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This edition of *TEACH* highlights the 'caring' mission and 'restorative' ministry of Christian teachers



Ministry Of Teaching

EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry
Guest Editor

Just a tree.

Its significance in 'the killing fields' however, was sobering. The notice at Choeung Ek stated its historic inhumane use. In an orchard Chinese burial ground, 15 km outside of Phnom Penh, the Chankiri Tree was brutally used to kill children, swinging them by their legs and smashing their heads against the trunk. Some soldiers carried out executions laughing, not wishing to convey any suggestion of sympathy that could incriminate them. Adult execution was by poisoning, bashing with digging tools or pointed bamboo sticks, methods designed to save ammunition. A Buddhist stupa containing 5,000 skulls is a sobering but confronting genocide memorial. Prior internment and interrogation, under extreme torture, occurred at Security Prison 21 (S-21), a former high school in Phnom Penh, and resulted from being accused of "pre-revolutionary lifestyles", including being lazy intellectuals (professors and teachers), in contact with foreigners through free market practices, or involvement with government agencies, missionaries, or NGOs. Yale researchers (Genocide Studies Program, 2010) estimate that in enforcing an 'agrarian' culture, 20% of the population died:

The Khmer Rouge regime headed by Pol Pot combined extremist ideology with ethnic animosity and a diabolical disregard for human life to produce repression, misery, and murder on a massive scale. (para. 1)

Commentators acknowledge the 'gut-wrenching' experience for an international visitor, but question the impact of memorials on Cambodians due to government ambivalence to forming a cultural memory, reconciliation and adjudicated justice.

Choosing to be confronted by this evidence in July 2010 caused personal reflection on why viewing the sites, considering such brutality and suffering, seeing the disbelief and despair in the photographic record of the victims held in S-21, could be a beneficial experience. Concurrently, news revealed that "Duch", the director of S-21, previously a mathematics teacher in the high school, was on trial admitting his supervisory role and apologising to the relatives of victims, yet later making an appeal against personal responsibility. Duch, using aliases, went 'missing' for 20 years and had become a Christian prior to discovery by an Irish journalist and his arrest.

UN sponsored judicial investigations in Cambodia have begun to address the aching hearts of the nation, yet relatives of victims are unable to approve any graciousness in sentencing.

While editing *TEACH*, musing on how a teacher could behave in this way shaped my responses to articles. There was resonance with Bryan Cowling's "The Revolutions We Need to Have", acknowledging eight changes needed, especially in Christian schools, to move from promoting national productivity, to systemic changes for the development of sound character in each person. Engagement with Faull's critical assessment of the proposed National Curriculum, invited considered reaction to preserve the ethos of schooling.

How should I react to abuse within my culture? Kilgour, advocates being proactive in addressing child abuse as the "public health problem of the decade" and collaborates with Watson (author of *Finding David*, see the book reviews) in researching school-based mentoring as a preventive and restorative interaction. School roles, strategies and suitable resources could protect Internet users as clarified by Chadwick and Knight. Forming supportive attachments in early school experiences emerges from Clarke's case study, as some compensation for parental inadequacy.

Can school life be better? Ludlow justifies play in the early establishment of essential 21st century skills. Skrzypaszek commends "The Higher View of Education", an incarnational ministry suited to post-moderns, preparing students for service extending through eternity. Solomon's "rear-vision" is used by Rieger to illustrate a research methodology, but also conveys culminative 'wisdom'.

Protection from 'cultural' genocide needs the 'caring' mission and 'restorative' ministry of Christian teachers. Participation needs commitment to revolutionary behaviour motivated by recall of the Calvary killing field?

Remember the tree. **TEACH**

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“Protection from 'cultural' genocide needs the 'caring' mission and 'restorative' ministry of Christian teachers”

[Photography:
Glenys Perry]

The revolutions we need to have¹

Bryan Cowling

Chief Executive Officer, Anglican Education Commission, Diocese of Sydney, NSW

There is no doubt that the phrase “The Education Revolution” as distinct from ‘a revolution in education’, coined by the ALP spin doctors before the 2007 election, has been very effective. Some might say it ranks alongside Gough Whitlam’s “It’s time” as one of the most memorable epithets in recent Australian political history.

What then Prime Minister Rudd and his Education Minister Julia Gillard sought to achieve under the banner of ‘The Education Revolution’ was, by modern standards, quite impressive. It included the roll out of two billion dollars worth of computers, the framing of a national curriculum where others have tried and failed, the establishment of new standards, the introduction of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), the creation of the *My School* website, the implementation of national partnerships and the progressive diminution of state sovereignty over school education. Most governments in the past have been content to tackle just one big initiative at a time realising that even one initiative can take eons to implement. The Rudd Government overwhelmed the educational community with a multiplicity of initiatives concurrently. It is too early to judge how effective any of these initiatives have been, let alone to establish whether individually or collectively, they represent a revolution in educational practice, let alone educational thinking.

At the same time, observers of Australian education have recognised that the past decade has seen an increased emphasis on pragmatism and utilitarianism as the driving forces behind education. Instead of defining the purposes of education in terms of personal growth and character formation, education more often than not is now described in terms of its contribution to national productivity. This shift in emphasis explains the focus on national curriculum, national assessment, national standards and the ubiquitous *My School* website. Such a revolution has its good points as well as its bad points.

A less perceptible revolution, but no less real, has been the demise of ‘the development of the whole person’ in favour of more specialised, partial

development of persons. Instead of setting out to develop in a holistic way, the academic, physical, social, cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions of their children, the majority of schools are focusing their efforts on the academic, the social and the physical domains almost to the exclusion of the cultural, moral and spiritual. It could be said in many cases, parents have been accomplices in this unfortunate distortion in education by not challenging its incompleteness.

Some commentators have questioned whether Australia needed Rudd’s “Education Revolution”. Others have gone further to question whether Australia needs a revolution of any kind in education. For my part, from a Christian educator’s perspective, there are at least eight areas in which some revolutionary thinking, talking and action is needed.

Revolution 1: An authentic Australian Christian approach to education

The first of these is the need for us to create an authentic Australian Christian approach to education. This will be an approach that impacts education, formal and informal, from the cradle to the grave, that includes early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, tertiary education of all kinds, formal and informal adult education, credentialed and non-credentialed.

Note the need is not for an approach to Christian education but rather a Christian approach to education. The term ‘Christian education’ has become a cliché devoid of quality. The term ‘Christian education’ has come to mean almost anything you like that has to do with Christianity. On the other hand, a Christian approach to education is one that is deeply informed by a biblical theology and worldview.

The very mention of the term ‘worldview’ is a turn-off for many people in Australia, including Christians and is regarded by some people as being too cognitive, or too clinical. But the reality is, each views the world—what we read and what we hear, what we teach—through a lens that is shaped, more than we realise, by what we value and desire. What we desire above all else frames our priorities and our behaviour, in schools and in our teaching.

A Christian approach to education includes how to:

- present the prescribed curriculum;
- choose between the myriad of options provided for in the syllabuses;

Instead of defining the purposes of education in terms of personal growth and character formation, more often than not it is described in terms of its contribution to national productivity

¹ This paper is an edited version of Bryan Cowling’s Opening Address to the National Christian Schools Policy Forum in Canberra on 24 May, 2010.

- explain the purpose of learning;
- regard students (sponges to soak up knowledge stuff, automatons to be programmed to think and speak in a certain way, clones to be shaped into an image of the parent or educator, eternal creatures made in God's image to love and serve him forever, devils to be disciplined);
- assess what has been learned, and why.

A Christian approach impacts the way teachers nurture and challenge students' talents and abilities for the benefit of the class and community. A Christian approach to education gives a different meaning to pastoral care, a different meaning to service, a different meaning to quality and a different meaning to leadership. A Christian approach to education is integral to making people whole. A Christian approach to education challenges two of the gods of this age: individualism and consumerism and emphasises a fundamental principle of relationalism in God's world.

An authentic 'species' that is Australian is needed, not a transplant from somewhere else. But more than that, educators need to frame a Christian approach to education in a language that enables discussion about it and linkage into the public market place, into the wider educational community. So this approach needs to be plausible. It needs to make sense even to those who might ultimately reject it.

Revolution 2: Serious, positive engagement with the curriculum

Christian educators need to engage seriously and positively with the curriculum. It is important in the refining of the curriculum documents that an appropriate balance is found and maintained between what is important for us as a nation and what is important for each school and teacher to deliver.

In our responses to the National Curriculum, our arguments should be restricted to major issues of principle, which if implemented, would cause us to compromise our allegiance to Jesus Christ or get in the way of our practice of a legitimate Christian approach. Let others pursue the issues of preference and taste, the addition of this piece of content, the omission of something else but let us address the big issues of principle.

Though we are Christians, we live, work, lead and teach in a fallen world, a world of competing ideologies, a world of education and scholarship that is pluralistic in the best sense of the word, and in which a modernist or post-modernist view of the world is pervasive.

It is important that the curriculum supports the spirit of curiosity, the promotion of humility in the

face of the abundance of what we do not know. It is critical that the quantity and complexity of what is included in each syllabus does not impede students' acquiring a life-long love of learning, a warm and respectful relationship with each of their teachers, and a positive disposition towards exploring God, His world, His revelation of Himself, and the purpose for which we have been created. In particular it ought not to be what we censor that distinguishes our schools from others, but how we address what is prescribed for us.

Revolution 3: Holistic integrative thinking and speaking about truth in the disciplines

One of the features that distinguishes Christian schools per se, from say Anglican schools generally, is the use of language such as 'the integration of Christian faith and learning'. By and large this sort of language does not appear in the publicity material for most Anglican schools, but it does appear in the prospectuses for many Christian schools. However, when it comes to examining what 'integration' means in practice, the differences between our schools are not so large. This occurs despite the vast amount of literature that has been written on the theory and the theology of integration, with these resources being accessible for many years.

This is a significant issue in its own right and I do not have time to develop it here. Suffice to say, a genuine integration of God's truth claims as revealed in the Bible and through Christ, together with the truth claims of each and every one of the academic disciplines studied in our schools, requires an intentional, thorough, accurate and carefully thought through understanding of biblical theology and doctrine, and an equally purposeful study and understanding of how academic knowledge claims are made, including the worldviews underlying those claims.

Christian teachers cannot hide behind rhetoric in this area. In fact, each needs to put behind them the fumbling, trivialised and often pious efforts of bygone decades and promote, practise and showcase radically different, holistic, integral approaches to thinking, teaching and learning. A revolution is needed in the way educators think and the way teachers speak and discuss this area of professional practice. It will manifest itself in a more authentic representation of Christian teachers as genuine educators and learners.

Revolution 4. Deepening and broadening the knowledge base of all school staff

It follows, therefore, that every teacher Christian schools place in front of students needs to be as highly equipped in their knowledge and application of the Bible

An authentic 'species' that is Australian is needed, not a transplant from somewhere else. But more than that, educators need to frame a Christian approach to education in a language that enables discussion about it and linkage into the public market place

as they are in the subjects they teach. It is apparent that this goal, to bring their teachers up to a suitable benchmark of theological knowledge and commitment (as well as pedagogy), may place an onerous burden on many schools. But the price schools pay, and the price our students now and in the future will pay if educators don't do this, is much greater. It is reasonable to expect all of our teachers to be engaged in on-going personal and professional development. In typically Aussie style, educational administrators tend to say that this is a matter for each individual to determine.

The professional credibility of Christian schools is a communal matter. All teachers need to be true life-long learners for the sake of the body to which they belong. Lifelong learning is integral to life in God's kingdom. Personal advice offered to people suggests, "In God's new world all will be engaged in gifted and talented programs and applied biblical studies. Get used to it now, get hooked now."

This paper flags the importance of Christian schools taking a more proactive role in deepening and broadening the skills and knowledge base of all of their staff, and doing everything they can to facilitate it. Just think how far \$2million per school could have gone if it had been applied to this instead of to bricks and mortar!

How important an investment is your school or the schools you know making in this area? When the going gets tough, is it your professional development budget that is the first to be slashed? How strategic is your deployment of time and money in regards to professional development?

Revolution 5. Succession planning for leadership in education

In Anglican schools across Australia, as no doubt in other sectors, many school leaders will retire over the next five years. There is no shortage of literature in this country and overseas recounting the reluctance of good teachers to put their names forward to lead big schools. Succession planning has never been done very well in Australia, and this also applies in our school sector.

Tomorrow's school leaders need more than school experience and secular higher education qualifications. In my view, they need applied theological training so that they can exercise the ministry to their staff (and students) that the churches are not able to directly offer. This presents as a major challenge because it is costly in terms of money and time, every school and current Head says they don't have enough of it, so it does not happen.

Our respective sectors are trying hard to identify, mentor, challenge and encourage aspiring leaders—not just for our own schools I hope, but for the whole range of schools. Our Diocese shares a particular

'heart' concern for our Christian brothers and sisters in government schools who need Christ-centred leadership development just as much, if not more, than the teachers in our own schools.

Unless educational systems invest more in the preparation of our future leaders, our schools will suffer badly.

It is apparent that schools are facing (and have been facing for some time) a desperate shortage of home-grown scholars in education who think, lecture, write and advocate Christianly.

- Where are our philosophers of education?
- Where are our outstanding leaders of education who also have a sound theological background and experience?
- Who is doing the seminal and scholarly thinking about education?
- Who can take on the pragmatists and reductionists at their own game?
- Where are the career paths in Australia for a teacher in your school who aspires to pursue a PhD or an EdD in education and theology?

In September last year Archbishop Peter Jensen delivered the Isaac Armitage Lecture in which he asked the question: "Is there such a thing as Anglican education?" "If there is," he asked, "where is the literature, what are its foundations and how is it manifested in Anglican schools?" Out of this has grown a small think tank of theologians, educators, academics and others who have been charged with the responsibility of writing a seminal book, creating a 'school of thought' that forms the basis for a more conscious, rigorous biblically-based philosophy and practice in education. This initiative is being supported by a serious campaign to encourage a score of our best thinkers and teachers to undertake postgraduate study/research. Schools and school systems have a lot of catching up to do.

Revolution 6: Purposeful recruitment of Christians to teaching

There are about 279,000 teachers in Australian schools. It is predicted that over the next five years, 110,000 of these will resign or retire. It is the policy (and an assumed practice) of many of the schools in the Christian school sector to employ only committed Christians, or at least to give preference to the employment of Christians. This practice has been facilitated in some jurisdictions by an exemption from certain anti-discrimination laws. A review of current trends in policy and practice suggests a concern that these concessions will not last forever.

For over five years the Anglican Diocese of Sydney has been actively promoting teaching as a worthy and strategic vocation for Christians. The first three years were focused primarily on senior

Tomorrow's school leaders need more than school experience and secular higher education qualifications. They need applied theological training so that they can exercise the ministry to their staff (and students) that the churches are not able to directly offer

students in government and independent schools as well as students in University. For the past two years this initiative was shared with teachers and potential career changers. The Diocese employs a full time person, Ian Keast, as the Director of the Christians in Teaching Project. Other non-government and government schools have benefitted, perhaps even more than Anglican schools, from Ian's tireless efforts. The need to recruit more educators who are highly competent, enthusiastic, mission-oriented, Bible-believing Christians into teaching, the leadership positions in schools, and for that matter into tertiary education institutions, is taken seriously. If it is important that the students in our schools are taught by committed Christian teachers then there is a need to expand our collective efforts to put before Christians the challenge and opportunity of teaching.

Revolution 7: School operation justifies only employing Christian teachers

But more needs to be done than that, and that's where the revolution comes into it. There is a need to conduct our schools in such a way that justifies the claim that only committed Christians can do the job. That is to say, unless a Christian approach to teaching (and pastoral care and relationship building) is adopted in which there is such an authentic integration of faith with learning that only a Bible-believing and practising (applying) Christian with the requisite quality professional knowledge and competence can do the teaching, schools forfeit the right to the exemption from anti-discrimination laws associated with religious observance. If all Christian schools want is teachers who are caring and work as professionals and don't deliberately undermine what the schools are about, then why should these schools claim to only want to employ committed Christians?

Let it also be understood, that just because a teacher professes to be a Bible-believing Christian does not guarantee for one minute that they think, live, speak and teach in an authentic Christian way.

Revolution 8: Working, praying, standing and acting together

There is a final revolution which all of the foregoing points put together require. It is an outcome that our minds will tell us should be promoted, but our hearts and hands might take longer to embrace. Almost every one of the exhortations referred to above impacts in some way on each of our constituencies.

It is readily recognised that there are still lots of misperceptions, misunderstandings, distrust, prejudice and stereotypes held amongst Christian educators, of each other. Sometimes these go back generations and need to be debunked. Different organisations have their own histories and these must be respected. However, it is very important that Christian educators work together, pray together, stand together and where possible act together. At the same time they need to encourage spiritual brothers and sisters who are striving to serve as modern-day Daniels in government schools. In many cases, they do not have around them supportive and praying Christians. To do less is to squander the opportunities and resources God has given to us.

Putting all these challenges together establishes an agenda for change that is much larger than Kevin Rudd could ever imagine. At the heart of our revolution (or all eight of them) is the need for authenticity and integrity. Christian educators cannot, in honesty before our Lord, whose claims on followers are total, pretend to be about His work in education and not subject all that is done to His Lordship. **TEACH**

“There are still lots of misperceptions, misunderstandings, distrust, prejudice and stereotypes held between Christian educators. It is very important that Christian educators work together, pray together, stand together and act together”

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The Australian Curriculum

A look through the lens of Christian education

Adele Faull

Coordinator, Quality Teaching and Learning K–12, Avondale School,
Sessional Lecturer, Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW

Abstract

The development of the Australian Curriculum is an ambitious task that involves meeting the needs of a large range of interest groups, each with its underlying philosophy and conceptualisation of what constitutes an effective and viable curriculum. The context of independent, Christian education systems and schools adds an important dimension to a discussion of the challenges that confront teachers and administrators as we move towards the implementation of a national curriculum. The observations and questions presented in this paper are not exhaustive, but are based on seminars and consultation sessions, discussions with a variety of teachers and subject coordinators, and wide reading of the documentation that has been forthcoming from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and other sources. The purpose of this paper is to promote discussion and reflection relating to the issues that confront teachers and educational institutions as they prepare for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, particularly in the context of Christian education.

Setting a context

The development of the Australian Curriculum is an initiative introduced by the Federal Government and managed at a national level under the auspices of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). It is based on the premise, “A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgement of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future” (ACARA, 2009, p. 6).¹ The Australian Curriculum is conceptualised in terms of states and territories working nationally with the intention of “harnessing expertise and effort in the pursuit of common national goals” (p. 6). These

goals involve “national acceptance of responsibility for high-quality, high-equity education across the country” (p. 6).

In *The Shape Paper*, ACARA admits there is nothing new in the idea of national collaboration concerning education. The 1989 Hobart Declaration and the 1999 Adelaide Declaration are cited as examples. In particular, the paper focuses on the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) as providing an effective framework for developing an Australian Curriculum. An examination of the available documentation and comment on the draft curriculum for Phase 1, however, indicates there are still unresolved challenges and issues inherent in such an ambitious project. The context of Christian-based education provides an added dimension for discussing these issues and the ramifications of a national curriculum for independent, Christian schools across Australia.

At the heart of the conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum is the issue of equity. Professor Barry McGaw, Chair of the National Curriculum Board (NCB) stated in a media release on 24 February 2009:

The key issue of equity and diversity relates to development of national curriculum that will be based on assumptions that all students are learners and every child matters. National curriculum will be accessible to all students and high standards will be expected while acknowledging the markedly different rates at which students develop (p. 1)

In spite of this underlying principle, however, there are anomalies and issues that need to be addressed.

General issues emanating from the Australian Curriculum

While it has been, and continues to be, of critical importance to examine specific learning areas included in Phase 1 (English, History, Mathematics and Science) and Phase 2 (Geography, the arts and languages) of the development of the Australian Curriculum, including opportunity for constructive feedback relating to the draft curriculum for each, it

“A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgement of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future”

¹ For the purposes of this article, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* will be referred to as *The Shape Paper*.

is also important to examine the 'big picture'. This includes issues that occur across the Australian Curriculum. The issues identified in this paper represent some of the major concerns. There are others that continue to be cause for debate.

1. Time allocation, timetabling and 'special character'

The issue of time allocation and timetabling emanating from the Australian Curriculum is likely to present schools with considerable challenge. This is particularly true of the history curriculum in the secondary school. Changes in the nature and volume of content for history 7–10, for example, call for more teaching time to be allocated to that subject area. This leads to the following questions: *From where will this additional time come? Will schools be expected to take time away from other subjects of critical importance such as English and Mathematics?* A related question is, *How will equity be determined in terms of time allocation for different learning areas?*

There is an extra dimension to this issue in the context of independent, Christian schools and systems, and this touches on the issue of 'special character'. A key aspect of schools within the Seventh-day Adventist system of education, for example, is that in both the primary and secondary school, time is allocated for the formal study of Christian biblical teachings, beliefs and interpretation. From a pragmatic perspective, it would be very easy simply to take time from this part of the curriculum and give it to mainstream subjects, such as history. The fundamental issue, however, is that doing so may begin to erode the 'special character' of the school.

Pastoral care and time given to the social, emotional and spiritual nurture of the child is also potentially under threat and this is a concern. If the fundamental philosophy of the school focuses on the development of the 'whole child', then it is of critical importance that time in the school curriculum is allocated to pastoral care. With the increasing demands on subject content and skill acquisition associated with the specific subject areas nominated in the development of Phases 1 and 2 of the Australian Curriculum, schools are under pressure to find that time in the timetable.

2. Funding considerations

There is no doubt that more resources, including more teachers, and certainly, ongoing and intensive professional development, will be needed not only to meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, but also to interpret what it means in terms of changes to existing school structures and resources.

This is particularly true if the intention of ACARA and the Federal Government is to ensure consistency in terms of interpretation and implementation across all the states and territories in Australia. Considerable financial pressure is already placed on schools and government departments of education. This begs the question, *Who will fund the necessary material and human resources, and who will fund the professional development of programs to assist teachers and educational systems to meet the demands implicit in the Australian Curriculum?*

Many independent and state/territory schools are facing intense financial challenge in the context of global economic trends. Careful and creative thought needs to be given to ways of addressing this issue and its considerable ramifications. In Queensland, for example, there are already moves to restructure the schooling system to accommodate the new focus on years 7 to 10 as one cohort. Traditionally, in that state, students in year 7 were still part of the primary school structure. Issues such as, *Who will teach the year 7 cohort, as they become part of the secondary school structure?* and *From where will the funding come to provide for all the ramifications of these structural changes?* add to the financial burden of school systems and state/territory government departments. This leads to considerations such as, *Will there be a need to make cuts in other areas of the school curriculum in order to accommodate the required transition to the Australian Curriculum?* Independent, Christian schools need to be aware that the focus on Christian teaching may be challenged because of funding considerations when the Australian Curriculum is fully implemented.

3. Assessment and reporting

Assessment is an integral part of curriculum development and implementation, yet it appears that the *nature* of assessment has not been an integral component of the process of developing the Australian Curriculum. This aspect of the proposed changes is open to debate. According to ACARA, the question of assessment is to be dealt with at the state/territory level and not at the national level. There are pragmatic reasons for this. If, however, it is left to the states and territories to determine assessment, how will this contribute to the *national* flavour of the Australian Curriculum? Surely it must be "national" across all components of the curriculum, including assessment and reporting.

There appears to be lack of clarity about the nature of assessment and reporting across the learning areas. Several issues arise from this. First, *If this truly is to be a national curriculum, what kind of assessment is to take place?* Second, *How is assessment of students to be reported?* ACARA has

“*Pastoral care and time given to the social, emotional and spiritual nurture of the child is also potentially under threat and this is a concern*”

“It is possible to infer specific student dispositions associated with the ten general abilities, but it would be more useful at a national level to have a comprehensive identification and description of those desirable dispositions”

indicated that “achievement standards” will describe the *quality* of student learning that takes place, but there appears to be confusion as to how that will be reported. For example, there appear to be very few guidelines as to the interpretation of the proposed grading scheme. Finally, *How will consistency in the standard and quality of assessment be ensured across the states and territories?* It is logical to assume that the issue of consistency is fundamental to the interpretation and implementation of the Australian Curriculum, yet there appear to be glaring anomalies regarding the issue of assessment.

4. Core of knowledge, skills, understanding and values

Changes in and additions to History and Science content (K–10) may be problematic for some Christian schools. For instance, there are issues associated with the tension between teaching compulsory content and teaching Christian biblical interpretation of the origins of humankind and our history. These issues are not new, but an examination of the requirements of the Australian Curriculum provides opportunity to revisit key questions in the context of the ‘special character’ and core beliefs and values of independent, Christian schools. This may be particularly true when it comes to the biblical account of Creation as the origin of humankind.

The Shape Paper (ACARA, 2009) makes reference to the “core of knowledge, skills, understanding and values” that characterise the Australian Curriculum. In the available documentation, however, the core values do not appear to have been comprehensively identified. The key business of most schools and schooling systems in Australia is to educate the ‘whole child’ so that he or she is prepared to contribute positively to and function effectively as a member of society. In this context, the question of values is of fundamental importance.

An examination of the ten “general abilities” statement in *The Shape Paper* (ACARA, 2009, pp. 11–13) provides a reference point for inferring what those core values might be. For example, *Creativity*, one of these ten general abilities, infers placing value on problem solving, originality and divergent thinking. It also infers valuing qualities such as resilience and perseverance. Placed in the context of independent, Christian schooling, these core values, together with values based on Christian biblical principles, such as respect and love for God, and respect and love for fellow human beings, are of critical importance in how the Australian Curriculum can be assimilated into a Christian teaching and learning environment.

The Shape Paper (ACARA, 2009) also makes reference to student dispositions stating, “The curriculum will describe the knowledge,

understandings, skills and dispositions that students will be expected to develop, in sequence, for each learning area across the years of schooling” (p. 9). At this stage, however, there does not appear to be a comprehensive exposé of what those dispositions might be. It is possible to infer specific student dispositions associated with the ten general abilities, but it would be more useful at a national level to have a comprehensive identification and description of those desirable dispositions.

From a Christian, biblical perspective, the nurture and development of worthwhile, Christ-like dispositions is of fundamental importance in the education of each child and the development of Christ-like dispositions is a key focus of teaching and learning that contributes to the ‘special character’ of the school. There are different interpretations of what dispositions are. A simple, but useful definition 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, 2009, p. 14). An important aspect of those patterns of behaviour is the way values are activated in day-to-day living and learning. While *The Shape Paper* (ACARA, 2009) makes reference to dispositions, there is considerable scope for reflection and discussion regarding the identification of those dispositions that need to be nurtured and developed, not only in terms of success at school, but also in terms of their value for life.

5. Issues associated with achievement standards and outcomes

a) Achievement standards

The Australian Curriculum places emphasis on *achievement standards* when assessing and reporting on student learning. The ACARA documentation describes *achievement standards* in terms of the *quality* of learning experienced by students and states:

Achievement standards will provide an expectation of the quality of learning that students should typically demonstrate by a particular point in their schooling (i.e. the depth of their understanding, the extent of their knowledge and the sophistication of their skills). (ACARA, 2009, p. 13)

As an example, the achievement standard for Year 2 English, Listening and Speaking, is as follows:

By the end of Year 2, students listen to a range of spoken and media texts on familiar and learned topics. They understand and recall literal information and retell main ideas and two or more key facts. They use spoken language as a

learning tool, listening for details and instructions, asking and answering questions and engaging in talk-based learning situations. They begin to adapt spoken language to suit their audience and purpose. They use everyday talk to discuss ideas, and specific vocabulary about areas of interest. They use more formal language to engage in group and class discussions and to make oral presentations, including some detail, with conscious attention to voice, eye contact and gesture. They discuss how to interact differently with different people. They give opinions on topics of interest and provide some supporting evidence for their points of view. (ACARA, 2010, p. 14,15)

The example given typifies the achievement standards provided by ACARA in the draft curriculum. In this context, it becomes apparent that the phrase “description of the quality of learning” may be an issue. A closer look at the given example indicates little if any reference to the *quality* of learning. Rather, the achievement standard is expressed in terms of the *outcomes* of learning; that is, what students can do (skills) and what they know and understand (content). In the context of the NSW Board of Studies curriculum, these statements would be examples of *outcomes*, rather than descriptions of the *quality* of the learning that has taken place. Verb cues such as ‘understand’, ‘recall’, ‘retell’, ‘asking and answering’, and ‘discuss’ provide evidence of this focus on learning outcomes (skills, knowledge and understanding), rather than a description of the actual quality of learning that students experience.

This is one example of the problem with some terminology used in the ACARA documentation. The concept *achievement standard* is defined in one way (quality based), but is used in a different way (outcomes based). Confusion about the terminology may result in different interpretations of key concepts such as this. It is logical to assume that a critical aspect of the Australian Curriculum should be national consistency in the interpretation and use of the underlying concepts and the terminology used to describe and explain them.

In addition to the issue of concept clarity, a second group of issues associated with achievement standards can be framed by the questions, *Is there a minimum level of performance that each child must achieve?* and *What happens if students do not demonstrate that they have reached the required achievement standards for a given year?* If all students are to achieve the same high expectations, then arguably, the issue of achievement standards becomes even more complex.

From the NSW perspective, the Board of Studies curriculum makes a very clear distinction between outcomes and standards, with assessment being standards referenced and outcomes driven.

Outcomes are subject-specific. The distinction between the function of outcomes and standards, as well as their relationship in learning and assessment is clear. As in some other states and territories, there is reluctance in NSW to give up what is perceived as being an effective, clearly defined curriculum for another that is perceived as being problematic. This was evident in a recent article in The Sydney Morning Herald (13 September, 2010), where Anna Patty cited the NSW Board of Studies regarding the Australian Curriculum.

It is not possible for all students to reach high standards in deeper understandings and skills development with the current content overload... There is no scope for differentiation of curriculum to cater for the full range of student ability (para. 9).

b) Outcomes

The Shape Paper (ACARA, 2009) refers to “three broad categories of outcomes” (p. 9) taken from the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (p. 13). Arguably, these outcomes are so broad that a considerable number of other outcomes can be inferred from each. This raises two issues, firstly: *Is it intended that systems and teachers actually make these inferences?* and secondly *Does each state or territory infer its own meaning or is there to be national consistency in the interpretation and application of these outcomes?*

From a Christian perspective, the “three broad categories of outcomes” described in *The Shape Paper* provide a platform for further reflection and discussion. The first category is of particular interest and has to do with “A solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning about adult life can be built” (ACARA, 2009, p. 9). In the description of this category of outcomes, reference is made to social and emotional intelligences. From the perspective of faith based teaching and learning, an interesting omission is spiritual intelligence. Reference is also made to national values. A Christian worldview calls for the inclusion of Christian, bible-based values. These considerations provide examples of outcome elements that, while contributing to the ‘special character’ of Christian schools and Christian teaching, are excluded from the Australian Curriculum.

In their response to Draft Phase 1 (K–10) of the Australian Curriculum, the Associated Christian Schools (2010) concluded with the statement, “ACS strongly urges ACARA to maintain, as a fundamental principle in the development of Australian curriculum materials, opportunities for faith based schools to preserve their diversity, flexibility in delivery of faith, culture and values, and independence” (p. 14).

“Confusion about the terminology may result in different interpretations of key concepts. It is logical to assume that a critical aspect of the Australian Curriculum should be national consistency”

In order to preserve this diversity, flexibility and independence, it is vitally important that Christian schools and systems rigorously examine the Australian curriculum documentation and think carefully about the repercussions on their right to be distinctive at a time when states and territories are moving towards prescriptive content, skills and values that are secular in nature.

6. The issues of equity and discrimination

The development of any new curriculum needs to take into account the issues of equity and discrimination. In the context of these issues, the philosophy underpinning the Australian Curriculum is manifest in the statement:

...an alternative curriculum for students who are regarded as disadvantaged does not treat them equitably. It is better to set the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations. (ACARA, 2009, p. 8)

The Shape Paper also states, “The Board will not accommodate disparities by setting different expectations for different groups” (ACARA, 2009, p. 10).

The issues of equity and discrimination are not peculiar to the Australian Curriculum and these considerations have been a key element of curriculum development at the state and territory level. For instance, the New South Wales Government Charter for Equity in Education and Training (NSW, DET, 2005) indicates clearly, “We aim to improve overall education and training outcomes by focusing on those learners and groups of learners who are not benefiting fully from education and training” (p. 1).

The principles of equal opportunity for successful, meaningful learning resonate with the Christian, biblical principle that all children have the right to equal quality of teaching and learning. The implementation of the Australian Curriculum provides an opportunity to revisit the critical question of who the ‘disadvantaged’ students are and to clarify what it means to “provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance” to achieve “the same high expectations.” While there appears to be relatively strong emphasis on socio-economic considerations, as well as culturally marginalised and physically and/or intellectually challenged students who are disadvantaged, it is important to recognise that gifted students may also be disadvantaged if they do not receive the level of support required “to have a fair chance to achieve those expectations.”

The Australian Curriculum provides an opportunity to revisit the critical question of who the ‘disadvantaged’ students are

It should be noted that there is a difference between having *high* expectations for all students and having the *same* expectations for all students. There is scope for debate about the feasibility of all children achieving “the *same* high expectations”, even with differentiated levels of support. Pedagogy models such as the NSW Quality Teaching Model (NSW, DET, 2003) and Productive Pedagogies (Queensland, DET, n.d.) indicate it is imperative that teachers and educators have *high* expectations of all student groups. A critical consideration, however, is that student differences are taken into account. In doing so, it becomes evident that not all students are likely to achieve the *same* high expectations.

While most researchers and educational authorities (see, for example, Oswald, Johnson & Howard, 2003; Council of Australian Governments, 2006; Victoria, DEECD, 2006) agree that schools and teachers should set high expectations for all students, the thesis that all students should have the same high expectations is debatable. It could be argued, for example, that by having the *same* high expectations for *all* students, schools and educational institutions may be setting up some students for failure.

Nationally, at least at a systems or organisational level, it is of critical importance that the issues of equity and discrimination are part of the ongoing discussion and that there is consistency in the interpretation of concepts such as ‘disadvantaged’, ‘same high expectations’, and ‘differentiated levels of support’ so that all disadvantaged students do, in fact, receive equitable levels of financial and human support. Arguably, unless this happens, in terms of having a fair chance to achieve ‘the same high expectations’, the question of equity becomes problematic and may result in unintentional discrimination against some student groups.

A truly national curriculum calls for consistency in all areas of support. In the context of independent, Christian schooling, there is the added dimension of equitable opportunity and high expectations for the spiritual nurture of all students. If there is to be an increased focus on subject content, with more time required to teach that content, then it is essential that Christian schools design and share strategies that help keep the spiritual dimension of teaching and learning alive and that set high, but realistic expectations for all students. In this context, the spiritual dimension of nurture is a critical component in the development of the ‘whole child’ and is of fundamental importance when considering the ‘special character’ of Christian schools. Arguably, it is in this area that all students can be nurtured in achieving equity in terms of the same high expectations.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper has been to present an overview of some of the issues inherent in the Australian Curriculum as the basis of discussion and creative problem solving. This time in the history of education and schooling in Australia provides a dynamic context for questioning and rethinking not only about school teaching and learning, but also teacher education. In particular, it provides independent, Christian systems of education with a valuable opportunity to rethink how they structure and resource education in this country.

It would be a mistake to denigrate the Australian Curriculum because there is much, in theory, to recommend it. The underlying principle of providing a curriculum based on equitable content, understanding and skills nation-wide is to be applauded, in spite of the monumental challenges this creates. The inclusion of all socio-cultural groups in the planning of such a curriculum deserves to be acknowledged, as does the push for ownership of literacy and numeracy across learning areas. Stakeholders involved in education need to be creative in designing specific, workable strategies for achieving these aims.

Taking into account student dispositions (see ACARA, 2009, p.9) and cross-curriculum perspectives, as well as content, understanding and skills is meritorious because it goes towards addressing the issue of educating the ‘whole child’ in a multi-cultural society. The question of nurturing appropriate student dispositions is particularly significant in terms of the ethos and culture of independent, Christian schools and requires carefully considered reflection and planning.

The fact that the Australian Curriculum is designed to accommodate different pedagogies, such as the NSW Quality Teaching Model (NSW, DET, 2003), provides further evidence of the positive intent of this initiative. Finally, the consultation process is a strong indicator of the serious endeavour to make the Australian Curriculum a truly national undertaking.

How do we, as Christian educators, prepare for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum? If ever there was a time to establish effectively functioning ‘think tanks’, it is now. If ever there was a time to liaise with and effectively communicate with each other regarding educational issues, including those raised in this paper, it is now. Educational systems and leaders, as well as individual teachers and schools, need to seize this opportunity for *really* making a difference in the quality of learning our children experience; for prioritising those aspects of teaching and learning that rise above national importance—those that are of *eternal* value. **TEACH**

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“The question of nurturing appropriate student dispositions is particularly significant in terms of the ethos and culture of independent, Christian schools and requires carefully considered reflection and planning”

The higher view of education

John Skrzypaszek

Director, Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre, Avondale College, NSW

Aim

This paper aims to explore the relevancy of Ellen White's book, *Education*, in a postmodern setting. Further, it intends to address whether the guiding influence of the Prophetic Gift is still relevant to Adventist education. This discussion is based on the writer's personal conviction that at certain crucial times God takes the initiative to communicate. To follow through such a position one needs to explore what God expects us to hear? What are the central themes of His communiqué? How relevant are they to life in the contemporary day and age?

Preamble

Even though the postmodern paradigm is fading into history, society continues to struggle with the aftermath of the postmodern ethos. Grenz defines postmodern consciousness as "the loss of the centre."¹ Middleton and Walsh speak of life as "cast adrift, exposed, uprooted and above all frightened."² Further, they propose that postmodern life is engulfed with fear of environmental destruction, fear of economic insecurity, fear about sexual immorality and the fear of odd ideas confronting every day life.³ McGrath refers to postmodernism as "the world beyond comprehension and mastery."⁴

Makay, a psychologist and social researcher, speaks of the deep-seated insecurity within the Australian society. He credits the fear of the future, and the internal human insecurities and doubts to the lack of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. Postmodern philosophy shaped a pathway of uncertainty, subjectivity and pluralism. It began a frantic deconstruction of God's purpose for the spiritual, mental and physical development of human potential. Interestingly, Mackay suggests that at the same time, "we are almost instinctively attracted to the confident voice; the strong leader."⁵ He reasons the "moral vacuums" of human life "yearn to be filled."⁶

In what way can Seventh-day Adventist education respond to the needs of the contemporary world? Does it have a voice, which gently, yet confidently helps participants to refocus on the most essential matters in life? If so, what are they? With these thoughts, allow me to trace briefly the background to Ellen White's classic book, *Education* (1903).

Historical background

In a letter written to Brother and Sister Starr, April 11, 1900, Ellen White referred to her forthcoming book on education:

I want all our teachers and students to have this book as soon as they possibly can. I can hardly await the process of publication. I want the principles contained in this book to go everywhere. We must take a higher stand on education.⁷

One wonders what made her so anxious to see this book in the hands of students and teachers. Ellen White began preparing the material around 1890. Most of the preparation was completed in Australia with the help of a literary assistant with a teaching and missionary background, Miss Sarah Peck. Her major task was to gather the counsels on education written by Ellen White in 1890 and before. However, she noticed that Ellen White's counsels were divided into two main streams, those suitable for the Seventh-day Adventist church and those for the wider society.⁸ The counsels for the church were included in *Testimonies* Volume 6 (1900) and *Counsels to Parents and Teachers* (1913). The material included in the new book *Education* dealt with broader principles.

While Miss Peck compiled and sorted out the material written in previous years, Ellen White kept adding new thoughts.⁹ She wrote, "I have been reading some chapters of the book on education. Sister Peck has been gathering this matter from a mass of my writings." She adds, "I have read three chapters this morning and I think the arrangement is excellent." Early in 1900, William C. White wrote:

During the past two years, I think Mother has written more upon the principles of education, the importance of Bible study, and the importance of combining labour with study, and the value of agriculture as the ABC of all agricultural training, than in all the years before. I think she had written more largely upon it than on any other branch of our work.¹⁰

Since Ellen White had already published a book on Christian education in 1884, one wonders why she was so eager to write and publish another book. I suggest that three key factors influence her keen interest in what she refers to as the higher view of education.

In what way can Seventh-day Adventist education respond to the needs of the contemporary world? Does it have a voice, which gently, yet confidently helps participants to refocus on the most essential matters in life?

First, she aimed to refocus Adventist education on biblical principles. She counselled the editors of *Christian Education* (1899) to “attract the attention of their readers to the Book of books” and to focus on the principles that flow from the “greatest Teacher that the world ever knew.”¹¹ She pointed out that such education is found in the Word of God.¹²

Second, her personal spiritual journey and search for God’s presence empowered her with Christ-like sensitivity, passion and concern for people’s welfare. In 1898, she wrote a letter to her son Edson in which she referred to some parents’ unkind attitudes towards their children. “Children are treated like dogs, ordered about, scolded and beaten and the children are educated in such a rough manner they can but be coarse and rough...Satan is pleased to have this work going on in families.”¹³ She counselled, “due respect must be given to children, for they are the Lord’s heritage.”¹⁴

Thirdly, before publishing the book *Education* in 1903, Ellen White sent copies of her manuscript to several readers asking for critical comments. Her son William sent some sections of the manuscript to Professor Sutherland, president of the Emmanuel Missionary College. His covering letter highlights a few interesting insights about the underlying theme of this book.

You will notice that since you saw the manuscript last a wide range has been taken out. More of the plan of redemption has been worked in by drawing from Mother’s published works, such as Patriarchs and Prophets, Great Controversy, Desire of Ages, Mount of Blessings and Christ’s Object Lessons. This required much labour but we hope that this book is sufficiently strengthened to compensate both for the labour and delay.¹⁵

The most important contributing factor for the urgency was the completion of her major work *The Desire of Ages* (1898) in which she enlarged the themes of God’s involvement in the human drama. She wrote, “In these days we hear much about ‘higher education’. The true ‘higher education’ is that imparted by Him ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’.”¹⁶ Her new book explored the principles of education in the context of the Great Controversy theme involving God’s plan of salvation and the view of education that will last through eternity.¹⁷ From this stance, she explored the dynamics of God’s purpose for life, namely the development of the spiritual, mental and physical faculties.

With this objective, she envisioned to revolutionise the ethos of Christian education. No wonder that she wrote, “The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come.”¹⁸ She

explained, “We must receive a knowledge of God, the Creator, and of Christ the Redeemer, as they are revealed in the sacred word.”¹⁹

In all this, she was not setting prescriptive rules for education. Rather, recognising the freedom of human individuality with ‘power to think’ creatively, she highlighted the value of the principles relevant to life’s journey in all times. Knight points out that in, 1901 Ellen White wrote, “The Lord has not designed any one special, exact plan in education,” and further “no exact pattern can be given for the establishment of schools in new fields.”²⁰

Avondale became the guinea pig of her experiments and the principles she explored in the book *Education* were to become a pattern for Seventh-day Adventist schools around the world. Under the umbrella of God-inspired thoughts, she wrote, “the school in Avondale is to be a pattern for other schools which shall be established among our people.”²¹ Can her voice and guidance be still relevant in the contemporary postmodern pace of life? What do we hear God saying?

Relevance of the book *Education*

Time and space does not allow for an elaborate discussion of this topic. Nevertheless, allow me to share a succinct summary of what I consider as Ellen White’s two central themes and to explore their relevance for postmodern life. The first theme explores the purpose of education and the second theme touches on God’s purpose for life.

The purpose of education

The opening chapter of the book *Education* begins with an emphatic statement suggesting that, “True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study.”²² Ellen White suggests it includes, a) a holistic view of human life (physical, mental and spiritual); b) a broader view of life. She claimed that education prepares the students for “the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.” Yet, I suggest that this is not the central point of her vision for education. Knight, notes correctly that for Ellen White, the purpose of education is to lead students to God and to a saving relationship with Jesus.²³ White follows her opening thoughts with the statement that education which empowers students with the joy of service, both in this life and in the life to come, flows from the heart of God.²⁴

It may appear that in taking such a view she disqualifies both intellectual and vocational preparation. I suggest, however, that she does not discount the pursuit of intellectual and professional goals. Rather, she simply recognises that because of sin, “man’s physical powers were weakened,” “his

“*In these days we hear much about ‘higher education’. The true ‘higher education’ is that imparted by Him ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’*”

The first objective of Christian education is to direct human minds to God's own revelation of Himself. This does not refer to excluding intellectual and philosophical gymnastics but to a foundational, relationally experiential knowledge of God

mental capacity was lessened" and "his spiritual vision dimmed."²⁵ So she reminds us, "all true knowledge and real development have their source" in the knowledge of God.²⁶ Therefore, the first objective of Christian education is to direct human minds to God's own revelation of Himself.²⁷ Here, she does not refer to excluding intellectual and philosophical gymnastics but to a foundational, relationally experiential knowledge of God. "The mind of man is brought in communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite. The effect of such communion on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate."²⁸

The intimacy of such a relationship provides an environment for the highest intellectual development.²⁹ She explains, "Whatever line of investigation we pursue to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all."³⁰ She concludes, "In this communion is found the highest education."³¹ The nature of such education "is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe."³² Further, "it cannot be completed in this life" but "will be continued in the life to come."³³

Ellen White's focus on a relational knowledge of God responds to the needs of the floundering ethos of the postmodern climate, namely what Grenz defines as human loss of centredness. Life in the contemporary world resembles a whirlpool of disoriented activities. The loss of coherent cosmology with a reliable point of reference turns people's minds inwards to a self-oriented world of emotional anxieties, detached from the past, insecure about the present and unsure about the future. Ellen White's emphasis on God sways human life from uncertainty, insecurity and hopelessness to a point of reference anchored securely in the heart of God. From this vantage point, she explores the principles and values for life's journey.

The purpose of life's journey

Exploring the theme of God's purpose for life Ellen White wrote, "Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range." There is a need of a broader scope, a "higher aim" which prepares students not only "for the joy of service in this world." Her next point, breaks the boundary of the limits set by "selfish desires" and "worldly ambitions" and unfolds a visionary perspective of the higher education.³⁴ It prepares students for "the joy of wider service in the world to come." The wider view of life's purpose enables students to discover their God-given individuality and uniqueness "with power to think and to do." At the same time, it trains them to be visionary thinkers, dreamers, movers and shakers, not the slaves of circumstances.³⁵

Is it possible to assume that the true nature and quality of what service in our contemporary world means should flow from the inspired thoughts, which gently bring into focus what matters to God? Is it possible to assume that the joy of service in this world should reflect the principles of the wider service that will last through eternity?

White links such preparation with the development of the physical, mental and spiritual faculties.³⁶ The goal is specific. It is aimed, "for the stability and uplifting of the society."³⁷ For this purpose, the book *Education* unfolds the principles of what I define as an incarnational purpose of education.

This focus ties education with ministry and service. Loxburgh and Romaniuk define the incarnational view as ministry that allows people "to engage each other in the reality of their life situation" rather than "strategic plans from above."³⁸ Exploring the incarnational nature of Christ's ministry, they write:

The narratives of Jesus' presence among us start among the ordinariness of people's lives. Jesus begins with their lived experience; he enters those experiences weaving God's story through their lived lives. He draws people into a new imagination about the nature of the good news he incarnates.³⁹

In other words, the incarnation view of ministry enhances Christian education with the principles of transformational qualities.

As noted, the primary object of education includes a relational and personal knowledge of God (John 17:3). Further, recognising the Bible as the main source of God's revelation, one "should gain knowledge of its grand central themes," such as "the view of God's original purpose for the world, the rise of the great controversy, and the work of redemption" (creation, salvation, eternity).⁴⁰ However, intellectual understanding of God's worldview requires practical application of the divine values and attitudes to life's journey. She refers to the principles of "truth, obedience, honour, integrity and purity."⁴¹ It demonstrates that God's purpose for life has a transforming quality. In her view, service moves beyond the realm of activism. It has a deeper incarnational meaning. In fact, an intimate relationship with God leads to a reversal of human attitudes and it develops sensitivity to engage with students "in the reality of their situation."⁴²

Ellen White wrote, "He who seeks to transform humanity must himself understand humanity."⁴³ Here, she upholds the example of educator par excellence, Jesus. In her view the service that provides a force for the stability and uplifting of the society, needs to reflect the depth of Christ-like attitude.

In every human being He (Christ) discerned infinite possibilities... Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened for its attainment, both desire and faith.⁴⁴

For Ellen White, Christ's methodology demonstrates the incarnational, life-inspiring principles and purpose of education. Firstly, He taught how to uplift human value and dignity. Secondly, He awakened new impulses and opened the possibility of a new life.⁴⁵ In other words, through the principles of incarnational service, He helped individuals to discover their God-given uniqueness and inspired them to reach their highest potential. Thirdly, she points out that "it was not on the cross only that Christ sacrificed Himself for humanity" but His "every day experience was an outpouring of His life."⁴⁶

Such education needs to take place in the classroom, lecture halls, homes, churches, in the neighbourhood and in the world at large. She concludes the book with a vision of the wider service in the world to come. "It is in service, that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning and discovering new mysteries."⁴⁷

I suggest the two highlighted themes, which form the heartbeat of Ellen White's book *Education*, respond to the prevailing climate of the postmodern ethos. In that sense, the principles she espouses are relevant and timely for they speak to the moral vacuum of the society that yearns to be filled with a sense of meaning and purpose in life. **TEACH**

Endnotes

- ¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996), 19.
- ² Richard Middleton & Brian J. Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Downers, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 26.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1996), 180.
- ⁵ Hugh Mackay, *Generations, Baby Boomers, Their Parents & Their Children* (Sydney, NSW: Macmillan, 1997), 190.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Letter 58, 1900 "Sunnyside," Cooranbong, New South Wales, Ellen White to G.B Starr.
- ⁸ Arthur White, *The Australian Years 1891–1900* (Hagerstown, DC: Review and Herald, 1983), 450.
- ⁹ Arthur White, *The Early Elmshaven Years 1900–1905* (Hagerstown, DC: Review and Herald, 1981), 180. In 1894 Ellen White published a book entitled *Christian Education*. In the note to the reader she stated that the book was designed not only for teachers but also for parents, who should be prepared to direct intelligently the education of their children. Ellen White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, Michigan: International Tract Society, 1984), 1.

- ¹⁰ Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 450.
- ¹¹ Letter 85, 1899.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Letter 145 September 22, 1898. Ellen White to Edson.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Arthur White, *The Early Elmshaven Years*, 181.
- ¹⁶ Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 464.
- ¹⁷ Ellen White, *Education* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1952), 14, 15, 301–309.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 123.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 17.
- ²⁰ George Knight, *Myths in Adventism: An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education and Related Issues* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), 18.
- ²¹ Ellen White, Manuscript 92, 1900.
- ²² White, *Education*, 13.
- ²³ Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 49–51.
- ²⁴ White, *Education*, 14.
- ²⁵ White, *Education*, 15.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 14.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 16.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ In the book *Christian Education* Ellen White wrote, "Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God." She asserted that "The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us the necessity of exercising our faculties and talents, but teaches us how to use every power to the glory of God. The human faculties when under the special direction of the grace of God are capable of being used to the best purpose on earth and will be exercised in the future immortal life." Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek Michigan: International Tract Society, 1894), 203.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² White, *Education*, 19.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 18.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 17, 18. Ellen White points out that by directing students to the sources of truth and by opening their minds to "great facts of duty and destiny" will empower individuals not to be "slaves of circumstances" but individuals "who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought and the courage of their convictions."
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 29.
- ³⁸ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 75.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ellen White, *Education*, 190.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 29.
- ⁴² Roxburgh and Romanuk, 75.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 78.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 80.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 309.

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These principles are relevant and timely for they speak to the moral vacuum of postmodern society that yearns to be filled with a sense of meaning and purpose in life
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The place of play in twenty-first century classrooms

Evidence and approaches

Sandra Ludlow

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

Do our current ways of teaching our young children actually foster the development of effective skills and dispositions for twenty-first century living? A number of authors, (Pink, 2005; Golinkoff & Sharp 2009), have commented that solutions to the issues associated with the rapid development of knowledge in the twenty-first century, issues and problems involved in environmental sustainability and issues of national security, will require answers from individuals who have the ability to communicate, collaborate, think critically, be creative and innovative, confidently approach challenges and have content knowledge (Golinkoff & Sharp, 2009, p.6). They identify these skills as being the ones that our 3 to 6-year-olds will need to acquire during their education, in order to be successful in their adult lives. Children of the twenty-first century need to go beyond the basic skills, they need to develop skills and dispositions that will enable them to become learners throughout their entire life (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk & Singer, 2009, p. 15). As teachers of 3 to 6-year-olds we need to ask ourselves, “What pedagogical approaches should I employ that will enable the children in my classroom to acquire the knowledge and skills for success in the twenty-first century?” To answer this question this article explores current thinking and research.

“Academically regimented classrooms frequently engender withdrawal, rebellion, and emotional meltdowns that place children on a tragic path of educational failure at a very young age

” Believe it or not, the best way teachers can foster the development of skills for twenty-first century success, is through play-based curriculums! Through a preschool day that offers both free and guided play (Golinkoff & Sharp 2009, p. 12). Through a curriculum that provides “extensive opportunities for children to direct their own learning in a well resourced, well facilitated environment” (Lawrence, 2009, p. 6). A curriculum that uses teachable moments to develop academic skills during symbolic play, construction play, games with rules, open ended research and the “exploration of natural materials” (Targowska, 2008, p. 25).

Why a play-based curriculum?

Exemplary practice supports the strategy of a play-based curriculum due to accumulated research findings, reinforcing that:

- children willingly work at a level beyond their current developmental level in their zone of proximal development during play, considered to be at a level not usually seen in their non-play activities (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk & Singer, 2009, p. 14.);
- play is intrinsically motivating (Targowska, 2008);
- “academically regimented classrooms, with their repetitive, boring tasks, that exceed the attention spans and patience of 3 to 5-year-olds, frequently engender withdrawal, rebellion, and emotional meltdowns that place children on a tragic path of educational failure at a very young age” (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk & Singer, 2009, p. 11);
- children often become anxious and stressed as a result of over management (Elkind, 2001), raising cortisol levels and inhibiting their ability to learn (Sims, 2008);
- children assimilate and accommodate information in a hands-on concrete manner during play, thus strengthening and developing their cognitive competence through “countless opportunities for sustained attention,... symbolic representation, memory development and hypothesis testing” (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk & Singer, 2009, p. 36.);
- imagination and social interaction decline when adults direct all of the learning experiences (Hirsh-Pasek, et al. 2009, p. 26);
- there is an increased opportunity for children to develop self-regulation, social competence, oral language skills, number, time and spatial understanding, sensory and aesthetic appreciation during play (Honing, 2007, p. 72; Targowska, 2008, p. 24; Hirsh-Pasek, et al. 2009, p. 18.);
- play develops in children dispositions to learn such as “enthusiasm, curiosity, commitment,

- persistence, confidence, cooperation, and reflexivity” (Arthur, 2010, p. 4);
- children develop learning processes such as “problem solving, inquiry, experimentation... researching and investigating” (Arthur, 2010, p. 6) during play;
 - focus is on the process rather than on the product during play;
 - there is inherent value in stimulating children’s ability to wonder together and imagine, to engage in trial and error behaviours, without judgement (Golinkoff & Sharp, 2009);
 - in the busyness of twenty-first century family life, children have few opportunities to practise play skills. They are ‘managed’ from dawn to dusk, own toys that inhibit creativity in play scripts, spend at least two to four hours per day in passive TV, DVD viewing, play computer games that are low in creativity and have pre-determined outcomes, and have limited access to multi-age play partners—“as a result many of the play skills that children were able to learn in the past by observing and imitating their older playmates now have to be modelled and taught by teachers” (Fleer, 2010, p113–114).

Even a cursory perusal of these points helps focus our thinking and legitimises the use of play as a pedagogical approach in preschool and infant classrooms.

Approaches to curriculum that support play-based learning and development

There are a number of curriculum approaches that undergird successful play-based curriculums. A number are briefly reviewed here; however for more information on each, refer to the references. As you trial them in your own teaching keep in mind that using these approaches successfully takes both time and practice.

A) Plan-do-review

Preschool environments that attractively display and offer for self selection, a wide variety of hands on experiences across all domains, and timetable extended time for children’s investigation, support well, opportunities for the plan-do-review strategy of the High/Scope approach (Epstein, 2007); the play plans of Bodrova & Leong (2001); and the progettazione (planning, design) of Reggio Emilia. These strategies support children’s planning and imagining by asking them to think about the following questions before they begin their play. What will you do in this play space? What materials will you need and what roles will you take on? How many people will play in this space? What do we already know? What do we need to find out? How can we do this? How can we find out?

Children are then given the time and opportunity to interact and investigate in the play space. This is the doing phase. “Because they are carrying out plans they have made for themselves, preschoolers approach play as a way to accomplish something important to them” (Epstein, 2007, p. 19). Their motivation sustains their effort and scaffolds persistence and problem-solving.

Both during and at the end of the play, it is appropriate for an adult to scaffold the children’s reflection and to extend and deepen the play by joining it or asking some of these review questions. How did that happen? Is there another way to do this? Why did that happen? What else do you need? What did you discover? These types of questions help children to build and deepen knowledge, to communicate, think critically, problem solve, be creative, recall procedures and collaborate together, thus scaffolding the skills of confident, articulate and competent learners. This teaching strategy is at the heart of the concept of intentional teaching as defined in the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF, Council of Australian Governments, 2009). Embedded within the plan-do-review approach is another teaching strategy called sustained shared thinking.

B) Sustained shared thinking

This approach to teaching has been defined as: “two or more individuals working together in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, and extend a narrative. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend the understanding” (Siraj-Blatchford, et al. 2004, cited in Clarke, 2009, p.7).

Children will only enter into this type of thinking when they feel respect and support for their ideas from the adults and peers in their class, knowing it is okay to make mistakes. Teachers must then give children the time, to “become engrossed, work in-depth, to plan and reflect” (Clarke, 2010, p. 22, p. 46), time to complete their chosen play projects and opportunities to express their ideas. Learning participants need to model thinking behaviours and the language of thinking—enquiring, reasoning, predicting, evaluating, problem solving and creativity (Clarke, 2010, p. 10, 42). It is also vital that children are given opportunity to develop a sense of ownership of the play project because ownership fosters intrinsic motivation and the dispositions to learn.

The educators of Reggio Emilia add another layer to the process of sustained shared thinking that they call the “100 languages” (Rinaldi & Moss, 2004). This teaching approach encourages children to investigate the topic in another mode, for example clay, drawing, ICT technologies, collage, drama,

“*During and after the play, it is appropriate for an adult to scaffold reflection and extend and deepen the play by joining it or asking review questions*”

or painting; thus extending, deepening and often reframing the investigation. For example a child may create a complex block construction during their play. A teacher using the '100 languages' approach would talk to the child commenting on the construction techniques, ask questions, perhaps take a photo of it and suggest that the child might dictate and record a story about their construction; or suggest as an alternative that the child use drawing materials to record their construction. All of these strategies help to progressively extend and deepen the investigation, resulting in sustained shared thinking, ongoing or reframed future constructions and learning that combines to affirm the child's thinking and creativity.

As the play investigation unfolds teachers can continue to intentionally show interest, clarify ideas, ask open ended questions, provide materials, and record in depth observations forming documentation, in an attempt to make the children's thinking and learning visible to both adults and children. Emergent curriculum strategies, extended projects and plan-do-review sessions, 'thinking hat' strategies, jottings and learning stories, all scaffold opportunities for sustained shared thinking. The power of sustained shared thinking lies in its ability to foster in children the dispositions and processes to learn that are so vital to success in twenty-first century life.

C) Problem solving

Problem solving is a process that occurs naturally in play and daily life. It is also a skill that teachers can incorporate intentionally into their curriculum to foster in young children the dispositions to learn,. They do this by using play as a mediating tool to extend children's thinking (White, 2008, p.26) through problem posing and solving during sustained shared thinking.

Being aware of the processes of problem solving helps teachers to make the most of the potential of teachable moments to scaffold children's metacognition. Interactions can promote progressively focusing, widening or deepening ways of thinking (Fabian & Dunlop, cited in Moyles, 2005, p.229). Skilful open-ended questioning, wondering and intentional modelling lie at the heart of this pedagogy and when used help children identify the problem, discover what is already known about the issue and scaffold a suggested hypothesis for forming a solution to the problem:

- What do you want to happen?
- What will happen if?
- What could you do first/next/then/after?
- How could we?
- What do you think?
- Can we find another way?

- I wonder if...? (Martin, 2009, p. 16).

When teachers place familiar objects in different places, remove a piece of essential equipment, ask open-ended questions during storytime, seek children's solutions to the day to day problems of the preschool and use problem cards, they allow children the time and opportunity to develop this important life skill. This teaching approach is one way to harness the potential of the environment as the third teacher.

D) Environment as the third teacher

The environment has the potential to become the third teacher when:

- Teachers provision it in such a way that children are empowered to locate use and return materials independently, without close adult direction;
- Diverse items are stored in matching containers in specialist areas, so enabling children to focus on the contents and support making choices;
- Children are given the time and opportunity to interact with the materials without step by step teacher direction, (Walker, 2007);
- Materials are positioned in smaller well defined spaces, to scaffold concentration, independence and more in depth investigation;
- Materials are presented aesthetically to invite interaction with the materials, fostering a child's curiosity, engagement and innovation;
- Materials are offered as both individual and shared experiences;
- Materials used in ongoing projects are able to be left in place rather than packed away at the end of a session (Curtis & Carter, 2008; Epstein, 2007; Walker, 2007).

The potential of the environment to act as a teacher is further enhanced when teachers provide materials and opportunities for children to record and keep track of their learning, such as clipboards, and digital cameras. This scaffolds children's revisiting and celebration of learning and social construction of knowledge. The discussions that emerge from the resources also enrich opportunities for communication and critical thinking. In this type of environment children become confident and capable learners.

Once the environment has been provisioned in this way it is vital that teachers maximise its potential for learning by remaining available for discussion, showing interest in children's play, being enthusiastic about their play, modelling research strategies to solve the unknown and bringing their imagination to the play scenario (Lubawy, 2010, p. 15). In short we need to remain 'hands on' rather than involve ourselves in housekeeping, record keeping and socialising with co-workers and parents.

Teachers can intentionally incorporate problem solving into their curriculum using play as a mediating tool to extend children's thinking

E) Dramatic play

When children engage in dramatic play they act out roles, interact with and negotiate with peers, and plan play scenarios. As they do this, they use more complicated grammatical and pragmatic forms of language than is usual for them in normal conversations, because they are modelling the behaviour of significant others. At the same time they become more skilled in inhibiting their impulses, and negotiating plots and roles, thus strengthening their self-regulation skills in combination with language skills.

This type of play also develops children's thinking, imagination and the social skills of communication, cooperation and perspective taking. It scaffolds sustained shared attention, memory, reflection and the understanding of emotions (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 132). During dramatic play, sandpit play, water play, clay and play dough play, and construction play, children encounter many opportunities to learn about spatial relationships and quantity, pattern, shape and numeracy. Astute teachers will take the opportunities presented in these types of play to notice and record the children's meaning making and to engage in sustained shared thinking with them; thus catching and making the most of a teachable moment in the child's zone of proximal development.

Dramatic play also helps children to understand themselves and their culture, allowing them to feel a sense of wellbeing and agency (Bodrova & Leong, 2003), both of which are foundational for healthy emotional development and the development of resilience in children. The importance of this sense of wellbeing cannot be overemphasised as an important life skill for the twenty-first century, because, "without a strong sense of wellbeing it is difficult to have a sense of 'belonging', to trust others and to feel confident in 'being', and to optimistically engage in experiences that contribute to 'becoming'" (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p. 30).

The benefits of dramatic play dissipate when children engage in role play of known DVDs, and TV shows, with realistic props. When this occurs, the plot, roles and props are set; imagination and language are restricted. Previewed play scenarios are repeated over and over and limited by the recalled script, rather than used creatively by being invented, modified and extended upon (Bodrova & Leong, 2003, p. 11).

F) Projects and emergent curriculum

Three approaches to curriculum that further support play-based learning are projects, emergent curriculum and *progettazione*. All fall within the definition of the Early Years Learning Framework (2009, p. 15) definition of intentional teaching. All three approaches have these beliefs in common:

- Curriculum is child centred and based on the needs, strengths and interests of the child;
- Curriculum is integrated across domains and between home and centre, educating the whole child;
- Curriculum is hands on and sensory as "children learn and construct meaning as they act upon objects in space and time" (McLachlan, Fleer & Edwards, 2010, p. 17);
- Curriculum is negotiated, emergent and play-based;
- Curriculum is strongly grounded in multiple intelligences and the 100 languages of children, co-operative grouping, and Bloom's taxonomy;
- Teachers carefully observe the child in an attempt to know as much as possible about their knowledge, interests and learning styles, so that they can intentionally provision the environment and guide the curriculum to support the child's learning in their zone of proximal development;
- A teacher's role is to support, encourage, reflect, hypothesise, problematise, add content knowledge at teachable moments, and co-construct with the child, as the project unfolds.

All three approaches are also strongly based on a view of the child as a strong and capable learner, who constructs as well as co-constructs knowledge, understanding and meaning while interacting with the provisions, ideas and people within their preschool, family and community. All three approaches consciously develop in children dispositions to learn, and the skills we have already identified as the skills our preschool children will need for success in the twenty-first century.

Each approach has a number of unique elements which predominantly reflect the nature of either the teacher's or child's role in the project, and subtle differences in how knowledge is acquired, as well as beliefs in what knowledge and skills are of most worth. A discussion of each of these is beyond the scope of this article. It is sufficient to say that the efficacy of a play-based curriculum is strengthened when emergent projects are used to support children's meaning making.

Observing, documenting and assessing play-based curriculum

Undergirding play-based curriculum lies the "pedagogy of listening" (Rinaldi, 2001), that is the adult's active participation in careful observation, documentation and assessment. When teachers and parents observe the child at play, listen to their conversations, record their actions and conversations, and use their professional knowledge to reflect on and interpret what they see and hear, they position

A teacher's role is to support, encourage, reflect, hypothesise, problematise, add content knowledge at teachable moments, and co-construct with the child, as the project unfolds

themselves to respond to the child's meaning making by supporting the child's learning and development through co-construction of play-based provisions and experiences. This process, when supported by documentation, makes the child's learning visible to their parents and peers. The pedagogy of listening also requires teachers to be open to change, be willing to suspend judgement, use all of their senses to listen, and to value the unknown (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 81).

There are a number of methods that can be used to observe and record children's play including:

- a) **anecdotal observations** – which focus on recording vignettes of what a child does and how they do it and using the data to interpret the child's development, strengths, needs and interests;
- b) **running records** – are a serial form of anecdotal records, recorded at regular intervals of three to five minutes over a short time period, then reviewed to interpret the attributes of children's play over an extended period;
- c) **jottings** – record short snippets of conversation or actions, and are used by teachers to jog their memory about a child's development or meaning making. Jottings may form the bare bones of a future anecdote or documentation statement, or alternatively provide the evidence for a mark on a checklist of skills;
- d) **documentation** – may incorporate a vignette, digital image or sample of work. Documentation is the process of observing children closely during their engagement with experiences and provisions, to record their actions and conversations, and using these records to revisit, reconstruct, analyse and deconstruct the experience for the purpose of gaining information for future pedagogical decisions, as well as for display and consultation with the child's family and peers (Rinaldi, 2004).

The aim of observing and recording play is to “foster learning”, modify the “learning-teacher relationship” (Rinaldi, 2004, p. 78) and make the child's learning visible. Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett and Farmer (2005) call documentation “snapshots of the child's tangible achievements” (p. 220). When teachers and parents use these snapshots to discuss the child's learning and development it “helps them to see things from different perspectives, allowing each...to transcend the limitations of their own points of view” (Curtis & Carter, 2000, p. xiii).

When documentation is shared with the children who are the subjects of the observations, it powerfully affirms each child's ideas and actions. These children sense the adult's celebration of their learning through their interest, respect and enthusiasm. This process allows each child to revisit the experience, often motivating them to further

thought and interaction, thus deepening investigation and understanding of the play-based curriculum.

What does pedagogical documentation look like?

There is no set format for documentation. It is not a product, rather it is a process and because of this, documentations are published in many formats. Some early childhood professionals choose to display documentation in panels of photos and comments and photocopies of children's drawings with accompanying vignettes, or audio tapes. Others place documentation, beside models and constructions or use photo journals, slide shows, videos, podcasts, portfolios or posters. The methods of displaying documentation are multiple and are only limited by time, cost, creativity and technological expertise.

Deciding what to document comes with experience and a clear understanding of why one is recording this moment. Hobba (2006), advises that teachers refrain from documenting *everything* and focus in depth on just a *few* things. You, as a teacher, know your students best. What is it that you want to find out about them? There are many possible provocations for documentation.

Learning how to document authentically is a professional journey that early childhood educators embark on. It takes time, research, training and experience to hone personal observation skills, to notice and record important and useful vignettes of children's meaning making. Other factors that contribute to good documentations are time to reflect, write, revisit and produce documentation, and an atmosphere of support, collaboration and open discussion between professional peers. The reward for children, teachers and families is the strong enabled development of a pedagogy of relationships and listening formed in conjunction with a mutual understanding of the child's strengths, needs and interest.

The concepts discussed indicate that successful play-based curricula rely on the interactions between, a number of complex pedagogical skills and processes: plan-do-review, sustained shared thinking and problem solving, negotiated and emergent planning, open-ended provisions, carefully considered and aesthetically pleasing environments, and the pedagogy of listening. Early childhood educators of 0 to 6-year-olds need to harness the wisdom and findings of decades of child development research, as well as the findings of the last decade of neuroscience and use them to inform our pedagogical practice. Teachers can and should deliberately and thoughtfully intertwine developmental indicators, learning outcomes from

Children sense the adult's celebration of their learning through their interest, respect and enthusiasm

Tools of pedagogical documentation

- Digital and video cameras—quickly capture and store images of action and samples of work.
- Cassette and digital voice recorders—capture conversations freeing adults to enter the conversation during the action.
- Paper and pencil—record key phrases from conversations manually.
- Samples of work and artistic creations—provide concrete evidence of the child's meaning-making.

What pedagogical documentation is NOT

- Teacher narratives or anecdotal observations, photo and teacher comment and interpretation devoid of the child's voice.
- Pictures or slide shows displayed without comment.
- A page displayed to parents entitled *Today We...*
- Pictures accompanied with a list of development indicators and QIAS principles.

framework and syllabus documents, and observation practices that listen to children and make their thinking visible to interested adults, with play-based emergent and negotiated curriculums. It may well require movement out of personal comfort zones. The value of these processes is in enabling the children in our care, to move beyond basic skills, to become creative thinkers who are both socially adept and academically competent, children who have also acquired skills and dispositions for success in life. The evidence for play-based approaches to curriculum for this age group is considerable and reliable—children learn best through play! **TEACH**

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“Learning to document authentically is a professional journey that takes time, research, training and experience”

How you learn to drive and what it means to educators

Elva Fitzgibbon

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

In most cases thorough learning of a skill requires a process of acquiring a series of smaller or contributing skills. The younger the child the more one can see a myriad of skills developing. It is breathtaking to observe all the skills a baby develops up to school age. At the other end of life, skills begin to diminish. One of the problems of old age is that acquiring new skills can be difficult. Brain deterioration means that some elderly people lose established skills.

The general process for learning a new skill follows a series of culminative steps. How did you learn to drive?

1. Being motivated – wanting to drive (like your peers) and seeing value, fun, and a challenge in the learning.
2. Gaining understanding – being taught, studying the car manual and driving rules, and qualifying for a learner's permit.
3. Learning each subskill – learning to start on a hill, use of the brake and accelerator, signalling and the dreaded reverse park, to name a few.
4. Practise, practise, practise – the only way to build those skills up to the accepted standard in a smoothly paced way. Eventually these will be spontaneous and even automatic.
5. Demonstrating your ability – an essential to proving to others that you can do it, including passing the driving test.
6. Applying and generalising the skill – driving safely and independently in the community. Generalising the skills to other conditions e.g. unfamiliar terrain, difficult weather, other types of vehicles.
7. Mastery of the skill – maybe completing a defensive driving course. Being acknowledged by others as a safe, very competent driver. Having a flawless legal driving record.
8. Keeping the skill current – driving regularly, updating on road rules and continuing to generalise.

As you have probably learned from experience some people take longer to acquire some of these steps, and certain skills can be challenging. Did you generalise well, or stick to safe options? Did you get tired of practicing and jump ahead into situations when you were not ready? Were you inconsistent from day to day? Worst of all were you nervous

when going for your licence and fail to demonstrate that you really could do it?

In classrooms today there is a tendency to standardise teaching and learning. Large classes, outcomes based education and political pressures, contribute to this. Let's comment on the eight steps in learning the skill of driving as it might apply to learning skills in the classroom.

1. Being motivated

Does a child really find fun or value in a repetitive learning of times tables? On the other hand, does a predictable and repetitive learning task every day have the effect of calming and reassuring unsettled children? How much choice is offered in learning options? There is a wide range of motivating factors at work from intrinsic motivation with a love of learning for its own sake, to extrinsic motivation and relevant rewards. The attitude of "what do I get out of it" is a growing one in the community. Fortunately to balance that, there is the altruism that is evident in community volunteers. Motivation is a complicated, personal and classroom dynamic.

2. Gaining understanding

A good teacher is what is needed for this outcome; giving clear instruction where possible, through demonstration which is strengthened through visual and auditory stimulation as well as cues. Teaching should be flexible enough to allow for different learning styles and for accommodating all children in an inclusive classroom.

3. Learning each subskill

Teachers need to order the learning into small steps and allow for different learning rates and abilities. If needed, slow down and even provide over-learning, so every child can achieve mastery of the subject matter.

4. Practise, practise, practise

Build more practice into daily opportunities set up for those learners who need it. Bright children may be taught once and know it, while others need more time and consolidation through software, co-operative games, buddy practice with a peer, or extra adult support.

Teaching should be flexible enough to allow for different learning styles and for accommodating all children in an inclusive classroom

5. Demonstrating the ability

Assessment can be so arbitrary. If you set the bar at the wrong level it can distort the learning results. Adapt to the learner and use precise curriculum based assessment. Sensitively delivered skills based assessment can even be made fun and interesting to children.

6. Applying and generalising the skill

Applying is not easy for some children. For example some have all the skills to work out a practical maths or science problem but can't choose which operations or the order in which to apply them. Slower learners can learn a skill in isolation but have trouble generalising it to a new situation. Further direct instruction and more practice can be planned to improve performance.

7. Mastery of the skill

Sometimes mastery is not vital and a working


functional knowledge is adequate. Divide learning tasks into essential and useful. For example knowing state capitals is useful, while constructing a well punctuated sentence is essential (or will it be in the technology dominated future?). Children gain pride and confidence from mastery.

8. Keeping the skill current

Revision is a bit dated as a word but teachers should provide opportunities to revisit and celebrate the learning.

The purpose of this article is to alert teachers to the skill acquisition process, remind them of the variation in children's ability levels and learning rates and make a plea for children who may struggle in the classroom and learn differently. **TEACH**

“*Bright children may be taught once and know it; others need more time and consolidation*”

The  *Eternal Health and Safety* of our students is our greatest priority

EH&S Issues

Schools everywhere, it appears, have been transformed into building sites as part of the Federal Government's stimulus package. Temporary fences have been erected and a steady stream of trucks and tradespeople enter and leave the school property daily as classrooms, multipurpose centres and even canteens take pride of place on the school property. All this activity means safety precautions are put in place. Builders are chosen carefully, tradespeople are hired, their qualifications are checked and after they leave, their workmanship is inspected. They register when they enter the school and sign out when they leave.

Schools are responsible when it comes to building programs. No one wants an unqualified tradesperson building a school structure. Schools are also responsible when it comes to choosing teachers. Interviews are conducted, CVs are scrutinised, and references noted. It's a relatively easy thing to check academic qualifications and workmanship but how do we check the hearts of teachers? Is it even possible to do this?

Sometimes we focus on the academic and teaching qualities of staff and forget that the very reason for the existence of Christian schools is more than pedagogical prowess and academic achievement. What lies in the heart of a teacher is difficult to measure, and it is more about being than doing. Teachers are what they teach through applying theory, and through being loving, authentic, and consistent.

Teachers who spend quality time with God will be effective agents of grace who share God's love from the overflow of their hearts. Here are three questions Christian teachers can ask themselves:

1. Is my relationship with God so full that I can share His love from the 'overflow'?
2. Do I spend more time focusing on what I do rather than who I am?
3. What does the quality of my relationships with peers, students and parents tell them about God?

The Eternal Health and Safety of our children is our greatest priority. **TEACH**

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

Cybersmart: Learning online safety

Ruth Chadwick

Senior Communications Advisor, Cybersafety Programs Section, Australian Media and Communication Authority, Melbourne, Vic

Philip Knight

Senior Education Adviser, Cybersafety Outreach, Australian Media and Communication Authority, Melbourne, Vic

The internet is an incredible tool. It provides an opportunity to communicate, learn, play and be entertained by content from around the world. It's vibrant, incredibly varied and offers information on any topic at a click of the mouse. While the internet provides many positives there are also risks. Cyberbullying, inappropriate contact, identity theft, scams and exposure to adult content can make the internet a risky place for children. The risks exist for all children, from pre-schoolers who are only starting to use a computer, to more experienced teens, and also adults.

“Children demonstrate a good general knowledge about online behaviours that might be considered ‘risky’. Despite this, some young people still engage in risky behaviour”

When it comes to teaching students about cybersafety, Australian schools face some major challenges: knowing what their obligations are in providing appropriate cybersafety care for students, and where to find research-based and reliable advice, strategies and resources.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) manages a national cybersafety education program, *Cybersmart*. This program includes targeted education and awareness activities and resources for teachers, students, parents and children, materials for use in schools and at home, and research into current trends in cybersafety. *Cybersmart* aims to give children, teachers and parents, sound advice on how best to manage risks, so their online experiences are safe and positive.

Online behaviour and risks

Studies into children and young people's online behaviour indicate that they use the internet to undertake a wide range of activities. These include using it for research as well as a range of social, gaming and learning activities. The ACMA's research into young people's online participation identifies a shift as children age, from individual activities such as playing games, which is popular with children aged 8 to 11 years, to social pursuits for young people aged 16 to 17 years.¹

This research identified important points including:

- Among 16 to 17-year-olds, 97 per cent of those surveyed reported that they had used at least one social networking service. For children aged between 8 to 11 years, only 51 per cent had used a social networking service.
- Using the internet for social interaction is the primary reason 81 per cent of 12 to 17-year-olds go online. Fifty four per cent of 12 to 17-year-olds note that “chatting with friends from school” is their main reason for using social networking services.
- Risky online behaviour increases with age. About 78 per cent of 16 to 17-year-olds claim to have personal information, such as photographs, posted on their social networking pages, compared with 48 per cent of 8 to 9-year-olds.

Children and young people are clearly entrenched in the online world. But how risky is it? According to the ACMA's *Click and Connect* study, children demonstrate a good general knowledge about online behaviours that might be considered ‘risky’. Despite this, some young people still engage in risky behaviour, and some perceive these behaviours are common across their peer groups.²

It is important to educate young people about the risk, then give them the skills and tools to change risky behaviour. This is particularly relevant in the use of social media sites. The popularity of these sites has grown enormously in recent years, leading to increased exposure to risk for users. Children and young people are better able to evaluate risk and manage difficult situations if they are aware of the consequences of their online actions and understand why they should think before posting online, keep personal information private and respect others.

The UK's Byron Review³ found that children do not report having major concerns about their online behaviour as they seemingly feel informed and in control about online risks. However, they are still “developing critical skills and need (adult) help to make wise decisions.”⁴ Report author, Dr Tanya Byron, notes that data shows young people are at an

increasing risk of “exposure to sexually inappropriate content, contributions to negative beliefs and attitudes, cyberbullying and (content which promotes) harmful behaviours.”⁵ The review recommends “a strong commitment to changing behaviour through a sustained information and education strategy.”⁶

These recommendations acknowledge that teachers and library staff, throughout primary and secondary schools, can play a pivotal role in helping students to develop appropriate and ethical behaviour when using digital technologies.

Cybersafety education

The school authority, teachers and other specialists owe a duty of care to students. Schools need to be aware of the key role they have to play in cybersafety education. This is particularly important in the current environment where the internet and online technologies are an essential part of life for students both at home and in the classroom. An educator’s duty of care cannot be underestimated, though in a rapidly changing environment, it may be contentious.

Developing school policies

To help minimise risk in the school and classroom environment, schools can identify risks relevant to their students and develop strategies and processes to address them. For example, schools may have policies and processes for use of the internet, email and mobile phones. These policies and processes should be updated regularly and effectively communicated to staff and students.

An effective policy is one that originates from a particular school or organisation and is the result of discussion which ideally engages the whole school or organisation in the process. While an ICT sub-committee may develop a draft policy, a working document only becomes relevant and practical if it is based on broad consultation and has thorough support. Sound policies should look to include:

- a rationale;
- a statement of purpose;
- guidelines for use; and
- a student commitment or undertaking—this should be sufficiently detailed to provide students with key safety messages that reinforce the overall school approach.

Schools are encouraged to contact their state authority about policies and developments in cybersafety education. More policy guidelines along with samples for each state jurisdiction are available online at www.cybersmart.gov.au/en/Schools.aspx.

ACMA Initiatives

To empower administrators, teachers and librarians to help students stay safe online the ACMA has

developed a diverse and targeted range of education resources and training programs. These promote key cybersafety messages and support children and young people in their online activities by teaching them essential skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Key ACMA programs for teachers, children and parents aim to help children minimise risk and enjoy their online experiences.

Professional development for educators

The ACMA offers a free cybersafety professional development workshop (PD) for educators that is available to all practising teachers across Australia. Since it was launched in 2009, more than 5,500 educators across Australia have attended the workshop with demand for presentations continuing to grow. Key cybersafety topics covered in the workshop include:

- the profile of a modern student;
- the skills required to develop a cybercitizen the legal responsibilities of educators and schools to mitigate risk and potential liability; and
- cybersafety resources that are useful to support school policies and teaching practice.

Educators need to work closely with their students to embed appropriate behaviour, knowledge and skills. A core foundation of the *Cybersmart* program for schools, shared in the workshop, is the cybercitizen profile. This assists teachers to identify and develop the relevant skills that children and young people need to be safe and responsible cybercitizens.

The cybercitizen profile is based on four capabilities:

- positive online behaviour;
- digital media literacy;
- peer and personal safety;
- e-Security.

The profile provides an outline of what children and young people do online at different ages.

Teachers who attend the PD take home a range of *Cybersmart* resources such as lesson plans, case studies and policies. These help teachers to engage students and to implement effective cybersafety strategies within their school environment.

The PD workshop is accredited, endorsed or recognised in all states and territories. Delivered by an experienced cybersafety trainer with an education background, the PD is offered as either an on-site workshop, held at schools, or an off-site workshop held at a local venue.

Appraisal of the program includes the following comments:

The Executive and staff...would like to express their sincere appreciation for your involvement in our...Professional Development week. Your sessions on cybersafety were insightful, helpful

“ Schools need to be aware of the key role they have to play in cybersafety education. An educator’s duty of care cannot be underestimated, though in a rapidly changing environment, it may be contentious ”

and somewhat confronting, but very much appreciated by all staff members. It is important for us as a staff to be helped to understand those whom we teach as they interact with today's information technology. You certainly assisted us in doing that in an engaging way... We pray that the vital work you are undertaking will impact those to whom you speak for the good of those they teach. —*Principal, Covenant College, Gordon, ACT.*

Just a quick message to pass on my extra compliments to the presenter of the *Cybersafety* workshop training session. The trainer's style of presentation, connection with the audience and practical knowledge of the content was outstanding. It was one of the most useful professional development sessions that I have been to for a long time. —*Teacher, Buderim Mountain State School, Qld.*

The ACMA's materials are brilliant. I cannot recommend them highly enough. There are very few resources and presentations that you hear rave reviews about wherever you go. The ACMA materials are raved about. They are terrific to recommend to parents. —*Dr. Helen McGrath, Deakin University*

I attended a cybersafety session run by the ACMA's trainer at St Vincent's College...on being cybersmart. The presentation was very interesting and informative but also grounded in thorough research and facts...I think the best part of the presentation was that it wasn't just about giving information but was also a call to action and to not be complacent. The steps we can take were also very practical. I had a look at the new *Cybersmart* website...and that is a great resource as well... —*President, St Vincent's College, Parents and Friends Assoc., Potts Point, Sydney, NSW.*

Internet safety awareness presentations

Complementing the PD workshop, the ACMA also offers free Internet Safety Awareness presentations for students, teachers and parents. These presentations are easy to understand, thorough and informative. They cover a range of issues including children's use of the internet as well as other emerging technologies and tips and strategies to minimise risk and help children stay safe online. In 18 months, over 150,000 students, teachers and parents have attended these free presentations.

Registration forms for the PD and Internet Safety Awareness presentations are available online at www.cybersmart.gov.au, by contacting the ACMA by email cybersafety@acma.gov.au, or by calling the Cybersafety Contact Centre on **1800 880 176**.

Internet safety for pre-service teachers

To support acknowledgement of the significance of safe online environments associated with schooling,

the ACMA has offered presentations to universities to meet the needs of pre-service teachers. Initiated at Deakin University in June 2010, this type of interaction currently includes a lecture (50 minutes) and tutorial (90 minutes). It is available free to all universities throughout Australia.

Through this interactive program pre-service teachers can gain the skills and knowledge required to confidently teach their students about cybersafety. Topics covered include cyberbullying, sexting, safe social networking, identity protection and digital citizenship.

Universities can request and arrange a presentation by emailing cybersafety@acma.gov.au.

Education resources

Recognising that a child's internet activity will depend on their age and experience, the ACMA provides a range of free teaching resources which meet age-specific needs. These materials include animations, video content, games and interactive activities, as well as lesson plans and other supporting information for teachers. Sources for these resources are identified below, with some description and indication of their potential use.

The Cybersmart website is about how to keep safe and be smart online. It provides cybersafety education and awareness for children, young people and parents. The website features news, resources and information about current cybersafety issues and provides practical advice about how to deal with them (www.cybersmart.gov.au).

The Cybersmart Schools Gateway is a web portal offering all Australian primary and secondary schools easy access to the *Cybersmart* education resources. The *Schools Gateway* hosts all current resources and links to national and international resources. The *Schools Gateway* also includes strategic tools for cybersafety education planning (www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx).

Primary school

CyberQuoll is an internet safety education resource for upper primary school students. It provides a fun, cartoon-style multimedia resource with different episodes explaining the basics of the internet and keeping safe. *CyberQuoll* includes a teacher guide with student worksheets, certificates and contracts. A family contract is also included for parents to use with their children (www.cybersmart.gov.au/cyberquoll).

Cybersmart Detectives is an innovative online activity that teaches children key internet safety messages in a safe school environment. Children

“Recognising that a child's internet activity will depend on their age and experience, the ACMA provides a range of free teaching resources which meet age-specific needs”

work in teams, online and in real time to investigate and solve an internet-themed problem. They are supported by teachers and internet safety experts who act as *Cybersmart* guides in the activity. *Cybersmart Detectives* teaches children key internet safety messages particularly the need to protect personal information (<http://cybersmart.engagelive.net/>).

A second activity, *Cybersmart Hero*, which focuses on cyberbullying and the need for children to support others being bullied online, was recently launched and is now available nationally. It is one of the upper primary resources available from the generic site for teacher resources ([http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher resources.aspx](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher%20resources.aspx)).

Hector's World is an innovative online safety resource for young children featuring Hector Protector, a bottlenose dolphin (<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Kids.aspx>). Developed in New Zealand by Hector's World Limited, this animated resource features episodes that can be viewed online. It's accompanied by online puzzles and downloadable storybooks and activities. There are also lesson plans from children aged 5 to 11 years.

Secondary school

CyberNetrix is an engaging multimedia resource designed for early teens. It includes interactive activities designed to simulate popular online activities, such as instant messaging (IM). *CyberNetrix* aims to highlight age-specific risks online and offers advice about how to avoid them. This resource includes a teacher guide with activity guidelines and student handouts (www.cybersmart.gov.au/cybernetrix).

Let's Fight it Together is a comprehensive teaching resource to help young people, teachers and parents understand cyberbullying and its impact on others. The resource provides practical advice in a package comprising a short film, supporting teaching materials and links to online activities. *Let's Fight it Together* highlights how technology can be misused, leading to cyberbullying, as well as guidance about how to promote and develop a culture of confident technology users.

Originally developed by Childnet International and the Department of Children, Schools and Families in the United Kingdom, the ACMA has adapted the program for use in Australia. It can be accessed from the resources for lower secondary schools at the site <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher%20resources.aspx>.

Wise up to IT is a video-based program aimed at secondary school students. The program covers

cyberbullying, online stalking, internet security and grooming in four videos which depict young people's experiences online. *Wise up to IT* provides teacher and student resources (www.cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit).

Super Clubs PLUS Australia (SCPA) is a protected online social learning network for children aged 6 to 12 years. The ACMA has launched two 'Cybersafety Badges' on the site. Children earn the badges by completing cybersafety activities including an interactive 'spot the problem', a cybersafety quiz and a cybersafety audit of their home.

Many of the ACMA's resources are available on DVD or CD ROM and can be ordered free of charge from the Cybersafety Contact Centre on 1800 880 176. The Contact Centre also provides cybersafety advice and information for a range of audiences.

Smart choices

The internet is a truly incredible tool and as it continues to develop, there will be many more, and varied, opportunities and risks for users. Helping children have positive online experiences requires sound support and education—not only by teachers but also by parents, carers and library staff. With this, children will be better able to make more informed decisions when they see or experience confronting material online. The ACMA's up to date, targeted and useful information can assist and is freely available.

Help children to make smart choices and stay safe online. **TEACH**

The Cybersmart program is a national cybersafety education program managed by the ACMA, as part of the Australian Government's commitment to promoting online safety for children and adolescents. The program welcomes all feedback. To comment, please email cybersafety@acma.gov.au

Endnotes

¹ ACMA, 2009. *Click and connect: Young Australians' use of online social media*. Available at http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311797, accessed 25 February 2010.

² Ibid.

³ Byron, T. 2008. *Safer children in a digital world: The report of the Byron review*. Department for Children, Schools and Families. Available at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/byronreview/pdfs/Final%20Report%20Bookmarked.pdf>, accessed 8 July 2008.

⁴ Byron, T. 2008. *Byron review: Children and new technology*. Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2. Available at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/byronreview/pdfs/Final%20Report%20Bookmarked.pdf>, accessed 8 July 2008.

⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

“Helping children have positive online experiences requires sound support and education—not only by teachers but also by parents, carers and library staff”

Child protection in independent schools

Peter Kilgour

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

Abstract

Given the relationship between a person’s emotional development, their faith development and the experiences during the early years of their lives, it is vital for the Christian school to do all it can to ensure that students are kept safe from all forms of abuse. This paper analyses research on the psychological effects of child abuse and gives practical ideas for teachers and schools on how to protect their students, themselves, and their colleagues from allegations of reportable conduct. It considers the value of a person to God and the responsibility that sits with school staff to protect children.

“*Christian schools express God’s love for children by enabling His invitation “Come unto Me”*”

Why this topic is important

Christian schools express God’s love for children by enabling His invitation “Come unto Me”. As a consequence, these schools make child protection a foundational element of their culture because of at least three significant observations. Firstly, children are the most precious commodity any community, including a church, has today and the most vital commodity this world has in securing its future. Damaging them potentially limits their future as well as their relationship to God and to their community. Secondly, educators recognise that staff members in independent schools are not immune to involvement in predatory behaviours towards children. Finally, school communities are challenged by William Glasser’s statement made in 1997 that paedophilia was the “public health problem of the decade” (Glasser, 1997, p. 1). In 2010 the issues and stories of abuse from inside and outside the Christian sector indicate no improvement in this risk in this new century. What does God think?

What God thinks

There is no escaping the highly valued relationship God has initiated with us as human beings. Zephaniah reveals God’s heart when he says: “The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” Zeph 3:17 (New International Version).

The apostle Paul further highlights our value to God when he says: “Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!)” Eph 1:4–5 (The Message).

Considering children and their importance to Him, Jesus goes one step further and actually admonishes adults to make sure children are treated in a special and caring way: “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Matt 19:14 (New American Standard Version).

Nobody knows like our Creator the impact abuse has on the developing mind and emotions of the child. In considering his extensive practice of psychotherapy Erikson (1959) was able to identify 8 consecutive stages in human social-emotional development (see Table 1), and in each of these stages, abuse in one form or another will have an impact.

Building on Erikson’s stages of development, Cloninger (2006) believes that rather than the stages being discrete and consecutive, “such development can be visualised as a spiral of expanding height, width, and depth as a person matures or increases in coherence of personality” (p.2). As a person reaches

Table 1: Social-emotional development

Stages in social-emotional development		
Trust	versus	Mistrust
Autonomy	versus	Shame
Initiative	versus	Guilt
Industry	versus	Inferiority
Identity	versus	Diffusion
Intimacy	versus	Isolation
Generativity	versus	Self-absorption
Integrity	versus	Despair

each stage of development, they will take with them the previous stage also and continue to develop and broaden it. This adds importance to the impact teachers can have on students at each stage of development but also raises concerns over the impact abuse can have on the emotional maturity of that child.

Fowler (1981 as cited in Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener & Benson, 2006), based his faith development theory on Erikson's stages. The moral, social and cognitive aspects of a person's emotional development parallel their faith development. Fowler believed that faith is independent of religion as such, but it is a "person's way of responding to transcendent value and power in such a way that the trust in and loyalty to the source of transcendence integrate our identity and give our lives unity and meaning" (p. 7). Given that faith development in students is a vital part of the program of a Christian school, it is important for teachers to realise that anything that interferes with the emotional development of the young person, will also interfere with that person's faith development.

By studying Table 1, and considering the more negative outcome at each of the stages of emotional development, it can be found that each of these are characteristics of children who are victims of some form of abuse and they will carry these outcomes into adulthood. Mistrust, shame, guilt, inferiority, poor sense of identity, isolation, self-absorption and despair are found either singly or in collection in children who have suffered abuse.

As evidence of the impact of sexual abuse on children, Wonderlich (2000) reports a series of facts that confirm the impact of child sexual abuse on emotional and moral development. He reports that approximately 31% of women in prison stated that they had been abused as children. Further, it was identified that approximately 95% of teenage prostitutes had been sexually abused. Finkelhor and Browne (1986) add more specifically to the evidence in stating that: "Long term effects of child abuse include fear, anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, inappropriate sexual behaviour, poor self esteem, tendency toward substance abuse and difficulty with close relationships" (p. 69).

Parents and significant other adults such as teachers and church leaders are those entrusted with the development of an emotionally balanced child. It can be imagined how seriously God sees any act of an adult that would prevent a child coming to Him and securing their place within His kingdom (Matt 19:14).

Teachers therefore, need to scrutinise carefully their behaviour towards children and in addition be always aware of the signs that may indicate that a child's development may have been interfered with

in some way. These orientations to professional practice can firstly protect both the teacher and the children and secondly provide opportunity for referral, potentially enabling support and restoration. Being informed about forms of abuse and understanding the consequences becomes essential for current teaching practice.

Types of abuse

Sexual abuse is just one type of reportable conduct suffered by children. Physical abuse and psychological abuse are also damaging for children but are not considered as newsworthy by the media as sexual misconduct, consequently the community is less aware of the incidence of these forms. Historical incidents in prominent church organisations have placed sexual abuse in the headlines on numerous occasions over the last two decades, but in the eyes of child protection agencies, the other two forms of abuse are equally serious in their impact.

Research shows that combinations of any of the types of sexual abuse indicated here lead to a more complicated set of mental health issues for the victim as they move into adulthood (O'Leary, Coohy & Easton, 2010). The severity of the sexual abuse and the way it may be combined with physical and emotional abuse are indicators of the level and form of complexity of future mental health issues.

How teachers can protect themselves and students

It is vital that teachers do not put themselves into positions or situations where their motives or actions can be questioned. It is equally important that teachers observe other teachers and their behaviour with students.

Outside of the immediate family, teachers are the ones who spend the most time with students. This means that they are most able to notice changes in student behaviour that may indicate some form of abuse (Briggs and Hawkins, 1997). Teachers are also in a position to notice the sort of emotional malfunctions noted earlier when students are being interfered with (Finkelhor & Browne, 1986). As pointed out by Walsh, Rassafiani, Matthews, Farrell & Butler (2010), these emotional malfunctions can also include: "low self-esteem...dissociation, and self-harming behaviours" (p. 336).

Teachers can protect themselves, their colleagues and their students by observing some simple precautions. The main ones summarised below are based on the Association of Independent Schools of NSW suggested code of professional conduct (2004).

1. Teachers should never be drawn into conversations with students that include

“*Mistrust, shame, guilt, inferiority, poor sense of identity, isolation, self-absorption and despair are found either singly or in collection in children who have suffered abuse*”

inappropriate sexual content or use suggestive overtones. This includes jokes and stories that are marginal in their implications. They should never discuss their own sexuality, relationships or desires with students.

2. There is very rarely a situation where it would be appropriate for a staff member to touch a child. This of course is age specific. An early childhood teacher comforting a hurting pre-school student using touch is a different situation to a secondary teacher comforting a senior student in the same way. In cases such as demonstrations in physical education, or in the application of first aid, touching may be necessary. Permission should be sought from the child however before they are touched.

3. A teacher needs to be very careful to avoid sexual exhibitionism—especially at the swimming pool, any changing room or on overnight excursions. In the same way they need to ensure they cannot be accused of watching children undress in the change rooms. They also need to ensure that students are not being exposed to the sexual behaviour of others. This includes exposing them to movies that have such scenes. Teachers should make sure they know the school's policy on movie censorship. Most schools have a policy of not showing any movie classified higher than PG.

4. Teachers should not include students in their social networking 'friend list'. Emailing, texting, skypeing and chatting online are also activities that are considered unwise. Increasingly schools and state departments of education are creating policies that ban teacher/student electronic contact except for academic communications that are specifically designed for that purpose. As a result of inappropriate communications between teachers and students, the Queensland Department of Education and Training has created a revised code of conduct for teachers prohibiting contact by teachers with students on social networking internet sites (Ninemsn staff, 2009).

5. While the use of pornography in any form by a teacher while at school would normally be called a breach of professional ethics in the school's staff handbook, the possession of child pornography is illegal. If found in an electronic format the school would need to provide the teacher's computer (or ICT device) as well as the name of the teacher to the police. The way teachers use photography also needs to be dealt with carefully, especially photo opportunities at all school events, including camps and swimming carnivals. School protocols should be clear, known and adhered to.

6. Teachers know that they are not to have 'favourites' in their classes. This is very difficult

because naturally some students are easier to relate to than others. Special attention towards certain students can however be construed as 'grooming'. It can be interpreted by others in this way when they perceive teachers are attempting to convince the child of their 'special relationship', are spending inappropriate 'special time', giving gifts, showing favours, and allowing the student to 'overstep the mark'.

7. Every teacher is aware that physical force used against a student, except where the teacher is trying to prevent harm or injury, is unlawful and the teacher could easily lose school employment due to a complaint of physical contact with a child. It is probably fair to say however, that not every teacher would be aware that even if a teacher threatens a student, and the student believes that physical aggression is possible, that behaviour is also reportable.

8. Also categorised as physical abuse is the area of excessive punishment or ill-treatment which also includes lack of treatment or neglect. This could be the refusal to provide first aid or transport to medical professionals if the need exists.

9. Finally there is the area of psychological harm where the words of a teacher can have profound effects on a student. This may include constant yelling, sarcasm, belittling, and the use of 'nick-names'. If a teacher's arsenal of student management techniques contains the constant use of any of these, there is cause for concern.

What does a 'groomer' look like?

Smallbone and Wortley (1999) report research carried out in Queensland amongst convicted and imprisoned child sex offenders. The participants openly reported many details that help to profile a person who is intent on grooming a child. The average age of an offender when they first offend is 31 years, 78% were Australian born who were not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and 37% had no previous convictions. Only 19% of offenders reported their father as being affectionate. Having a violent, abusive or dismissive father was reported by 37% and 55% had themselves been sexually abused. Pornography had been used by 86%, including 10% who used child pornography.

This profile of offenders represents normal Australians who became experts at grooming children. Their motivation for grooming fell into two broad categories: those who had a preference for abusing children and those who were opportunists. In a school situation, a person who is so inclined will have many opportunities to exercise their power over children, but concern should extend to all school age

“Increasingly schools ban teacher/student electronic contact except for academic communications that are specifically designed for that purpose”

associated group activities including sport, outdoor activities, electronic gaming, religion, and cultural pursuits such as music, dance, and other arts.

As pointed out by Smallbone and Wortley (1999), it is a mistake to believe that girls are more susceptible to abuse than boys. While perpetrators of sexual abuse are 3 times more likely to abuse females, males are 3 times more likely to be abused. This is because the few serial offenders in the group were more likely to target male victims.

What observations would specifically point to an adult who may be intent on grooming a child? In the same study by Smallbone and Wortley (1999), data revealed that 67% of offenders reported their method of grooming as touching non-sexually. For 59% it was giving potential victims lots of attention while for 56% it was spending lots of time with them. A similar proportion (56%) made sure they did things that the child wanted to do.

It is the role therefore of each person in the school community to advise colleagues if, in their opinion, the colleague's behaviour could be perceived to be inappropriate and suspect, but also to report colleagues or others if they believe a child could be at risk.

Being fair to the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator

The only fair way to deal with allegations of reportable conduct by a staff member is to carry out a thorough, unbiased investigation into the allegation. It is not fair on the student who has reported the event not to take their evidence seriously and investigate. It is possible that the allegation will be vexatious, false, or misconceived, but in some cases it may be factual. There is precedence of child abuse in independent schools and any allegation needs to be taken seriously.

A properly carried out investigation will always include a risk analysis that considers both parties, their families, the wider school family and any other affected parties. Both chaplain and counsellor help should be offered to any involved party who desires it.

While a teacher may feel 'not supported' when the principal asks for an investigation into an allegation about their conduct, it is in fact better for them to cooperate with an investigation. When the facts are retrieved, an innocent teacher will have their name cleared. Without an investigation there will always be questions over that particular allegation.

A caring Christian school needs to have a plan of action to help with the considerable residual hurt that will be generated when a staff member is accused of some form of reportable conduct. The hurt affects the alleged perpetrator whether the allegation is fact

or otherwise. The students making the claim will also experience extremes of emotion and the families of both parties may suffer trauma at different levels.

Education and communication are key ingredients in helping the parties understand the process. This education for staff may include prior information on areas of policy content, case studies of past incidents, details of the investigators, availability of the counsellor and chaplain, what the financial and employment implications may be, and what the timeline for the investigation is.

No matter what information and factual details are given, there will still be significant emotional hurt to deal with at the time of an incident. It is particularly difficult for the rest of the staff who observe what is happening, but who are not privy to the facts of the case because of privacy issues. These persons need continued understanding and should be offered counselling also.

What issues does a Christian establishment have in dealing with this?

A Christian establishment should be very well equipped to deal with sensitive and emotive issues such as abusive type behaviours. Caring should be inherent and support should be plentiful. Unfortunately however, the past indicates that institutionalised culture and traditions can cause a different set of circumstances to prevail in a Christian setting that create organisational difficulties.

There can be the tendency to minimise any initial allegation of sexual abuse or at least to trivialise the allegation and hope it will go away. There is also precedence of alleged victims being discouraged from reporting alleged assaults. There can also exist an inbuilt culture and doctrine of specific roles for the different sexes that support patriarchy.

Other relevant issues are that, in many cases, the community and even families are polarised by the allegations and sides are taken.

Any allegation of abuse is a time when leadership is tested and school morale has to be intentionally nurtured. Weak leadership and uninformed action can make these situations more difficult than they need to be. Systems and organisations are demanding appropriate behaviours in leaders and require accountability with increased expectations of informed, professional, respectful attitudes associated with just processes.

How does 'teacher caution' affect pastoral care

In previous decades, school administrators were satisfied to see teachers mixing with students in the breaks rather than reading the paper over a hot drink in the staff room. On reflection, the revelation

“*What observations would specifically point to an adult who may be intent on grooming a child?*”

“
The relationship between students and teachers in Christian schools has long been a feature of the school's pastoral care program and is particularly vital for students with dysfunctional or single parent families”

of many school-based cases of reportable teacher conduct indicates the need for cautious observation of interactions and the need for careful collegial council. School administrators appreciate the mentoring roles their teachers take on in the school, but are more aware now than in the past of the potential for allegations of reportable conduct to be made. Profiling indicates that the young, popular teacher has often been the one who may have an issue with child abuse involvement, or may be the one who is the victim of a misconceived allegation.

Pastoral care needs to protect the teachers as well as the students. The caring school will keep constant reminders before the teachers of their legal and spiritual duty of care for the students, for themselves and for their colleagues.

There are many positive ways that child protection can be kept before the teaching staff. A small item on the staff meeting agenda each week as is usually done for Occupational Health and Safety, is a proactive way of addressing issues and potential issues. This would emphasise the importance of child protection and keep it before the teachers regularly rather than a single training session annually. These regular items of information could be varied and may include the following: the review of a policy, a case study, a role play, a visiting professional, or a confidential discussion of a specific student.

Though this paper highlights many of the more negative aspects of the area of child protection, it would be a disappointing outcome if teacher/student relationships that serve to mentor students academically and spiritually were in jeopardy because of over zealotry in the child protection area. The relationship between students and teachers in Christian schools has long been a feature of the school's pastoral care program and is

particularly vital for students with dysfunctional or single parent families. Education, care and mutual accountability should be optimised to ensure the safety of students and staff. **TEACH**

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Mentoring for impact

Brad Watson

Lecturer, Faculty of Arts/Humanities, Avondale College, NSW

Peter Kilgour

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

Abstract

School based mentoring (SBM) is an increasingly popular component of pastoral care programs in Australian secondary schools. Concurrent with growing consensus over the benefits of SBM, there is increasing recognition that the benefits of SBM can be maximised through careful programming, appropriate benchmarking and effective evaluation. Although children spend approximately 40% of their waking hours in school, and SBM is increasingly common, there is surprisingly little data available on the effectiveness of SBM. This paper reports on research into a mentoring program that links undergraduate theology students to teenage students in a secondary school. While the mentoring program was of value to both mentors and mentees, interviews with participants point to the value of aligning the program with guidelines for best practice found in the Australian National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks, 2007.

Introduction

For the purpose of this paper mentoring is defined as a range of activities designed “to provide a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (Australian Youth Mentoring Network, 2007, p. 13). Implicit in this definition is the premise that the primary beneficiary (mentee) is a young person who is assisted through personalised guidance and support in an organised program which links them to a supportive change agent (mentor).

As the author of *Boy Oh Boy: How to Raise and Educate Boys*, Tim Hawkes (2001) notes that the word ‘mentor’ is used in Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey*. Written in Greek, approximately eight hundred years before the birth of Christ, the poem describes the responsibility given to a nobleman whose task it was to care for the son of the great Odysseus (otherwise known as Ulysses), a hero of the Trojan War who took ten adventurous years

to return to his homeland. In Odysseus’s absence, Mentor coached, guarded and guided Telemachus (his mentee), befriending the fatherless young man, sharing his wisdom to guide his ward’s career and personal development. Mentor may be seen as a wise facilitator who used both formal and informal opportunities to deliberately encourage, support and develop the potential of his mentee through a proactive, supportive relationship.

School based mentoring (SBM) activities are of particular interest to pastoral care staff, administrators and school counsellors. While the impacts of community mentoring programs are well researched, SBM outcomes are less understood, especially for mentees (Jucovy, 2000, p. 1). Research findings on the impacts of mentoring have been contradictory and public perceptions of SBM are largely informed by research conducted on community mentoring programs and a small number of SBM research projects. Rhodes (2008, p. 41) notes that, “the field of youth mentoring has taken on a public life of its own—a life that is, at times, removed from the scientific evidence”. SBM can and should be viewed as a social phenomenon that requires careful study. Despite the presumption that all SBM activities are useful, some SBM programs may be poorly planned, poorly run and may lack evidence of impact.

Especially in school settings, where most students interact with adults in a relatively impersonal context, the impact of mentoring on individuals is widely perceived to be substantial, especially when mentors adopt a non-judgemental, advocate approach that is based on a positive relationship. In one study of 82 mentor/mentee pairs, most of the 24 mentors whose match failed “had a belief that they should and could ‘reform’ their mentee” (Jucovy, 2001, p. 1). Various researchers cited by MacCallum and Beltman (1999, p. 17) suggest that youth exposed to mentoring relationships benefit in terms of school attendance, school retention, progression to tertiary study, academic performance, self-confidence, self-efficacy, motivation, relationship with peers and family, problem solving skills and role modelling. In

“The impact of mentoring is substantial, especially when mentors adopt a non-judgemental, advocate approach that is based on a positive relationship”

a study of 53 Australian pilot indigenous mentoring programs the key outcomes identified were improved school attendance, strengthened participation in school activities, improved dialogue between Aboriginal families and community, and improved connections to the broader community (MacCullum, Beltman & Palmer, 2005, p. 6).

Although SBM research is still in its infancy, common areas of inquiry include effective length of mentoring matches, frequency of meetings, training and support, characteristics of effective mentors and impact on mentees (Grossman, 2009, p. 4). Research consistently points to the importance of long duration mentoring, maximising frequency of meetings, development of an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, and utilisation of a personal empowerment approach (Deutsch and Spencer, 2009). SBM is said to enjoy particular advantages over community based mentoring programs including increased appeal to mentors (reduced time commitments combined with increased personal security), strong referral systems for mentees (largely because teachers refer students to the program), enhanced potential for cross-gender mentoring and reduced costs (Jucovy, 2000, p. 1).

Advocacy for SBM is varied and proponents range from those who report small or moderate benefits to others who provide strong endorsement. The USA Arizona Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families (2005, p. 10) reported that although only 2% of Arizona's youth were in a mentoring relationship, youth with mentors were 52% less likely to skip school, 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 37% less likely to skip a class, 32% less likely to hit someone, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol. Further, the commission posits that in the school based mentoring programs it investigated, youth were more confident, more positive about relationships and had better attitudes. Converse and Lignugaris/Kraft (2008) compared sixteen at-risk students mentored by staff to a control group of unmentored at-risk students and reported significant changes in attitudes of mentored individuals toward self, peers, teachers, and other school personnel. One study of high risk youth (often the mentees had a criminal record) found that mentoring "acted as a barrier against depression, which in turn had an effect on how the youth handled social conflicts, substance use and recidivism" (Bauldry, n.d., p. 18). It should be noted that the impact of SBM on mentors themselves is rarely researched however many researchers concur with the finding that mentors enjoy developing relationships and may experience "enhanced personal development and self-esteem" (MacCullum et al. 2005, p.6).

A study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters SBM program offered in USA schools is indicative of the benefits commonly reported for students. Researchers studied a total of 1,139 nine- to sixteen-year-olds in 71 participating schools. From this sample, 565 youth were randomly assigned to a beneficiary group from whom baseline data was collected and 574 assigned to the control group. The researchers found that mentoring resulted in improved academic performance, specifically in science and language, quality of class work, number of assignments handed in, number of serious school infractions, scholastic efficacy, and school attendance. Although there appeared to be significant benefits attached to the social connectedness provided by the mentoring program, the researchers did not discover any benefits in terms of "out-of-school drug and alcohol use, misconduct outside of school, peer and parent-child relationship quality and self-esteem" (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007, p. 68–69). Given the variation in outcomes observed for mentees in the various studies cited above, it may be that mentoring outcomes are affected by a variety of factors including mentor traits and training, the type and quality of programs offered, and the mentees themselves.

Reid (2008) notes that successful mentoring is dependent on the preparation of the program, attention to detail, and level of reflection conducted by the mentors. Training of mentors is essential. She says that if implemented well, "some learnable behaviours can improve complex interpersonal interactions. Mentoring programs do not need to rely only on participants' instincts as they negotiate difficult social waters" (p. 52). Interestingly, Converse and Lignugaris/Kraft (2008) speculate that mentors who are more informal and playful, and rely less on planned activities or icebreakers, are more successful in establishing a mutually enjoyable relationship associated with tangible outcomes.

Hughes and Dykstra (2008) researched the perceptions university students had of the mentoring program they voluntarily participated in. Their work revealed that: "Mentors were motivated primarily by the opportunity to have a positive impact on youth through (a) being a role model, friend, source of support, and caring adult, and (b) increasing their own understanding" (p. 21). Such motivators may be congruent with those of the mentors in the study, which is the focus of this paper.

Methodology

The SBM program evaluated in this study is offered to high school mentees aged 14–16 from a Seventh-day Adventist school who are linked to

“Mentors who are more informal and playful are more successful in establishing a mutually enjoyable relationship associated with tangible outcomes”

undergraduate theology students over a period of just 10 weeks. As such this program is thought to be the only one of its kind in Australia. The mentors are typically aged between 20 and 45, are usually male, and participate in the mentoring program as a course requirement. Of the 13 mentors interviewed, the mean age was 28. The program coordinator, a chaplain at the institution that provides the mentors, coordinates pre-mentoring training totalling 4 hours. Given the short duration of the program, and the overwhelming weight of evidence collected on SBM programs, the researchers approached the task of evaluating the impact of the program with some scepticism regarding the impact on both mentors and mentees.

In the context of other programs run in Australian schools, the SBM program studied in this paper is in keeping with the descriptor provided in the Australian National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks (Australian Youth Mentoring Network, 2007) which asserts that:

School based mentoring takes place at the mentees' school either during school hours or immediately after. School based programs often target students at risk of leaving school early or who are socially isolated or failing to achieve their potential. Activities may include tutoring, career exploration, playing games or sports. The primary focus is the development of a long-term supportive relationship. (p. 13)

The school mentees participate voluntarily and are initially selected for program involvement by the Head of School, in consultation with staff. Some mentees are considered to be 'vulnerable' (from a single parent family, socially isolated or in trouble at school) while other students are referred by staff on the basis that they would benefit from social networking in order to develop leadership skills. Interestingly, the matching process utilised is very flexible. Rather than pre-match mentees to mentors, the two groups are placed in a room together, with food, and instructed to form their own mentor-mentee partnerships, typically involving one mentor and one mentee. Activities include informal discussion, review of events or happenings in the life of the mentee, game playing, singing, sports and icebreaking tasks.

Formal mentor-mentee interaction is limited to one semester of academic activity incorporating four hours of mentor training and ten weeks mentoring. The program has been offered since 2006 and currently utilises the Adventist Development and Relief Agency BSomebody2Someone Mentoring Training Series resource (French & Unser, 2007). There is an expectation that mentees will benefit from the 'connection' achieved through improved social networking, that is "A sense of belonging; of

feeling like you 'fit'; of knowing that people know you, and believe in you" (p. 13, module 5). The mentor coordinator noted that the main goal for mentors is to "Get them focussed on the powerful ministry they can have with kids, and build their confidence. It's a very intentional method of introducing mentoring to the SDA Church."

The mentoring program is best seen as a loosely designed, relatively informal, short-term intervention designed to impact both mentors and mentees. Anecdotal evidence provided by school staff and mentee feedback sheets collected by the program coordinator strongly suggested positive outcomes of the program and a consequent need for review and evaluation to deepen impact. For example, all 26 (100%) mentees who completed feedback sheets in 2009 stated that the mentoring was a positive experience. However, 16 (42%) added that the program was too short.

Effective evaluation of mentoring activities usually necessitates a thorough understanding of the desired program outcomes, use of appropriate informants, employment of suitably nuanced data gathering/analysis mechanisms and ideally, comparison to a control group (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). The activities of the authors of this paper however can be seen as more in keeping with rapid appraisal techniques of data gathering incorporating a preliminary 'case study' that utilises coded transcripts of recorded focus group discussions, and interviews utilising the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach (Davis, 2005) in which participants identify the most important consequence of an intervention. The MSC approach requires participants in an intervention to 'story' the most significant impact for them. This study used no control group for comparison and took place seven months after the program ended. Rather than being viewed as a systemic attempt to measure the impacts of a program (MacCullum & Beltman, 1999, p. 17), the data gathered could be seen as an exploratory study that is best used to stimulate discussion on the need for Mentoring Benchmarks and their relevance to small SBM programs.

Results

Focus group interviews involved 13 male mentors who were randomly assigned to one of three discussion sessions of about one hour, at which time they were also invited to write an MSC statement. Individual interviews were also conducted with two program coordinators. A focus group discussion involving seven Year 10 mentees was also conducted however the number of participants was limited by the fact that some had left school, and many of those invited to participate either declined the opportunity to

“**School based programs often target students at risk of leaving school early or who are socially isolated or failing to achieve their potential. The primary focus is the development of a long-term supportive relationship**”

meet with researchers in their lunch break, or failed to gain and submit parental consent. Fortunately a written feedback sheet had been completed in late 2009 by 26 mentees and 22 mentors (French, 2009). A thematic analysis of the coded interview transcripts and feedback sheets yielded observations from both mentors and mentees about the program.

Mentees

As a discussion starter the mentees were asked to respond to a simple five question survey in which each statement required mentees to respond using a five point Likert Scale where 5 was the most favourable response and 1 was the least favourable. For example, students who responded to “I enjoyed the company of the mentors” could circle 1 (not really) or 5 (very much). Table 1 shows the questions asked and the mean response score for the students. The mean response for question 1 was 4.57, indicating a very strong level of satisfaction with the company of the mentors. Evidence for a positive relationship was supported by 25 of the 26 students reporting in student feedback sheets a perception that their mentor liked them.

It can be seen from the mean of 4.43 for both questions 3 and 4 that the students involved in the mentoring program considered it to be a positive social learning experience. Students strongly recommended participation by other classes in the future ($M=4.86$). Feedback sheets confirmed this with all 26 mentees asserting that they would recommend it to others.

The mentee focus group discussion solicited positive responses, even though they came in short, concise sentences. The researcher began by asking the mentees if the program should happen again. The result was a unanimous “yes” from the group with one “definitely” heard. Mentees were then queried why they were so positive about the program. This brought answers of more substance including: “It was fun”, “getting to know more people”, “we learned new skills”, “helping other people out”. One student expressed satisfaction in missing a science class however noted that the mentoring sessions were deliberately rotated to minimise impact on particular subjects. Feedback sheets resulted in comments such as “It relaxes you to talk to someone”, “it was fun and it was good to meet people”, “it’s really positive”, “I made friends”, “I had something to look forward to each week” and it “takes you in so many positive directions”.

The boys interviewed tended to be very economical with their words. When asked to describe exactly what they did with their mentors, one responded, “Sometimes everyone would just

Table 1: Mean responses from mentees

Item	Statement	Mean response (n=7)
1	I enjoyed the company of the mentors.	4.57
2	I still think about my mentors.	3.14
3	Having the mentors visit made a positive difference to my day.	4.43
4	I learned things from my mentor.	4.43
5	I would recommend the mentoring process for future classes.	4.86

play a game of footy or soccer or cricket”. Generally, they talked about the games and the music they participated in individually, and as a group with their mentors, but then indicated that they had discussed issues with their mentors and talked to them about “things that were going down”. They indicated unanimously that this was helpful for them and that their mentors were good listeners.

The boys’ ideas on how the program could be improved were also expressed with a degree of brevity. They wanted the program to continue for them and to have it expanded so that others could benefit as well, including the girls who had little opportunity to participate due to the small number of female mentors. Four of the seven focus group participants stated that although the official mentoring project had ended, they were still in touch with their mentors via email, phone or other means. One piece of mentee advice that resonated with the entire group was, “Instead of one period make it two or three”. By contrast, only 13 of the 26 mentee feedback sheets (50%) indicated that the high school students wanted more time each week with their mentor, that one hour was less than ideal.

When asked to identify the most significant change in their lives as a consequence of participating in the mentoring program, the mentees commented that it had been simply having someone outside of friends and family to talk to. In the absence of teacher observations, infringement data, school attendance records and academic records, it was not possible for the researchers to draw any conclusions about the long term impact of the program on student academic performance or behaviour. A review of the 26 mentee feedback sheets reveals that mentees especially appreciated the opportunity to network socially (n=19), have fun (n=10), talk and have questions answered (n=8), and miss class (n=6).

“One student expressed satisfaction in missing a science class however noted that the mentoring sessions were deliberately rotated to minimise impact on particular subjects”

Mentors

Given that the thirteen male mentors interviewed had all agreed to participate in the research, and were not randomly selected from the entire cohort of 25 mentors who participated in the program in 2009, it is possible that their experiences do not provide a representative sample. Indeed, mentors who had negative experiences may have excluded themselves from the research activity and both of the female mentors declined to participate in the three focus group discussions. However, given that 13 participated in focus group discussion from a total of 25 mentors (52%), the researchers are confident that the cohort is reasonably represented.

A summary of shared motivation for participation in this SBM, as offered by one mentor, suggested,

It was more [about] just being a mate, listening to them if they've got problems...yeah just [to] give them a bit of edification, bring them up if they are down, if they are happy see where they are at...if possible just to relate ummm, personal experience.

This holistic finding is in agreement with earlier research, supporting this as a significant motivator for tertiary student mentors (Hughes and Dykstra, 2008).

The observations below combine findings from focus group discussion, MSC statements and comments from 22 mentor feedback sheets collected in 2009. A summary of the outcomes for the mentors results in eight specific themes and a brief discussion of each follows.

Most mentors expressed **moderate to high degrees of satisfaction** with their participation in the program, asserting that they were adequately trained and personally enriched through their involvement. In the words of one mentor “*I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as I did, by the end of the program I didn't want it to end*”. Most mentors, with the exception of one who seemed unable to find anything in common with his mentee, expressed such sentiments. A strong appreciation of the experience was revealed on 20 of the 22 mentor feedback sheets.

In focus group discussion mentors consistently argued, sometimes quite passionately, that it would be far better to **match with mentees over a longer period of time**. All of the three mentor focus groups agreed that while the program was beneficial, greater impact would be expected through longer engagement. While one mentor stated, “*I was surprised to see how much of a dent one can make in such a short period of time—the kids were very responsive*”, the remainder questioned the brevity of the program. Another asserted, “*Too short. By the*

time you build up a strong relationship it was over.” One focus group recommended extension to at least one year, and expressed interest in matches for up to four years. Clearly, “*Ten weeks is not enough to meet someone off the bat and talk about deep stuff*”. From the feedback sheets, 50% indicated dissatisfaction with the short duration of the formal matching.

In focus group discussion several mentors revealed, quiet candidly, amusement over their own **vulnerability and misgivings prior to matching** with a mentee. Some of the older mentors had strongly doubted their ability to connect with teenagers, a sentiment shared by many of the relatively younger mentors. Several described real nervousness and fear of rejection by their potential mentees, followed by relief when they were matched. Mentors reported anxiety of different degrees as shown in the following comment, “*I just thought I would be [the] last one picked. And I just didn't think it was going to be a good experience at all.*”

Mentors highlighted **the need for informative matching** so that mentors and mentees could form matches based on common interests. This was expressed in the statement, “*I think it is just as simple as doing a basic questionnaire, just a five point questionnaire, ehm, on just their musical tastes, their sports interests, what their fields of interests are, in hobbies or ambitions*”. Those who found common interests reported benefits such as connecting more easily and finding common grounds for conversation, however this occurred more by chance than by design in this program.

Significantly, most of the mentors were **reluctant to speculate on the lasting impacts** of their activities with the mentees. No mentor interviewed described evidence of change in their mentees, perhaps reflecting the relatively short duration of the program. Indicative of group sentiment was the statement, “*I felt the program was a great initiative but didn't think the time given was sufficient to make an impact on their lives*”. Impact related comments tended to focus on observations that the mentees were appreciative and could be surprisingly open, and that some formed a real friendship. This is consistent with mentee responses that identified relational outcomes without long lasting consequences apart from the establishment of some valuable friendships.

Surprisingly to the researchers, focus group discussion frequently resulted in the observation by mentors that **the experience had changed their own perception of youth ministry and built their confidence in interacting with youth**. Comments included “*It has led to a shift in my*

“*Focus group discussion frequently resulted in the observation by mentors that the experience had changed their own perception of youth ministry and built their confidence in interacting with youth*”

ministry focus” and “I felt a change in my approach to evangelism. I did not need to preach at him, but rather just to create a friendship.” At least five of the mentors explained that as a consequence of their participation in the mentoring program, their approach to running youth groups and some church activities had changed to become more inclusive and relational. A theology student stated, “This program changed my view on my future ministry where I will make children my focus”. Some mentors also acknowledged a strong reverse-impact effect as reflected in the comment “It’s like they are mentoring you rather than you’re mentoring them...like he mentored me more than I mentored him I’m sure”.

Two mentors struggled with their mentees, expressing concern that **there needs to be flexibility** for reallocation relatively early in the process, especially when a relationship based on common interests fails to develop or if either party feels awkward. In cases where there is “no connection with the kids” and therefore limited ability to “bring out something that was worthwhile” continuing a match may be counterproductive.

Virtually all of the mentors agreed that it was important to **improve the depth and longevity of their relationships** with mentees. Suggestions included allowing mentors to contact mentees out of school, exchanging phone numbers, and participating in camps or community service activities on a more regular basis. Some mentors expressed frustration that they had established a relationship over one semester, however were not facilitated to continue for a longer period. “I just found it really difficult trying to stay connected with him now that we don’t have a regular time...if it’s structured in such a way that the first semester we get to know them and get that level [of friendship] that trust is built up; and [in] the second semester that trust expanded and we could show them a whole new world about what life is all about.” In feedback sheets 16 mentors asserted that they hoped to continue the mentoring relationship beyond the conclusion date.

A commonly expressed concern was that when the program ceased there was no follow-up opportunity for mentors to contact mentees, and that the matches ended awkwardly at a BBQ. Indeed, a worry expressed was that having gone to lengths to establish a relationship based on mutual trust, the program ended with the end of the mentor’s academic semester, reflecting the needs and convenience of the mentors, rather than respect for a relationship. Reflecting on this one mentor said, “They say build this relationship up and then stop. Kind of doesn’t really present a good image to the

kids.” A mentor expressed being “more intentional with the phasing out” was desirable, perhaps due to the concern that “having adults quit on them is their life story.”

All the mentors were enthusiastic about applying practical, youth ministry skills to a mentoring program that facilitated “meeting real people, meeting some real needs.” In the words of a theology student mentor who was endorsed enthusiastically by four others present in his focus group, “It was [a] crime to bring us back an hour later. It was like, leave us out there for another two or three hours, please!”

Discussion

It is difficult to estimate the number of SBM programs currently run in Australia that target youth. This is due to their diversity, geographical spread, divergent goals, dissimilar funding bases and differing levels of formality. However, those programs that are registered and tracked do provide useful insights. According to the Australian Youth Mentoring Matters report (Australian Youth Mentoring Network, 2009, p.1) there were 17,607 young people participating in 106 AYM registered programs for that year. Of 146 programs whose staff completed surveys, 62% indicated that their main priority was to increase the young person’s personal growth. Not unexpectedly, most mentees ranged from 12 to 21 years of age. Almost half (48.1%) of the programs identified “at risk school attendees” as their primary target. Other significant groups include Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders (11.3%), unemployed (11.3%), and young people with a disability (9.4%).

According to the report, the role of mentors in registered programs varies according to the purpose of the program. Mentors in the AYM study do not view their primary role as academic support, sharing this view with mentors in the Big Brothers Big Sisters study (Herrera et al., 2007). When questioned, respondents in the Big Brothers Big Sisters study saw the role of a mentor as follows: provision of general support; providing career advice; improving social skills and providing support for the transition from school to work. Similar perspectives were revealed in this case study. The theology students interviewed saw their primary role as friends and advocates. Some took it upon themselves to help their student meet a goal, for example, to learn to box, to fish or to develop social skills.

The publication of the national Youth Mentoring Benchmarks (AYMN, 2007) represents a welcome addition to resources available to guide development of large, funded mentoring programs and stems from a growing body of literature. The SBM program studied here was not designed with an awareness

“It was a crime to bring us back an hour later. It was like, leave us out there for another two or three hours, please!”

of the Benchmarks and is unlikely to comply with many of the guidelines due to its small size and limited resources. For example, it is unlikely that a skilled, paid coordinator will be recruited (one of the benchmarks) and as a consequence many other recommendations are not attainable. Nevertheless, the evaluation of this program and the following discussion does reinforce the importance and credibility of some of the basic guidelines found in the Benchmarks.

The SBM program reported on here has several strengths relating to the mentors. Firstly, a strong partnership exists between the mentoring coordinator and deputy principal of the school, ensuring that the mentors are well oriented and supervised. Secondly, the mentors are idealistic, community oriented theology students with a strong interest in community service and personal development. Thirdly, pre-mentoring training is provided, leaving mentors feeling well prepared for their immediate role and supporting future potential roles. Finally, the matching process is flexible and allows mentees and mentors to self-select their partners. In keeping with a growing body of evidence, the mentors have been trained to be non-judgemental, informal, supportive and flexible. There is little doubt in the minds of the researchers that the program had a significant educational impact on the mentors, as expressed by one mentor who wrote in his MSC statement, *“The first time I spoke to the student who I mentored, was a life changing experience.”*

The long-term impact on mentees is less certain although all mentees did report some evidence for improved social connectedness. One review of empirical studies concludes, “Youth in one-on-one mentoring relationships of shorter duration (3–6 months) experienced no significant improvements in academic, social, and substance use outcomes” (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002, p. 4). In keeping with the Australian National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks (2007), it is recommended that the theology department providing mentors seeks opportunities to extend the length of each match to a minimum of 12 months and re-evaluate the impact on self-esteem or self worth. The Mentoring Matters National Survey Findings (Australian National Youth Mentoring Network, 2009) indicated that only 34% of registered programs report matches of more than 12 months however the common occurrence of short duration mentoring matches can be attributed to convenience and organisational constraints rather than a commitment to maximising efficacy. In the study explored in this paper, increasing the length of match with mentees was desirable for all the mentors interviewed, primarily because they

believed it took some months just to establish a relationship and build trust.

In their review of 55 evaluations of the effects of mentoring programs on youth, DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002, p. 1) found evidence of only a modest or small benefit of program participation for the average youth however noted better outcomes for at-risk youth. They recommended “greater adherence to guidelines for the design and implementation of effective mentoring programs as well as more in-depth assessment of relationship and contextual factors in the evaluation of programs.” Unfortunately, small mentoring programs often struggle to provide adequate administrative support. Cost implications are significant. MacCallum and Beltman (1999, p. vi) note that a large school “employing the equivalent of one person to run a program with no other responsibilities in the school may be able to maintain 50 one-to-one mentor relationships.” Most small SBM programs are run on goodwill and the enthusiasm of their coordinators. This certainly was the case with the SBM program reported on.

Conclusion

It is desirable, even for the small SBM program evaluated here, to utilise effective program design and planning, including objectives and desired outcomes necessary for the development of an effective monitoring and evaluation system. Development of appropriate policies and procedures, including an information booklet for stakeholders is desirable, as is monitoring and support for the match throughout the mentor-mentee life cycle that enables match improvement and adjustment. Help for mentors and mentees to reach closure or transition is an important need identified in this study and like all the recommendations above, should be achieved, in keeping with the national benchmarks.

Like many small mentoring programs in Australia, the SBM program reported here has relied previously on anecdotal evidence to justify continuation. Credible annual evaluation that reports substantial outcomes for mentees is likely to result in program improvement and may lead to additional program funding and replication. Grossman (2009, p. 20) points out that “not every program should conduct a rigorous impact study: it is a poor use of resources, given the cost of research and the relative skills of staff.” However, Grossman does suggest there is merit in tracking three key dimensions: youth and volunteer characteristics, match length, and meeting quality benchmarks. When interviewed, the 2010 director of Seventh-day Adventist schools noted that there is significant

“The program had a significant educational impact on the mentors, as expressed by one, who wrote, ‘The first time I spoke to the student I mentored, was a life changing experience’”

scope for an Australia-wide SBM program or suite of programs, within Adventist schools, utilising better resources, improved coordination and benchmarking for programs that already exist. This observation is likely to resonate with the view of administrators of other education systems in Australia. The researchers of this paper suggest that application of the Australian National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks would improve the learning outcomes for mentors and mentees in the program studied. However, an abbreviated, revised benchmark document and checklist may be desirable for informal, short duration programs. Since further research is required to investigate the true impact of short-term SBM mentoring programs on both mentors and mentees, future support should resource systematic evaluation and reliable investigation of the factors influencing effectiveness. **TEACH**

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“There is significant scope for an Australia-wide program within Adventist schools, utilising better resources, improved coordination and benchmarking for programs that already exist”

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Ecclesiastes as research

Autoethnography through a rear-vision mirror

Wilf Rieger

Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Avondale College, NSW

Introduction

The Bible is a book of many surprises. Not least of these is that it contains accounts of research. In a collection of 66 books mostly in Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic, through more than 40 Holy Spirit inspired authors, stretching over one and a half millennia, God gives a special revelation of Himself and His purposes for humanity. The texts deal with or touch on subjects ranging from history, literature and philosophy to health and hygiene, prophecy, law, natural science and the environment; and more. Across this wide spectrum of content, no less than four distinct instances of research conducted by individuals can be identified; three in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

“*Ethno-graphic research is open-ended, context specific, and interpretive in nature, aiming to develop understanding rather than establish statistical relationships*”

The first occurs in Judges 6, where Gideon has a crisis of faith in dealing with Israel’s enemies. To verify the divine promises he carefully conducts two simple consecutive empirical tests under identical conditions with startling results that appear to run counter to logic and naturalistic explanation. Another example is the dietary evaluation study conducted at the Babylonian court to train young men to serve King Nebuchadnezzar, as recorded in Daniel 1: 3–19. Modern evaluation research literature refers to it as an “exemplary model for the utilisation of research in making educational policy decisions.”¹

A further example is found in the Gospel of Luke. In the introduction, the writer refers to using primary sources—eye witnesses—in his historical research, as he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning...to write an orderly account.”²

It is evident from the cited instances, that research was conducted in situ to inform decision-making and as a vehicle to strengthen personal faith; also to validate the veracity of historical accounts for listeners and readers, rather than for academic purposes. A fourth example of research found in the Bible, is the book of Ecclesiastes, traditionally attributed to Solomon, which is the focus of this article.

Ecclesiastes in a general research context

There are different approaches to contemporary research. Each has its inherent strengths and

weaknesses, including the ‘closeness of fit’ to the planned inquiry. A scan of the book of Ecclesiastes suggests the author is engaged in inquiry that approximates what is regarded now as *autoethnography*; a subcategory of ethnography, which is a form of qualitative research. The latter is descriptive; with the collected data coming from natural settings rather than from contrived or experimental ones and taking the shape of words and ‘pictures’, compared to the numerical data collected in quantitative research.

Ethnographic research is open-ended, context specific, and interpretive in nature, aiming to develop understanding rather than establish statistical relationships. Researchers seek to understand people’s view of the world; “how they create and understand their daily lives”³ and what meaning people construct around life events, assuming “there are always multiple perspectives”.⁴ Hence, “meanings and interpretations are not fixed entities”.⁵ In their methodology ethnographers proceed inductively rather than deductively; towards theory rather than from theory, often revisiting social environments, to narrow their observations or collect additional data raised by emerging questions.

More specifically, in autoethnography the researcher is simultaneously the study’s observer and actor; discrete roles that call for an approach of conscious detachment. Researchers thus “turn the analytic lens on themselves...[and] write, interpret, and/or perform their own narratives about culturally significant experiences”;⁶ consequently becoming the main topic themselves.

The writer’s background⁷

Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba, widow of Uriah the Hittite. Solomon succeeded his father David as Israel’s king in a palace coup with the backing of the prophet Nathan, the Queen Mother, Zadok the priest and David’s palace guards. The group foiled a conspiracy headed by his older brother Adonijah and Joab, Israel’s army commander.

After the execution or banishment of his most dangerous opponents, Solomon began a prosperous and mostly peaceful reign of 40 years over a united

kingdom. The latter, in addition to the vassal states that were tributary to Solomon, stretched from the Euphrates in the north to the borders of Egypt in the south, and from the land of the Philistines in the west to the Arabian Desert in the east. Israel owed its considerable land size and power to David's territorial conquests which Solomon further strengthened through treaties and alliances, consolidated by 'political marriages'.

Over time, Solomon embarked on ambitious large-scale construction projects; some accomplished through conscripted labour. His greatest achievement was probably the building of the temple in Jerusalem. He also continued to build a strong army, developed a substantial trading fleet, and exploited the copper and iron mines in the south of his kingdom. From a historian's point of view, all these undertakings, together with the inflow of tribute money, contributed to his personal power, wealth and fame as an oriental monarch; and to the stability of his rule.

Solomon's riches and wisdom are 'legendary'. Among examples are his accumulation of vast quantities of gold; the accolades heaped on Solomon by the Queen of Sheba for answering the hard questions put to him during her state visit; the judgement of the dispute between two women over 'their' child; as well as his many proverbs. Biblical history records Solomon, together with Jesus, as offering the longest and most detailed prayers of intercession recorded in Scripture;⁸ one for literal Israel, the people of God; the other for spiritual Israel, future generations of Christ's followers. The circumstances of these two prayers, however, were in stark contrast. Solomon was officiating at a glorious public event, celebrating the dedication of the temple, while Jesus' outpouring of concern for the spiritual and the physical welfare of his followers was made on an intensely private occasion.

The available background evidence indicates that Solomon was a high achiever for many decades. He was self-confident and proud of his achievements, but then experienced an end-life crisis that left him seriously depressed and led him to inquire into and reflect on his life experience: Wealth, fame, pleasure, power, knowledge; for what purpose and to what end? The book of Ecclesiastes is a record of this inquiry. Interestingly, his published findings were 'peer reviewed', Ecclesiastes being accepted later as part of the canon of Hebrew sacred writings.

The research presented

Preamble

The very title of the book—in Hebrew, *Qoheleth*—suggests the notion of a convener of or presenter at a meeting;⁹ not unlike a present-day academic

colloquium. Colloquia are usually organised meetings when scholars, post-graduate students and interested persons gather to listen to someone's perspective or research findings on a particular topic, with guest speakers often making presentations. The present article postulates that Solomon could well have been the guest presenter at such a gathering that may have included younger scholars, even his son(s).¹⁰

Stating the problem

To begin his presentation, Solomon introduces himself. Then, from the perspective of the 'natural man' (*under the sun*) or perhaps devil's advocate, he succinctly foreshadows the problem of the inquiry: The meaninglessness of life as the 'bottom line', despite all one's hard work and toil. By implication, he poses the question: "How does one find happiness, purpose and meaning in life, without God?" Thus the *qoheleth* clearly identifies the research problem and its significance, and then embarks on his topic, which is both riveting and controversial.

The purpose and meaning of life has absorbed thinkers over the ages, including monarchs, concentration camp inmates,¹¹ philosophers and writers, among countless others. Thomas Keneally, Australian novelist three millennia removed, highlights the importance of the issue raised by *Qoheleth*, but in more positive terms:

Meaning is everything and humans will never cease pursuing the question of meaning. Nor should they. Indeed, nor can they. We're almost hard-wired to pursue the question of meaning and significance. There is no escaping it, wherever you go.¹²

Reviewing the literature

To review the literature is an important task for any present-day researcher. The purpose of the literature review is to create context and background as well as providing an overview and a frame of reference for the study. Moreover, it seeks to clarify concepts, often by assisting with definitions; drawing on relevant fields of existing knowledge, identifying pertinent controversies, and benefiting from previous research and what other researchers, writers and thinkers have said. Solomon, as might be expected from an ancient writer, concerned himself mostly with the latter group.

At first glance, the literature search does not become a conspicuous part of Solomon's text. However, on closer examination, it is evident that the researcher is indebted to at least one source that was readily available to him: Israel's sacred writings. At the time these consisted of the books of

“Solomon was a high achiever, but then experienced an end-life crisis that left him seriously depressed and led him to inquire into and reflect on his life experience”

Table 1: Samples of Old Testament sources predating Ecclesiastes; pointing to Solomon's possible references to, or dependence on O.T. texts

	Texts from Ecclesiastes	Texts from O.T. sources predating Ecclesiastes
Eccl. 1:4	"[Many generations pass away] but the earth abideth for ever." KJV	Psalms 119:90 "...thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." KJV
Eccl. 2:2	"I said of laughter, 'It is mad'; and of mirth, 'What doeth it?'" KJV	Prov. 14:13 "Of laughter I said, 'It is madness', and of amusement, 'What does it accomplish?'" MLB
Eccl. 3:19	"For that [death] which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts...as the one dieth, so dieth the other..." KJV	Psalms 49:12 "But man with all his pomp must die like any animal." LB
Eccl. 4:3	"...Better is he than both they [the dead and the living], which hath not yet been [born]..." KJV	Job 3:11 "Why didn't I die as soon as I was born? Why didn't I die when I came out of the womb?" NCV
Eccl. 5:4	"When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it." NIV	Num. 30:2 "When a man makes a vow to the Lord...he must not break it." NEB
Eccl. 6:2	"God has given to some men very great wealth...and they die and others get it all!" MLB	Psalms 39:6 "[Man rushes to and fro]...he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it." NIV
Eccl. 7:7	"Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart." NIV	Exodus 23:8 "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous." NIV
Eccl. 8:11	"It is because sentence upon a wicked act is not promptly carried out that men do evil so boldly." NEB	Psalms 10:5,6 "...They [the wicked] always succeed. They are far from your laws...They say to themselves, 'Nothing bad will ever happen to me...'" NCV
Eccl. 9:5	"The living know that they shall die, but the dead don't know anything." ML	Psalms 6:5 "Dead people don't remember you, [Lord, and]...don't praise you." NCV
Eccl. 10:20	"Never curse the king, not even in your thoughts." LB	Exodus 22:28 "You shall not revile God, nor the ruler of your people." RSV
Eccl. 11:9	"...walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement." KJV	Deut. 29:19 "[A wrongdoer]...may flatter himself and think, 'All will be well with me even if I follow the promptings of my stubborn heart'; but this will bring everything to ruin." NEB
Eccl. 12:13	"...revere God, and keep his commandments..." MLB	Deut. 4:2 "...keep the commandments of the Lord your God..." NIV

Key to Bible translations—KJV: King James Version; MLB: Modern Language Bible; RSV: Revised Standard Version; LB: Living Bible; NCV: New Century Version; NIV: New International Version; NEB: The New English Bible.

Moses (the Pentateuch) and a collection of writings that probably included (in part or their entirety) Job, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel 1–2, and many of the Psalms. Then there were some of the proverbs that were written *for* Solomon, and those *by* him.¹³ *Table 1* indicates, to some degree, Solomon's possible references to, or dependence on this literature.

Modern researchers normally set out their review of the relevant literature as a discrete section of their reported study. Such a separation would probably have been perceived as artificial, if not completely unknown by Solomon. A perusal of Ecclesiastes reveals that references to the literature are scattered throughout the text, as evident from *Table 1*, to augment the author's argument.

Some scholars point out that the author of Ecclesiastes would also have had access to non-Hebrew writings:

Solomon had no doubt read all the 'books' he could find, perhaps including the rather extensive literature of his day and the wisdom literature of Egypt, already famous in his day (see 1 Kings 4:30).¹⁴

This conclusion is deduced from archaeological evidence of the widespread existence and use of alphabetic cuneiform script in producing, for example, Canaanite texts of mythology and poetry; and the employment of hieroglyphics to record the achievements of Egyptian civilisation.¹⁵ However, it appears, little is known about whether Solomon utilised such sources.

The methodology utilised

Autoethnographies are marked by both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, autoethnographic genres are powerful, first-hand accounts. They have an authentic voice, shaped by personal experience; they carry authority. Readers are challenged to experience the worlds of the authors vicariously (as they pose questions like, “How does my experience shed light on, and offer insights about particular situations?”) and to reflect critically on their own.¹⁶

On the other hand, there is a danger of bias, narcissism,¹⁷ or that they become hagiographies. Further, these self-narratives are not created in a cultural vacuum and are, almost always, *ex post facto*. As in Solomon’s case, retrospectivity—his observations through a rear-vision mirror—may be flawed and inadequate. As Frances Foster makes clear:

Looking back is tricky business. It is seeing through time, people, events; it’s remembering subtleties and attitudes. It’s getting the facts straight, even though the facts may have little to do with ‘telling the truth’. So much depends on who does the looking back and why.¹⁸

It is thus pertinent that utilisation of the methodology maximises its strengths and through alertness, ‘pitfalls’ are avoided and its weaknesses minimised.

Some Bible translations, such as the New International Version, place Solomon’s Ecclesiastes under various linked headings. Certain commentators,¹⁹ however, divide the text according to categories into which Solomon organises his data; a practice followed in this article. The likelihood exists that originally Solomon accumulated a mass of data throughout his life, without any conscious attempt of ever planning to record, classify or ‘code’ his experience; until his end-life crisis. Nevertheless, his research question is sufficiently broad for the data to ‘speak’ to it.

Methodologically, Solomon endeavours to bring reliability to his data and credibility to their analysis through repeated observations and revisiting of particular experiences, or examining similar situations. An example of this are the data in relation to fatalism referred to in Eccl. 3:1, 8:6–7, 9:12, 10:14. Similarly, “wise” and “wisdom” occur more than fifty times, bridging different parts of the text when it is sometimes difficult to discern a systematic “unified flow of thought.”²⁰

Also noteworthy is his use not only of extensive *reflection*, but emphasis on *reflexivity*—a change in our consciousness (in a sense a transition from *searching* to *researching*²¹) and how we perceive

the world that can prevent us from being ‘trapped’ in it.²² Many secular persons would see this as a self-empowering act; most Christians, however, would regard it as Spirit-empowered.

Analysing the data, findings, and comments

History informs us that Solomon, in the role of data analyst, is an individual who has reached his penultimate or perhaps the last stage of his life cycle. Erik Erikson, 20th century psychologist differentiates between two possible alternative ‘markers’ that individuals may have reached at this point in their lives. It is either *stagnation* and later in the final stage, *despair* and *disgust*, on the one hand, or *generativity* and *care* and eventually *integrity* and *wisdom*, on the other.²³ As the qoheleth presents his findings, listeners/readers become aware that Solomon is apparently trying desperately to bring order and meaning to the closing chapter of his life to avoid succumbing to ‘despair and disgust’.

The researcher does not clarify his procedural priorities in examining the data; whether on the basis of chronology, the initial directions in which the ‘weight’ of the data points, or some other logic. As he interprets the data however, in relation to what brings meaning and happiness in life, a number of potential themes emerge:

Natural science. This is a field in which Solomon has extensive knowledge (1 Kings 4:33). It is the first theme that he explores. He discerns the transience and insignificance of humankind and sees the cycles and generations of human life as a parallel to the grand cycle of nature; driven by sun, wind and water. His attempt at ‘natural theology’—the endeavour to explain reality, life’s meaning and happiness, from nature itself—does not appear to fit the data. An ‘under-the-sun’ view of the world is judged to be *hebel*, futile and meaningless. Oxford professor Alister McGrath, citing medicine Nobel Laureate Sir Peter Medawar, gives credence to this outlook, in an interview with Stephen Vaysey:

In his book, *The limits of science*, he [Medawar] says, when it comes to understanding how nature works, how the material order hangs together, science basically has no limits at all. But when it comes to questions of meaning or questions of value, it can’t answer these. Not just that it can’t—it can *not*.²⁴

Knowledge and wisdom—philosophy. Next, Solomon examines the data to ascertain whether they support the thesis that this conceptualisation of human endeavour leads to meaning and happiness in life (Eccl. 1:12–18). It appears a promising premise

“Autoethnographic genres are powerful, first-hand accounts. They have an authentic voice, shaped by personal experience; they carry authority”

at first, particularly given the king's assertion, "...I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge" (Eccl. 1:16, NIV); an assertion that is verified in 1 Kings 4:29–34. However, his subsequent findings are not as encouraging. He checks by taking into account additional data, comparing wisdom and folly (Eccl. 2:12–17), and the weariness of study taken to extremes (Eccl. 12:12).

Supplementary data (Eccl. 9:10, 13–16) point to mortality, among other determinants, limiting human wisdom, the latter being also emasculated by individuals' social status. These data only confirm some earlier impressions. He concludes, "For the more my wisdom, the more my grief; to increase knowledge only increases distress" (Eccl. 1:18), a view annexed 'down the centuries' by Goethe's Faust, a universal figure, who laments that he is no wiser after having studied philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine and theology. Similarly, some modern thinkers contend that while human minds are responsible for remarkable achievements and advances, they are also answerable for the problems which have resulted.²⁵

Hedonism. Then there are data that, for Solomon, seem to point to pleasure as an organising theme (Eccl. 2:1–11, 18–26). His gratification of every sensory desire, pleasure for its own sake, seemed to weigh heavily on Solomon's mind. His excesses and addiction to pleasure seeking, however, leave him feeling jaded, empty and dissatisfied. Even the pleasure gained from his hard work and achievements generate loathing. He dismisses hedonism as, "...a chasing after the wind..." (Eccl. 2:11, LB), but does not propose asceticism as an alternative. Instead of *the life of having pleasure*, he points to *the pleasure of having life*.

Materialism. Wealth and material possessions were some of the defining characteristics of Solomon's reign. Numerous passages (Eccl. 2:4–6, 8; 5:9 – 6:12) deal with the topic. Solomon was probably the richest king in antiquity, as he had accumulated vast treasures. The question may be posed whether he was the owner or the prisoner of his riches. Unlike his contemporaries, Egypt's pharaohs, who believed in taking their earthly 'stuff' with them to their pyramid graves, Solomon perceived a different reality: "People come into this world with nothing, and when they die they leave with nothing. In spite of their hard work, they leave just as they came" (Eccl. 5:15, NCV). He would have removed from any of his fourteen hundred chariots the modern bumper sticker that purports, "The one who has the most toys when he dies wins."

Solomon's disillusionment with materialism providing significant meaning to life is still echoing in the 21st century:

Happiness is the single commodity not produced by the free market economy. Worse than that, when we are happy, we don't feel the need to buy anything...We must come to the realisation that *to have* is not as important as *to be*.²⁶

Fatalism and deism. Who or what controls the future? This becomes an interesting question for the researcher in organising his data (Eccl. 3:1 – 4:16). There is a glimpse of an emerging counter-narrative (to that of the 'natural' man) in the famous verses that instruct us, there is a right time and season for everything under heaven, and by implication, that time is a precious commodity for which we are accountable—God having 'planted eternity' in human hearts. Like Solomon, we, living in the age of the nanosecond, on a planet a billion light years distant from some stars in the cosmos, come to the realisation that God exists outside time. And we apprehend Him not as some super version of a time-lord,²⁷ but the Lord of Time.

Solomon's temporary 'optimistic' interpretation of data, however, gives way to his former acerbic scepticism. He notes the unfathomableness of God, the finality of His actions, with humans not really being in control: "All things are decided by fate... there's no use arguing with God about your destiny" (Eccl. 6:10, LB). Indeed, the monarch considers that humans have no advantage over animals; all have the same destination, death and the grave. His acute awareness of the scant remaining years of his life only deepens his despair. In contrast to Job (Job 19:25–27), Solomon does not express a hope in the resurrection. He observes inevitability about many things in life.

Alternatively, on occasions, time and chance apparently do appear to govern people's lives (Eccl. 9:11). God doesn't seem to play an interactive role in His creation, allowing rampant oppression, and not meting out swift justice; where "...some of the good die young and some of the wicked live on and on" (Eccl. 7:15, LB). Unconvinced by the explanatory logic of fatalism and deism, Solomon's interpretation of data shifts to a different, 'higher' category.

Religion and morality. Having 'raised the bar', Solomon finds that data (Eccl. 5:1–7), however, point to a prevalence of ritual worship—typified by routine temple sacrifices, devoid of the Spirit—and the thoughtless mouthing of pious promises that lack commitment. One is seen as empty, the other foolish.

Further findings are presented in Eccl. 7:1 – 12:9. Many are given in the form of wide-ranging aphor-

“*God exists outside time, and we apprehend Him not as some super version of a time-lord, but the Lord of Time*”

isms and maxims, including some enlightened interludes, as well as in revisiting themes that he had explored previously, e.g. wisdom, human mortality, death, the inequalities of life, and our limited understanding of the Creator God. Scanning a concordance will quickly reveal the impact of the Pentateuch, Psalms and Proverbs on Solomon's thinking in these later passages. He notes the flawed nature of humanity, recommends making wise choices, including cooperating with civil authorities and see-saws between powerful spiritual truths such as God's *final* justice (Eccl. 8:12), and his own nagging doubts—why bad things happen to good people (Eccl.8:14). He finishes by admonishing the young to value their youth and the opportunities before them, because serious mistakes have long-term consequences and ultimately God will call us all to account. Whether morality for the young or old, it is also found to be *hebel*. Then Solomon gives a lyrical description of the aging process, including a reminder of his own condition and the limited choices now available to him. Having dealt with the main themes that have emerged from the data, it seems worthwhile to engage in some further discussion of Solomon's research findings.

So far, many of the findings have really been a rejection of the dominant values and the culture of the court over which Solomon presided for almost 40 years. The court epitomised the hegemonic socio-economic, political, military, and religious 'parties' that controlled the kingdom and determined social relations. Customs, mores and 'maps of meaning', to a large extent, were mediated by the court—the king, his courtiers, officials and representatives. The observed oppressive and disabling social structures were evidently of Solomon's own making and/or that of his administration. Over time, Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh had been relegated to a tenuous status through the growing alliances with surrounding nations. The aging king comes to the realisation that he and his advisors were thus instrumental not only in leading the nation's decline into decadence, but in shifting the hub of Israel's spiritual orthodoxy.

Solomon leaves us to speculate regarding the precise catalyst that precipitated his sudden critical reflection on the past. Importantly, in the end, he is unable to integrate his data into an overarching explanation that brings together the disparate pieces of the research study. Significantly, also, he is unwilling to make the blind irrational leap of faith into the philosophical abyss that twentieth century existentialists such as Jean-Paul Satre made and commit to a position that asserts, the ultimate meaning of life is meaninglessness. A life that is

not grounded in the Creator God does not appear to make sense to him. So what does the researcher conclude?

Conclusion

In view of the data, Solomon rejects the 'foreign' values adopted by the court. The dominant lifestyle and the activities that were a product of these values did not liberate him; in fact they seemed to have accomplished the opposite. He is now ready to give what is required of a credible research study or dissertation²⁸—provide a clear, succinct answer to its central research question, based on the findings. He shares it with his listeners/readers: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man" because God will hold everyone accountable for all their actions (Eccl. 12:13, KJV).

The implications of the conclusion are completely clear to Solomon's audience. The king's voice is raised in warning so that future generations might be saved from similar bitter experiences. Thus the book of Ecclesiastes furnishes the reader with instruction, unlike "certain books [that] seem to have been written...merely for the purpose of letting us know that the authors knew something."²⁹

Solomon has presented his conclusion, but the research process has also raised more questions than he is able to answer. In relation to this, he doesn't make any recommendations for future research, but leaves the possibility open.

Postscript

In the New Testament, Jesus points a rich young man, who is also searching for meaning in life, in the same direction as indicated in Ecclesiastes. "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matth.19:17, MLB) and if he wanted to be *complete*, he is challenged to change his priorities; to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Jesus. It is worth noting that in Solomon's conclusion, 'duty' is in parentheses, added by translators. The same notion, that commandment keeping motivated by a love for God comprises "the whole of man", is expanded by Jesus' conception of *completeness*: loving God and our fellow humans with all our being.

In Israel's history, obedience to God's commands resulted in freedom from slavery and oppression. Obedience brought liberty on an individual and national level, as well as the physical and spiritual. Most Christians would contend that Solomon developed a new consciousness through responding to the promptings of God's Spirit. The 'retrieved memory' of revealed Hebrew sacred writings, comprised of such 'cultural artefacts' as, the bestowal of the Decalogue, the curses and blessings on

“**He is unwilling to make the blind irrational leap of faith into the philosophical abyss that twentieth century existentialists made, and commit to a position that asserts the ultimate meaning of life is meaninglessness**”

Mt. Gerizim, and the memorial stones taken from the Jordan River, that spoke of Yahweh's trustworthiness, also is likely to have contributed to Solomon's 'about-turn' in his sunset years and ultimately to the restoration of his relationship with God. **TEACH**

Endnotes

¹ For a detailed treatment of the evaluation study, see Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CAL: Sage Publications, pp.209–214.

² Luke 1:3, *New international version of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

³ Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. New York, NY: Pearson Education, p.272.

⁴ Burns, R. (1997). *Introduction to research methods*. South Melbourne, Vic: Longmans, p.301.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chase, E. (2010). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses approaches and voices. In W. Luttrell (Ed.). *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

⁷ The sources for the background material are 1 Kings 1–11; 2 Chronicles 1–9 and Horn, S. et al. (Eds.), (1960). *Seventh-day Adventist Bible dictionary*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association; vol. 3, pp.1029–1031.

⁸ See 1 Kings 8:21–53 and John 17.

⁹ Horn, loc. cit.

¹⁰ As suggested by Ecclesiastes 12:12.

¹¹ See Frankl, V. (1962). *Man's search for meaning*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

¹² Thomas Keneally interviewed in Voysey, S. (2007). *Open house: Sheridan Voysey in conversation*. Sydney: Strand Publishing, p.242.

¹³ Lee, R. (undated). *The outlined Bible*. London, UK: Pickering & Inglis, no 21.

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¹⁵ Horn, op. cit., vol. 1, pp.124–129 and vol. 2, pp.37–44.

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²⁰ Zackrisson, J. (2007). *Ecclesiastes: Adult teachers Bible study guide*. Warburton, VIC: Signs Publishing Company, p.125.

²¹ See Berger, J. and Mohr, J. (1991). The zoo in Basel. *Granta*, 35 (Spring issue), p.152.

²² Johnson, T. (1995). *The myth of the great secret: An appreciation of Joseph Campbell*. Berkeley, CAL: Celestial Arts.

²³ Refer to Erikson, E. (1997). *The life cycle completed*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, pp.111–114.

²⁴ Alister McGrath interviewed in Voysey, S. (2007). Ibid., pp.139–140.

²⁵ Johnson, loc. cit.

²⁶ Brown, N. and Selmanovic, S. (2010). The Sabbath: Resistance. *Record*, 115(7), 14–15, citing Wayne Muller.

²⁷ A reference to the BBC TV series, *Dr Who*.

²⁸ Dunleavy, P. (2003). *Authoring a PhD*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

²⁹ Ibid., pp.18–19.

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E White, Education p 109

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Reflections on a secure attachment

Lynn Clarke

Teacher/Director, Jesmond Community Preschool, Jesmond, NSW

Relationship provides the grounds for our continued existence. Supportive relationships based on protection and comfort in times of distress provides optimum foundations for individuals to grow and learn. Crucial relationships in early years are usually between the child and parents and can also be between the child and other significant caregivers. John Bowlby (1969) studied and researched early relationships to formulate attachment theory. Bowlby identified four attachment styles. Progress in scientific fields has supported Bowlby's theory. Neuroscientists have been able to observe the brain's wiring and development. There is correlation between attachment style and brain development.

“When a parent cannot be present in a child's life for a specified period, a child will need to develop an attachment with his or her caregiver”

Caregivers are significant in a child's life, it is these relationships that a child depends upon. The relationships will form the basis of the child's growth and character. The earliest relationships are the beginnings of attachment, a theory developed by John Bowlby, and described as a “biological drive that encourages proximity to a caregiver and provides the young child with protection from danger” (Wilson, 2009, 23).

When a parent cannot be present in a child's life for a specified period, a child will need to develop an attachment with his or her caregiver. Secure attachments are vital for healthy growth and development.

Observation

This observation was taken at a preschool between a child, identified as Tom (age 4), and myself. Tom arrived at preschool early that day; I arrived ten minutes later. The observation began when Tom noticed my arrival and our interactions lasted for 45 minutes.

Tom runs across the playground and takes hold of my hand. I squat down to his eye level and say, “Tom you're here already.”

Tom nods and tells me that he will be running at athletics after school. I reply that Tom is a fast runner and that he should have fun. Meanwhile another child is anxious about his parent leaving. I tell Tom that I will hold his hand while I help Carl say goodbye to his mum. Tom holds my hand while I support Carl and his parent. When Carl is settled, Tom looks at me and points to the obstacle course set up in the playground.

I ask Tom if he wants to play there. Tom says that he does and I invite Carl with us. I walk to the obstacle course with Tom and Carl holding a hand each.

I sit in the middle of the square shaped course. Tom and Carl utilise the equipment and have brief conversations together. I smile as they go past; they each smile back and look occasionally to see that I am watching.

Carl moves away.

A parent approaches me and I stand up to interact. Tom stops playing and watches me. After two minutes, the parent leaves and Tom points to another activity and says, “How 'bout we go there.” During the conversation with the parent, I offer to watch her toddler who is on the obstacle course while the parent does some business in the office. I tell Tom this and suggest that he goes to the preferred activity and that I will follow him shortly. Tom continues on the obstacle course. When the parent returns, Tom asks, “Can we go there?”

I walk with Tom to a construction activity, sit with him and initiate a conversation about Tom's dog who visited preschool yesterday. We share this topic of conversation for three minutes and then Tom asks me, “Lynn, can we make pikelets because we didn't make them at home?”

I reply that we can make pikelets next time that Tom comes to preschool. I tell Tom that we need eggs to make pikelets and that we don't have any today, however, we are making fairy bread as we are having a party for our intern's last day.

Tom continues playing with construction materials, singing to himself. Other children arrive and Tom has a brief dialogue with these children and listens to me as I talk to the others as well.

Tom then asks, “Should we play there?” meaning at gigantos blocks. I move with Tom and sit nearby talking with other children and to Tom. He enquires if morning tea is ready and I inform him that it will be ready soon. We discuss Tom's age and birthday.

Tom pushes a child who knocked his construction over. I kneel down and ask the pushed child if they are okay. I ask Tom to use his words to the other child and model the words for him.

Tom continues to play and interact with other children. Tom sees the morning tea trolley arrive and goes to wash his hands for morning tea.

I stay behind.

Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

Throughout the observation, Tom demonstrates a secure relationship style as “he investigates from a dependable foundation” (Thornton, 2009). My arrival at preschool coincides with the arrival of many families as it is the start of the regular preschool day. Although Tom has been playing without obvious anxiety, my arrival signals a reunion of a child/adult friendship and perhaps, at that moment, he may feel socially insecure with the influx of many people. He responds by running towards me and taking my hand.

Linden (2006) suggests that forming attachments is a process and not a single event. An infant from birth is reliant on an attachment figure to feed, soothe and comfort them. Michael Rutter’s (cited in Linden, 2006) research demonstrated that infants and children can form many attachments, the key is the development of an emotional rapport.

Tom and I have known each other for nine months. When Tom’s mother would leave Tom at preschool, I would be in their presence to support this critical time of anxiety for Tom. Our rapport is obvious as Tom goes out of his way to acknowledge my arrival and I acknowledge that he has arrived first. We also are able to link past experiences, e.g. Tom’s dog visited preschool the day before and plan new adventures e.g. fairy bread making and pikelet cooking.

Phases of attachment

Bowlby’s (cited in Berk, 2009) ethological theory of attachment is a four phase process. The phases describe the emergence of attachment relationships from birth to the child’s fourth year of life.

Tom, aged 4 years and one month, is currently at the final stage—formation of a reciprocal relationship. As evident throughout the observation, Tom has developed language skills and uses these for interactions with an adult and peers. He has developed a sense of confidence that his attachment figure will be available and attentive in times of need.

Separation occurs eventually between Tom and I when Tom chooses to leave me to go and have morning tea. He recognises that I will still be in the playground and that he can return if he needs to.

As Tom has moved through these stages, he now has, as Bowlby describes, an internal working model, which is a vital part of personality and will guide all future close relationships (Berk, 2009). The internal working model develops a set of expectations about the availability of attachment figures, the support that they will provide during times of emotional need and interactions with the carer (Kelly, Zuckerman, Sandoval, & Buehlman, 2003).

Attachment styles

Tom displays a *secure attachment* style. This is evident by his strong physical connection (holding

hands and staying close by) to the carer, and by his ability to explore the surroundings, in the caretakers presence, interact with his peers and make independent decisions as highlighted by his decision to go for morning tea.

Not all attachments are seen to be secure. Gerhardt (2004) describes an *avoidant attachment* pattern as one where the child has to suppress his feelings. The child may appear calm, however, the heart rate and automatic arousal are too high (Gerhardt, 2004). This style of attachment may develop for children whose carers have difficulty noticing and regulating their own feelings (Gerhardt, 2004). On reunion with a parent, these children may observe the parent, but stay physically away (Thornton, 2009).

Some children exhibit a *resistant or ambivalent attachment* style. This style emerges when parents are not consistent in their reactions to a child’s feelings. Gerhardt, (2004) states that these children keep their feelings close to the surface. On reunion with their parent they may cling, protest, and fail to return to exploratory play.

Children exhibiting *disorganised attachment* may be fearful, strongly avoidant and show mixed emotions on reunion with a parent (Kelly, Zuckerman, Sandoval, & Buehlman, 2003). These children may have been subjected to trauma, parental bereavement or disturbed parenting styles.

Neuroscience

Our brains are a living system that relies on interactions for survival (Cozolino, 2006).

Secure attachments, as Tom displays, are critical for our brains to develop the pathways we need to understand the social world, the rules of relationships and to gain strength from the pleasure of healthy physical interactions (Downey, 2007).

Cozolino, (2006) suggests that our brains are also capable of adapting to unhealthy environments and to inappropriate interactions. The result is, however, an impeded development later in life.

Brain growth is at its most rapid in the first months of life, up until five years. It must be nurtured by nurturing adults. Cozolino (2006) states that early relationships impact on the physiology and functioning of the brain. Emotionally stimulating interactions generate brain growth. Soothing an infant enables the child to develop a biological framework for dealing with future stress (Downey, 2007). This capacity to regulate our emotions and reactions is built in the early years and is known as ‘affect regulation’.

Attachment difficulties lead to prolonged stress and result in neural loss throughout the cortical- limbic circuits (Cozolino, 2006). This is known as ‘affect dysregulation’. Emotional states of

“Secure attachments are critical for our brains to develop the pathways we need to understand the social world, the rules of relationships and to gain strength from the pleasure of healthy physical interactions”

Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

hyperarousal (reactive, alarmed) and dissociation (numb, inattentive) follow which are painful and uncomfortable (Downey, 2007).

Tom displayed one instance where his behaviour may reflect hyperarousal—when he reacts quickly to push a child over. I feel, however, that he responded in this way as the words to use were not forthcoming quickly enough. Tom would have been disappointed that his work was damaged. I was able to acknowledge the problem, model a caring response to the pushed child, and support Tom in the words to use for the next time he experiences a similar situation. This technique is based on Vygotsky's model of play and learning (Berk, 2009). These strategies also support Bandura's social learning theory where children acquire knowledge and skills through observational learning (Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2007).

The hypothalamic-pituitary axis in the brain modulates our reaction to stress by secreting cortisol and other hormones. The vagal system regulates the response to threat. When someone is traumatised or neglected emotionally, the chemical reactions in the body and brain can be switched on as if they have never been switched off, thus, a minor instance can cause an overreaction (Downey, 2007). It is therefore crucial that children's emotional and social development is supported from birth.

Relationships in childcare

It is essential for adults working in childcare to foster emotional rapport with children. "The most important thing, 95% of the job, is to develop warm, trusting relationships with the children and to do that you make yourself available, interested, and involved" (Lady Gowrie Child Centre, 2006, p. 4).

This happens as a reciprocal relationship throughout the observation with Tom.

To enhance attachment development, a child must feel a sense of belonging to the early childhood service they attend. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory depicts the child developing in a complex dynamic system of relationships affected by many environmental influences (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2000). Therefore, the bond between culture, community, school, family and child must be solid. Throughout the observation, Tom and I make continuous links to the environments that provide resources for Tom.

For children to prosper in an early childhood service they must feel safe and comfortable. As theory shows, children can only explore if they feel secure. This means children need to be given time to separate from parents. A warm caring adult should be present at this time. This adult should then stay

with the child for as long as the child needs. The child decides when they feel in a state of equilibrium and the child takes the initiative to move on.

Conclusion

The essential nature of relationship is asserted by Malaguzzi (cited in Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002) who believes "there is no possibility of existing without relationship. Relationship is a necessity of life" (p. 65). For optimum brain growth the relationship between carer and child must be responsive, consistent and warm, so enabling emotional and social development to prosper.

The Early Years Learning Framework of Australia (2009) supports the notion of belonging being integral to existence. The Framework states that belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become. Tom shows that he belongs to a service that has fostered a strong reciprocal attachment; he is flourishing in this environment.

In a responsive childcare environment, a child who is experiencing a secure relationship style with their family will have their notions of feeling good about themselves complimented. Children with attachment styles other than secure at home can still develop secure attachments with service staff. Secure attachments are paramount for the child's optimum development as this is the period of greatest growth and change. **TEACH**

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“The most important thing, 95% of the job, is to develop warm, trusting relationships with the children and to do that you make yourself available, interested, and involved”



Ministry Of Teaching



BOOK REVIEWS

Developing a faith-based education: A teacher's manual

Barbara Fisher (2010). Terrigal, NSW: David Barlow Publishing.

Barry Hill

Director of Education, South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, NSW

Barbara Fisher, in this work written with three co-authors, states in the introduction that it is a textbook “oriented towards those engaged in nurturing children’s spirituality and faith formation from ages 0–12.”

In looking at the introduction and table of contents, the reviewer wondered how much the book was meant to reach beyond Biblical Studies. A reading of the book however gave the feeling that there was much that could apply beyond Bible teaching to all teaching.

The scope of the book

The book divides into three sections. The first describes the 21st Century teacher’s worldview. Then Section 2 presents information for teachers preparing to teach a faith-based education. This is really a set of six curriculum elements to consider when teaching faith. With the exception of Chapter 12 the third section on activating faith-based education seems directed at the preparation and delivery of Biblical Studies lessons. The “4 H” framework introduced in Chapter 10 of this section is effective.

The chapter sequence is logical and the content is sufficiently comprehensive to be helpful to undergraduate and other teachers. The structure works well overall but there could be more clarity about the divide between Sections 2 and 3. The difference seems to be that while both focus on attitudes and skills necessary to make effective faith-based teachers, Section 3 deals more with actual lessons.

One anomaly occurs in Section 1, *The 21st Century Faith-based Teacher*. The section seems misnamed because its single chapter *Worldviews and 21st Century Teachers* deals much more with the nature of worldviews than teachers. However

this chapter does effectively summarise core elements of worldviews and provides a good framework for examining them.

Theoretical model

This is a book about faith-based teaching. While faith itself is an underlying theme, faith is a complex concept, so there is need for a theoretical framework to tie the book’s conceptual ends together. The author could have used a stronger theoretical framework for the book, some model involving faith. A possible framework for this task could be the nature of faith itself because, among other things, faith is actually comprised of values, character, worldview, and spirituality, and further is a life-orientation.

There is a good distinction between three of the book’s critical elements, namely faith, spirituality and character, but this distinction could go further still. Given its importance, the concept of faith could be explored in more detail. Elsewhere some terms such as “salvation” could be defined more.

Structure

The book is structured well. Its format is practical and mindful of teacher needs. Each chapter starts with an outline and overview. Then interspersed throughout the text are focus discussion questions, scenarios to consider, tables to illustrate key concepts and summary questions at the end of the chapter. This approach means that practical suggestions and questions assist student readers before they get too bogged down in theory overload.

Content

Overall the author has selected content judiciously. While drawing on theory, chapters are practical and teacher-friendly. Each chapter of the book pursues key objectives and includes a useful set of content areas whose scope is sufficient to give undergraduates and all teachers considerable help in teaching faith.

Given the complexity of teaching faith, there could be more material in some sections. For example there would be a benefit gained from a more extensive exploration of teaching values, character development and social/emotional learning. Also a more practical ‘how to’ section on teaching worldviews could have capitalised on the good foundation in Chapter 1. The ‘wish

list' above serves to illustrate the difficulties faced in writing a complex book and the reviewer acknowledges that any book has limits on content.

It is commendable to see the author address assessment in the faith domain. Chapter 11 effectively explores practical ways to assess the learning of faith. While this breaks some new ground it could still go further. For example there is a cognitive component of the affective valuing domain that could be pursued. Assessment tasks can be set on criteria for making judgments, on value ranking priorities, on reasons for making choices, on evaluating moral authorities, and so on.

Style

The writing style is clear, direct and succinct. The teaching of faith is complex and the book does well in summarising many key concepts and themes and simplifying a lot of theory. Further, the reader does not perceive any significant stylistic disparity between chapters and this fact is commendable considering there are four authors.

Every book strikes a compromise between its length and selection of content. Although this book does well with linkage overall, occasionally there could be more introductory explanation of how a chapter or a section within a chapter, is structured and linked. One example is on pages 102–3. The four elements of Figure 7.3 are briefly introduced on page 102, followed by a list of the strengths of teaching Biblical Studies according to faith, and then without further comment the list of the four elements. There could have been more explanation of the model, more linkage between the two elements on pages 102–3 and with the related planning overview wheel on page 110.

Conclusion

In summary, this manual presents many creative suggestions for teaching faith, so that any Christian teacher will find plenty to assist his/her teaching. The book fills an important niche in the educational textbook genre and is something the world of Christian teacher education has been awaiting for some time. The manual makes a valuable contribution to faith-based education in teacher education courses and an additional resource for professional development activities for practicing teachers in Christian schools. [TEACH](#)

What's wrong with Anzac? The militarisation of Australian history

Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Eds.). (2010). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Zombie myths of Australian military history

Craig Stockings (Ed.). (2010). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Daniel Reynaud

Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Avondale College, NSW

Two books with overlapping themes, both from the University of New South Wales Press, offer teachers of Australian history a refreshingly sound corrective look at aspects of the Anzac legend. Lake and Reynolds' work explores the development of the Anzac myth, exploring parallel histories that have not been mythologised and questioning the embroidering of the Anzac story. The four main authors, highly respected historians, are particularly severe on the politicisation of the Anzac legacy and the entrenchment of a military story as the key to the development and understanding of the national ethos.

In Stockings' volume, ten noted military historians tackle ten Australian military myths that will not die, from the frontier wars of colonial Australia, through Breaker Morant, Gallipoli, *HMAS Sydney* and on to more recent wars such as Vietnam and East Timor. The facts they offer are contrasted with popular beliefs that assume the status of history. For example, they address issues such as Breaker's actual status and behaviour, the strategic unimportance of the much-hyped Kokoda campaign of World War Two, and that Vietnam was arguably a very necessary war for Australia, and not merely one fought because of the Americans.

Both books are powerful correctives to the runaway Anzac legend that is consolidating its hold as the unquestioned 'truth' on which all other aspects of Australian nationalism are founded. Christian teachers in particular should welcome perspectives that question Australia's

new secular religion of Anzac. The books allow students to examine aspects of historiography, as required by the various national and state history syllabi. Since the foundation of a Christian education is to challenge narrow and fallacious thinking, these texts are highly recommended and will prove useful in the school library, as teachers broaden the sympathies and understandings of their students. [TEACH](#)

Finding David

Brad Watson (2009). Warburton, Vic: Signs Publishing Company.

Karen Collum

Teacher and children's book author, Brisbane, Qld

For high school student, David, life has become a series of changes. His mum no longer lives in the family home—for reasons initially undisclosed—the rest of the family has had to move to a run-down, shabby house in another town, and David and his sister, Jess, have had to change schools. To make matters worse, half of David's belongings are yet to arrive at the new house, including his beloved surfboard.

The story begins with David facing the daunting first day at his new school. Things don't go well as he lands in dog poo on the bottom of a stack of boys in a random game called "Deathball" and then he gets his first English assignment: presenting a three-minute talk about his family. This is David's worst nightmare, not because he doesn't like public speaking but because he's terrified someone will find out the truth about his mum.

The novel continues with an exploration of family dynamics between David, his father and sister and illustrates a family under pressure. The tension is balanced as David develops strong friendships with James and Sai, two boys from school. Surfing and mountain-bike riding, a good dose of humour and an ongoing theme of adolescent male competitiveness provide a realistic and humorous backdrop for an otherwise

serious story. Elements of faith are woven into the narrative but in a subtle and often indirect manner.

As David tries to navigate his way through his new life, he also gets the opportunity to be involved with the school's mentoring program for boys, RiskMEN—Resilience, Integrity, Self-discipline, Knowledge Mentoring. Run by one of the most popular male teachers at the school, RiskMEN provides a therapeutic edge to the novel and illustrates the positive potential of a group of young men working together and the importance of a 'significant other' adult in children's lives, in this case, teacher Mr Jones. Through RiskMEN, David is challenged to step up and deal with his circumstances no matter how frightening they may be. He sets himself the goal of improving his relationship with his parents.

Throughout the book, snippets of information about David's mum are given until finally her secret is revealed: mum is in a psychiatric hospital after a nervous breakdown. To reconnect with his parents, David must first confront his own fear, anger, hurt and issues of faith.

Finding David is written in accessible, modern language and provides a realistic but optimistic view into the inner world of teenage boys. It particularly lends itself to use in the personal development curriculum. Goal-setting, mentoring, risk-taking behaviour and mental illness are all avenues that could be explored after reading the text. It would also provide a wonderful springboard into an exploration of services in the local community for people suffering from or living with someone who suffers from mental illness. Parents may also gain insight into the mind of teenage boys through the novel.

Complete with genuinely funny humour, believable dialogue and a solid storyline, *Finding David* is an excellent read. Never clichéd, it presents a Christian world view through contemporary eyes and doesn't back away from the hard questions. With surfing and mountain bike riding as key components and just a hint of romance, *Finding David* will appeal particularly to teenage boys in grades 8–10. The pace is fast, the characters engaging and the writing tight. Watson combines skilful storytelling with top-quality prose, which puts *Finding David* among my favourite contemporary Christian novels for young people. [TEACH](#)

Teachers are representatives

We are ambassadors for Christ—2 Corinthians 5:20

Louise Starrs

Prep Teacher, Calvary Christian College, Townsville, Qld

Time flies when you are having so much fun loving God and people. It is hard to believe that it was sixteen years ago that I had the opportunity to sit with my first class of five-year-old children and share the love of Jesus. Every year since then I have told the same story to my class about how Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me". He did not turn them away and he welcomed both them and their families. For the last sixteen years I believe that it has been my mandate to share this great love with the children and families that God puts in my life. I am a representative of His love.

In that first year I taught and loved with all of the passion and enthusiasm that a beginning teacher could muster. I reached out to the families of the children in my class and communicated the good news of Jesus with both the adults and children that I came in contact with throughout the year. I

remember the joy the first time a parent said that they could see that there was something in me that was different and that they wanted to love people like I did. I introduced that parent to Jesus and the affect on her life was incredible. Her self-confidence blossomed, her marriage improved and she began to love her family in a new and wonderful way.

This great mandate has never changed. Over the years experience has taught me well that there are ways that are better than others to perform this commission, but the joy of reaching out to those beautiful children and their families with the love of God has always been my great reward. Tomorrow morning I will look out across twenty fresh-faced 'cherubs' and they will look back with the excited anticipation of feeling loved and cherished by their teacher. It's something they have grown to expect, and I could not be prouder to be a representative of the love of Jesus in their lives. **TEACH**



"I believe that it has been my mandate to share this great love with the children and families that God puts in my life"



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Green is the new black

Luke Simmons

Education Solutions Consultant, Editure, Australia

“With the accessibility of technology, schools can realise huge savings by changing practices and communicating digitally where possible”

Isn't it great that sustainability has now become a mainstream issue within society? Could you even imagine environmental policy being at the forefront of an election campaign in 2000? For schools, the often-overlooked bi-product of being 'green' relates to the amount of money that can be saved through basic awareness of the resources they're using—and how careful use can help them stay in the black.

In Australian schools, Information Communications Technologies (ICT) usage is reaching a point where average sized schools are managing as much hardware as reasonably sized businesses in the corporate world. This means that schools need to exercise as much diligence as possible to ensure they're running a tight (and energy efficient) ship.

To help schools stay in the black, I've included five simple tips that schools can follow to save cost, minimise wastage and reduce energy usage.

1 – Turn your computers into sleepy heads!

Make sure your school has a system where all PCs/laptops switch to power saving mode during periods of inactivity. Windows 7 makes it easier to manage on a school-wide basis. Annual energy savings of \$20 per PC add up to \$10,000 per year when you have 500 PCs!

Comment: This is easy to implement and the savings are well worth it. They'll appreciate the rest too.

2 – Green really is the new black!

In 2007, a blogger proclaimed that Google could save 750,000 kilowatt-hours a year if the homepage was changed from white to black. This is because standard LCD and CRT screens use less power when displaying black backgrounds. Following on from point 1, a solid green policy within your school would ensure that colourful screensavers are shelved in favour of black, hibernated screens.

Comment: Although this is a small saving, every amount counts.

3 – Digitise where possible!

The traditional way of distributing class materials and internal communications has always been by using a photocopier. It has often been used to print

out daily notices, memos, messages and classroom handouts. With the accessibility of technology, schools can realise huge savings by changing practices and communicating digitally where possible. For example, a small school used the web to deliver internal communications and it saved them 8,000 pieces of paper throughout one year! This amounted to a reduction of 95kg in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, 2560L in water consumption, and one less tree felling—plus reduced printing expenses.

Comment: In 2010, this is type of saving should be readily valued and easily implemented.

4 – If you must...

If the only feasible option is to print, make sure your school has a photocopier that allows double-sided printing. Most major providers offer this feature. However, using recycled paper through your photocopier is not advocated because this could affect your school's warranty service agreement.

Comment: Being 'green' still means thoughtful policy and logical practice. Don't go overboard!

5 – Use laptops instead of PCs

It's clear that a major factor to consider in the laptop or PC war is the former's superior mobility. However, a point rarely raised in this fight is the fact that laptops use significantly less energy than most desktops. Studies have found that, on average, laptops use 50% less kWh/year than PCs. If a school chooses 500 laptops, the annual savings can be significant.

Comment: Smaller is better!

In terms of simple-to-adopt strategies, these five measures are some of the best examples of procedures to follow

However, there are more complex strategies that schools are undertaking by utilising current best practice in ICT. This includes strategies such as 'virtualising' their servers, outsourcing their data storage and using virtual desktops.

In summary, it's clear that schools can save wastage and costs by following simple steps. The key principle to energy conservation is making incremental improvements over sustained periods of time. It's obviously a team game and everyone needs to be aware and involved. **TEACH**

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Clarifying Chemistry

What is motivating?

Graeme Perry

Former Chemistry Teacher, Cooranbong, NSW

“The ‘ask-and-receive’ relationship is a space in the [Science] subject team, and is a unique contribution to team literature”

Geology ‘Rocks’! In Junior Science it was fun and presumed to be motivating to use this cryptic as a title for a unit, a lesson or as an interrupting exclamation in class. Creativity did not provide a similar positive motivating phrase for Chemistry, from my recall. On ‘bad’ days students opined its ‘confusing chemistry’ or ‘chemistry stinks’! What about ‘Chemistry is crackers!’ Does a one liner motivate enough?

In-service days in Science were valuable events when curriculum concepts were unpackaged and better explanations modelled, learning tools were shared—I loved mnemonics, like ROYGBIV and LEO goes GER—and as well assessment strategies were devised and procedural consequences compared. But, why was it only on those days that this seemed to happen? School days seemed usually to be too busy, boring and barren for sharing these insights.

Gregory Smith (2009) in a phenomenological study of 15 high school science departments within the Queensland state education system has noted that while the Professional Standards of Queensland’s teachers indicate that teamwork is critical to teachers’ work, “the research findings highlight the non-supportive team and teamwork policies, procedures, and structures in the schools and identify the lack of recognition of the specialised skills of science teachers” (Abstract). He describes schools as “support vacuums” and identifies four impediments to teamwork in schools:

- Non-social relationships to science teachers;
- School policies and structures;
- Lack of school policies and structures; and
- Vulnerability and low self-efficacy. (p. 228)

Smith models relationships between these factors, increasing the number of variables considered (pp. 218–235), and claims Science teachers expound a unique conception of teamwork.

The science department provides a space where teachers can ‘weather the storm’ of being undervalued, frustrated, unappreciated, and demoralised together. The team identity generated by the teachers provides support as they are bombarded by a deficit view of science teaching. The science department provides a strong collective bounded by the discourse of science and social relations. It is also central to science teachers’ identity as it engenders a sense of worth

and value...In the development of their own team model, science teachers illustrate their own shared mental models of teamwork...The ‘ask-and-receive’ relationship is a space in the subject team, and is a unique contribution to team literature. (pp. 237–238)

Colleagues in Science are usually sympathetic to mutual need. Managing the wide variety of equipment, imminent danger and content variation accentuates the need of short timelines and immediate solutions. If you ask science teachers, someone will usually respond, but often only if you ask. It’s about busyness but also an acknowledging of professionalism and specific past professional training.

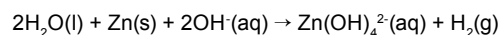
Clarifying motivation: Gold still glistens!

Present when my eldest granddaughter returned home after her first Chemistry lesson, my curiosity demanded I ask what her lesson was about. “It was amazing! We turned small copper coins into gold ones—and they used to do it to two cent coins and take them down to the canteen coz they looked like two dollars, so that’s why we had to use one cent coins.” Now, I was interested in the Chemistry rather than the ethical implications, “So how did you do it?” I was thinking electrochemistry of some form. “We just dipped it in things and then heated it.” “So, what happened—how?” I asked. “It just went gold. It was a great lesson. Here it is.” The coin was glistening in the palm of her hand. Would she let me touch it?

Here is the quick method. However, use the reference list to gain clear statements of resources, danger assessments and some alternative chemicals. Place a ‘copper’ coin in a solution of sodium zincate that is in contact with zinc metal in the solution. The coin is coated with a silvery metal at this stage. Take the plated coin in some tongs, wash, and then heat it in a Bunsen flame for a few seconds. The coin now appears gold. Rinse the coin to cool it before handling it. The gold ‘coating’ may flake off.

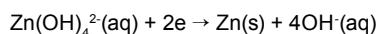
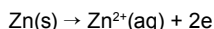
Clarifying the chemistry

Zinc and compounds of zinc are amphoteric meaning they react with both acids and bases. The zincate solution can be formed by reacting zinc metal, with caustic soda solution (3M) while it is heated to boiling, a reaction summarised by the ionic equation

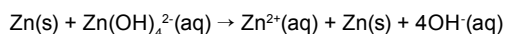


Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

The copper coin in contact with metallic zinc forms an electrochemical cell with the two half equations:



and a summarising ionic equation



The zinc on heating, forms an amalgam with the copper which when it solidifies (Low M.P. = 900–940°C) is termed brass. This is the gold colour.

The pedagogy

This activity includes many concepts to discuss, depending on the level at which it is introduced. Some suggest that third graders can carry out the experiment. Is it appropriate to use significant experiments that support the development of deep concepts as 'wow' factor, unexplainable demonstrations in earlier years, often ignoring dangers? For all students the phenomenon will deepen the wonder about chemical composition and reaction. Early concepts include the states of matter, mixtures and the properties of matter.

An associated project could investigate the physical properties and uses of brass. Senior chemistry years can consider amphoteric properties, electrochemistry, complex ions, forms of equation writing with assigned questions potentially drawn from any, or all these areas.

"So do you think you will like Chemistry?" "Yeah, of course." It wasn't just the coin that glistened. There was a sparkle in her eyes and controlled excitement in her voice. **TEACH**

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It's not about me

David Arthur

Head of 'A' Level Studies, International School, Shenzhen, China



“Do you know which poster I like the best?” Meg* was always willing to discuss things at a deeper level.

“It's the one just below the clock,” she said. It was my own personal paraphrase from the book *Education*. “The true aim of education is to teach students to think, and not just reflect the thoughts of others.” Posters of meaningful expressions around the room are but one strategy to integrate faith and learning.

But should I even try this while teaching Economics in a very results-driven secular senior high school in China? Add to this a background as one of the sceptics of the concept in the early 1980s as well as the fact that there are only two ‘active, full time Christians’ on a staff of close to one hundred teachers. How audacious!

On arrival in the school five years ago, the meaning of life for this ‘chalkie’ was a bit hazy. Oh yes, I was there to teach a subject to students and from within the context of being a witnessing Christian. After all, what other choice does a Christian have? However what it is really all about has only become clear during the last couple of years.

Jeffrey*, one of the Chinese teachers, and the other active Christian has become a true friend and ‘comrade’, and the journey thus far has been a real growth experience for both of us. Our weekly lunch and prayer time, and brief chats in between times have helped us to build our faith and think of ways to quietly assist the small number of Christian students that have made themselves known to us. This mostly happens when we notice a cross hanging around a neck, or when we are tipped off by someone else.

The Lord is leading us to where He is working—slowly, and at His pace. Our plan is to provide strong support and encouragement for these students as they witness in each of their classes.

So what is the strategy in the classroom? One of the themes that is introduced at the beginning of each course is the idea that each student is ‘standing on the shoulders of giants’, and that they owe everything they know and are to someone else—family, friends, teachers, and significant others. A response to this is encouraged.

A second theme arises from these probing questions: “Do you want to simply make lots of money, or do you want to make a difference in your world?” and “What does it matter if you become the richest person in the world but lose your life (and/or the quality of your life) while doing it?”

Thirdly, they are reminded that good stewards make the most of their talents, and may even take calculated risks to improve them. A pithy expression displayed on the board at the beginning of every class and the resultant discussion usually become variations on one or more of these main themes. The aim is to challenge their thinking. Do they know I am a Christian? Maybe, but maybe they do not. They certainly do know that I am different from the other teachers. They themselves have often told me that in my classes they learn about life and not just about Economics.

The whole process is an attempt to pass on the inspiration that Spirit-filled ‘significant others’ have injected into my own life. These are the giants on whose shoulders I stand, and in particular those teachers who have had a powerful influence over the years. It is also worthwhile to remind students that what we choose to do (and equally what we choose not to do) affects many people—perhaps thousands, even future generations. The really interesting part is that neither Jeffrey nor I know the ultimate results of our efforts. We plant the seed and sometimes we even get to water it, but it is God who makes it grow. We must never forget this reality.

Teaching in this school is a real challenge for both of us. Not necessarily in the subject matter, or even the difficult tasks we have to accomplish. The real challenge is to be people whose approach is positive (when things do not go our way!), who act with integrity, and whose manner is kind and caring.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that we are not working for the owner of the school, but for the Master, and that our entire *modus operandi* is to bring glory to God. One of my very clear memories from the past occurred more than thirty years ago in my first year at Avondale, indeed probably in the one of the first Education I classes. Dr Trevor Lloyd put a quote on the board that has never been forgotten. “One short life, ‘twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last”. What a challenge! And what a supreme privilege to be working for such a magnificent employer! **TEACH**

David notes that the answers to these ‘foreign’ students’ questions are still the same: “Yes—Australia is a beautiful country”, and “Yes—I like Chinese food!”

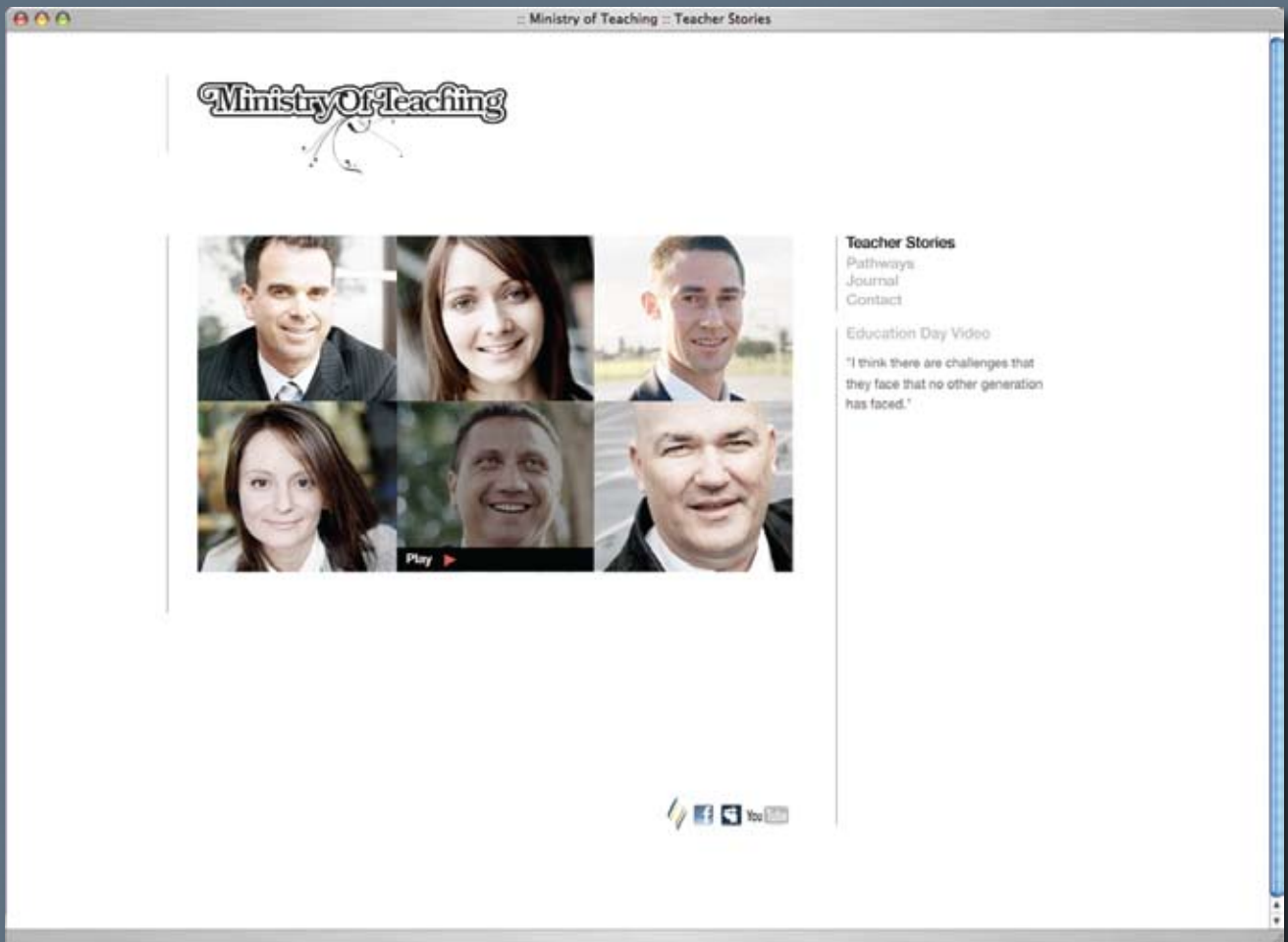
* Names have been changed.

“The whole process is an attempt to pass on the inspiration that Spirit-filled ‘significant others’ have injected into my own life—those teachers who have had a powerful influence over the years”

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