the last 10 years, has there been any quantitative research on the use of the strategy in the classroom.

A 10-week study on the use of Readers Theatre in a second grade language arts classroom showed an average rate increase of seventeen words per minute over the control group (Martinez et al., 1999). The work of Millin and Rinehart (1999) showed similar results. Keehn’s (2003) study of second graders using Readers Theatre showed statistically significant gains in rate, retelling, and expressiveness by low achievement students, while the “high-achievement readers made statistically significant gains in measures of comprehension and word recognition”.

Hudson (2006) provides a concise list of the benefits of Readers Theatre. Readers Theatre:

- provides an authentic purpose, legitimate reason, and motivation for rereading text multiple times;
- uses repeated reading to help students develop accuracy, rate, and prosody;
- helps students understand the importance of intonation and how it relates to context;
- improves students’ comprehension of text through repeated readings and variations in interpretation;
- requires teamwork among students; and
- sanctions peer interaction and fun.

### Readers Theatre, Bible study, and fluency

In Christian schools, Bible is taught alongside other academic subjects. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that biblical Readers Theatre scripts can enhance fluency whilst teaching biblical content.

There are three basic types of Readers Theatre: interactive, presentational, and echo. While the following examples may not be used as given, they will provide the reader with ideas for writing and producing scripts that meet the objectives of their Bible courses.

Since Readers Theatre is presentational and not representational drama, it is well suited for classroom use. Acting with the voice brings biblical themes to a heightened level of appreciation.

The readings below are given as samples of

“Readers Theatre sanctions peer interaction and fun”

the types of Readers Theatre that can be used in worship services, school programs, or Bible classes. The primary goal of these readings is to bring the biblical stories alive. The added advantage is the enhancement of fluency.

To demonstrate a variety of Readers Theatres, only sections of each reading are given. The precise manner in which these readings are to be implemented is open to the creativity of the instructor. To fine tune one of these readings for performance, such things as casting, voicing, and staging need to be considered (See Campbell & Cleland, 2003).

## Conclusion

There is a host of Readers Theatre available on the Internet; however, it may be difficult to find a script to match one's curricular objectives. This is why we encourage instructors to develop their own scripts. Often Readers Theatre scripts found on the Internet or in commercially available sources are written with long lines, lending themselves to a form of round-robin reading. We advocate a style with a faster pace and a focus on deeper meaning! **TEACH**

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## Sample scripts

### Presentational readings

Presentational readings, as the name suggests, are carefully rehearsed readings designed for audience listening. Their impact comes from the use of the voice as a dramatic tool.

**Title:** *Nathan and David*

**Source:** taken from 2 Samuel 12.

**Length:** 53 lines

**Readers:** 5 readers—readers 1 and 2 are Nathan, they carry most of the story line; readers 3 and 4 take the parts of the rich man and poor man respectively, reader 5 takes the role of David.

**Comments:** The interpretation of the story is open to the instructor. During the last 15 lines, the readers become more and more intense, at times, even raising their voices for emphasis.

Reader 1: David, I am Nathan, a prophet of God.  
 Reader 2: I have a tragic story to tell you.  
 David: I am listening.  
 Reader 2: In a certain town  
 Reader 1: there were two men—  
 Reader 3: I am very rich.  
 Reader 4: I am very poor.  
 Reader 3: I have very large herds.  
 Reader 1: He had herds of cattle and sheep  
 Reader 2: which made him very, very rich!  
 Reader 1: The poor man had—  
 :  
 :  
 Reader 2: David began to rant and rave—  
 Reader 1: And so he should have.  
 David: If there is a God—and surely there is—  
 Reader 2: said David,  
 David: this rich man deserves to die!  
 Reader 1: David.  
 David: He must pay for the lamb four times over.  
 Reader 2: David.  
 David: Who is this man?  
 Reader 1: David!  
 Reader 2: David!!  
 Readers 1&2: You...you are that man!

**Title:** *There's only one 'I'*

**Source:** taken and modified from the authors' book. (Campbell & Cleland, 2003)

**Length:** 23 lines

“Acting with the voice brings biblical themes to a heightened level of appreciation”

# Teaching & Professional Practice

**Readers:** 17 readers (or adjust to suit number in class)

**Comments:** Make cards with the following words / letters: NATION, UNIVERSE, COMMUNITY, CITY, AUSTRALIA, A, L, L, C, R, E, A, T, I, O, N. Wherever an 'I' appears, it is printed in red; all other letters are black. If there are more than 17 students, two or three students may hold a given word card and share the matching line(s). Students holding the letter cards to form "ALL CREATION" stand in the back row. Those holding word cards sit in the front.

**Narrator:** God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible

**Voice 1:** for the fish in the sea,

**Voice 2:** for the birds in the air, the cattle,

**Voice 3:** for the Earth itself,

**Voice 4:** for every animal.

**Narrator:** Let them be responsible

**Voice 3:** for fish in the sea

**Voice 2:** for birds in the air,

**Voice 1:** for every living thing on the Earth.

**Narrator:** God created human beings; he created them God-like, reflecting God's nature.

**Voices 1–11:** There's only one 'I' in all creation.

**Voice 12:** There's only one 'I' in our nation.

**Voice 13:** There's only one 'I' in our whole universe.

**Voices 1–11:** There's only one 'I' in all creation.

**Voice 14:** There's only one 'I' in our community.

**Voice 15:** There's only one 'I' in our great city.

**Voice 16:** There's only one 'I' in our Australia.

**Voices 1–11:** There's only one 'I' in all creation.

**Voice 12:** There's only one 'I' in our nation.

**Voice 13:** There's only one 'I' in our whole universe.

**Voices 1–11:** There's only one 'I' in all creation.

**All:** I must be responsible!

**Voice 17** (*as a mischievous aside*) And there's only one 'I' in responsible.

## Possible extensions:

- Have the children raise their cards at appropriate moments.
- Have all children wear white shirts and red ties.
- Use a musical backing. (You may request Jo's melody in print or on tape, at no cost, by contacting her at [jvcleland@aol.com](mailto:jvcleland@aol.com))

## Interactive readings

Interactive readings involve audience participation, and require audience members to adopt a particular role. The impact of this style of Readers Theatre is that the audience is absorbed into the story and becomes part of the action. Used in a classroom, this is a wonderful confidence booster for struggling readers, as they are one of a chorus of voices.

**Title:** *The unmerciful servant*

**Source:** taken from Matthew 18

**Length:** 45 lines

**Readers:** 4 readers plus the audience. The two readers carry the story line; one person is designated as the King and one as the Poor Servant. The audience (or classroom) is cast as the unmerciful servant.

**Comments:** Casting requires readers to feel the anger, forgiveness, and frustration of the moment and be to express it with their voices. Typically, these four readers take their place in front of the audience. We have found it useful to practice a few lines for the audience, pointing out to them that they are the unforgiving servant! Interactive readings cast the audience to certain lines so that they must identify with the character of the text (taken from Campbell & Zackrisson, 2003).

**Reader 1:** The kingdom of heaven is like a king

**Reader 2:** who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

**Reader 1:** A man who owed him several million dollars

**Reader 2:** was brought to him.

**The King:** I need my several million dollars, pay up!

**Audience:** I can't pay!

**The King:** Pay up!!

**Audience:** I can't pay!

**The King:** Sell his wife!

**Audience:** Please don't!

**The King:** Sell him!

:

**Audience:** Sell his children! Sell his lands!

**Poor Servant:** Please don't!!

**Reader 1:** The servant's servant fell on his knees  
**Reader 2:** and cried.

**Poor Servant:** Be patient I will pay.

**Reader 1:** But the first servant, ignoring the plea

**Reader 2:** became an unmerciful servant by saying—

**Audience:** SELL!

**Reader 1:** The king was not pleased at all!

**The King:** I forgave you millions, can't you forgive a few?

**Reader 1:** And so it was in this parable

**Reader 2:** that Jesus gave meaning

**Reader 1:** to what

**Reader 2:** forgiveness really means

## Echo readings

Echo readings also involve the audience, but in this case, the audience echoes a key reader's words and mimics the nuances of expression. While at first glance it may appear that echo reading is to be used



only with young children who cannot read (indeed, it works very well with the very young), it is surprisingly effective with adult audiences as well.

**Title:** *Jesus calms the storm*

**Source:** taken from Matthew 8

**Length:** 38 lines

**Readers:** A Narrator who carries the story line with the dialogue provided by what is called the Voice Leader.

**Suggestions:** The concept is straightforward. The audience is instructed to repeat what the Voice Leader says, imitating his/her voice inflection, emotions embedded in the voice, volume, and, at times, facial and body movements. The Voice Leader reads only one sentence or phrase at a time. Notice that the lines for the Voice Leader are purposely short.

**Narrator:** One day while on the seashore, Jesus said to his disciples,

**Voice Leader:** (Motion with the head to go) Let's go / to the other side of the lake.

**Narrator:** They got into a boat and began sailing. (Make the sound of the wind) A furious storm came up without any warning. The waves washed over the boat. All during this time, Jesus was sleeping. The disciples, who were afraid, woke him and said,

⋮

**Voice Leader:** Why were you so scared? / Don't you trust me?

**Narrator:** Terrified they asked each other,

**Voice Leader:** (Terrified look) Who is this? / (Make sound of the wind) The wind / and the waves obey him.

**Narrator:** And so it was that the disciples learned who this man Jesus really was and the great power that he had.

**Title:** *Joseph sold into slavery*

**Source:** taken from Genesis 37

**Length:** 32 lines

**Readers:** The Voice Leader represents Joseph's brothers while the Narrator carries the story line.

**Comments:** The audience does not need to see the script.

**Narrator:** Jacob's sons, except Joseph, were caring for their father's flocks near a small town. Jacob told Joseph to go and see if all was well with his brothers and with the flocks, so Joseph did as his father had requested. When his brothers saw Joseph coming, they started to talk among themselves.

**Voice Leader:** (Shake head in disbelief) Look, the dreamer is coming!

(Raise fist above head and pinch lips together) Let's kill him.

**Narrator:** To cover up their evil scheme the brothers decided to tell his father that a wild animal had eaten him. Reuben heard of the plan and tried to rescue Joseph. He didn't want Joseph to be killed.

⋮

**Narrator:** So the brothers sold Joseph to the camel drivers. Joseph was taken to Egypt. The brothers took Joseph's robe, dipped it in the blood of a killed goat. They took the bloody robe back to their father and said,

**Voice Leader:** We found this.

**Narrator:** Jacob said, It's Joseph's robe! Surely he has been eaten by a wild animal! Jacob was very sad. He cried for many days. As for Joseph, the camel drivers sold him in Egypt to a man named Potiphar.

**Voice Leader:** Poor, poor Joseph what are you going to do?

**Narrator:** On the road to Egypt and slavery, Joseph purposed in his heart to serve the God of his father Jacob and to be faithful no matter what happened.

*Full and additional scripts may be obtained by contacting Melvin Campbell: mdcamp2@att.net*

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

# 2009

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# **H&S Issues**

**The students are excited. Bags in hand and chattering incessantly, they line up ready to board the bus for their 'Big Day Out', alias a class excursion. You, as their teacher, struggle to match their enthusiasm. The planning is done and you have made sure the learning will be worthwhile, but the memory of the risk assessment form and its potential hazards lingers, increasing your awareness of the duty of care you have for your precious charges.**

There are many risks associated with a school excursion. Every teacher's worst nightmare is that someone may be left behind somewhere. Other hazards, both minor and major, wait to trip up unsuspecting students and their teachers.

Schools are diligent in identifying risky situations. They assess potential hazards and the severity of these hazards according to a risk code. However, identifying the risk is not enough. Schools must demonstrate that they have implemented measures to control the risk and minimise the possibility of harm to any student. Are we as diligent and intentional in identifying spiritual hazards, assessing spiritual risk and implementing strategies to ensure our students' eternal health and safety?

Below is a spiritual risk assessment activity that may be done individually or collectively by teachers. For each of the following characteristics of Gen Y (children born between the early 1980s–late 1990s) and the upcoming Gen Z (children born in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or late 1990s), answer the following questions:

1. What are the potential hazards this characteristic poses when it comes to the spiritual development of this generation?
2. How great are the risks?
3. What can Christian educators do to minimise the risks?

Each generation (Builders, Boomers, X, Y, Z) is the product of social and global issues of a particular era. The four characteristics that follow are broadly indicative of students in our schools. They apply to Gen Y, but are even more characteristic of Gen Z, who have reached primary school but are yet to make their presence felt in high schools.

## **Technology-savvy**

Gen Y has grown with information and communication technology. Almost every year of their lives, a new application has hit the ICT market, and Gen Ys have embraced them enthusiastically.

Gen Z, on the other hand, can't even remember a world devoid of the internet, i-pods and mobile phones. Their skills as users outstrip both their teachers and Gen Y students.

## **Nature-illiterate**

Linked closely to time spent with technology and the protectiveness of parents is the lack of connection that today's children have with the natural world. Children may have knowledge of rainforest habitats and threats to the environment via the virtual world of the internet, yet have never experienced the sounds, smells and sights of a rainforest first hand. As a result, they lack empathy with nature, and have increasingly less or no experience of the wonder of God's creation and the mysteries of the natural world.

## **Mini-adults**

We are witnessing the demise of childhood, and the rise of the 'little people' generation. Children and even toddlers, listen to adult music, play adult games, watch adult television shows, wear scaled-down versions of adult clothing, engage in adult talk and are being increasingly pressured by society and educational curriculum to think, behave and make decisions like adults. As a result of pressure to prematurely deal with adult issues, anxiety disorder and depression are on the rise among pre-teens.

## **Risk-averse**

Michael McQueen (2008), social researcher, indicates that later Gen Y and in particular Gen Z, unlike their confident older sibling Gen X, are more averse to taking risk. These children have been born into a society that fears everything from global warming, terrorists, neighbours and strangers to the unknown, failure, and litigation. The consequences of this fear are becoming increasingly apparent in the inhibitions of young children.

We cannot change the characteristics of the generations we teach, anymore than we can change who we are. It is, however, our responsibility to understand the forces in society that have shaped Gen Y and are shaping Gen Z so that we can interact with them in appropriate ways and build authentic relationships that will lead them into a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. **TEACH**

*EH&S issues* are a joint initiative between the Adventist Schools Australia Curriculum Unit and Avondale College.

## **Reference**

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## Computer technology in the Geography classroom

### Quality teaching and learning

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**Computer technology is influencing every area of our lives. Funding from the Federal Government and the need to connect with and engage Generation Y students in learning puts pressure on teachers to find valid and effective ways of using computers in the classroom. This article shares one Geography teacher's experiences of using computer technology to enhance quality teaching.**

#### Introduction

Using computers as a teaching tool can be exhilarating one moment and utterly depressing the next. The capacity of technology to bring learning alive for students and make learning significant is immense, yet the demands which such learning places on teachers' computing knowledge and skills can be daunting, and the technical glitches frustrating. One thing, however, is certain, although technology is not a substitute for quality teaching, it can enhance quality teaching.

Hattie (2009, p. 36) asserts that "teachers need to be actively engaged in, and passionate about teaching and learning", a view which is supported by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSWDET, 2003). Quality teaching also requires diversity.

Highly effective teachers don't just teach in one way—they have a repertoire of instructional techniques, teaching behaviours, and essential skills on which to draw, depending on the needs of their students, the nature of the subject, and the complexity of the learning outcomes. (McEwan, 2002, p. 81)

The use of technology, particularly computers, dramatically increases the range of techniques available to support quality teaching. The integration of computers into the learning environment must link computers to learning and the sociocultural environment (Lim, 2002).

The New South Wales Quality Teaching Model is widely accepted as providing a sound framework for quality teaching. The goals of this model are to:

- promote high levels of *intellectual quality* to produce deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas;
- establish a high *quality learning environment* to create classrooms where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning; and
- generate *significance* by connecting students with the intellectual demands of their work to help make learning meaningful and important to them.

(McLeod & Reynolds, 2007, p. 46)

While all three domains of the Quality Teaching Model are essential for quality learning, and all three goals may be enhanced by the use of computers, this article focuses on the dimension of *intellectual quality* as it relates to computers in the classroom. *Intellectual quality* refers to teaching that focuses on a small number of key concepts and the relationship between these concepts in order to promote deep knowledge and understanding. Six elements make up the *intellectual quality* domain. A description of these elements is found in Figure 1.

When using computer technology in the classroom, it is important to move past Type I applications that focus on the acquisition of facts, and even beyond word processing activities and internet research to reach a more instructional approach. This is not to say that word processing and research are not valid uses for computers. These uses alone cannot justify the financial investment schools make in computer technology (Maddux, Johnson & Willis, 1992), and do not necessarily satisfy the elements of quality teaching. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that use computer technology whilst addressing key elements of the *intellectual quality* domain.

This article presents six strategies that utilise

“Although technology is not a substitute for quality teaching, it can enhance quality teaching”

computers in the classroom. These strategies have proved effective in engaging students in learning, and promoting *intellectual quality*. Although the examples given are in the field of Geography, they can be adapted to other subject areas.

Geography is defined in New South Wales by the Board of Studies as being “an investigation of the world which provides accurate description and interpretation of the varied character of the earth and its people” (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 5). As such, it develops knowledge and understandings about how people interact with their environments, and includes a strong skills component, which encourages students to investigate and communicate geographically. The strategies described in this article are presented with a sample activity in which each has been trialled; however, each has been widely applied to other topics and stages of the curriculum.

## 1. Online readings and discussion forums

Encouraging senior students to read a wide range of current literature from a variety of perspectives on mandatory topics is always a challenge. Utilising the school intranet, selected readings may be placed in specific subject folders for students to complete for homework.

### Sample activity: Yr 12, reading on world cities

Task: A reading about the future of world cities has been placed on the school intranet for you to download, read and discuss. You may comment or react to content in the article, ask follow-up questions, pose hypotheses or seek clarification of meaning by posting on the discussion forum. Alternatively, you may respond to a post made by a classmate.

### Benefits

- Students became more interested in completing the homework readings and posing questions / comments for classmates.
- Students were engaged in their favourite pastime—talking to friends—but with one significant difference, they were engaged in *substantive communication* about a given topic. In addition, they were using the appropriate *metalanguage* and generating written ideas about the topic as well as engaging in *problematic thinking*. What is more, this was taking place outside of class hours.
- The use of the intranet has significantly improved both the completion rate of readings and the interaction between students on selected topics.
- Readings cannot be lost or left at school.
- The teacher’s awareness of the comprehension levels of individual students is enhanced, allowing for differentiation.

**Figure 1: The elements of intellectual quality as given in the NSW Quality Teaching Model (Adapted from McLeod & Reynolds, 2007)**

INTELLECTUAL QUALITY	
Deep knowledge	The knowledge being addressed focuses on a small number of key concepts and the relationships that exist between the concepts.
Deep understanding	The students demonstrate a profound and meaningful understanding of key concepts and the relationships that exist between the concepts.
Problematic knowledge	Students are encouraged to seek alternative solutions and question existing ones.
Higher-order thinking	Students engage in thinking that requires them to organise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and information.
Metalanguage	Teachers and students use the specialised terminology that relates to the lesson content and discipline.
Substantive communication	Students are engaged in meaningful conversations about the concepts and ideas presented in classes.

### Suggestions

- Be familiar with the reading, its relevance to the syllabus and possible avenues of discussion that may be prompted by the reading.
- Check the discussion pages regularly to ensure students keep to the topic, and to engage in the discussions taking place.
- Vary the length, difficulty and source of the readings in order to maintain interest.
- Observe copyright regulations.

## 2. Podcasting

A podcast is an audio or video file that is usually made available for others to download.

### Sample activity: Yr 7, world heritage sites

Task: Use *iMovie* to make a video podcast of a world heritage site with which you feel a connection. The podcast must include the specified details and meet the given production criteria.

### Benefits

- Allowing choice of site gave students a sense of control over their learning.
- In-depth investigation of one site allowed them to build *deep knowledge* and *understanding* around the single concept of what constitutes a world heritage site.
- The podcast encouraged students to use appropriate *metalanguage*.

“*Students were engaged in their favourite pastime—talking to friends—but with one significant difference*”

- The end product was presented to an audience but avoided the anxiety that class presentations sometimes engender.

### Suggestions

- Be familiar with the software, in this case iMovie.
- Set specific criteria and parameters for students to operate within.
- Allow for a range of technology skill levels.
- Set completion dates for each step / stage of the process.
- Compile a list of useful and credible websites for student to explore.

### 3. Video diaries

**Sample activity:** Yr 12, biophysical interactions, ecosystems at risk, people and economic activity

**Task:** At the end of each day's activities during the field trip to Hook Island, you will work with a partner to record a video diary entry. When planning your video, you may make notes of your observations and data collection, for example tourist tallies, underwater quadrats or species identification. Ensure that you use technical language appropriate to the day's activities. A copy of your diary entries will later be given to everyone in the class.

### Benefits

- Video diaries allowed students to process their learning and articulate it to an audience.
- The task required *problem solving* and encouraged *substantive communication* on a small number of concepts, which promotes *deep knowledge* and *understanding*.
- Students needed to be familiar with the *meta-language* relating to their field study activities and use appropriate *metalanguage* in their video diary.
- Planning the content of each diary entry helped students consolidate the learning that took place.
- Students enjoyed sharing their diaries and watching classmates' diaries. This allowed students to listen to the material several times over, from a variety of perspectives (*problematic knowledge*).
- The teacher could quickly assess the students' understanding and note any areas that needed clarification or further explanation.
- This activity allowed students to be creative in their presentations with everything from David Attenborough style documentaries to 'talking coconut' diaries being submitted.
- Using a computer to edit the videos onsite further enhanced the learning that took place.

### Suggestions

- Set strict time limits and stay nearby so students remain on task.
- Always set explicit quality criteria so students are

aware of your expectations.

- The teacher may wish to view the video diaries to ensure they have titles and that days or dates are clearly identified, this also allows for teacher censorship.
- Careful naming of files helps prevent accidental erasure.

### 4. Virtual fieldwork

Students at all levels can benefit from participation in virtual field studies. Although virtual field studies can never replace the benefits of genuine field experiences, they introduce the tools that geographers use when engaged in fieldwork.

A series of virtual field studies are available from Jacaranda (Interactive World Atlas, 2007) and are suitable for all stages of Geography. Sample virtual field studies in this series include the Murray-Darling, Mexico City, Ningaloo Reef, Antarctica, Banda Aceh, Kakadu, Melbourne Docklands, New Orleans, Nouakchott and the Three Gorges Dam.

### Benefits

- Students had an opportunity to 'visit' a wider variety of locations than would otherwise be possible.
- Designed to foster *problematic thinking* and *higher order thinking* skills, the activities lead students to *deep knowledge* and *understanding* of one geographic location.
- Students were engaged with a variety of interrelated stimuli such as graphs, audio interviews, photographs, maps and flow charts.
- There were opportunities for students to respond and consolidate learning.
- The multimedia nature of virtual field studies caters for a variety of learning styles, and effectively teaches the processes, methodologies and *metalanguage* involved in fieldwork.

### Suggestions

- Teachers must complete the field study for themselves prior to the class.
- Setting the scene and building the context of the study is important before commencing the activities.
- Before starting, decide what method of assessment will be used and whether it will be assessment of learning or assessment for learning.

### 5. Online video tutorials for skill development

The Geography syllabus requires students to apply "mathematical ideas and techniques to analyse geographical data" (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 10). One aspect teachers struggle with is finding sufficient class time for consolidation of skills. During homework activities, students may forget steps, apply a formula incorrectly or fail to understand

“Video diaries allowed students to process their learning and articulate it to an audience”



what the question is asking. This problem may be counteracted by creating short video tutorials of the teacher demonstrating specific skills and posting them on the school intranet.

## Benefits

- Research supports modelling as a powerful teaching tool (Bandura, 1997; Horner, Bhattacharyya & O'Connor, 2008; Schunk, 2004), and students were able to watch the modelled process as often as necessary.
- Each tutorial focused on one skill and included both the skill and a problematic application of the skill. This helped the students develop *deep understanding* and encouraged *problematic knowledge*.
- Students were exposed to *metalinguage*.
- The tutorials provide a non-threatening and non-assessed opportunity for skills acquisition outside the classroom. Students who were reluctant to complete a practice skill page were more likely to watch a video clip.
- Students could replay the tutorial while practising skills or preparing for assessments.

## Suggestions

- Upload the tutorials when the skills are introduced in class.
- Remind the students to use the tutorials for revision before assessments.
- Place downloadable skill worksheets on the intranet along with each tutorial.
- 3–5 minutes is around the optimum length for a tutorial.
- The intranet enables the teacher to monitor who has been watching each tutorial and how long they watched it (some may need reminding that 13 seconds is hardly long enough to be beneficial).
- To vary presentations, use a puppet or get the students to record their own tutorial.

## 6. Data collection and analysis

### Sample activity: Yr 7, global change

Task: Each student needs to bring a bag of clothing items they would normally wear on the weekend.

Class period 1: Check the label of each item to determine where it was made. Using your laptop, enter this information in *Pages* (a software package). As you enter information, a pie graph will be generated and updated with each additional entry. After 1 minute, you will rotate to another student's selection of clothes and enter the relevant data, and so on.

Class period 2: Analyse the data you have collected. Create a report that includes the pie graph, a definition of globalisation, an explanation of the results, a statement of how this study affects you, and a portrait photo of yourself as the reporter.

## Benefits

- Students found the activity engaging, fun and relevant because they used items of their own.
- Students could observe their data being processed immediately on the pie graph.
- Although conducted individually, students quickly began to engage in *substantive communication* as trends began to emerge. Students did not predict all the results correctly, thus the element of surprise kept them interested in the task.
- *Higher order thinking* was required when students had to analyse their findings and write their report.
- *Metalinguage* was encouraged in the report writing.

## Helpful pointers

- Encourage all students to have their items ready on the data collection day.
- Leave the clothing in small piles and move the students from one pile to the next.
- Explore the different graphing options available and choose the one best suited to the purpose (pie, bar, column).
- Use questioning to promote higher order thinking, for example, origin of brand names versus origin of manufacturing.
- The photograph identification is fun and fast (if your computers have the necessary tools) but not essential.

## Conclusion

These activities demonstrate that the intellectual quality domain of the New South Wales Quality Teaching Model can be enhanced by the use of computer technology when addressing syllabus requirements for Geography. In addition to the specific strategies listed in this article, students in

“*Students quickly began to engage in substantive communication as trends began to emerge*”



[Photography:  
Tiani Page]

# Teaching & Professional Practice

Geography classes have designed and created multimedia presentations, collected and interpreted a variety of electronic information, and learnt to refine search techniques using the internet, all of which are syllabus suggestions for integrating ICT into the Geography classroom.

“Computer technology will only be as effective as the teacher using it”

Computers are an essential commodity in the personal lives of most high school students. In order to maintain educational relevance for Gen Y and the even more technology-wise Gen Z students, teachers need to embrace computers as a teaching tool, as well as become smarter and more effective in using them to enhance quality learning. It is important to remember that computer technology will only be as effective as the teacher using it. When teachers create ICT pedagogies that meet the criteria of the New South Wales Quality Teaching Model, everyone wins—students are able to work with familiar technology and enjoy their learning; teachers see students engage and learn about the world in which they live. In addition, society benefits from young people who are equipped with both learning and ICT skills for use in the real world. **TEACH**

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## There arose a generation that did not remember

### The challenge of maintaining distinctively Christian institutional cultures in an era of change

**Darren Iselin**

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*After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things He had done...  
Judges 2:10 (NLT)*

#### Abstract

**The preservation and perpetuation of core institutional vision, values, ethos and identity to succeeding generations are critical imperatives that confront all Christian educational organisations. Christian institutions have historically been prone to the dis-integration of their respective cultural distinctiveness through processes of rationalisation and secularisation, and many do not remain distinctively Christian in vision, ethos or identity beyond the second and third generations. This paper will provide a review of the literature relating to the preservation of core ideology within Christian educational institutions and will identify a range of forces that promote and inhibit the preservation of distinctively Christian identities within an ever-increasingly complex and market driven socio-cultural milieu.**

#### Introduction

Throughout history, the challenge of how Christian organisations and movements can maintain and perpetuate their core cultural values and identity beyond the founding generation has both challenged and perplexed leaders. The Biblical narrative records numerous tales of how one generation serves the Lord wholeheartedly, embodying the message and core values with zeal, commitment and passion, yet within a short period of time another generation arises that “do not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things He had done”. Unfortunately, the atrophy and dis-integration of distinctive cultural values and identity has historically impacted upon numerous organisations formed within the Christian tradition, and has led to difficulty in maintaining cultural distinctiveness and institutional resiliency beyond the third generation (Baker &

Riordan, 1998; Belmonte, 2006; Burtchaell, 1998; Dosen, 2001; Marsden, 1994). Gardner (1986 as cited in Belmonte, 2006) encapsulates the challenge that confronts all Christian educational institutions.

Values decay over time. [Schools] that keep their values alive do so by not escaping the process of decay but by powerful regeneration. There must be perceptual rebuilding. Each generation must discover the living elements of its own tradition and adapt them to present realities. To assist in this discovery is the task of leadership. (1986, p. 8)

To assist in conceptualising the challenges relating to perceptual rebuilding, three specific stages within the history of any institution have been identified within the literature. Table 1 summarises a selected range of these theories of cultural development.

#### The founding or pioneer phase

According to Schein (2004), the first phase of cultural development occurs with the founder. The vision of the founder is instrumental in establishing the distinctive culture of a given group. During this founding phase, the leader “embodies the vision” ensuring that at every point within the organisation, the core ideology, values, vision, mission and purpose are seamlessly aligned with systems of action and organisational structures (Collins & Porras, 1995). Hirsch (2007) suggests that the distinguishing feature of new organisations is a movement ethos which he contends is always evident during this founding period. Hirsch proposes that an adaptive, dynamic and fluid movement ethos that is incarnated or embodied within each member, leads to rapid growth and expansion of the enterprise during this initial phase. However, as the movement develops institutionalism sets in, which necessitates a focus upon “mere organisational and institutional survival” rather than extending and re-incarnating the original vision and purpose for the movement (Hirsch, 2007, pp. 186–187).

“The atrophy and dis-integration of distinctive cultural values and identity has historically impacted upon numerous organisations”

”

Throughout history, the visionary exploits of countless leaders have birthed the legacies of an untold number of Christian institutions and enterprises. What distinguishes these initiatives is invariably a founding leader or group of people that had something extraordinary to say, to do, to expose, to construct or to reveal. Trace the cultural stories of fledgling Christian schools, colleges, and universities and the tales of sacrifice, risk-taking, uncertainty, hardship, ridicule, yet miraculous and sovereign provision and leading from God repeatedly resonate in the hearts and minds of those who were privileged to experience these ‘pioneering’ days. Whilst ostracised within their generation, God’s sovereign work was at hand, establishing and blessing the faithfulness and sacrifice of a founding generation to see a vision become a reality. Such a calling lies at the heart of most founding movements, institutions, schools and ministries. These pioneers were also driven by deep convictions of not just what needed to be done, but more specifically what had to be done, whatever the cost and despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

### The organisational midlife phase

Inevitably, all organisations enter a second phase of historical development which Schein (2004) terms midlife. Schein (2004) reveals that this period is often marked by leadership succession and a re-defining and perhaps formal articulation of the core cultural elements that were taken for granted and assumed within the founding phase. Limerick et al. (2002) describe this subtle change in focus as transitioning from the founding vision to the development and articulation of the organisation’s “self-concept” or institutional identity. Pearce describes this process by proposing that “this idea—that the firm must now know itself—is the essence of the company’s self concept” (1982, p. 21).

During this period, effective institutions develop “tangible mechanisms” within their structures to ensure that core cultural values, vision and identity are not lost during this critical phase (Collins & Porras, 1995, p. 86). These elements, which include rituals, ceremonies, stories, honouring of heroes, and articulation of values and beliefs, are often made more explicit and tangible by this second generation. One particularly powerful cultural element that begins to carry great meaning within this phase is the use of meaningful signs, artefacts, symbols and documentation that suitably represent the ‘essence’, ‘identity’ or ‘organisational self-concept’ of the institution. Whilst these symbolic elements may be inherited from the first generation (for example crests, mottoes, chapels or logos), the mid-life phase must decide what meaning and purpose the symbol or artefact was intended to convey, and must thereby articulate and assign meaning and significance to what the first generation may have perceived as ‘second nature’ or ‘assumed’ knowledge.

Weber (1947) proposes that this second phase of development could be termed *Veralltaglichung*—which literally translated means “rendering into everyday” (as cited in Berger & Berger, 1976, p. 339). Berger and Berger (1976) vividly articulate this consolidation or midlife phase.

All this changes drastically when a new generation that was not present at the inception of the movement comes into being and grows into positions of leadership in whatever structure the movement has set up... The second generation has not...participated in the great events that saw the beginning of the movement. They only know these events by the stories of the elders. Most fundamentally however, that which to the first generation was truly extraordinary, now...becomes part of the ordinary fabric of social life. (1976, p. 339)

“Those in the midlife phase must articulate and assign meaning and significance to what the first generation may have perceived as ‘second nature’”

**Table 1: Synopsis of theories of cultural development / dis-integration within organisations**

Generation	Weber / Berger (1976)	Schein (2004)	Limerick et al. (2002)	Hirsch (2007)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> generation</b> pioneer generation	charisma	founding / early growth	founding phase	movement ethos
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> generation</b> prosperity generation	routinisation	mid life	consolidation and continuity	settling movement ethos
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> generation</b> perishable generation	rationalisation	maturity and decline	renewal phase: discontinuity and reconfiguration	institutional ethos

Limerick et al. (2002) highlight this 'rendering into everyday' within this mid life phase or what they term "consolidation phase".

Because the emergent meta-strategic design is a worked-out version of the founding vision and identity, the two become indistinguishable in the minds of organisational members. The result is that, almost imperceptibly, the vital founding vision is forgotten and its configuration counterpart takes its place...instead of becoming a means to an end, they [the configuration system] become the right way of doing things. (p. 175)

During this second phase, the routine of the configuration system therefore becomes the mission and replaces the original vision in both intent and purpose. Willard (2003) comments that mid-life leaders sometimes "do not carry the 'fire'...the mission or missions that have been set afoot begin a subtle divergence from the vision that gripped the founder, and before too long the institution and its mission have become the vision" (p. 1).

Many second generation Christian educational institutions mistakenly embrace the operational systems of action for the original vision at this critical phase of development, and inadvertently allow the "rendering into everyday" of a range of core and non-core cultural elements and ideology. Confused over the mission, operational plans, strategic goals, structural re-building and founding ideology, ethos and vision, some educational institutions fall victim to the preservation of the current mission of the Christian college or school, with all its contextualised and fluid strategies, processes and operational values, whilst inadvertently relinquishing the core cultural values, vision and identity that established these institutions and shaped a margin of differentiation within the socio-cultural milieu.

There is a real point to saying that in religious matters, nothing fails like success. These types of movements touch the human heart very deeply and serve profound human needs. Because of this, they soon attract many who do not even want the fire of the founder—they do not really understand it. But they do need and like the light and the warmth it provides. (Willard, 2003, p. 3)

The vision that so powerfully shaped the first generation now becomes incrementally replaced by a 'mission for the vision'. Obtaining a level of reputation, status, power and prestige that the founding generation could only dream of, the second generation may seek the extension of their own colleges and kingdoms, rather than maintaining their focus and dependence upon the original vision. Put simply, too much is now at stake within the institution to revert back to founding visions and values—reputation, status, success, prosperity and wealth

abound but there is a subtle and incremental 'turning of heart' and decreased devotion.

It is also during such periods that the potential for triumphalism can usurp the original vision, and the mission for the extension of the institution becomes the goal rather than God's glory alone (Dickens, 2000). Furthermore, the 'rendering into everyday' of so many aspects of the founding generation's ideology and values creates complacency, which breeds a sense of self-satisfaction and cultural laziness towards founding principles and ideologies, and the potential for compromise, dilution of values and watering down of core ideology.

### Maturity and decline phase

As an organisation continues to grow and develop, a third phase of cultural development occurs which Schein (2004) defines as the maturity and potential decline phase. Whilst it is not inevitable that an organisation's culture will atrophy, the tendency within many organisations is towards cultural decline during this third generation. Berger and Berger (1976) contend that this phase is merely the logical extension of the routinisation phase leading inevitably towards rationalisation. Whilst Weber (1947) saw inherent benefits in the process of bureaucratisation within institutions, from a cultural re-generation perspective, such de-personalising and systems-orientated approaches can stifle rather than stimulate both the embodiment and preservation of core ideology and identity within the organisation, and hinder innovative and divergent approaches to cultural change, regeneration and renewal.

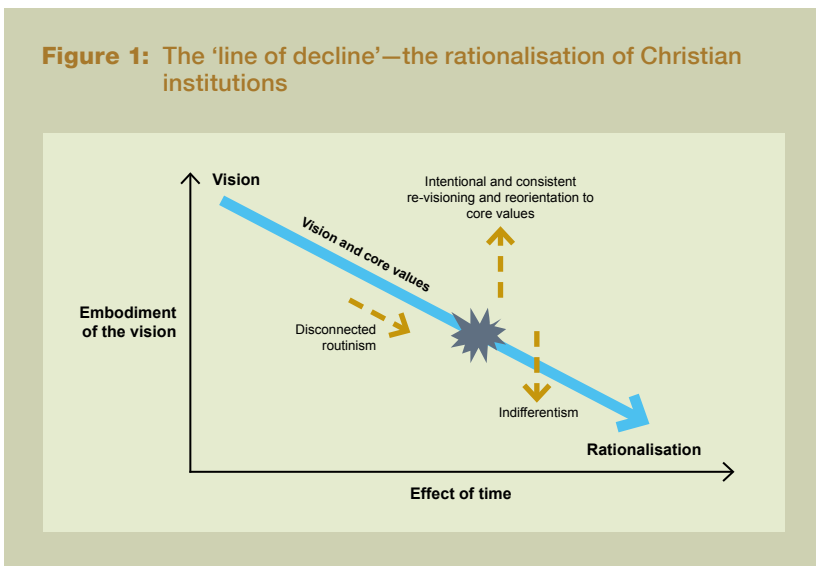
Schein suggests that this is a primary cause of decline within organisations during this phase as long held assumptions and deeply embedded systems of action "now operate as filters that make it difficult for key managers to understand alternative strategies for survival and renewal" (2004, p. 313). Limerick et al. (2002) expand on this further by proposing that during this phase there is tendency for organisations to become locked into structured and deeply ingrained systems of action that make organisations "prisoners of the social systems" which were created during the consolidation phase.

### The line of decline conceptual model

Based upon a synthesis of this research, the task of preserving and perpetuating core cultural values and identity within institutions entering a mid-life phase of cultural development would appear to be a challenging yet critical undertaking. James Burtchaell describes the historical erosion of core cultural values and identity as a slide from "vision towards rationalisation" (1998, p. 846) and proposes that Christian institutions that are not intentional and

“  
The  
tendency  
within many  
organisations  
is  
towards  
cultural  
decline during  
this third  
generation.”

**Figure 1: The 'line of decline'—the rationalisation of Christian institutions**



explicit in their engagement with core cultural values and distinctiveness will, over time, relinquish all forms of Christian organisational memory and ethos from their daily cultural practices.

Figure 1 conceptualises and graphically depicts the flow within Christian institutions from vision to rationalisation unless there is an intentional re-casting and re-alignment to the core values and core ideology of the founding vision. (Benne, 2001; Berger & Berger, 1976; Burtchaell, 1998; Collins & Porras, 1995; Hirsch, 2007; Limerick, Cunnington & Crowther, 2002; Schein, 2004; Willard, 2003)

The auspicious 'line of decline' represented within this diagram, whilst not inevitable within a Christian institution or movement, would nevertheless appear to be the common trajectory beyond the second generation of cultural development (Burtchaell, 1998). As the effect of time 'renders unto everyday' what was truly extraordinary and significant to the founding generation, routinisation of cultural elements and distinctiveness occurs, leading to indifference and / or irrelevance of the core cultural elements that were the distinguishing mark of the founding phase of development. One specific study that powerfully exemplifies the line of decline is by Dosen (2001), entitled "The Intentional Secularisation of a Denominational College—The Case of Webster College". As secularisation and the routinisation of processes within Webster College became more prevalent, no intentional re-casting of the original vision was deemed necessary and the college disengaged with the original vision and core values that had shaped its cultural development in

the founding phase. Dosen (2001) concludes his study by reinforcing the imperative of leadership in preserving and perpetuating core cultural values and identity.

The leader and the board are the keepers of the mission. If denominational colleges are to continue their mission into the future, they must recruit and support leaders who will actively engage the college with the denomination's tradition. (2001, p. 404)

### The threat of secularisation within Christian schools and colleges

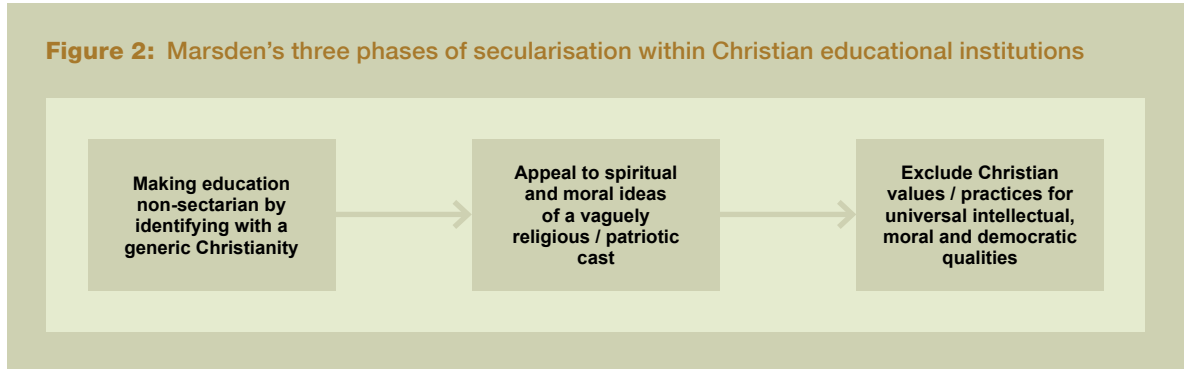
The challenge of intentionally breaking this 'line of decline' within schools and colleges formed within the Christian tradition is made more complex by the historical propensity for such institutions to be prone to the dis-integration of their cultural distinctiveness through processes of secularisation.

Marsden (1994) identifies a three phase process that contributes to secularisation and erosion of core cultural values and identity from Christian institutions (see Figure 2) (Marsden as cited in Benne, 2001, p. 4). These stages of decline were articulated by Marsden after studying such prestigious institutions as Harvard, Yale and Princeton. James Burtchaell reiterates the processes that underpin Marsden's phases by contending that "Once the colleges had settled into the indifferentism their inclusivist language expressed, they were within reach of that more degraded and more incisive form of liberalism: rationalism" (1998, p. 846). Burtchaell therefore cautions all those involved with Christian educational institutions with this sobering plea:

**“Christian institutions that are not intentional and explicit in their engagement with core cultural values and distinctiveness will, over time, relinquish all forms of Christian organisational memory and ethos from their daily cultural practices”**



**Figure 2: Marsden's three phases of secularisation within Christian educational institutions**



This study also invites reflection on...the dynamics whereby any Christian endeavour can unwittingly be decomposed. It offers enough folly at close range for readers to be stimulated to reflection about the circumspection and canniness we all require to review and renew earlier commitments without forfeiting them unawares. So much that is onward is not upward. (Burtchaell, 1998, p. xii)

Burtchaell and Marsden's extensive research into the insidious and all-pervading nature of secularisation that occurs during the consolidation and mid-life phases of Christian schools and colleges highlight how subtly the cancer of secularisation can take hold within their institutions, and how the price of sustaining distinctively Christian educational cultures must always be 'eternal vigilance' to core cultural vision, values and identity.

### Preventing cultural atrophy and indifference within Christian institutions

Two particular studies identified within the literature provide proactive solutions for preventing cultural atrophy and secularisation within Christian schools and colleges. The first of these is Robert Benne's (2001) study of six premier colleges and universities within the United States that are effectively 'keeping faith' with their founding visions and values. Benne's excellent analysis of these six institutions is far more optimistic in its prognosis, and he perceptively identifies three pivotal components that must be cultivated if such institutions are to effectively preserve their core ideology beyond the founding phase of cultural development. These include: vision, ethos and the embodiment of this vision and ethos in its leaders and people. Benne (2001) declares,

It is clear that each school's animating vision...has to be articulated and embedded in the ongoing life of the college. It has to be articulated in the mission statement of the college and in the school's presentation of itself in admissions and development materials. But above all it has to be embedded in its people (p. 204).

Benne's emphasis upon re-casting, re-articulating and embodiment of the college's core cultural vision for every generation is grounded upon a belief that the vision is foundational.

The Christian story as a comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central account of reality must be held strongly and confidently enough to shape the life of the college decisively *in all its facets*... That is why these six colleges have maintained their religious identity in face of powerful secularising forces. The persons responsible for them...have had enough confidence in the Christian account of life and reality to insist that it be the organising paradigm for the identity and mission of the college. (Benne, 2001, p. 96-97)

Such an all-encompassing vision enables each generation to hold fast to non-negotiables, but also emancipates the institution from the fetters of systems of action that are often mistakenly perceived by those within the organisation to be 'not negotiable'. In reality, such systems MUST change and adapt to socio-cultural shifts and emphases for the school or college to survive, but Benne contends that such re-casting must always remain grounded within the core vision and values of the college. This contributes to the breaking of the 'locked flywheel' within such institutions, whereby second generation schools and colleges often become prisoners of their social systems and empty traditionalism; they cannot innovate and change their 'way of doing things around here' because their focus is no longer upon the central vision as an organising paradigm but rather the fluid expressions of such a vision through functional, culturally embedded and operationalised systems and design mechanisms and structures.

Benne's research also reveals a range of key foci that facilitate the preservation of Christian distinctiveness and core ideology. These include the maintenance of denominational alignment, preservation of chapel services as central to the institution, and careful attention to staffing and

“*Re-casting must always remain grounded within the core vision and values of the college*”

student enrolment policies. Benne concludes his study with the following imperative for all leaders within Christian institutions seeking to preserve their core ideology within the current educational milieu.

A tradition, in the words of G. K. Chesterton, is a democracy in which the dead have a vote. Perhaps it is time for those partly secularised colleges to hear those ancient voices, take responsibility for the cause they championed and reconnect with the heritage of those who have gone before and those who enliven that heritage today. (Benne, 2001, p. 214)

Within a specifically Australian Christian school context, the work of Justins (2002) identified similar findings and proposed a range of challenges and recommendations for preserving core ideology for succeeding generations within Christian schools in Australia. Justins' study, contextualised within the Christian Parent Controlled Schools (CPCS) sector, provides a revealing snapshot within this specific expression of Christian schools in Australia. Justins' study found clear evidence that the foundational values were being perpetuated, and that the prevailing practices of these CPCS schools were generally holding fast to core vision, values and assumptions. However, Justins' study also identified the challenges that confront the new Christian schools movement regarding the perpetuation of foundational values. Justins warns:

The foundational values of CPC schools will not continue to provide impetus and direction to their practices without deliberate intervention. The values face too much competition and are in a sense too demanding, to survive without being nurtured and explicitly promoted and esteemed. (Justins, 2002, p. 247)

To assist in this process, Justins (2002) proposes thirteen recommendations for perpetuating core values within Christian Parent Controlled Schools in Australia that include (among others): an explicit and repeated communication of foundational values, staff induction processes, prudent enrolment policies, the centrality of Christ and the use of the Bible within classrooms, professional development within a Christian worldview and the employment of Christian staff (Justins, 2002).

### Consumer sovereignty and the preservation of core cultural distinctiveness

Justins' (2002) findings also highlight that the expansion of the non-government sector has led to a volatile and highly competitive educational market place within contemporary Australian education. As a consequence, Justins contends that market forces and the highly competitive educational milieu within

which schools compete for the "student-consumer" are significant threats to the preservation of core cultural values within Christian schools in general, and the CPCS movement in particular.

If the marketplace assesses the commodity, which is education, on the basis of academic performance...CPC schools make a decision to compete in that marketplace, then they are in real danger of displacing their foundational values. (2002, p. 248)

Christian educational institutions are no longer perceived as isolated havens of teaching and learning, but are intricately tied to economic forces of supply and demand, financial profit and viability, and the strategic positioning of an educational product and commodity within the marketplace of education (Evers & Chapman, 1995; Marginson, 1997). Benne also reinforces the difficulty of balancing market forces with core ideology.

[When a Christian college] is in a fight for its life or even for its relatively good 'market position', it responds to what the market demands and then tries to squeeze in its own specific contributions that may transcend those demands. It is a difficult balancing act. But if it accedes too easily to the former, it loses what made it distinctive in the first place—its soul. (2001, p. 21)

Benne reveals that "the external demands of the market create an internal culture of caution about religious matters" (p. 24), particularly in schools that are struggling to attain or maintain their market share. He contends that such atrophy of the founding vision will inevitably continue unless either "a traumatic crisis" forces a re-alignment of the school's identity or strong leadership steer the vision and direction of the school back to their founding values and mission (p. 25) (see Figure 1). The pervasive effect of applying the 'consumer sovereignty' model to education and the prevalence of such a hotly contested educational marketplace means that market forces will continue to be a critical factor in any Christian educational institution's continued success and marketplace viability and will fundamentally impact on the preservation of core cultural values.

### Cultural accommodation

The research literature also identifies that the actual cultures of many perceived 'Christian' educational institutions in the second and third phases of cultural development are, in practice, not really that distinctive at all. Wagner's research of American Christian schools revealed that the extent of compromise was the most surprising feature of her

**“Christian educational institutions are no longer perceived as isolated havens of teaching and learning, but are intricately tied to economic forces”**

findings and the compromises evident within the schools' day to day operations belied the rhetoric of the schools' distinctive philosophy and espoused worldview assumptions (Wagner, 1990, p. 206). John Hull sought to identify why deep structures of schooling are left unchallenged within Christian educational institutions.

When confronted by all this evidence, my own allegiance to the ideal of Christian education sometimes wavers. The challenge of implementing a different, biblical model of schooling appears so far out of reach that I am tempted to think that the whole idea might be wrong-headed. At times I wonder if there really is such a thing as a Christian model of education. (Hull, 2003, p. 207)

“**The actual cultures of many perceived 'Christian' educational institutions in the second and third phases of cultural development are not really that distinctive at all**”

Furthermore, Hull argues that Christian educators regularly compromise and “habitually settle for something less than Christian education”, leading to what he describes as “visionary downsizing” regarding the purpose and function of Christian schools (Hull, 2003, p. 219).

In stark contrast to these findings, research by Twelves (2005), Justins (2002) and Riding (1996) have each identified a distinctive and vibrant cultural ethos and identity within the Christian schools involved in their respective studies. Furthermore, Chittenden and Lowney clearly reveal the potential for distinctive core ideology to be perpetuated within institutional cultures that endure across generations (Chittenden, 1993; Lowney, 2004). These findings provide an optimistic caveat to the general tale of secularisation and atrophy that all too often befalls Christian institutions and their engagement with changing societal mores and cultural trends.

### Further challenges to preserving distinctively Christian institutional cultures

Apart from the challenges of a highly competitive educational marketplace and cultural accommodation, a range of other internal and external factors that inhibit preservation of core cultural values have been identified. These challenges include compromises due to tight government controls in relation to funding, market driven enrolment policies and financial viability (Benne, 2001; Carper & Layman, 1995; Justins, 2002; Twelves, 2005). Internal factors identified within the literature also include school governance and accountability structures, staffing policies and leadership succession processes and priorities (Benne, 2001; Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Mills, 2003; O'Donoghue & Hill, 1995; Wagner, 1990). The challenge confronting leaders within Christian educational institutions is therefore an administratively complex one—how can these

schools and colleges, ideologically strong on vision, values and the explicit promotion of a specifically Christian cultural ethos and identity, continue to preserve and perpetuate their core cultural distinctiveness whilst simultaneously responding to the ever-changing demands and expectations of the social-cultural, political, and economic milieu in which such institutions are situated?

Carper and Layman succinctly encapsulate this generational challenge by asserting, “Christian schools are here to stay. Their character and effectiveness...will depend upon how well they negotiate the perilous path between adolescence and adulthood” (1995, p. 17). Will a generation arise “that does not remember the Lord and his ways” within our Christian educational institutions? The response to this question is one that must compel and inspire current leaders of any Christian education institution to be vigilant, prayerful and pro-active during their watch for the inherent dangers of not “holding fast to that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21), and to “stand *fast* and *hold* the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15). This necessitates that leaders intentionally and purposefully re-cast the founding visions and core values of their institutions within each generation and seek creative, dynamic and inspirational ways to re-orientate and re-articulate their core vision and values during each phase of cultural development. Furthermore, the research would also indicate that the cultivation of a generational embodiment of core cultural vision and values, will ensure that a lasting and living legacy remains within our Christian schools and colleges, a legacy that will “acknowledge the Lord and remember His ways” in all that is undertaken in the name of Christian education, both now and into the future. **TEACH**

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## Cooking up a marketing plan

**Karen Zeuchener**

Marketing and Development, Avondale School, Cooranbong, NSW

**How can our school use its current facilities and learning resources to attract prospective clients without the need for large outlay costs? As a marketing director, I was trying to create a marketing opportunity that would be successful, practical, achievable and affordable.**

### The origin of *Early Years*

Whilst lying in bed one night, a number of thoughts collided to give birth to the concept of Avondale School's *Early Years* program. Parents want their 2–5 year olds to participate in engaging, age-appropriate learning activities, and are willing to pay for these opportunities. I know that if parents associate positive experiences with a school, they are more likely to enrol their child at that school. There is no better time to develop a positive relationship with prospective clients than *before* they begin school. It then hit me—Avondale School already has the facilities and resources needed to offer such programs.

### The *Early Years* program

Avondale School's *Early Years* program offers a variety of fun, educational opportunities throughout the school year. Classes—which include cooking, dance, kinder gym, science, art, computer, music and library—run once a week for six weeks during each school term.

Each lesson starts with half an hour of free play at Avondale Early Learning Centre. The *Early Years* participants make use of the play equipment at the Early Learning Centre whilst the children there have inside activities. Part of the philosophy of *Early Years* is to encourage children to try new things and that includes food. The school canteen prepares a healthy morning tea platter full of tempting delights from apples and carrots to olives, capsicum and dates, along with mini sandwiches or crackers.

All *Early Years* classes are hands on: in cooking, children break the eggs, chop the vegetables and knead the dough; during science, each child does their own experiments; and art classes require old clothes, as the children fully experience the materials they work with. At the end of many of the classes, the child is given something as a reminder of their experience, for example, a recipe book with pictures of themselves cooking, or their large art

canvas. These mementos serve as a reminder of the fun that was had and the learning that took place.

Each of the classes utilises existing school facilities that would not otherwise be used at that time of day, for example, multi purpose centre, cooking facilities, school library, music room, art room, and computer room.

### Advertising *Early Years*

*Early Years* no longer needs to pay for expensive newspaper advertising. Promotion by word of mouth has enabled the program to grow from 10 children in 2007 to 70 children in 2009. Some classes require booking up to 12 months in advance.

At the end of the year, an *Early Years* Christmas party is held. Everyone who has attended one of the *Early Years* classes is invited and is encouraged to bring a friend. This is another way to make new contacts. Places for the following year's classes are open for bookings at the Christmas party.

### The marketing benefits of *Early Years*

*Early Years* has changed the way Avondale School markets to the community. Due to involvement in these classes, parents are on our campus before their children are old enough to start school. They interact with many of the facilities Avondale School has to offer and develop a sense of familiarity with the campus. Parents are told of the school's successes and have an opportunity to meet some of the staff at Avondale School. *Early Years* engenders positive experiences and builds a relationship between Avondale School and the community.

The friendships that parents and children make when they attend *Early Years* are also of benefit to the school. Friendship groups may influence choice of school as parents endeavour to place their child in a school where the child will have friends.

Avondale School's *Early Years* program has enabled the school to open its doors to the community in a non-threatening way. Whilst the participation of children is the centre of the *Early Years* program, the marketing benefits make the program a real success. When parents come to *Early Years* classes, they can't help but tell others about Avondale School. It is impossible to put a dollar figure on this positive word of mouth advertising. **TEACH**

“When parents come to *Early Years* classes, they can't help but tell others about Avondale School”





# Our Vision

ADVENTIST EDUCATION • NEW ZEALAND

## **G**odliness

becoming connected with God and choosing His way as our way

## **R**ich Relationships

honouring others above ourselves and connecting with them because they are precious to God

## **O**wnership of Mastery

giving our personal best to develop our God-given talents in pursuit of excellence

## **W**isdom in Decision-making

choosing discernment and a positive attitude

## **T**ransformational Learning

nurturing personal transformation and becoming agents of blessing and change in our community

## **H**arvest-focus

pursuing goals-that-matter with intention and purpose

*Join us... grow with us*





## Chaplaincy in Christian schools

### Towards a policy platform for productive partnerships<sup>1</sup>

**Wilf Rieger**

Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Avondale College, NSW

#### Introduction

Pastoral care or student wellbeing, as it is often referred to, now straddles educational institutions from early childhood centres to university graduate schools.<sup>2</sup> Whether in the public, independent or Christian school sector, it appears no longer optional; it is more than *de rigueur*, it is integral to the life of effective and caring learning communities in Australia. In the UK, Ron Best has for some years advocated an interesting and widely accepted pastoral care structure that attempts to meet four identifiable types of needs encountered in schools.<sup>3</sup> In his proposed “pastoral tasks”, students’ needs are being addressed through *casework*, where the *curriculum* provides students with knowledge and skills for becoming more resilient, where a strong sense of *community* rather than punishment focuses on developing responsible behaviour, and where a *whole-school approach* results in achieving planned outcomes. How might chaplaincy fit into such a structure?

“Essentially, caring is about valuing people, and an ethic of care is a demonstration of grace”

Chaplaincy brings an added dimension to pastoral care—a spiritual one. In a general sense, chaplaincy may be regarded as a human service ministry that incorporates specific roles in meeting the wellbeing needs of a particular group or community. It does not compete with, but is complementary to and part of the overall pastoral care program of a learning community.

#### The significance of chaplaincy

The increasing importance of pastoral care and chaplaincy is reflected in the offering of masters and bachelors degree courses (M.Ed. / Student Wellbeing; B.Soc.Sc. / Chaplaincy) at some Australian tertiary institutions.<sup>4</sup> There is evident need for qualified personnel in schools that have to deal with a range of ‘societal ills’. According to adolescent psychologist Michael Carr-Greg, schools have become the front line in the provision of psychological ‘first aid’ to many young Australians. Also, given claims that up to one fifth of adolescents have psychological disorders,<sup>5</sup> on those grounds alone, it might be justifiable to recast the well known

17<sup>th</sup> century Cartesian proposition into: *I care, therefore I am.*

From a Christian perspective, pastoral care and chaplaincy are about caring and valuing, which are relational and inclusive qualities that go to the very heart of:

- The character of the Trinity. (cf Matthew 12:8)
- Jesus’ mission statement: “For the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10, KJV)
- Jesus’ vision statement: “... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10, KJV)

Essentially, caring is about valuing people, and an ethic of care is a demonstration of grace. It constitutes the very core of the plan of salvation which reveals God’s love and integrity to the entire universe.

#### Looking back and ahead

Chaplaincy is not a recent phenomenon. Chaplains have served in hospices and the military as far back as medieval times in Europe. They also made contributions to the colonisation of America and Australia. Traditionally, chaplains have worked in areas where highly stressful situations were likely to be encountered. Under extreme pressure, or “when facing a crisis, persons often turn to their spirituality as a means of coping.”<sup>6</sup> The armed services, prisons, and hospitals are institutions likely to employ the services of chaplains, but they are also valued by coast-guard services, governments and by some sports teams. As reported by the media, even the world of business recognises the value of chaplains. An interesting insight is provided by one recent example:

Optometry practice owner Janelle Macnamara says a chaplain visits her operation each week to chew the fat with staff. Macnamara could have hired a counsellor or a clinical professional but she wanted a chaplain. “He’s got a lot of ability to call on psychological knowledge and counselling knowledge but as well as a lot of spirituality, for want of a better term,” she says. “He’s not a Bible basher but he’s able to touch on a deeper meaning that perhaps a counsellor might not be able to. And depending on the person, I’m sure he can go to

different levels, whether it's for religious people or for atheists."<sup>7</sup>

In an endeavour to provide a more comprehensive pastoral care package for their students, many schools have joined the list of institutions using or employing chaplains. Some private schools have utilised chaplains as part of a long-held tradition. Most public schools, on the other hand, have not been 'down this road' before, although schools in Western Australia are a notable exception. There, chaplaincy, since its inception in public secondary schools in 1982, has made a useful contribution to students' wellbeing<sup>8</sup> and grown significantly over the last two decades.

Much of the chaplaincy expansion in W.A. occurred prior to the Coalition Government's announcement of the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) in October 2006, and the subsequent \$90 million funding of the voluntary program. Almost 1400 schools (public and private) across Australia received grants in the first round of applications.<sup>9</sup> Three quarters of the recipients were public schools; the ratio of three to one reflecting the respective sizes of the Australian public and private education sectors.

The NSCP was perceived as meeting a need by many educators. But misunderstood by others, either unintentionally or intentionally—particularly special interest groups—it also became the target of strident, partisan criticism.<sup>10</sup> Although NSCP's present three-year funding is assured until 2010, there are some questions about the program's future under the current government. According to media reports, "Education Minister Julia Gillard's office has confirmed the \$90 million program will be changed into a secular scheme when current contracts expire."<sup>11</sup>

Under the present scheme all school chaplains are required to sign a code of conduct. In "religious-based schools," the code does not prevent them from discussing their faith with students or conduct services according to the faith of the school.<sup>12</sup> Given the signalled change of direction by the incumbent government, if and how chaplains ministering in faith-based schools will be affected remains to be seen. Will funding be maintained, or will this ministry continue unfunded?

Perhaps the issue may be decided on whether faith-based schools (be they Christian, Jewish or other) are able to advance a convincing justification for chaplaincy and comply with any new conditions under the NSCP funding agreement. Furthermore, schools may be required to present a chaplaincy 'curriculum' or program with stated outcomes and how such a program links with other curriculum

subjects such as Personal Development and Health / Physical Education. The roles of chaplains, their services, tasks, and necessary qualifications, among others, may also have to be explicated.

## Policy development

Developing a succinct, workable school chaplaincy policy may be a first step in addressing some of these issues. It should aim at providing a school community with a platform for productive partnerships between stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, chaplains, administrators, churches, as well as government agencies.

What is a policy? An eclectic compilation defines it as, "a formal document outlining the ways in which an organisation intends to conduct its affairs. It comprises a cohesive set of responses to a given situation or environment, selected from among alternatives, that guides the implementation of present and future decisions for a long-term purpose."<sup>13</sup> Essentially, a policy incorporates aspects of Laswell's<sup>14</sup> classic communication formula: Who does what, for whom, why, how, when, where, how well? School chaplaincy policies may vary from school to school, depending on circumstances. Nevertheless, each policy should rest on an integrated, broad platform that relates to the school's *raison d'être* rather than being made on an *ad hoc* basis. This should make for greater user-friendliness, avoid problematic interpretations and permit wider and more routine and time-saving application. Among other things, policy may effect the ordering of priorities and the allocation of resources.

How might a school chaplaincy policy be developed? Not infrequently, institutions adopt specific, ready-made policies 'lock, stock and barrel' (separate from any mandated by legislation); the advantage being, not having to reinvent the wheel. The drawback of such a shortcut is the possibility of being unaware of the legal implications to which a school might 'sign up', not having 'owned' the policy in the first place. Ideally, for maximum effectiveness, the policy-making process should not only include those who administer policy, but also those who are affected by it. Additionally it should:

- Demonstrate feasibility and an awareness of available resources whether human, fiscal or physical.
- 'Speak' to the perceived needs of stakeholders and their circumstances.
- Incorporate the school's ethos and value system.
- Align with best practice and any applicable legislation.
- Take into account relevant current research findings.

“Each policy should rest on an integrated, broad platform that relates to the school's *raison d'être* rather than being made on an *ad hoc* basis”

In offering a suggested chaplaincy policy prototype for a K / R–12 Christian school, the writer accessed findings from several pertinent research studies and has drawn on them.<sup>15</sup> The main study<sup>16</sup> was a modified Delphi application<sup>17</sup> that involved a representative panel of sixty members, made up of parents, students, chaplains, teachers, school principals and church administrators. The study's

main research questions were grounded in Christian faith-based schools and related to: The goals and significance of chaplaincy; desirable attributes of, and employment procedures and assessment criteria for chaplains; matters perceived as contentious in pastoral care; and the nexus between chaplaincy and pastoral care.

## SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY POLICY

A generic prototype<sup>18</sup> for Christian faith-based schools

### Definition of chaplaincy

In an educational setting, chaplaincy is a human services ministry that focuses on the pastoral nurture and spiritual development of a school community, and forms an integral part of a school's overall pastoral care program.

### Rationale

The [*insert name*] Church has a mission and vision for its schools. They should be places of learning for students' holistic development, where both academic excellence and spiritual values are fostered in a climate of "Christ-centred worship, loving relationships and practical concern for others."<sup>19</sup>

The [*insert name*] school / system recognises the potential contribution of chaplains as spiritual leaders in ministering to students, parents and teachers, and in enhancing the wellbeing of the whole school community. There is valid justification for providing and supporting an effective school chaplaincy ministry, for many educators perceive it as being indispensable to the life of a Christian school.<sup>20</sup>

### Job description

This is a spiritual-pastoral leadership position. The chaplain, *as part of the school's pastoral care team*, plans, organises, and implements a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, events and projects, to achieve the pastoral care goals of the school. Relevant experience and qualifications are thus requisites for the position. In their everyday work, chaplains are responsible to the principal and the school council / board of governors.

### Qualifications<sup>21</sup>

#### Personal

A 'short list' includes: being readily available and approachable, an effective communicator and having a genuine interest in children / youth and their salvation; being a person of integrity with a positive outlook on life; exhibiting ethical behaviour and an authentic Christian lifestyle, and also having relevant life experience.

#### Professional

Because school chaplains are spiritual leaders, the chaplain, preferably, should have a recognised tertiary qualification in theology, counselling or education (or a combination of these) from an accredited tertiary institution and have relevant practical experience.

If an appointed chaplain does not have all the desired qualifications, then the appointee will be required to enter into an agreement to commence an appropriate professional growth course or study program approved by the school council / board of governors. This body may provide some financial assistance for such an 'own time' study program.

### Appointment

Chaplains are appointed to schools on the following basis:

#### Student numbers [as a guide]

<b>1–150</b>	Pro rata budget, chaplain funded by associated church/es
<b>150–400</b>	0.5 budget, funded by school
<b>400+</b>	1.00 budget for each 400 or major part thereof, funded by school [ <i>also NSCP funding</i> ]

The appointment of the school chaplain is a joint school and church function, undertaken in the following manner:

- Principal to notify the school council of the need to appoint a chaplain. As with other important staff appointments, forward planning is essential.
- The position will be advertised.
- The final selection to be determined through an interview panel including the school principal, members of the school council, and (an) appointed church representative/s.

### Remuneration

The chaplain will be considered to be an employee of the school and remunerated on the basis of qualifications and experience.

Where a pastor / minister is appointed as a full-time school chaplain (ordained or not), the chaplain's position is to be recorded as a secondment from a church to the school. The period of secondment will ordinarily be a maximum term of, for example, four or five years. The school will enter into dialogue with the appropriate church administrative body no less than four months prior to the end of each year to determine whether the secondment will be continued or a replacement chaplain sought.

Where a teacher / minister is selected to be a chaplain, the teacher / chaplain appointment may be on an annual basis.

Where an applicant for a chaplaincy position comes from other than a teaching ministry, pastoral ministry or counselling background, they must also



satisfy the personal and professional qualifications criteria, and if such a person is selected, they will be appointed to the position of chaplain on the following basis:

- A probationary period of 12 months
- An initial contract period of two years (inclusive of the probationary period)

### Employer-employee relationships

The initial interviewing panel should appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person to be the spiritual mentor for the chaplain and be a resource for professional development. It is recommended that the chaplain provides the principal with brief, half-yearly and end-of-year reflective reports about their work, activities and contribution to the school's pastoral care program.

Chaplains are required to attend and participate in the following:

- Professional in-service opportunities, seminars, conferences and ministerial meetings.
- School registration days, 'home and school meetings', parent-teacher interviews (be available for)
- Annual conventions or planning sessions held by the church/es.

Ordinarily, chaplains will take their annual leave during school-term or year-end breaks.

### Roles, tasks, and responsibilities<sup>22</sup>

Chaplains, are an integral part of the school's staffing. As such the school principal will assist the chaplain in determining their daily and weekly schedule, within the framework of a planned, written, 'program of ministry' for a four-term school year. This document should specify outcomes, activities, events, programs, and the necessary strategies, resources, personnel and budget for implementation.

Chaplains are encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life, including church visitations, student and staff service activities, sports carnivals, campouts etc.

Because every school is unique, the role in each case will vary in relation to available time and other circumstances. It is unrealistic to prescribe a single set of expectations to suit all chaplains. However it is appropriate to identify a set of typical responsibilities and activities many of which could reasonably become part of a particular chaplain's 'role set'. On appointment, the chaplain, together with school and church administrators should formulate (set down in writing) and agree on the chaplain's role, and then review it from time to time. In recommending the following list of activities and responsibilities as suggestions, it should be stressed that it is *unrealistic* to expect that every item in the following list will be included in any one person's role.

The school chaplain's 'role set' will include, but is not limited to, many of the following responsibilities and tasks:<sup>23</sup>

### Spiritual modelling and mentoring

- Be a spiritual mentor to students and staff
- Contribute actively to building the spiritual tone of the school
- Model an authentic Christian lifestyle

### Worship activities

- Plan and organise chapels and staff worships in partnership with school administration and staff
- Participate in the planning of special worship events such as Week of Spiritual Emphasis

### Bible study and teaching

- Conduct special Bible study groups with a view to leading students to Christ and baptism; participate in such baptismal events
- Support the Bible / Biblical Studies teachers in the school and contribute to the development of curriculum resources for teaching the subject
- Assist in developing resources for use in pastoral care, and for roll teachers in their presentation of class worships

### Leadership in, and support of school-related activities

#### Worship and fellowship:

- Lead out in worship and fellowship activities
- Give leadership at, and provide support for youth rallies and week-end fellowships
- Be a resource person for school-presented church programs

#### Outreach and service:

- Work collegially with teachers in planning service activities and community programs
- Organise and assist with outreach and service programs
- Plan and support discipling and training activities

#### Social and recreation:

- Support or participate in formal and informal recreation activities and social events
- Attend school camps
- Participate in sports coaching
- Accompany school band tours

### Parents and the community

- In collaboration with teachers, contribute and participate in the organisation of parent education nights e.g. "What does your school teach about God?" "What is the school's policy on bullying?"
- Assist in parenting seminars and community programs
- Access and provide appropriate resources for Christian parenting and family.

### Nurture and pastoral care

- Be actively involved in the school's pastoral care program, as leader of the pastoral care team
- Be involved in the induction of new students into the school as one of the points of contact between the school and students' families to establish a relationship to serve possible future needs
- Contact or visit homes of students on a systematic basis: to enquire on students' progress emotionally, scholastically and spiritually; to pray with the family for the success of the children in the school and at home, and to invite the family to special functions organised by the school

- Liaise with teachers to be informed and provide feedback to support students
- Be available for crisis management
- Refer individuals to a qualified, professional counsellor
- Act as a student advocate in disciplinary situations (To avoid a conflict of interests, chaplains should not be a member of the school's discipline committee.)
- Maintain a pastoral link with past students and friends of the school

#### Professional development

- Engage in on-going personal development that involves completing units of formal education in pastoral care, counselling, or similar studies
- Participate in a chaplains' network supported by a professional or church body
- Attend conferences relevant to perceived professional needs

In relation to the chaplain's roles, tasks and responsibilities, it should be noted that pastoral care should not be left to the chaplain and the pastoral care team alone. Pastoral care is part of the ministry of every teacher. It is most effective when it has whole-school participation and support.

#### Appraisal and evaluation

The chaplaincy program should be evaluated in the school's specified accreditation process, as part of the overall pastoral care program of the school.

A biennial reflective *self-assessment* should be completed by the chaplain, alternating with a *peer assessment*, against a set of agreed, specified criteria or, if preferred, the chaplain's service may be evaluated annually with a modified version of an instrument used by some church bodies for the appraisal of pastors. Assessment and evaluation should be regarded as a *constructive* process and the conclusions reached should be used to inform further planning.

#### Budget

As for other areas of the school's operation, provision should be made in the annual school budget to fund the various elements of the chaplaincy program, including a suitable office where the chaplain is easily accessible, and also funding for the chaplain's professional development.

#### A concluding note

A carefully developed chaplaincy policy, potentially, is a valuable strategic instrument. However, what ultimately counts is what actually is put into practice and whether that makes a qualitative difference to the lives of the members of the school community. A significant difference is made when everyone participating in pastoral care and chaplaincy in Christian faith-based schools sees themselves as being engaged in ministry that portrays and demonstrates Christo-centric relationships.

In such communities each person knows and experiences that they *belong*. They are not 'free-floating islands in a sea of humanity' or victims of the rampant individualism that presently characterises much of Western culture. Each member finds support and spiritual nourishment in the fellowship of a Christian school community; where its "needy students [are] bringing their struggles, home issues and brokenness into every classroom"<sup>24</sup> and with teachers responding (at a level appropriate to their experience and expertise<sup>25, 26</sup>) not only individually, but also collegially, as each student is 'lifted up in prayer' during daily staff worship in an atmosphere that sensitively balances genuine Christian concern with confidentiality. Such acts of ministry, among others, would lead one to conclude that policy is being translated into reality as, "The caring and concern central to a school's social-emotional climate leads it to embrace the difficulties and pain of its students and [those of the] wider community."<sup>27</sup>

Such school communities cherish and convey *hope*. They have hope in the faithfulness and promises of God in Jesus Christ who addresses the most fundamental questions of human existence and thus sweeps away fear and existential despair. In the words of one school principal, it allows students "to view the world through the eyes of faith and provides a solid foundation for their spiritual development."<sup>28</sup>

In such schools we feel *loved, safe and valued*. We learn and experience that, according to salvation narrative, we are all precious in God's sight—irrespective of individual gifts, abilities, social status, cultural background or race. We understand that from our very first breath we were intended by God to live in relationship and to each one is extended the invitation of accepting God's saving grace. Herein is found authentic humanity. Regarding this, David Atkinson<sup>29</sup> refers us to the story of the Velveteen Rabbit who, with other toys, lived in the nursery.

The Velveteen Rabbit turned to the old wise experienced Skin Horse in the nursery and asked, 'What is real? Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?' The Skin Horse replied, 'Real isn't how you are made. It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.' 'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit. 'Sometimes', said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'Does it happen all at once, or bit by bit?' 'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse, 'you become. It takes a long time. ...Generally by the time you are Real most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out, and you get very shabby...but once you are Real, you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.'<sup>30</sup>

“What ultimately counts is what actually is put into practice and whether that makes a qualitative difference to the lives of the members of the school community”

The Velveteen Rabbit became real by being loved. It would “learn through relationship, gradually over time, with pain and struggle no doubt, to say, ‘I am loved, therefore I am’<sup>31</sup>—a truly metamorphic transformation of Descartes’ aphorism.

Christian educators appreciate that such an outcome can only be accomplished by a whole-school approach that is enabled by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. **TEACH**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This article, in part, is an extension of a conference paper by Christian, T. and Rieger, W. titled, ‘Searching for a workable chaplaincy and pastoral care model? Research presented from a Christian perspective’, presented at the Conference for Christians in Higher Education: *Redeeming the Academic Mind*. Macquarie University, NSW, July 8–10, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> See Report to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2008). Key characteristics of independent school education and care settings, *National quality framework for early childhood education and care: A discussion paper*. Adelaide: Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, pp. 6–7. Also The ANU Graduate School, *Roles and responsibilities*. Retrieved June 30, 2009 from <http://www.anu.edu.au/graduateinfostaff/roles&resp>.

<sup>3</sup> Best, R. (1996). Concepts in pastoral care and personal social education, in R. Best, C. Lang, C. Lodge & C. Watkins (Eds.). *Pastoral care and personal-social education: Entitlement and provision*. London: Cassell.

<sup>4</sup> For example, a M.Ed.(Student Wellbeing) is offered at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne, Vic. Retrieved June 30, 2009 from <http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/swap/about/>. A B.Soc.Sc.(Chaplaincy) is offered at Christian Heritage College at Mansfield (Brisbane, Qld). Retrieved June 30, 2009 from <http://www.chc.edu.au/bachelor-of-social-science-chaplaincy/>

<sup>5</sup> Maechen, J. (2005). Countering the psychological wasteland. *Education Review*, 15(23), 8.

<sup>6</sup> VandeCreek, L. & Burton, L. (2002). Professional chaplaincy: Its role and importance in health care. Retrieved July 18, 2003 from <http://www.preciousheart.net/Chaplaincy/Chaplaincy-healthcare.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Jennings, J. (2009). Amen to that. Is there a place for religion at work? *The Sydney Morning Herald*, week-end edition, My Career, July 4–5, 2009, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to first-hand accounts by school chaplains in Berlach, R. & Thornber, B. (Eds.). *Pastoral care: The first ten years of chaplaincy in Western Australian government secondary schools*. Perth: The Churches’ Commission on Education & Edith Cowan University.

<sup>9</sup> Reported in *The West Australian*, June 27, 2007. Retrieved on June 29, 2009 from <http://www.thewest.com.au.aapstory.aspx?StoryName=395297>

<sup>10</sup> Typical is, Stop the National Schools Chaplaincy Program! Retrieved June 29, 2009 from <http://www.stopthenscp.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Ben Packham’s article, Chaplaincy program goes secular in Rudd overhaul. *Herald Sun*, January 14, 2008. Retrieved June 29, 2009 from <http://www.news.com.au/hraldsun/story/0,21985,23047448-662,00.html>

<sup>12</sup> Chaplains are not impeded in these matters, according to published guidelines by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: National School Chaplaincy Program, Religious-based schools. Retrieved June 29, 2009 from [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSchoolChaplaincyProgram/Pages/faq\\_re](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSchoolChaplaincyProgram/Pages/faq_re).

<sup>13</sup> The definition incorporates germane concepts which came from a number of sources. Retrieved July 21, 2009 from <http://www.fao.org/Waidocs/ILRI/x5499E/x5499E03.htm>; also from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy>; [http://www.ilri.org/html/trainingMat/policy\\_X5547e/x5547e05.htm](http://www.ilri.org/html/trainingMat/policy_X5547e/x5547e05.htm); <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policy-statement.html> and <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/policy>.

<sup>14</sup> Laswell, H. (1971). *A pre-view of policy sciences*. New York: American Elsevier.

<sup>15</sup> A Mater Dei Institute research project carried out and described by Norman, J. (2004). Pastoral care in Irish schools: An international perspective, in James Norman (Ed.). *At the heart of education: School chaplaincy and pastoral care*. Dublin: Veritas; Murphy, S. (2004). A study of pupils’ perceptions and experiences of school chaplaincy, in James Norman (Ed.). *At the heart of education: School chaplaincy and pastoral care*. Dublin: Veritas; Baker, M. (2009). The heartbeat of the community: becoming a police chaplain. PhD thesis, University of Technology Sydney, NSW.

<sup>16</sup> Christian, T. (2004). Directions for future models of chaplaincy and pastoral care in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in Australia: A modified Delphi application. B.A./B.Teach. Honours thesis, Avondale College, NSW. The writer of the article acted as supervisor for the thesis.

<sup>17</sup> A Delphi study (application) is a structured non-face-to-face communication process that elicits group opinions or judgements regarding a complex problem. The process counteracts the influence of powerful or dominant individuals.

<sup>18</sup> A prototype may be improved or adapted to suit different schools and circumstances.

<sup>19</sup> See 1 John 4:7–21; Adventist Schools Australia (2004). *Education handbook*. Ringwood, Vic: Seventh-day Adventist Church, p. 9; various articles in *The Journal of Adventist Education*, 2006, Feb. / March issue; White, E.G. (1923). Thoughts on education, in *Fundamentals of education*. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, p. 59.

<sup>20</sup> Hill, B. et al. (2006). *Commission on Adventist secondary education: Report to the South Pacific Division Executive Committee*. Wairoonga: SFD Ed. Dept. p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Christian, T. (2004) *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> This section of the prototype draws on, or incorporates material from, Adventist Schools Australia (2004), *Guidelines for school chaplaincy*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>23</sup> The “role set” is based mainly on the research by Christian, T. (2004) and also on Adventist Schools Australia (2004), *ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> Hill, B. (2009). What matters most. *Record*. 114(33), 2.

<sup>25</sup> For the concept of “levels of counselling” (and how teachers may act at the basic level) see Bridger F. and Atkinson D. (2002). *Counselling in context: Developing a theological framework*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, p.26.

<sup>26</sup> A cautionary note is in order here. The temptation, particularly in small under-resourced schools, to utilise well-intentioned but unqualified and inexperienced volunteer ‘chaplains’ (such as high school graduates who are filling in a gap year) is fraught with inherent dangers. These young volunteers often readily identify with students and such arrangements may even have positives. However, occasionally there might also be unexpected dire personal and legal consequences from which it may take a school a long time to recover.

<sup>27</sup> Hill, B. (2009), *ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> Faull, D. (2009). Touching Jesus. *Record*. 114(33), 9.

<sup>29</sup> Bridger, F. and Atkinson, D. (2002), *ibid*, p. 192.

<sup>30</sup> Williams, M. (1922). *The velveteen rabbit*. London: Heinemann.

<sup>31</sup> Bridger F. and Atkinson, D. (2002), *ibid*.

# Highly effective teachers

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**Abstract**

The question “What makes an effective teacher?” is an ongoing concern for those involved in education and teaching. This article argues the importance of taking into account both pedagogic and dispositional characteristics when examining what it might mean to be a highly effective teacher. In doing so, two theoretical frameworks are described; namely, the New South Wales Quality Teaching Model (QTM) (NSW, DET, 2003) and the Dispositional Cluster Model (DCM) (Faull, 2008).

The past decade, however, has seen a resurgence of research undertaken in the affective domain of teaching, with particular reference to the role of human in effective teaching. This paper will use the Dispositional Cluster Model (Faull, 2008) to enrich the discussion of what it might mean to be a highly effective teacher by including the perspective of teacher dispositions, values and beliefs.

**Using the QTM to describe effective teachers**

Grounded on the principles of Productive Pedagogy, the QTM is concerned with the challenging issues of intellectual quality and equitable student outcomes. Based firmly on the philosophy that “it is the quality of pedagogy that most directly and most powerfully affects the quality of learning” (NSW, DET, 2003, p. 4), this model conceptualises the nature and function of pedagogy in terms of learning outcomes that focus on intellectual quality, including not only the learning process but also the assessment of learning outcomes.

The theoretical framework of the QTM is based on extensive research and comprises three dimensions of pedagogy that are directly linked to improved student outcomes. The model focuses on the interaction between variables in the teaching-learning process that are described in terms of *Intellectual quality*, *Quality learning environment*, and *Significance*. Each of the three dimensions comprises six elements that further define and clarify the nature and function of the model in terms of classroom behaviours and practices (see Table 1).

“The QTM provides a theoretical framework that can be used for examining the effectiveness and quality of teacher behaviours in the classroom.”

**Introduction**

There is a large body of research on teacher effectiveness, a great deal of it addressing pedagogic issues including teacher knowledge, the acquisition of a broad range of skills and prerequisite teacher competencies. As part of the quality assurance for teaching and learning, most states and territories in Australia have established Professional Teaching Standards (PTSs) that form a benchmark for teacher quality in schools and in teacher training institutions. These PTSs focus mainly on observable teacher behaviour.

In the context of teaching and learning in NSW, a significant development has been the design and implementation of the Quality Teaching Model (QTM) (NSW, DET, 2003) as a benchmark for pedagogic practice. The QTM provides a theoretical framework that can be used for examining the effectiveness and quality of teacher behaviours in the classroom.

**Table 1: The dimensions and elements of the QTM (NSW, DET, 2003, p. 10)**

	Intellectual quality	Quality learning environment	Significance
Elements	deep knowledge	explicit quality criteria	background knowledge
	deep understanding	engagement	cultural knowledge
	problematic knowledge	high expectations	knowledge integration
	higher-order thinking	social support	inclusivity
	metalanguage	students' self-regulation	connectedness
	substantive communication	student direction	narrative



Each of the three dimensions is conceptualised as being inter-related and inter-active in nature. At the heart of the model is the dimension *Intellectual quality*. Teacher involvement in the process of teaching and learning is expressed in terms of how effectively it facilitates quality learning outcomes for students. With regard to the dimension *Intellectual quality*, the teacher is called on “to select and organise the essential knowledge, understanding, skills and values from the syllabus” (NSW, DET, May, 2003, p. 11). This is based on the assumption that the teacher is able to construct his or her own meaning and knowledge that demonstrate the defining characteristics of intellectual quality. The teacher’s role also includes the ability to develop “the students’ deep and critiqued understanding of the selected knowledge, understandings, skills and values and of the connections among them” (ibid). This necessitates that the teacher has mastered the prerequisite skills and strategies for facilitating students’ active involvement in the learning process.

The dimension *Quality learning environment* calls upon the teacher to demonstrate the ability to create, maintain and promote a quality learning environment that can extend well beyond the classroom to include “all adults who share the learning environment” (NSW, DET, May, 2003, p. 13). Finally, the dimension *Significance* necessitates that the teacher demonstrates the ability to promote the significance of students’ learning by making “the connections between and among the student as an individual and social being, the nature of the work at hand, and the contexts in which such work matters” (NSW, DET, May 2003, p. 14). It follows that if teachers are to effectively and successfully facilitate quality learning, taking into account each element of the three dimensions of the QTM, then they need to demonstrate the abilities and qualities that they seek to promote in their students.

### Does the QTM adequately describe effective teachers?

A key question posed by Killen (2007) was, “What type of person does a teacher need to be in order to be able to implement each of the elements of Quality Teaching effectively?” (p. 33). This question is of considerable significance because it broadens the debate about what it means to be an effective teacher to include the quality of the teacher as an individual. This quality can be expressed in terms of teacher dispositions.

In the research analysis of the Productive Pedagogy Model (Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2002), a precursor to the QTM, it was found that relatively few teachers were able to perform at consistently high levels of productive pedagogy. Various reasons were

given for this: curriculum design may have restricted the scope of teacher performance; the organisational structures in the schools, themselves, may have imposed limitations on teacher performance and effectiveness; or time constraints may have precluded teachers’ mastery of the demands of the model. These constraints are worth considering by school administrators and educational decision makers in order to assist teachers with enhancing the quality of their teaching.

In spite of these limitations, however, it was found that a relatively small percentage of teachers were able to sustain consistently high levels of productive pedagogy across all dimensions.

A closer examination of the nexus between teacher attributes and dispositions, on the one hand, and pedagogy on the other, may enhance our understanding of what it is that differentiates competent teachers from highly effective teachers.

### Teacher dispositions

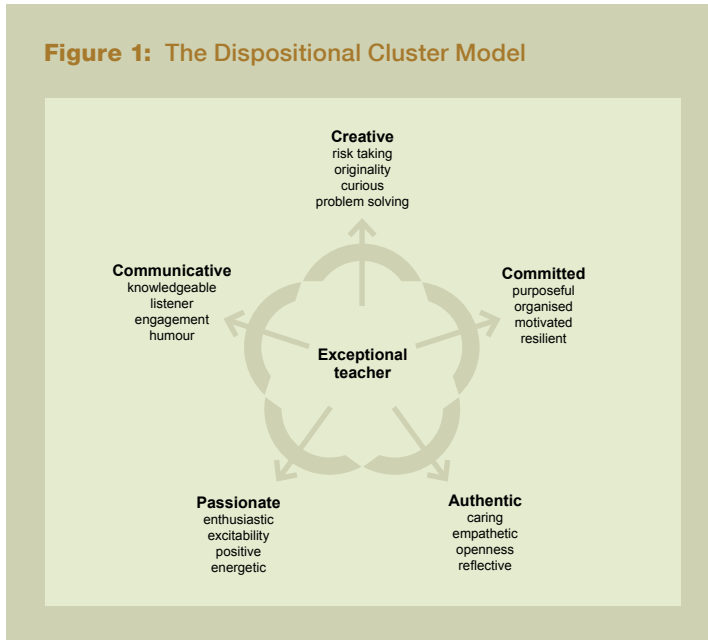
Usher (2002) concluded that, in the context of teaching and learning, it is essential that we find a way to understand the “internal dispositions” that underpin effective teacher behaviour. Research led him to conclude that dispositions are expressed in terms of “certain more stable characteristics and recurring perceptions of self, students, the job and its purposes, people and the world-in-general which are operative in a teacher’s perceptual world and render much of the effect of their efforts” (n.p.). He noted the need for further research on the question of the distinguishing features of the teacher that are manifest in effective teaching behaviour.

There is a rich array of perspectives relating to the nature of dispositions. Katz and Rath (1985) explored the notion of disposition as “an attributed characteristic of a teacher, one that summarises the trend of a teacher’s actions in particular contexts” (p. 301). This definition does not suggest that dispositions *cause* behaviour. Rather, dispositions are *manifest* in behaviour. A similar notion of dispositions is evident in Ennis’ (1987) definition, “A disposition is a tendency to do something, given certain conditions” (in Rath, 2006, p. 19). Here, emphasis is placed upon the teacher’s *tendency* to do something, rather than on the action itself. A final definition of this discussion, is “Dispositions are inherent qualities that incline a person to act in consistent ways that can be observed through patterns of behaviour in particular contexts” (Faull, 2008).

Having enunciated these different perspectives on the nature of dispositions, it is appropriate to examine the Dispositional Cluster Model as a second theoretical framework for discussing what it might mean to be a highly effective teacher.

“What type of person does a teacher need to be in order to be able to implement each of the elements of Quality Teaching effectively?”

**Figure 1: The Dispositional Cluster Model**



## Using the Dispositional Cluster Model (DCM) to describe effective teachers

Based on an extensive survey of literature that included the fields of effective teaching and effective teachers, giftedness and talent, creativity, intelligence, and dispositions, Faull (2008) identified five clusters of dispositions that appear to epitomise highly effective teachers. For the purposes of conceptual clarity, the clustering of these dispositions is represented as the Dispositional Cluster Model (DCM) (see Figure 1). The 'umbrella' term selected for the first dispositional cluster was *Authentic*. A second cluster of items tended to focus on the teacher's sense of purpose and engagement. This cluster was given the descriptor *Committed*. A third group of dispositions was predominantly associated with the teacher being *Creative*. A fourth cluster was found to be associated with the teacher's knowledge and the way this was communicated. This cluster was given the descriptor *Communicative*. There appeared to be a fifth group of dispositions that had to do with teacher enthusiasm and energy. This fifth cluster was given the descriptor *Passionate*. Each of these five 'primary' dispositional clusters can be defined in terms of 'secondary' dispositions that are conceptualised as being interactive and inter-dependent.

Examples of teacher comments that support the identification of these primary dispositional clusters and their secondary dispositions have been taken from cases study interviews of 12 teachers

“To be seen as authentic there needs to be congruence between words and action”

(A through to L) who were identified by their school principals as being exceptional teachers (Faull, 2008). The identification of these teachers was chiefly based on their perceived performance on the QTM and on observed teacher behaviours.

## Highly effective teachers are AUTHENTIC

Considerable attention has been given to the terms 'authentic' and 'authenticity' in research on dispositions.

[Authenticity is] a multifaceted concept that includes at least four parts: being genuine, showing consistency between values and actions, relating to others in such a way as to encourage their authenticity, and living a critical life. (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 7)

Brookfield (2006) maintained that for a teacher to be seen as authentic there needs to be "congruence between words and action, between what you say and what you actually do" (p. 74). Cranton and Carusetta further stated that authenticity is "a quest for a personal state of teaching to identify and critically examine their individual sense as it relates to personality, teaching style and interactions with others" (p. 6).

Be natural. Be yourself. Don't put on an act. Don't try to be someone that you're not, because children see through that. (Teacher H)

In the DCM, 'secondary' dispositions that characterise the AUTHENTIC teacher include: caring, empathic, open, and reflective.

The concept of **caring** is an integral characteristic of effective teachers. At the most basic level, authentic teachers should demonstrate a consistent pattern of practising the "ethic of caring" (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Authentic teachers should also show a genuine concern for their students' academic welfare (Feldhusen & Goh, 1995). More specifically, the literature suggests that authentic teachers should: show "respect and compassion for others" (Bunch, 2006, n. p.); "be approachable, sensitive and persistent" (Keeley, Smith & Buskist, 2006, p. 85); and provide "constant encouragement to students" (ibid).

When asked what they would most like to be remembered for, four teachers from the case study (Faull, 2008) commented that they would like to be remembered for the fact that they cared about their students and about teaching.

There is considerable support in the literature for authentic characteristics that could be interpreted as being **empathic**. Highly effective teachers "see sensitivity and understanding of the learner's private world of meaning as a priority of helping others

learn” (Usher, 2002, n.p.). Edwards (2007) and Killen (2002) argue that empathic teachers are sensitive to student differences and inclusive of cultures.

A disposition to be “**open**” is invariably associated with effective teachers. Brookfield (2006, p. 68) asserted that for a teacher to be regarded as authentic, there needs to be, “The perception that the teacher is open and honest in attempts to help students learn”. In support of this view of openness, Usher (2002) maintained that authentic teachers “should not be afraid to reveal their own idiomatic approaches to teaching” (n.p.). Further support for openness as a desirable disposition came from Keeley et al. (2006, p. 85) who stated, “Teachers should be open and humble and admit mistakes”.

There’s nothing hidden about me. I’m very open and very honest with the kids. I think they know what I value. They know I value them. (Teacher A)

The ability to be **reflective** is seen as an essential characteristic of being an authentic teacher.

Perspectives on teaching are an expression of personal beliefs and values related to teaching that are often formed through careful reflection. (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 6)

This highlights the importance of teacher beliefs and values. Glatthorn (1975) associated reflection with authentic awareness.

Authentic awareness can only come as we move to these deeper levels of the self through self acceptance, self confrontation and self prizing. (p. 38)

The disposition to be reflective can be observed through the degree to which teachers are “self monitoring and sensitive to how teaching affects student learning experiences” (Keeley et al., 2006, p. 85).

Teacher B values the practice of reflection. When asked what advice he would give a novice teacher he identified this key disposition.

It’s important to reflect—I think reflection in your teaching is a really underrated quality. (Teacher B)

## Highly effective teachers are COMMITTED

The notion of commitment permeates much of the discussion of teacher effectiveness in literature from this field and provides convincing support for its selection as a primary disposition.

In the most general terms, Usher (2002) asserts that effective teachers are committed to “goals, attitudes and values that are broad, deeply held and person centred” (n.p.). More specifically, highly effective teachers show commitment (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004) through “positive emotional attachment

to the work involved in teaching generally or to a specific act of teaching” (p. 6).

Teaching is a calling...it is more than just a job or a career. For me, it’s become a ministry. (Teacher G)

They demonstrate their commitment through an enduring belief that children are able to achieve (Kagan, 1992) and that teaching and learning are worthwhile. Finally, effective teachers are “committed to their own professional and personal growth” (Bunch, 2006, n.p.). Secondary dispositions that characterise COMMITTED teachers include: purposeful, organised, motivated, and resilient.

The sense of enduring **purpose** is an inherent part of being a committed teacher (Collinson, 1996). Purposeful teachers are identified as being likely to exhibit the following behaviours: first, a visible striving to be a better teacher (Bunch, 2006); second, high expectations of themselves and others (Bain, Lintz & Word, 1989); and finally, a “willingness to engage with the school and the school community” (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004, p. 6). Teacher B demonstrated an enduring sense of purpose and goal orientation.

I like to challenge myself. I think that’s really important, to stay challenged...I like to read a lot of educational style journals and try different things... another big goal of mine would be to continue learning. Another goal is to stay motivated. (Teacher B)

Being well **organised** is an important underpinning quality for the disposition of being committed. Keeley et al. (2006) best encapsulated this disposition by asserting that effective teachers should be “highly prepared, well organised and hard working” (p. 85). Murray (1999) identified being “organised” in terms of ways of organising or structuring subject matter as one of his 12 traits of effective teachers.

I love to be organised. I love children to be organised. I know that I need to thoroughly plan before a lesson. Once you’re organised, being enthusiastic is extremely important. (Teacher C)

Highly effective teachers are **motivated**. Crosswell and Elliott (2004) stressed the importance of motivation as a driving force “to engage in ongoing learning and to maintain professional knowledge” (p. 6). Strong motivation and commitment are manifest through high expectations of self and others (McFadden & Munns, 2002). This resonates strongly with the QTM dimension *Intellectual quality*. Teacher L was asked whether the marks students achieved were more important than other factors in teaching.

“Highly effective teachers show commitment through “positive emotional attachment to the work involved in teaching generally or to a specific act of teaching””

I think if you're motivated and I think if you enjoy teaching, the marks come from there. I think you've got to give the children a love, to give them confidence, give them the motivation and the enjoyment, and then you'll see the marks come from them. (Teacher L)

In this response, Teacher L demonstrated a strong predisposition not only to be motivated, but also to motivate her students.

Teacher commitment is frequently tested in the context of the classroom and **resilience** is required to “navigate the rocky road between vision and reality” (Hammerness, 2004, p. 41). In this journey, patience and perseverance in teaching and learning activities are essential characteristics of being resilient (Freire, 1998; Taylor & Wascisko, 2000).

At the end of each term, I'll sit down and think, *Well, what didn't I do well?..I've got a list on my laptop...Some lessons will fall flat on their face. If things aren't working, I ask myself, Why aren't they working and how can I fix them?* (Teacher B)

Teacher B demonstrates not only a high degree of resilience, but also the disposition to be reflective.

## Highly effective teachers are COMMUNICATIVE

A survey of literature in the field of teaching and learning indicates that there is consistent discussion of the importance and the implications of being communicative. Highly effective teachers are able to communicate at a range of levels with their students, colleagues and others engaged in teaching and learning.

Communicating with kids is really important. You've got to find out about them, show them you're interested. You've also got to teach them how to be communicative. That's how we learn. And that's how I learn; by being communicative. (Teacher I)

Secondary dispositions associated with the teacher being COMMUNICATIVE include knowledgeable listener, engagement and humour.

Several important aspects of being **knowledgeable** are worth noting: first, the display of a “rich factual knowledge about teaching” (Arlin, 1999, p. 13); second, the possession of “in-depth knowledge of subject matter” (Vialle & Quigley, 2002, p. 3); third, “a rich procedural knowledge about teaching strategies” (Arlin, p. 13); fourth, the presentation of current information (Keeley et al., 2006, p. 85); fifth, the willingness to become learners in the act of constructing knowledge (Arlin, 1999); and finally, the encouragement of “higher level thinking” about knowledge constructs”

(Vialle & Quigley, p. 2). A highly effective teacher will demonstrate all these aspects of being knowledgeable. Teacher A demonstrated the disposition knowledgeable when she shared her belief.

It's important to be constantly learning...being abreast of the issues and understanding all the things that are going on. (Teacher A)

Being a good **listener** is a recurring theme in the discussion of communication capabilities. Kottler et al. (2005) best summarised the importance of listening in the communication process as, “Listening to and responding to authentic feelings and ideas” (p. 75). In order to be a good listener, Norton (1977) asserted that effective teachers are attentive and not dominant. This correlates strongly with the element ‘substantive communication’ in the QTM dimension *Intellectual quality*. An example of the disposition to be an effective listener was evident in Teacher C's advice to novice teachers.

Listen. You need to listen to the people you teach with—your colleagues. You need to listen to the children...Listening to children is so important. (Teacher C)

A strong consensus is evident in the literature that communication is essentially a process of **engagement**. The engaged teacher will focus on demonstrating to students that they are being taught to learn in a way that is likely to be most helpful to them (Brookfield, 2006). This involves planning for effective classroom communication (Kottler, Zehm & Kottler, 2005). Furthermore, the teacher will “demonstrate confidence through clear speech, eye contact and precise answers to questions” (Keeley et al., 2006, p. 85). Engagement includes the ability to maintain consistent rapport (ibid). The effective teacher will “promote student-teacher conversations that extend to issues beyond the specifics of course assignments and information” (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003, p. 132). Finally, engagement implies that the effective teacher acts “as a good facilitator” (Vialle & Quigley, 2002, p. 3). Teacher B demonstrated a strong propensity for engagement.

To get kids involved you've got to give them choices...Every different assignment I do, I try to pull in different learning styles. You've got to engage the kids by taking into account their learning styles...And you've got to be engaged in learning, too. Just like the kids. (Teacher B)

A number of experts have seen **humour** as an essential ingredient of being communicative. Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) stated that the effective teacher should “skilfully

“Highly effective teachers are able to communicate at a range of levels with their students, colleagues and others engaged in teaching and learning”



produce humorous messages on a regular basis in the classroom” (In Aylor & Oppliger, 2003, p. 124). Teacher K shared anecdotal evidence of a strong disposition for humour in her teaching. This was particularly evident when she recounted a conversation with her Science class of Year 9 boys.

“So what did you do for the holidays, Miss?” And I said, “Oh, we marked cattle.”  
 “What does that mean?”  
 And I said, “Well, you put your ear tag in and you give them a shot and you turn all the boy cows...all the boy bulls into steers.” (Teacher K)

When asked what she wanted to be remembered for in her teaching, she also valued fun.

I'd really like to be remembered as a teacher that had fun and made Science—which a lot of kids think is really boring—interesting. (Teacher K)

## Highly effective teachers are CREATIVE

“Real life creativity requires the proper conjunction of personality, cognitive skills and situational conditions” (James & Asmus, 2000–2001, p. 150). From a different perspective, Cropley (1994) asserted that effective teachers demonstrate successful creative thinking in the way they facilitate creativity in their students. In more practical terms, Simplicio (2000) stated that effective teachers deploy “new and creative approaches to everyday instruction” (p. 675).

Being a CREATIVE teacher involves secondary dispositions such as risk taking, originality, curiosity, and problem solving.

An important factor in a teacher’s **risk taking** is the capacity for experimental endeavour. As Feldhusen and Goh (1995) observed, teaching is regarded as an experimental endeavour that entails risk. Risk takers are not afraid to try new ideas or to take risks with decision-making.

[Effective teachers need to have] the humility and courage to live with uncertainty and to take the risk of questioning whether they can do better and become active participants with the student in the learning process. (Arlin, 1999, p. 16)

Teacher E demonstrated the disposition for creativity and risk taking.

I guess I value and place an emphasis on thinking and having a go, rather than being right. I like to see creativity. So I value them [the students] having a go. I value risk taking in learning. (Teacher E)

Creativity was seen by Scheidecker and Freeman (1999) as implying **originality** in that effective teachers seek “new ways to view things, new ways to learn, new group activities, new projects

in the classroom, new procedures” (p. 72).

I like to experiment with new ideas. Find new ways of doing things. Getting the kids to think in new ways. It’s very easy to fall into a bit of a rut if I don’t do this. (Teacher B)

Effective teachers “constantly seek new ways to improve their abilities and they eagerly explore alternative avenues that can lead to greater insights” (Simplicio, 2000, p. 676). In addition, they “constructively respond to new ideas” (Cropley, 1994, p. 16). Being **curious** requires a habitual disposition to find new and better ways of doing things. The previous comment made by Teacher B is also applicable to the disposition of being curious and seeking new ways to meet the challenges of teaching and learning.

In most cases, **problem solving** is seen as a creative exercise used to address curriculum design and practice. In behavioural terms, Keeley et al. (2006) state that effective teachers will demonstrate “problem solving skills in the development of the curriculum and associated thinking processes” (p. 85). More specifically, Keeley et al. claimed that effective teachers show the ability for “critical thinking in the use of problem-solving techniques” (ibid).

Teaching provides the challenge that I personally need and the opportunity to be creative and to enter unknown territory...I’ve found this whole new world of exciting stuff. Teaching provides that opportunity to find creative ways to problem solve. To think of creative ways to deal with challenging the kids. (Teacher E)

## Highly effective teachers are PASSIONATE

In this context, passion is conceptualised as a driving force for the emotional and psychic energy that underpins high quality teaching.

Metcalf and Game (2006) asserted, “Teachers who change lives are invariably characterised by their passion and their enthusiasm” (p. 59). In a similar vein, Day (2004, p. 3) stated, “For those teachers teaching in a creative and adventurous profession, passion is not an option. It is essential to high quality teaching”. Kottler et al. (2005) made the observation, “Passionately committed teachers are those who absolutely love what they do” (p. 149). Day argued that to be passionate about teaching is not only to express enthusiasm but also to enact it in a principled, values-led, intelligent way. Passionate teachers are “deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world” (Fried, 1995, p. 1). In the context of teaching in an independent Christian school, Teacher F’s interview comments provided a powerful perspective.

“Effective teachers deploy “new and creative approaches to everyday instruction”

I'd like to be remembered as someone passionate about Jesus Christ and passionate about learning. Passionate about people. (Teacher F)

Four secondary dispositions that characterise the teacher as being **PASSIONATE** are: enthusiastic, excitable, positive, and energetic.

A considerable body of literature associates **enthusiasm** with effective teachers. There are three distinct areas where enthusiasm appears to play an influential role in determining teacher effectiveness. First, effective teachers are seen to be enthusiastic about subject matter (Feldhusen & Goh, 1995) and about knowledge discovery at a more general level. Second, they are consistently “enthusiastic about helping other people to grow and develop” (Taylor & Wascisko, 2000, p.9). Finally, they exhibit pleasure and a sense of fulfilment in all teaching activities and engagement with students (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004).

I love to be organised...I like enthusiasm. (Teacher C)

The ability both to appear **excited** and to **create excitement** was noted by Metcalfe and Game (2006) who said that the passionate teacher creates an environment where, “The hum in the classroom involves everyone...something happens without anyone making it happen” (p.60). The trait of excitability is expressed through “high levels of energy, long concentration spans on topics of interest, powerful emotions and the desire to take risks” (Hunt & Seney, 2001, p.9). Teacher B demonstrated excitement in his comment.

I love getting involved...I run the SRC at school and coach sporting teams. We've got an open day this weekend. We've got a golf tournament. And those are the moments, too, when you're teaching, that you savour the most. You can get some really magical moments in the classroom where you make a real connection, but those outside the classroom... they are the memorable times. (Teacher B)

In assessing the importance of being **positive** as a disposition within the passionate cluster, two key notions were expressed by Usher (2002), namely, that effective teachers have a “positive view about the worth, efficacy and potentiality of others” and a “positive view about their own worth, efficacy and potentiality” (n.p.).

Every child can learn, irrespective of where they're at in their life or in their learning process... Every child has a voice—it should be heard. (Teacher G)

Concerning the link between being an effective teacher and being **energetic**, Rosengren (2004, p.2) proposed that the most important thing was “the energy that comes from bringing more of you into what you do”. Day (2004) noted that passion was linked with intellectual energy and he argued that passionate teachers are “intellectually and emotionally energetic in their work with children, young people and adults alike” (p.2).

Teaching is not just a job. You're *living* teaching. You're not just an, 'I'll get out of bed at 8 o'clock' and you come here. You're constantly seeing and reading and hearing and moving the minds of kids. (Teacher B)

## Concluding the discussion: The question of teacher values

In his exposé on dispositions, Freeman (2007b) proposed a *syntax of dispositions* that included ‘values in action’. He argued that it is one thing for a teacher to have particular values; it is another for the teacher to activate those values—to live them in his or her teaching. In this discussion of what it might mean to be a highly effective teacher, reference has been made to the NSW Quality Teaching Model and the Dispositional Cluster Model. With each of these theoretical perspectives, it is one thing to know about highly effective teaching; it is another to actively engage in highly effective teaching.

Have a humble heart and a willingness to learn—a teachable spirit. Don't give up. It's hard work. It takes a lifetime to learn this craft...These are people's lives and your most important tool is your emotional intelligence. To be a reflective practitioner is the most important thing that you can do. (Teacher F)


As teachers and educators, we need to reflect on the nexus between quality pedagogy and teacher dispositions when coming to an understanding of what it means to be a highly effective teacher. **TEACH**

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# Increasing life effectiveness

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### Introduction

**The iPod, more than any other device, is indicative of the times in which we live. It provides entertainment and information at the click of a wheel, whenever, and wherever we want it. The iPod is tool of choice for many of the current generation of youth who fill their days with electronic devices, computer games, Youtube, Myspace, Facebook and talking to friends on MSN. These youth have been referred to as the iGeneration, or Google Generation; whatever you choose to call them, they are the young people in our schools.**

Life is not simple for many of these students. They are growing up in a world vastly different to that of their parents. Today's world features "cultural pluralism, increased anxiety about personal and environmental risks, precarious employment, rampant consumerism, the information deluge, greater individualisation and increased instability in families" (Hughes, 2007).

Within this quickly changing world, there is a need for students to develop the capacity to cope with their ever-changing environment. They need to be resilient. Outdoor education activities have been proposed as one way of increasing a person's resilience through increasing 'Life Effectiveness' skills. These skills equip students to handle the demands of life and impact a person's capacity to adapt, survive, and thrive (Neill, 2008). They will enhance a person's resilience and their sense of wellbeing.

### Benefits of outdoor education

As the name suggests, outdoor education involves experiences that take place in the outdoors. Most of these programs focus on the personal and social development of participants (Neill, 2008). Outdoor education programs have been shown to impact students' self-concept, self-esteem, social skills, decision making skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, and aspects of life

effectiveness such as time management, social competence, task leadership and emotional control (Allen-Craig & McLeod, 2005).

These results should not surprise us. For many years educators such as John Dewey have advocated experiential education as the best medium for gaining developmental outcomes in students (Neill, 2008). While traditional curriculums often struggle to develop connections between the theoretical and the practical, the use of the outdoors natural world has been found to be effective for instilling authentic, real life experiences into the learning process. (Bunting, 2006).

Youth require authentic activities to build connection to real world meaning for the value of one another and the need to protect our environment. Often lost in a make-believe world of video games in a mass marketed culture of violence and escapism, today's youth need mentoring to guide them to the world of authentic experience and personal connectedness. (Goodman & Jelmberg, 2008)

Outdoor education offers authentic, holistic experiences. Educators have long supported approaches that combine the mental, the emotional, the social, the spiritual and the physical (Gilbertson et al., 2006). Natural settings provide direct and immediate consequences, along with positive and negative feedback from peers, in safe facilitated arenas. Students are required to use initiative, make decisions, and be responsible for outcomes (Gilbertson et al., 2006). The many choices required during an activity encourages individuals to make decisions based on their ethics and values, and personal growth is characterised by increases in self-esteem, confidence and motivation (Prouty et al., 2007). The resultant learning is personal and spontaneous.

Many of the approaches used in outdoor education are based in the theory of constructivism where prior knowledge is recognised and built on. Outdoor education provides teachable moments where students grasp concepts and facts that are

“*Outdoor education offers authentic, holistic experiences*”

less likely to be understood in static environments. The consequent learning is student-centred, developmental, and more likely to be retained in the student's memory (Goodman et al., 2008).

Another reason for the success of outdoor education activities may lie in the way that it connects the senses. Bunting (2006) claims the brain searches for meaning in interconnectedness.

The brain performs better with meaningful challenges that aren't overwhelming. Learning that engages the entire physiology, from emotions to cognitive processes, produces a greater likelihood of understanding. Outdoor education pedagogy uses direct sensory experiences involving nature and human community (Gilbertson et al., 2006) and in this way not only involves symbols and words but also the senses in the learning process (Bunting, 2006). Outdoor education connects the sensors in a way that makes learning not just an exercise in cognition, but also an emotional based experience (Goodman et al., 2008).

Beyond sensory awareness and skill development, outdoor education experiences tend to help students form a community among the group (Gilbertson et al., 2006). Outdoor education facilitates development through mentorship with teachers and peers (Bunting, 2006). Neill and Dias (2001) found that the most positive predictor of growth in the psychological resilience of 'Outward Bound' participants was the community formed and the removal of negative social influence.

**Table 1: Significant differences in life effectiveness skills ( $p < 0.05$ )**

Life effectiveness scales	Before	After	Effect size
Time management	4.9	5.4	0.40
Task leadership	5.2	5.7	0.43
Emotional control	5.2	5.6	0.23
Active initiative	5.7	6.1	0.26
Self confidence	5.9	6.2	0.22
Self efficacy	5.5	5.8	0.28

**Table 2: Life effectiveness variables included in the study**

Variable	Definition
<b>Time management</b>	The extent that an individual perceives that he / she makes optimum use of time
<b>Social competence</b>	The degree of personal confidence and self-perceived ability in social interactions
<b>Achievement motivation</b>	The extent to which the individual is motivated to achieve excellence and put the required effort into action to attain it
<b>Intellectual flexibility</b>	The extent to which the individual perceives he / she can adapt his / her thinking and accommodate new information from changing conditions and different perspectives
<b>Task leadership</b>	The extent to which the individual perceives he / she can lead other people effectively when a task needs to be done and productivity is the prime requirement
<b>Emotional control</b>	The extent to which the individual perceives he / she maintains emotional control when he / she is faced with potentially stressful situations
<b>Active initiative</b>	The extent to which the individual likes to initiate action in new situations
<b>Self confidence</b>	The degree of confidence the individual has in his / her abilities and the success of their actions
<b>Cooperative teamwork</b>	The extent to which an individual can work as a member of a team
<b>Self efficacy</b>	The degree of personal confidence and self-perceived ability in situations

## The current study

The current study seeks to explore how participation by year nine students in a multidisciplinary, integrated (Pettus, 1994), experiential education program, based loosely on the model developed by Kurt Hahn, as used in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, impacts upon their Life Effectiveness.

Within the experiential education program, a framework was developed which allowed students to be involved in expeditionary learning, urban learning and service learning. Wherever possible, classroom studies were also linked to these broader themes.

The current study focuses on the expeditionary learning component, where students participated in a number of bushwalking based outdoor education activities which culminated in a six day expedition to the Walls of Jerusalem National Park in Tasmania. To finalise the expeditionary component of the program, students prepared a public presentation of their learning and experiences. On a given evening, each student was provided with a display space to organise as they wish. Parents, teachers, fellow students, and members of the community were invited to circulate among the displays. Students answered questions and gave detailed descriptions of their learning and experiences.

Students completed a questionnaire at the start of the year and again after they had completed the expeditionary part of the year long program. It included items from the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire along with the additional constructs of Cooperative Teamwork and Self Efficacy derived

from the Ropeloc Questionnaire (Richards, Ellis, and Neill, 2002). Table 2 contains an explanation of the Life Effectiveness variables included in the study.

The data collected from students was then coded and entered into SPSS. Descriptive analysis of the items was carried out and multivariate analyses were then undertaken to develop scales using factor analysis and reliability testing. All of the scales were satisfactory with good factor loadings and reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) between 0.74 and 0.91. Any items with negative loadings were recoded and the various factors were turned into composite variables by averaging the item scores across the factor.

## Results

The results from the scales showed that at the beginning of the year, students were, on average, above the half way mark of the various Life Effectiveness scales. At the conclusion of the expeditionary component of the program, students had increased significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) in Time Management, Task Leadership, Emotional Control, Active Initiative, Self Confidence & Self Efficacy (see Table 1 & 2). That is, students increased their optimum use of time, their leadership in tasks, their emotional control when faced with potentially stressful situations, their ability to initiate action in new situations, their levels of confidence in their abilities and the success of their actions, and their beliefs of what they are capable.

While students do show development in these skills during a normal school year, one would not expect such significant increases in the relatively short time period (2 months) from the beginning of the school year to the completion of the expeditionary part of the program. Of particular note are the increases in Time Management and Task Leadership which achieved an effect size greater than 0.4. These results support the notion that outdoor education programs do assist students to develop their Life Effectiveness skills and are in line with other studies that have found similar results (Hattie et al., 1997; Neill, 2008).

When asked during an interview to reflect on their outdoor education experiences, many students could verbalise how they felt their lives had been impacted and Life Effectiveness skills improved. For example:

When you achieve by climbing up a mountain, you know you can do other stuff that you thought you couldn't do. (Student 1)

I learnt to be more coping with the situations that faced me and to remain calm rather than going nuts with everything that goes wrong. I need to control myself because there's nothing you can



[Photography:  
Peter Beamish]

do about it, rather than giving up, and just keep fighting through. If things are going that wrong, you might just lose it anyway, because that is just too hard, you just have to keep trying. (Student 2)

These results are very encouraging and reveal that students felt an increase in self efficacy and emotional control.

## Task leadership

During the bushwalking activities, the students were split into groups that were ability and gender streamed. Significant between group differences were found for Task Leadership. All groups experienced the stresses that come with leadership and found that the most successful way to navigate was to use a consultative approach.

Each person had to be a leader for some part of the trip. When I was leader it helped me because I got to ask people which way they think we should go and I could lead the group with compass and map. When I was leading I felt, like, listened too because everyone was following. I experienced a bit of stress choosing which way to go. It's important not to go the way you want to go but to get other people's ideas. (Student 3)

The more able groups showed a significant gain in Task Leadership while the less able groups showed little gain. This could have been a result of greater teacher dependence because the less able groups were over challenged. These groups, required more frequent intervention by the facilitator, which led to the students not developing significantly in Task Leadership.

There was also evidence of a significant gender effect on Task Leadership with boys making more significant gains than girls. Interviews suggested the style of facilitation in the girls groups was more directed and did not make use of error as constructively as the boys groups. It would seem that the facilitators of these groups may have had less confidence in the girls' ability to navigate and

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manage the party. Overall, the results suggest facilitation style can affect amount of change measured in an outcome.

## Time management

Many of the students appreciated the importance of good time management as seen in the following interview statements:

You have to plan your time wisely so you can get to your destination before it gets dark. (Student 4)

You have to plan where you are going to go, your menu and how to pack your pack. It also helped me in my study. Before bushwalking I wouldn't plan, whatever comes up I would just do it, but after bushwalking I learned to plan each day what I would study, English, Maths, Science. (Student 5)

Significant between group differences were found for Time Management. The student interviews revealed that the style of facilitation in the groups was quite different. Those students in groups where time management skills were emphasised were those that increased in this area.

## Educational implications

This study has significant implications for schools. Life Effectiveness skills are important and this study has added weight to the argument that these skills can be enhanced by outdoor education programs. Although Task Leadership and Time Management are two skill areas where the impact on the students was greatest, student levels of Emotional Control, Active Initiative, Self Confidence, and Self Efficacy all showed significant improvement.

These outcomes do not happen by chance but are the result of purposeful facilitation by outdoor educators. Hayllar (2005) believes that outdoor education goes beyond the mere supervision of an activity; but rather involves the purposeful facilitation of learning from a meaningful outdoor experience. Outdoor educators who are trained in the delivery of specific outcomes achieve better results (Allen-Craig & Miller, 2007). Neill (2000, p. 2) goes as far as to state the disadvantages of running a poorly facilitated program can outweigh any possible gains from the experience.

This study supports the view that desired outcomes are best achieved by staff who effectively facilitate the outdoor experience. The differences between the groups were more likely the result of the different teacher facilitation styles than differences in group ability. To maximise the outcomes of outdoor education experiences, schools need to ensure that their outdoor educators have adequate facilitation skills.

## Conclusion

In a digital world where students are often called to make sense of an increasingly complex environment, to become resilient and to develop adequate life skills, we find ourselves endorsing a call to interact more with the natural world and to participate in well facilitated outdoor education activities. In doing so, students may develop better life skills, and on the way, a clearer understanding their God.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:20) **TEACH**

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# A sodium loaded trap? What should schools tell students about cheese?

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## Abstract

**This study evaluates the sodium and calcium content of convenience cheese products available for use in school lunches and the classification of such products using traffic light approaches designed to guide food selection for healthy eating. Thirty-eight convenience cheese products from NSW supermarkets were studied. Nutrition information panels provided sodium content for all products and calcium content for 35 products. It was found that a 40g serve of convenience cheese products can contribute a substantial proportion of children's calcium Estimated Average Requirements (EARs). However, the accompanying sodium levels create difficulty for keeping daily sodium intake within the Adequate Intake (AI) range for school children of all ages, particularly, younger children (4–8 year olds). Due to the sodium content, many of the cheese products, especially processed cheeses, need to be classified as 'red' foods—to be avoided or only eaten occasionally. The categorisation of the convenience cheese products as 'green', every day foods, to provide calcium conflicts with messages to choose foods low in sodium when promoting healthy eating.**

“The school has many opportunities for promoting healthy eating, but there is also the potential for conflicting health promotion messages”

## Introduction

The school has many opportunities for promoting healthy eating, but there is also the potential for conflicting health promotion messages. The school canteen has an important role in modelling food choices and complementing healthy eating knowledge, skills and behaviours addressed in the curriculum (NSW Department of Education and Training, n.d.; Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007).

Convenience cheese products are used in children's school lunches either packed from home or from school canteens. These products include individually packed portions and slices for snacks, and pre-sliced and grated products for sandwiches and wraps. Where do convenience cheese products fit in the promotion of healthy eating at school?

## Cheese and canteen traffic light guides

To guide school canteens in choosing healthy food to sell to children, the majority of states in Australia have adopted a traffic light approach to food selection (Healthy Kids School Canteen Association, n.d.a). The NSW *Fresh Tastes @ School Healthy School Canteen Strategy* (NSW Department of Health & NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006) is an example of the traffic light approach. In the *Fresh Tastes Canteen Menu Planning Guide*, reduced fat dairy products have been classified as 'green' foods (to be used freely in the canteen menu), while full fat dairy products have been classified as 'amber' (to be used moderately or no more than a couple of times a week). In this case, cheese is included in the 'green' and 'amber' categories rather than the 'red' (occasional no more than twice a term) despite its sodium content.

Registers of products meeting canteen guidelines or buyers guides, available from canteen associations, such as the NSW Healthy Kids School Canteen Association (n.d.a), are used by canteen staff to facilitate product selection. Currently, several reduced fat cheeses categorised as 'green', and a number of other cheeses, categorised as 'amber', are listed in the sandwich, burger, wrap and roll ingredients section of the Buyers Guide for the NSW Healthy Kids School Canteen Association (n.d.b). Another register, The Star Choice Registered Products Database, of the Western Australian School Canteens Association (n.d.) had four cheeses—grated or sliced reduced fat products—categorised as 'green'.

## Canteen guideline revision and the Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs)

The guidelines for selection of foods for school canteens are being revised as part of the National Healthy School Canteens Project, and are expected to be completed in 2010 (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2009). The nutrient criteria for categorising foods are being reviewed to provide uniform national guidelines that address changes in nutrient recommendations in the NRVs (National Health and Medical Research

Council, 2006). The NRVs have recommendations for energy and nutrient intakes according to age and gender. The NRVs recommend that the daily sodium intake of normally healthy individuals be within the Adequate Intake (AI) range for their age and gender group. Upper Levels of Intake (ULs) are higher than the top of the AI range. If average daily intakes are above the ULs, adverse health effects are expected. The NRV Estimated Average Requirements (EARs) are used to indicate the adequacy of calcium. EARs are the daily amounts “estimated to meet the requirements of half the healthy individuals in a particular life stage and gender group” (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2006, p. 1).

### United Kingdom (UK) traffic light labelling

The UK has a traffic light scheme for labelling salt (sodium chloride) on the front of food packages (UK Food Standards Agency, 2007). Beard, Nowson and Riley (2007) converted the UK salt cut-points to sodium for discussion in the Australian context. For a sodium ‘green’ light, food needs to have less than 118mg per 100g, for ‘amber’ between 118mg and 590mg per 100g, and ‘red’ greater than 590mg per 100g of food. Traffic light approaches for front of pack labelling have been investigated in Australia (Kelly, Hughes, Chapman, Louie, Dixon & King, 2008), but are not used yet.

### Cheese in health promotion material: calcium versus sodium

Health promotion materials available to teachers and students promote dairy products as good sources of calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Examples of such materials are the Fact Sheet, “Help Young Bones Grow Strong” (CSIRO, 2007), and the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003). In September 2007, the Federal Government distributed material about the CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Aussie Kids to all primary school students in Australia (Australian Science Media Centre, 2007). The CSIRO (2007) recommends two to three serves of dairy products daily, with a serve of cheese being 40g. Reduced-fat cheese is identified as suitable for daily use.

Dairy products can provide significant calcium, but serves of milk, yoghurt and cheese are not equivalent in sodium content. Sodium is added to cheese to manage growth of bacterial cultures and to aid flavour and texture (National Heart Foundation, 2009).

The Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003, p. xvii) recommend including “milks, yoghurts, cheese and or alternatives” and choosing “foods low in salt”.

Since salt is a major source of sodium, there is the potential for unintended high levels of sodium intake when cheese is promoted as a source of calcium.

Concerns over osteoporosis have led to increased emphasis on calcium intake in childhood and adolescence, to ensure desirable peak bone mass. The 2007 Australian National Children’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (Australian Government Department of Health and Aging, 2007, p.21) indicated that only 11% of 12–13 year old girls and 18% of 14–16 year old girls met their EAR for calcium. For boys, 50% of 12–13 year olds and 56% of 14–16 year olds met the EARs. Of the 4–8 year olds, 85% of girls, and 93% of boys, met the EARs. This same study (p. 24) found that all children exceeded the AIs for sodium for their particular age group. To promote bone health in children and adolescents, restricting salt intake is recommended along with consuming adequate calcium (Prentice et al., 2006, p. 12).

The Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health (AWASH) (n.d.) is attempting to increase awareness of the role of sodium in the development of high blood pressure and other diseases. They are concerned about the sodium intake of children, and are implementing strategies to reduce salt consumption, and sodium in the food supply.

### The current study

This study evaluates the sodium and calcium content of selected convenience cheese products in order to provide a basis for discussion regarding categorisation of the convenience cheeses as ‘red’, ‘amber’ or ‘green’ foods for school lunches.

### Method

Thirty-eight convenience cheeses, from two major national supermarket chain stores on the NSW Central Coast, were included in the study conducted in September 2009. The cheese products contained 25g or less fat per 100g—approximately equivalent to the fat content of 25% reduced fat cheddar cheese—this is still a high fat content. Natural and processed cheese and cheese spread products were included. There were 25 sliced or individually portioned products, and 13 grated products.

Sodium and calcium contents in mg per 100g were obtained from product nutrient information panels. Three grated products did not list calcium content on the label.

The proportions (%) of the cheese products classified as ‘red’, ‘amber’ and ‘green’, using the UK Traffic Light Classification criteria for salt converted to milligrams of sodium (Beard et al., 2007), were determined.

For each product, the sodium content in mg per 40g serve was compared to the age appropriate

“*Dairy products can provide significant calcium, but serves of milk, yoghurt and cheese are not equivalent in sodium content*”

“Some of the processed portioned / sliced cheeses contributed well over the AI and nearly half of the UL for 4–8 year olds”

AIs, and ULs. Calcium contents were compared to the EARs. (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2006). The mean, median, minimum and maximum percentages of these AI, UL and EAR values for the cheeses overall and the two categories of cheeses, grated cheeses and individually portioned / sliced cheeses, were calculated.

## Results

### Sodium content: UK Traffic Light classification

Figure 1 shows the proportions (%) of the cheeses that were categorised as ‘red’, ‘amber’ and ‘green’ using the UK Traffic Light classification for salt converted to sodium (Beard et al., 2007). Overall, the majority of the convenience cheese products were categorised as ‘red’. A higher proportion of individ-

ually portioned / sliced than grated products were categorised as ‘red’. None of the cheese products were classified as ‘green’ for sodium content.

### Sodium: % of AIs and ULs per 40g serve

The cheeses differ considerably in their contribution to the sodium AIs and ULs for each age group. The grated cheeses tended to have lower sodium levels than the portioned / sliced cheeses (see Tables 1a and 1b). Some of the processed portioned / sliced cheeses contributed well over the AI and nearly half of the UL for 4–8 year olds.

Figure 2 shows the proportions (%) of the top of range of the AI for sodium for 4 to 8 year olds (600mg) provided by a 40g serve of each of the five cheeses with the highest sodium content. These cheese products were all individually wrapped, portioned / sliced processed cheese products, convenient for adding to school lunchboxes. The second highest sodium containing product is a processed cheese stick, packaged to be appealing to young children, and has endorsement by the Australian Dental Association Ltd on the pack.

### Calcium content: % of EARs per 40g serve

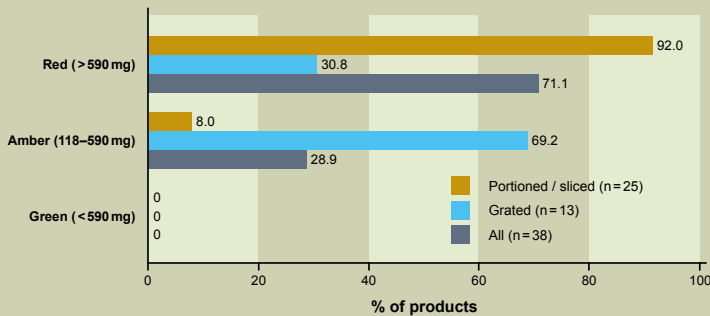
Table 2 shows the mean, median, minimum and maximum (%) of the calcium EARs per 40g serve for each age group. The cheeses varied widely in their contribution to the EAR for each age group. The highest and lowest calcium cheeses respectively, provided 76.5% and 26.9% of the EAR for 4 to 8 year olds, compared to 37.9% and 13.3% of the EARs for 12 to 13 and 14 to 18 year olds.

## Discussion

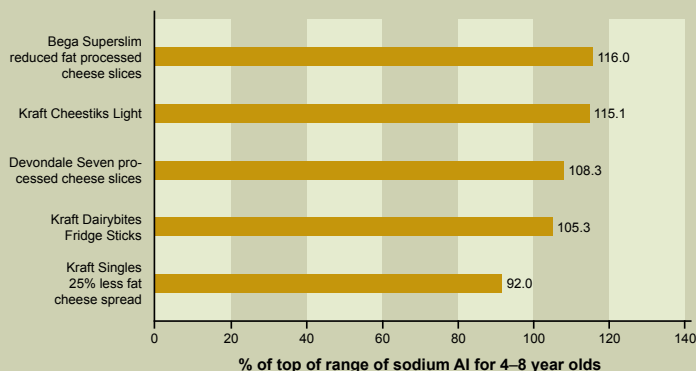
The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003) recommend choosing low salt foods. However, there are few consistent guidelines regarding the selection of lower sodium cheeses for school lunches. There are canteen guidelines for sodium levels to be used in deciding whether certain energy dense foods such as hot foods, snacks and drinks should be classed as ‘red’ rather than ‘amber’ (NSW Department of Health & NSW Department of Education and Training 2006). Cheese does not appear to be considered a snack in these guidelines.

The Healthy Kids School Canteen Association (n.d.b), in their fact sheet on salt, recommend choosing foods with less than 120mg of sodium per 100g, and avoiding foods with more than 600mg of sodium per 100g, this is similar to the UK Traffic Light guidelines for salt converted to sodium (Beard et al., 2007). However, there are examples of cheese with more than 600mg of sodium per 100g that have been categorised as ‘amber’ rather than ‘red’, and cheeses with more than 120mg of sodium per

**Figure 1: Proportions (%) of cheese products categorised as red, amber and green using the UK Traffic Light criteria for salt content converted to mg sodium per 100g (Beard, Nowson & Riley, 2007)**



**Figure 2: Proportions (%) of the top of range of the Adequate Intake (AI) for sodium for 4–8 year olds (600 mg) provided by a 40g serve of each of the five cheeses with the highest sodium content**





100g, that have been classified as 'green' rather than 'amber' on the NSW Healthy Kids School Canteen Association (n.d.b) Buyers Guide for sandwich, burger, wrap and roll ingredients. One of the cheeses categorised as 'green' had 600mg of sodium per 100g.

Since there were sliced and grated convenience

cheeses in this study with less than 590mg of sodium per 100g, it is possible to avoid high sodium cheeses in school lunches. However, there were no convenience cheeses available with less than 120mg of sodium, so even the lower sodium cheeses are not a preferred source of calcium for daily consumption. None of the cheeses in this study

“*Even the lower sodium cheeses are not a preferred source of calcium for daily consumption*”

**Table 1a: Proportions (%) of the top of the Adequate Intake (AI) range\* values for sodium for school aged children and adolescents provided by 40g serves of convenience cheeses**

Sodium top of AI range values for age groups		% of top of AI range values for sodium provided by 40g serves		
		Grated cheeses (n=13)	Portioned and sliced cheeses (n=25)	All cheeses (n=38)
4–8 years 600mg	Mean %	35.8	63.6	54.0
	Median %	34.1	48.0	44.3
	Minimum %	27.8	31.3	27.8
	Maximum %	48.9	116.0	116.0
9–13 years 800mg	Mean %	26.7	47.7	40.5
	Median %	25.6	36.0	33.2
	Minimum %	20.8	23.5	20.8
	Maximum %	36.6	87.0	87.0
14–18 years 920mg	Mean %	23.2	41.5	35.2
	Median %	22.2	31.3	28.9
	Minimum %	18.1	20.4	18.1
	Maximum %	31.7	75.7	75.7

\* It is recommended that average daily intake is within AI range for healthy individuals (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2008)

**Table 1b: Proportions (%) of Upper Levels of Intake (ULs)\* for sodium for school aged children and adolescents provided by 40g serves of convenience cheeses**

Sodium ULs for age groups		% of ULs for sodium provided by 40g serves		
		Grated cheeses (n=13)	Portioned and sliced cheeses (n=25)	All cheeses (n=38)
4–8 years 1400mg	Mean %	15.3	27.3	23.2
	Median %	14.6	20.6	19.0
	Minimum %	11.9	13.4	11.9
	Maximum %	20.9	49.7	49.7
9–13 years 2000mg	Mean %	10.7	19.1	16.2
	Median %	10.2	14.4	13.3
	Minimum %	8.3	9.4	8.3
	Maximum %	14.7	34.8	34.8
14–18 years 2300mg	Mean %	9.3	16.6	14.1
	Median %	8.9	12.5	11.6
	Minimum %	7.3	8.2	7.3
	Maximum %	12.7	30.3	30.3

\* Adverse health consequences are expected if average daily intake is higher than UL (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2006)

are recommended as 'green' foods, if sodium is considered important.

The Healthy Kids School Canteen Association (n.d.b) fact sheet on salt includes cheese, along with take-away meals, bread, breakfast cereal, soups and sauces, salty snacks and processed meats, as common sources of salt for children. Processed cheese sticks are listed with savoury snack foods, luncheon meats and vegemite sandwiches as major sources of salt (sodium) in the lunch box. The problem with processed cheese slices is not mentioned. Of the five cheese products with the highest sodium content in this study, three were reduced fat processed cheese slices, and two were cheese stick products (see Figure 2).

Cheeses can contribute to calcium intake (see Table 2). However, for bone health (Prentice et al., 2006, p. 12) it would be prudent to encourage sources of calcium that are lower in salt (sodium), than many of the convenience cheeses in this study.

It could be argued that categorising individual foods based on nutrient content is the wrong approach, and that guidelines should be for the nutrient content of the overall meal or menu. In the UK, new standards for school lunches have been developed with nutrient-based standards, taking an average meal approach, rather than considering individual foods (School Food Trust, n.d.). It would be difficult or impossible to remain under the UK average school lunch sodium requirements (School food Trust, n.d., p. 3.13), if 40g of some of the cheeses in this study were included in the meal.

An Australian study of food consumed at school

by 5–12 year old children, indicated that the role of school canteen food was to supplement lunch from home, rather than replace it. (Sanigorski, Bell, Kremer & Swinburn, 2005). The UK nutrient-based standards (School Food Trust, n.d.) for average meals may be less suitable in the Australian context than nutrient-based standards for food categories.

The review of the nutrient criteria for categorising foods in the National Healthy School Canteens Project (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2009) needs to address the tension between the sodium and calcium content of cheese products. It remains to be seen whether cheese will have its own higher sodium threshold, as a concession to its potential calcium contribution, permitting it to be a 'green' or 'amber' food, or whether it will become a 'red' occasional food.

Whatever the outcome of the National Healthy School Canteen Project, the calcium versus sodium dilemma remains in health promotion material available for use in the curriculum. Considering the calcium and sodium contents of cheeses, compared to other dairy products and non-dairy calcium sources, provides an opportunity for improving food selection.

## Conclusion and recommendations

A 40g serve of convenience cheese products can contribute substantial proportions of children's calcium EARs. However, the accompanying sodium makes keeping sodium intake for the day within the AI range difficult for school children of all ages, but particularly for younger children (4–8 year olds).

“*For bone health it would be prudent to encourage sources of calcium that are lower in salt*”

”

**Table 2: Proportions (%) of calcium Estimated Average Requirements (EARs) provided by 40g serves of convenience cheeses**

Calcium EARs for age groups		% of calcium EARs provided by 40g serves		
		Grated cheeses* (n=10)	Portioned and sliced cheeses (n=25)	All cheeses (n=35)
4–8 years 520 mg	Mean %	61.7	58.3	59.3
	Median %	61.5	61.5	61.5
	Minimum %	52.3	26.9	26.9
	Maximum %	72.1	76.5	76.5
9–11 years 800 mg	Mean %	40.1	37.9	38.5
	Median %	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Minimum %	34.0	17.5	17.5
	Maximum %	46.8	49.8	49.8
12–13 & 14–18 years 1050 mg	Mean %	30.6	28.9	29.4
	Median %	30.5	30.5	30.5
	Minimum %	25.9	13.3	13.3
	Maximum %	35.7	37.9	37.9

\* For 3 of the 13 grated / shredded cheeses in the sample calcium was not on the label

For many of the individually portioned / sliced convenience cheeses in this study, the sodium content is so high that they need to be considered as 'red' or occasional foods despite their calcium content.

The convenience cheeses in this study illustrate the potential for unintended sodium intake when health promotion messages recommend cheese, as an alternative to other dairy products, to increase calcium intake.

A school that encourages healthy food choices will support increased awareness of sodium in foods such as cheese, and promote the availability and consumption of lower sodium sources of calcium. **TEACH**

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“The sodium content of many convenience cheeses is so high that they need to be considered as ‘red’ or occasional foods despite their calcium content”



## Mini Vegetable Frittatas

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 1 large zucchini, grated
- ½ cup drained canned corn
- ¼ cup grated low-fat cheese
- ½ cup wholemeal self raising flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup oil
- 2 tablespoons sunflower kernels

1. Heat oil in a frypan and sauté onion until soft. Place in a large bowl.
2. Add carrot, zucchini, corn, cheese, flour and salt to the bowl.
3. Combine eggs and oil and stir into vegetable mixture.
4. Spoon mixture into lightly greased muffin pans. Sprinkle with kernels and

bake in a moderate oven, 180°C, for 30 minutes.

**Makes 12.**

Per Serve: 560kJ (130cal). Protein 5g. Total Fat 8g. Saturated Fat 1g. Carbohydrate 8g. Total Sugars 1g. Sodium 220mg. Potassium 120mg. Calcium 47mg. Iron 0.8mg. Fibre 3g.

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# Developing literacy skills with graphic organisers

**Margaret Strickland**

Teacher librarian, Endeavour College, Mawson Lakes, SA

“An information literate person is able to manage the increasingly complex information environment”

## Introduction

**As teachers we are constantly looking for ways to improve student learning. In Australia, educational theory and practice have predominantly moved from the behaviourist school of thought to the cognitive school of thought. From this position, a constructivist theory of learning has developed. Within this model, students are actively involved in the learning process. Practices in education have also been informed by information scientists who understand that information is important and is processed and adapted by learners in relation to what they already know.**

Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) also influenced the development of new methodologies in school curricula during the 1990s. Teachers became more aware of students who preferred a visual and / or spatial style of learning, which responded to visual and spatial learning techniques like graphic organisers.

Within these learning models, the users’ needs are central to information retrieval practices. Over the last twenty years bibliographic, programmed instruction in school libraries has given way to our current concept of information literacy education, which looks at information literacy as a process to be learnt within the mainstream curriculum of the school (Gordon, 2002). In Australian schools, we are now teaching a variety of literacies and literacy now has a much broader meaning. We talk about information literacy, visual literacy, ICT literacy, media literacy, thinking literacy and multicultural literacy, amongst others, and the interplay between them. New literacies must change what teachers do and how they weave literacies together at all levels of school education. The South Australian Certificate of Education Literacy Policy (2006) says there is a need to “improve student proficiency across a full range of literate practices appropriate to changing social and technological times”.

The term ‘information literacy’, first coined by Zurkowski (1974), assumes “information problem-solving skills that enable independent and effective

learning” (Capra & Ryan, 2002). Combes (2005) describes an information literate person as one who is able to use technology, is also ICT literate, is able to use a range of information resources, has a range of well-developed literacy skills, and is able to use information. This is a useful way of conceptualising information literacy because it allows a focus on the skills that students will need to acquire to attain this status. According to Combes (2005), an information literate person is able to manage the increasingly complex information environment.

While many writers have debated the nature of information literacy itself, educational institutions have proceeded to implement curriculum, which teaches students to become information literate. For example, Eisenberg & Berkowitz (1998) developed the Big6<sup>®</sup>, which is the most widely used approach to teaching information skills. The Big6<sup>®</sup> is an information literacy model and curriculum guide implemented in thousands of schools across the world from pre-school to higher education. Given a research task students are asked to work through a 6 step process:

1. task definition
2. information seeking strategies
3. location and access
4. use of information
5. synthesis
6. evaluation.

Sometimes the Big6<sup>®</sup> is called an information problem-solving strategy, because with the Big6<sup>®</sup> students are able to handle any problem, assignment, decision or task.

A new level of awareness of the effectiveness of using graphic organisers to assist people to become information literate came in the late 1990s through the work of American educator, Jamie McKenzie. During his visit to Australia, he addressed curriculum development in an Information Age. Among other things, he discussed the need to develop “free range students” (McKenzie, 1999, p.40) with effective navigation skills in an Information Age and the use of graphic organisers, like the Inspiration<sup>®</sup> software, to assist thinking and research skills in the twenty-first century.



Ausubel (1960) first described graphic organisers as a type of advance organiser presented prior to learning, so that the learner could organise and interpret new, incoming information. He developed the concept as a cognitive instructional strategy to promote the learning of new information—to bridge and link old information with new.

In the mid 1990s, Tony Buzan was a major player in developing the practice of using a particular type of graphic organiser, the mind map, to assist learning. He believes that “a mind map is the easiest way to put information into your brain and to take information out of your brain” (2002, p. 6). Buzan and Buzan (2003) define a mind map in terms of four characteristics: (a) a subject or a central image, (b) several main themes which radiate from the central image, (c) branches which display key images and words, and (d) a connected modal structure formed through these branches. As such, the mind map is structured for radiant thinking. Novak and Gowin (1984) also believed that concept maps have the capacity to enable meaningful learning and to clarify the key ideas to be focussed on in a specific task.

The Inspiration® program has developed and computerised graphic organisers for an educational setting. It is a visual thinking and learning program used for concept mapping, webbing, outlining, planning and presenting work. It has the capacity to integrate visual learning and technology into the literacy curriculum. Anderson-Inman and Zeitz (1993) compared the use of the Inspiration® program with the paper-and-pencil approach to concept mapping. They found that using Inspiration® encourages students to revise their concept maps

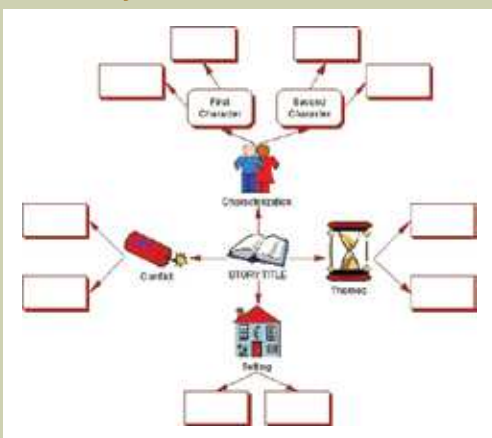
because deletions, additions and changes can be achieved quickly and easily. Figure 1 shows a sample template for the development of a concept map for story / novel analysis using Inspiration®.

It is not difficult to use graphic organisers in the classroom; however, it often requires a supportive, co-operative, risk-taking culture within schools (Nettelbeck, 2005). A movement towards the use of graphic organisers does not mean that writing is abandoned; rather, it gives teachers the option to diversify learning tasks and make learning more creative, open-ended and exciting. Nettelbeck (2005) believes that concept mapping is one way to create a high capacity educational system, in which “highly skilled teachers are able to generate creativity and ingenuity among their pupils”.

Carol Gordon’s (1995) research in which she combined her interests in education, information literacy and graphic organisers illuminates the current discussion. She created a student research assignment that integrated information literacy instruction with Biology curriculum. She comprehensively investigated the effect of graphic organiser training on the subsequent searching practices of Grade 10 Biology students in a Genetics unit. Gordon believes that concept mapping is a well-accepted method for clarifying concepts and discovering meaning “by graphically displaying the concepts and plotting relationships among them” (p. 115). Gordon used graphic organisers as the intervention with an experimental group, while a control group undertook the research assignment without using concept mapping but experiencing the same teacher. She was ultimately interested in whether the development of this skill in a specific unit of work would affect searching behaviour in a subsequent, related topic. She found that concept mappers showed a preference for print rather than electronic search tools, spent more time in print indexes, did more in their searching—they were more thorough and / or efficient searchers, were more inclined to concept-driven searching, and were more likely to make metacognitive judgments. Gordon also found that when concept mappers were searching electronically, they spent less time searching, worked in fewer and shorter sessions, used fewer search words, preferred subject heading rather than keyword searching, and performed more depth rather than breadth searches. Gordon concluded that mappers were more sensitive to the electronic environment, more efficient in the way that they used their time to perform more search operations per minute, more thorough in consistently applying a more concise repertoire of search terms and more thorough in engaging in more depth searching.

“*Concept mapping is one way to create a high capacity educational system*”

**Figure 1: Screen shot of Inspiration® template suitable for reception–year 10**



**Table 1: Literacies addressed through the use of graphic organisers**

Literacy type	Number of respondents / 40
Information literacy <sup>(a)</sup>	39
Information technology (ICT) literacy	26
Visual literacy	24
Traditional literacy (children's and / or adolescent literature) <sup>(b)</sup>	20
Thinking literacy <sup>(c)</sup>	9
Social literacy <sup>(d)</sup>	2

<sup>(a)</sup> Information literacy includes specific mention of information literacy Step 1

<sup>(b)</sup> Traditional literacy includes creative writing

<sup>(c)</sup> Thinking literacy includes higher order thinking and metacognition

<sup>(d)</sup> Social literacy includes teamwork, negotiation and peer mediation

## Research questions

The present study attempts to draw together literacy programs and graphic organisers and to look at how teacher librarians are using graphic organisers including mind-mapping software to address the literacy needs of their students. The current research literature fuelled further questions about the Australian experience of teacher librarians:

1. In which topics are teacher librarians using graphic organisers?
2. What type of literacies are they addressing?
3. What do teacher librarians perceive to be the benefits of using graphic organisers?
4. What methods do they use to create graphic organisers?

## Research method

In the current study, participants were recruited from teacher librarians in South Australia through the listserv SLASANET and Australia-wide through the listserv OZTL\_NET. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were adopted. Survey questionnaires, in email format, along with interviews were used to collect data on the behaviours, understandings, attitudes and practices of teacher librarians.

The respondents came from all states of Australia, all the major school education systems and all levels of schooling. The responses from the questionnaires were used to construct the themes and questions for the Interview stage. Interviewees were selected based on experience as teacher librarians; wide experience in various roles within the school setting; mobility within the education system;

and participation in key professional networks. For purely practical reasons, those selected were all from South Australia.

## Research findings

### Using graphic organisers in a range of topics

Teacher librarians listed a wide range of topics in which they had used graphic organisers. The most common topics were the human body, the environment, animals and Australia. The most common Key Learning Areas (KLAs) involved were Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), including History and Geography, and Science. Eighty percent of respondents had used graphic organisers in SOSE. The main reasons given for the use of graphic organisers in SOSE were that the content was appropriate for inquiry learning and that teachers in this KLA set research assignments. Sixty five percent of respondents had used graphic organisers in Science. Some teacher librarians noted that Science teachers like the organised, structured format of graphic organisers.

### Using graphic organisers to address literacy needs

Graphic organisers were seen to be of benefit to students operating in a range of literacy types. Teacher librarians listed the following literacies as being ones that could be addressed through the use of graphic organisers: information literacy (Step 1—Planning), traditional literacy (including creative writing), ICT literacy, visual literacy, thinking literacy (including higher order thinking and metacognition) (refer to Table 1). Information literacy was the literacy type most often addressed by teacher librarians.

### The benefits of using graphic organisers

Teacher librarians worked most frequently with students from Reception–Grade 10. Within this age range, they reported that both girls and boys responded positively to curriculum incorporating graphic organisers. Teacher librarians also indicated they felt that students from a wide range of ability levels, including students with learning difficulties, students with behavioural problems, gifted students, and second language learners, benefited from the incorporation of graphic organisers. Many teacher librarians felt that graphic organisers gave students with learning difficulties and gifted students the opportunity to work at their own pace with a satisfying and productive learning experience. Goldberg (2004) supports this finding that mind mapping cuts across ability levels.

Concept maps have a high degree of flexibility, which makes them a useful planning tool, having a capacity to clarify the key ideas for a specific task

**“Graphic organisers give students the opportunity to work at their own pace with a satisfying and productive learning experience”**

(Novak & Gowin, 1984), and brainstorm headings (Valenza, 2005). Graphic organisers have great value in compressing and focussing the student's attention on the topic better than any other means (McKenzie, 1997), in fact, the act of creating graphic organisers to illustrate the organisation of ideas and information aids comprehension and learning (Flood & Lapp, 1988). The teacher librarians in this study identified 39 educational benefits of using graphic organisers. As can be seen from Table 2, there was considerable consensus amongst the interviewees about the relevance of this list, seventy five percent of the interviewees each listed the top twenty-four benefits. All interviewees identified the important benefits of graphic organisers for planning research and organising information under main headings. Undoubtedly, these two benefits are not mutually exclusive, although the former implies a broader and more complex part of the information literacy process.

Graphic organisers are able to provide a scaffold for younger students by helping them know what to look for and what to do with it when they found it (Braxton, 2003; Jones, 2001). The interviewees identified assistance with scaffolding as a main benefit of graphic organisers for younger students. They also agreed that through graphic organisers, younger students can be introduced to information in a manageable form and better think through concepts and issues (refer to Table 2).

### The creation of graphic organisers

When it came to creating a mind map, computer-based graphic organiser programs were widely used. Thirty-four of the forty respondents had used electronic graphic organiser programs, with sixteen different programs listed as having been utilised by the group. However, Inspiration® was the most popular with 94% of respondents having used this program. Table 3 shows those programs that have

**Table 3: Computer programs used in the creation of graphic organisers\***

Computer program	Number of respondents / 40
Inspiration	32
Kidspiration	7
Word	6
Powerpoint	2
Publisher	2

\* Only those programs listed by at least two respondents have been included

**Table 2: The thirty-nine benefits of using graphic organisers**

Students can...	Number of responses / 12
1. plan their research	12
2. order and organise information under main headings	12
3. see their thought processes	11
4. extend thinking and establish connections	11
5. define the task	11
6. map existing knowledge ie What do I know?	11
7. focus on questions for research	11
8. use problem-based learning	11
9. view a visual representation of the process	11
10. engage in visual brainstorming	11
11. link ideas and concepts	10
12. sift and sort information	10
13. engage in collaborative learning	10
14. work on group thoughts and ideas	10
15. be motivated through the visual appeal of the program	10
16. move from the implicit to the explicit	9
17. use as a presentation tool including hyperlinking	9
18. work through all stages of information literacy cycle	9
19. exercise creativity	9
20. enjoy using graphics	9
21. relate to digital tools	9
22. think more clearly	8
23. see the links	8
24. exercise lateral thinking	8
25. judge the usefulness of the information	8
26. enjoy the open-ended nature of such tasks	8
27. retain information more efficiently	8
28. think more explicitly	7
29. use computers productively	7
30. have restricted opportunity to engage in plagiarism	7
31. produce quality work	6
32. use integrated tools	6
33. be less likely to lose work	6
34. compare before and after recording	5
35. work faster	5

Younger students can...	Number of responses / 12
1. be introduced to a manageable form for information	11
2. better think through concepts and issues	11
3. be assisted in scaffolding	10
4. be challenged to work at a higher level	6

“**Graphic organisers facilitated the development of a range of literacy types**”

been used by at least two respondents. (For an overview of graphic organiser websites of use to schools, go to the Shambles website.)

In general, teacher librarians liked the simple, user-friendly structure of Inspiration® and the focus on process. The strength of Inspiration® is in the process, in the idea that constructing the mind maps can lead to creative thinking (Bell, 2004). The teacher librarians in this study initially chose Inspiration® because, in many cases, it was already networked in the school, or inexpensive to buy, and it is Mac compatible. The program appeals to users because (a) it is easy to use, (b) it uses colour-coding to aid visualisation of the relationships between ideas, (c) it allows students to record a lot of information and view a broad topic more easily, (d) it minimises giving up, and (e) it is flexible enough to allow students to easily move between the graphic organiser and traditional note-taking formats.

### Conclusion

This research study revealed an impressive commitment from teacher librarians to their profession. They thought deeply about pedagogical issues, showed initiative in developing curriculum appropriate to their student populations and were involved in a wide range of curriculum initiatives. Their curriculum role gave them freedom to work with information literacy and graphic organisers,

which are more about methodology and process; in addition, they are able to operate outside the usual KLA content constraints. Teacher librarians reported that a wide range of students in terms of age, gender and ability level responded positively to curriculum incorporating graphic organisers, and that graphic organisers facilitated the development of a range of literacy types. **TEACH**

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## Kokoda Track

**Jill Pearce**

Principal, Macarthur Adventist College, NSW

**What follows is my account of the journey of a lifetime for myself, two staff members and ten amazing students of Macarthur Adventist College.**

### The beginning

This story began at the end of 2007, a very challenging year at Macarthur. It started with the loss of a very dear staff member to cancer and our first group of students to enroll in Year 9 as we commenced our push into senior high school. In an effort to rally my staff and the students, the question was, “How do I create unity and purpose for these young people when the death of our secondary coordinator had just dealt such a blow to their confidence?”

I believe that it was a God-given idea to seek out the possibility of taking our 2008 Year 10 students on an experience that would transform their lives. I know some people thought I was crazy to attempt this journey with our young people but I believe God never gives us more than we can handle! I knew nothing of the many challenges we would face in the completion of this expedition. The Kokoda Track is renowned for challenging people—young and old. It has claimed lives in war and peace. It has changed people for the better.

The biggest obstacle we faced in the initial stages was energising and inspiring 15 and 16-year-olds to do something that they thought was impossible to finance and outside both their interests and limitations. Thankfully, I had great people who were able to support me in getting the students excited about the dream. I had others to convince as well but that is another story. When we began this journey, it seemed a dream to us all.

### Planning and preparation

During the initial planning stage, we felt that we needed more guidance than what we were able to get from just discussing the details with travel agents. As Kokoda is a national icon, it requires a lot of permits and paperwork. Once again, God provided for us. Ross Whelan, principal of Thomas Hassall, a Christian School in our local area, and member of *Beyond Me*, offered to help. *Beyond Me* aims to change the lives of young people by taking them to Kokoda and they were willing to help us with the planning and finances for our trip.

Some people would like to know why I would want to go on one of the world’s most difficult and strenuous tracks in the world. Initially, I planned to stay in Port Moresby to provide professional development opportunities for local teachers while the group did the track, but a nagging thought kept returning, “How can I ask my students to do something that I’m not prepared to do myself? How tough could it be?” I was going to find out!

To prepare ourselves we started a training program and read about the track. Here’s an excerpt of one source we read:

It takes around ten hours of walking, climbing, clambering, slipping and skidding to travel from the township of Kokoda to the Isurava battlefield. Think of it as ten hours on a StairMaster exercise machine, most of the time in a steam room. During the tropical downpours which drench the land every afternoon, walking the terrain is like climbing under a fireman’s hose. The climbing is relentless, bringing searing pain to thigh muscles, but descending is far worse. It results in what the Diggers called ‘laughing knees’—an uncontrollable shaking brought about by overuse of the quads in unfamiliar fashion, a condition exacerbated by constant slipping in the wet. The rain in the tropics is unique. It is ‘fat’ rain. When you look at it through a clearing in the forest it seems to fall as constant straight lines rather than as drops. It completely changes the landscape. The ground turns to slush—heavy, cloying foul-smelling mud... When the rain eases, the heat kicks in and the humidity becomes almost unbearable—a smothering pressure-cooker. (source: <http://www.kokodatrackfoundation.org/track.html>)

In spite of reading many such sources, we still did not believe this was going to be so tough! How naïve we were! We had no concept of what Kokoda was going to be like.

### The track

I learned a number of life lessons on the track.

#### Push past the obstacles

Until you have tried something, you can never really comprehend what that something will be like. No matter how many times a person tells you that something is tough, easy, challenging, or exciting, you can never really know it until you have seen, tasted, heard or smelled it.



[Photography:  
Jill Pearce]

## My Journal

Day 2  
(blank)

Day 3  
(blank)

Day 4

Yes, there is a reason that I haven't been writing, I have been too exhausted to! The past two days have been nothing short of exhausting, grueling, humbling, and emotional! The body is weak but the blessings and support that I have received from the porters, the kids and the staff have been enormous.

On day two, we crossed a cruel mountain range up to Isurava, famous as the location where the Aussies showed their courage and tenacity while fighting off the invading Japanese army. That is another story that emotions and time won't allow me to share today. The gradient was straight up, up, and up for kilometres. By my side, I had our ex-army man come guide, Colin, along with the head porter and my own personal porter, Nick. I hadn't eaten much for two days, not enough to give me the energy I needed to do this. I began vomiting and dry reaching, unable to stop for some minutes. Colin was such a gentleman, he encouraged me all the way and even gave me his Gatorade to keep me going! I later found out that they didn't think the 'boss lady' was going to make it past that day!

At about 11 am on Day 2, I told Colin that I didn't think I would make it, that I didn't think I could go on. I had slipped and fallen three times that morning, I had bruises the size of tennis balls and lumps that made it hard for me to be comfortable moving, lying or sitting!

When we stopped at the end of Day 3, I even slipped on the steps coming down from the guesthouse. Luckily, I just ended up on my back on the grass, looking up at the sky and thinking what an idiot I was.

Day 4

...I'm still here! God what do You want from me?

### God loves idiots

Some people would think that I was an idiot to even try doing the track at my age (53) and in my physical condition (I had a tumour removed from my knee in April).

God loves me just as I am, when I make mistakes, when I fall, when I do things in the dark or in the light, He loves me enough to come along, pick me up, dust me off and get me going again. God loves me all the way. As I walked, climbed and stumbled along the Kokoda Track, those thoughts

came back to me, providing the comfort I needed. Each night, I talked with God about my day, thanked Him for getting me through it, asked Him to prepare me for the next day, and thanked Him for the courage of my colleagues and students.

While I lay on my mat each night, unable to move because my body was in so much pain, I would hear the voices of the students rising up in song as they worshipped God with the villagers. They didn't know it but I had tears of joy and pride rolling down my cheeks as I lay there. I knew they too had been challenged by each day of the walk but they persisted and overcame.

### God provides

On Day 2, after falling and vomiting my way to the top of a mountain ridge and passing through a dangerous water crossing, I came, completely exhausted, close to the rest stop. When I saw staff member, John Kama, waiting for me, I was so overcome that I burst into tears. Andre, our school chaplain, came down and they both prayed for me. At that moment, with both John and Andre holding onto me, I felt so blessed. Andre then rallied the students to support me too. As I approached the campsite, with John supporting me, the students greeted us with a song of encouragement and faith. They then nurtured me with food and words of affirmation until it was time to move on again.

### Humbly accept help from others

From that day on, the students devised a system to protect and encourage Mrs Pearce! It didn't take me long to realise that two of the students were 'assigned' to stay with me and encourage me along each section of the track. It was amazing to see these wonderful young people sacrifice to be with me as we moved slowly through the mud and over the tree roots, ever upward and then inevitably downward! Some sang as we trudged along and some quietly chatted but I was always mindful that they had chosen to be there. There was no one forcing them, no one making them feel bad, they just did it! I was very proud of them all; they were showing sacrificial service! Amazing!

### Trust

Have you ever held the hand of a stranger? Ever felt that if you didn't grasp a hold of something, you would die?

On the Kokoda Track, there are sections where you have to turn your body side on and inch your way along, holding firmly to tree roots and the hand of your porter, or you could fall hundreds of metres to the valley below. We all had to trust our porters. My porter, Nick, had done many treks and was more experienced than I, I had to trust him. Those who

*“While I lay unable to move because my body was in so much pain, I would hear the voices of the students as they worshipped”*



# Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

have done the track say, "If your porter holds out his hand for you, take it!"

When you are offered a hand, how ready are you to take it? Does pride sometimes get in your way? I have to admit that pride has been in the way for me in the past but Kokoda has changed all of that.

I spent four days walking through the jungle of Kokoda, holding the hand of a complete stranger and feeling totally at ease about it. My pride came tumbling down after Day 2, when I realised that if I didn't humble myself and accept Nick's help, I would be at risk. I learned to take his hand when he held it out to me, and to seek his hand when I needed the reassurance and support.

How many times have you sought the hand of another? How many times have you sought the hand of the Master? How many times have you fully admitted to Him that you can't do it on your own? Doing the track gave me, and the students, firsthand experience of the need to trust.

## Submission

Three times I begged the Lord to make this suffering go away. But He replied "My kindness is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak." So if Christ keeps giving me this power, I will gladly brag about how weak I am. Yes, I am glad to be weak, or insulted or mistreated or to have troubles and sufferings if it is for Christ. Because when I am weak, I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

I had read this verse many times but I didn't get its application to my life until I went on the Kokoda Track. I had turned to the Bible for answers to the pain I was enduring on Day 4. My right knee had swollen to twice its size and I wasn't able to walk without great pain.

As Day 5 wore on, my knee became more and more uncomfortable, stiff and swollen. I had taken

all the painkillers I could in an effort to reduce the swelling. I took myself off to pray about it and asked God to provide me with a miracle. The word soon spread that the 'boss lady' was having trouble. It wasn't long before a natural healer from another trekking group came over to massage heated reeds over my swollen knee. However, that evening, I was in so much pain I couldn't sleep. I lay in bed tossing and turning, praying and pleading with God to let me have my miracle—the chance to continue the journey. By morning, I still didn't have the miracle I was wanting. My leg was swollen and painful—there was no way I could continue.

I had fought with God and He had won. I had to submit to Him and what He had planned for me and for the rest of the team. It wasn't easy. I did not want to leave them but I knew that God had them in the palm of His hand and I could let go.

Have you had a wrestling match with God? Was it an issue for which you felt you knew the right answer? How often do you submitted to God and His will for your life?

When I look back on my life, I can see how God has used tough experiences to bring me to my knees. He is moulding and sculpting me into who He wants me to be. Those experiences aren't gentle or pleasant but, in the end, they will produce something beautiful. Sometimes it is hard to see how God is working or to recognise the miracle He sent but I am willing to accept that He is in control.

## The end of my Kokoda

As I watched the students leave the next morning, I prayed God would provide them with memories that would transform their lives.

## The journey continues

We are often reminded of the character traits of Kokoda: "sacrifice, courage, endurance, and mateship". I would love to report that the students were transformed and that they are now doing great things for their school and community, in reality, we are still on the journey of discovery and revelation. They are still discovering what God has planned for their future but they know that with God all things are possible. They conquered one of the most grueling climbs in the world! They did it as a team and they did it despite great difficulties. I am excited about what these students will do with their lives.

God has more 'life lessons' to teach each of us as He moulds us into the person He created each one to be. As the changes take place, we are provided with living examples of the character of God.

Kokoda has taught me that, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." **TEACH**

“I can see how God has used tough experiences to bring me to my knees”

## Reaching out in the Heat

Keen to reach out to those in your community, but don't know where to start? Want to help young adults make the right decisions when the heat is on, but aren't sure how to approach them?

As an organisation that focuses on strengthening families and instilling hope into the broader community, Focus on the Family does not hesitate to reach out to those who are questioning everything in the midst of a crisis, and the Victorian Bushfires was no exception. 'It's much more than grief and loss,' says Counselling & Program Development Manager, Deb Sorenson, who assisted in providing resources to those helping the fire victims. 'It's about helping people deal with trauma.'



But the practical service of Focus on the Family is not limited to crises, as it pursues many issues including those youth related. It is now accredited by the Department of

Education and Training to offer the No Apologies Impact seminar to young adults in Years 7-10 as part of state's curriculum, a seminar designed to help teens make healthy decisions about life, love and sex.

Education and Training to offer the No Apologies Impact seminar to young adults in Years 7-10 as part of state's curriculum, a seminar designed to help teens make healthy decisions about life, love and sex.

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**Good Food News:** Our quarterly newsletter featuring stories on nutrition, recipes and Sanitarium news.

**Brochures:** Loads of leaflets on healthy eating for different groups from kids through to people with diabetes or Coeliac's disease.

**Recipe of the Week:** We email you a delicious recipe each week complete with nutrition breakdown.

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## When the whole world was talking

World Forum on Early Care and Education, 2009

**Kaye Judge**

Director, Kindy Patch, Eleebana, NSW

### Commencing the conversations

**It was in Belfast, Northern Ireland, June 2009, when 625 early childhood professionals from more than 80 countries gathered to attend the Eighth World Forum on Early Care and Education.**

We arrived as strangers, unsure of what to expect but certain that destinies would be determined and career paths changed through listening to professional dialogue and engaging with communities in passionate conversation.

### Conversations to connect children as citizens

A challenging question was posed to the group.

*The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is 20 years old: should we celebrate? Every one of us here, whatever country or context we come from, can give proof to the fact that the rights are not a reality for every child.*

We must celebrate the existence of the Convention as a platform on which to stand and address the needs confronting and surrounding all of us. Individual schools have achieved great things through the involvement of young children in identifying their rights as citizens. Children from the Boulder Journey School in Colorado contributed their perspectives.

*Children have the right to have fun; be listened to; clean air; play tea parties, even with real tea; hang upside down when it is safe; guess how things work; have their hair look like they want; and lots more!*

Presenter Clionagh Boyle challenged our views on quality environments, media initiatives and programmes to support special differences, giving us a greater understanding of the complexities of the ecology of Child Rights.

### Critical conversations on conservation

If we want to save our world then we have to develop the love of nature in our children while they are young. We all need to love the earth and its natural treasures before we will work to save it.

Presentations covered topics such as perspectives on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Early Childhood through

indigenous knowledge, entrepreneurial thinking, and the recycling of waste, all critical issues for human survival (John Siraj-Blatchford); Early Childhood Reggio inspired environments in Australia and America (Fran Bastion); and the richness of nature as the foundation and uniting thread in all quality learning experiences (Clare Warden).

### Creative conversations

Delegates were creatively courted and converted by verbal and non-verbal conversations. A workshop by Maureen Harris on Montessori music was discussed around tables long after the event. The role of photography and filmmaking was another creative avenue presenting new directions in education. The busy art session challenged participants to think creatively by “creating community through the language of materials”.

### Conversations with champions

Lillian Katz in her address, Conversations on Early Childhood Education, said “Whoever might be the leader of our country in 40 or 50 years from now, is likely to be in someone’s early childhood program today... Knowing about children is not enough, we must know each child.” She spoke with such wisdom and clarity, challenging us to think about the essentials of teacher education and competence.

It was life changing and life giving to be present and share ‘real space’ with amazing creators, mentors and leaders. I found myself chatting with Lillian Katz over a book signing; catching a lift with Margaret Akinawbe, a beloved spokeswoman for Africa’s children; listening to the gentle Jan Peeters crusading for men in Early Childhood Education; devouring Dr Stuart Shanker’s critical findings on how social and emotional interactions develop the mind thereby affecting the development of the brain; and reflecting with Professor Colin Gibbs as he described teachers who have “presence” as those who promote wonderment, love and compassion. These experiences now make reading research seem like a friendly chat with newly found friends.

### Captured by a conversation

Whilst taking a final stroll around Belfast, I witnessed

“  
If we want  
to save our  
world then  
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while they  
are young”

# Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

an inspirational scene. There amongst a double row of water fountains a young, bright-eyed, giggling boy with tight black curls ran, jumped and danced for joy as spouts of water splashed over his face and soaked his beautiful clothes. With arms raised high to the sunshine, ready to catch the water as it fell, he clapped enthusiastically, spreading the water all around. His father, a well-groomed businessman, stood back laughing. Passers-by paused, suspending their lives for a moment to absorb this sacred scene of childhood joy.

I realised that captured and expressed in this moment was much of what this World Forum promoted; the importance of the role of men and father's in the lives of children; the importance of spontaneous play; the need to incorporate natural play-spaces in public places in order to connect children to nature; the willingness of adults to suspend their agendas and allow time to appreciate the spontaneous expressions of children's joy; the friendship and hospitality of strangers; the celebration of diversity; the view of children as our teachers and often times, healers; the call to remember that children are our first priority, they are

citizens now; and the refreshing notion that it is good to take time to celebrate!

## The conversations go global

The power of our conversations throughout this week will result in the creation of something new, something good. Our words create worlds, worlds of hope, peace, love and greater joy for children and those who work with them and for them.

Bonnie Neugebauer offered the 2009 World Forum Challenge, which can potentially involve all of us in advocating for children. It's called *1:01*. At one minute past one, everyday, take 1 minute to advocate for improving the life of young children in some small or large way. There is an online web blog where you can be inspired by others or tell your story of advocacy for children ([www.worldforumfoundation.org](http://www.worldforumfoundation.org)).

In 2011, the World Forum is destined for another city. Wherever that may be, plan to attend. It is a time where you will feel the world's warmest heartbeat and hear the most inspiring words helping to re-ignite your love of children and empower your contribution to it. TEACH

“*Whoever might be the leader of our country in 40 or 50 years from now is likely to be in someone's early childhood program today*”



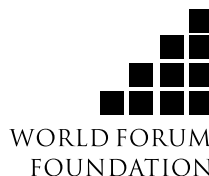
## Conversations on Early Childhood Teacher Education

*Co-editors: Andrew Gibbons & Colin Gibbs*

*Introductory chapter by: Lilian G. Katz, PhD*

This book is for all student teachers, teacher educators, and early childhood professionals who choose to share in, and continue, inspiring conversations within their own early childhood experiences and settings.

Price: NZD \$60.00



New Zealand Tertiary College

Available through NZTC Books at: [books@nztertiarycollege.ac.nz](mailto:books@nztertiarycollege.ac.nz)



# Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

## BOOK REVIEW

### *The brain that changes itself*

Norman Doidge, M.D. (2007). Melbourne, VIC: Scribe.

#### Kristin Thompson

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

When scientists first started to look at the convolutions of the brain, they may well have been reminded of a geographical landscape. There are few geographical frontiers still to be conquered, but the very latest equipment is only now making exploration of the brain a feasible venture.

In 2007, the Canadian psychiatrist, Norman Doidge, M.D., wrote a book that has received several favourable reviews, *The brain that changes itself*. I paid \$35 for my paperback version. Although it is of equal interest to the layperson, teacher, administrator, therapist and scientist, the writing style is easily accessible to the layperson. It has been such a hit that it has become an international bestseller. It was reprinted five times in 2008, with yet another reprint in 2009. Doidge uses numerous case studies to illustrate how amazingly the brain is able to change in response to various situations or trauma in order to improve quality of life.

The book's main theme is that people can learn because brains can change. This proposal is of great significance to teachers and education administrators. This book emphasises that biology is not destiny—things can change—and that the environment can help.

Doidge shows that the brain is not static.

We have been so enamoured by the machine and by computers that we have limited our understanding of the brain to the likeness of a machine that we ourselves have made. Doidge claims contact with many dedicated scientists and laypeople that have experienced the recovery of brain functions traditionally considered unrecoverable, and concludes that the brain is plastic. By providing biological explanation for some of our wilder taboos, he also makes sense of unconventional phenomena. The shoe fetish, for example, may arise because the brain maps for feet and sex are very close.

After reading this book we may feel guilty that we have not had the money, or have not been able to mobilise the effort needed to help our students and staff achieve the potential for change that our plastic brains allow. Some of the changes reported in the book have required considerable financial, physical, emotional and faith resources. Case study after case study is cited, challenging the status quo.

Norman Doidge visited Australia this year. I heard him open an address by quoting the Hebrew Scriptures, saying that the Lord God spoke and there was light. He said, "thought influenced substance". He went on to say that in the Gospel, the Word becomes flesh—"thought influences substance". He then went on to use video case studies to illustrate his point. During the book signing, I asked whether Jesus' words about telling a mountain to throw itself into the sea is an indication that Jesus sees the world as plastic, to which Norman Doidge answered, "Well, thought influences substance".

The book is very engaging and accessible. It makes change seem not only possible, but understandable. I have also been given new inspiration in reflecting on the teachings of Jesus. Enjoy the case studies and see what it does for you! **TEACH**

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# TEACH JOURNAL

online

www.ministryofteaching.edu.au

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "Ministry of Teaching :: Teacher Stories". The page content includes:

- Ministry Of Teaching** logo at the top left.
- A video player showing a portrait of **Jack Ryan**. Below the video are playback controls and the text "Main Menu".
- A navigation menu on the right side with the following items:
  - Teacher Stories**
  - Pathways
  - Journal
  - Contact
- A bio for **Jack Ryan**:

**Jack Ryan**  
My interest in teaching started because of my interest in teaching art. The longer I stayed at Avondale, I came to realise how much I enjoyed the connection with people, and that's what kept me at college. 21 years later, this remains one of the most important reasons why I love teaching. I am the Principal at Brisbane Adventist College.
- Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube at the bottom right.



ACCESS BY EQUITY GROUPS <small>Derived from DEWR data</small>	STAFF QUALIFICATIONS <small>Derived from DEWR data</small>	STUDENT-STAFF RATIO <small>Derived from DEWR data</small>	THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE: TEACHING QUALITY <small>Derived from GCA data</small>	THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE: GENERIC SKILLS <small>Derived from GCA data</small>	THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE: OVERALL SATISFACTION <small>Derived from GCA data</small>	GRADUATE STARTING SALARY <small>Derived from GCA data</small>
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