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OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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addressing the question

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EDITORIAL

Sherry Hattingh
Guest Editor

Balance

How many times have you been told to "get a balance"? Balance is a word that is used so often in so many circumstances and yet we limit it to a few meanings. Recently, with work changes and church commitments my husband has reminded me to make sure I have a balance and that I don't get "stressed out". As a result I decided to investigate balance and how it impacts my life, or better yet, how little I manage to use it in my life. We are instructed to find balance in so many areas of our lives—your work, your life commitments, your eating, your time, your social networking, your exercise—the list is endless!

What is balance exactly? How do you find it? How do you maintain it? These are the questions that I seem to constantly ask myself. In order to get direction on the definition of balance I went to the Oxford dictionary and found the following:

counteracting weight or force, even distribution of weight or amount; stability of body or mind, offset or compare (one thing with or against another); counteract, equal or neutralise weight or importance of; bring into or keep in equilibrium.

I was not surprised to find the definition beginning with weight distribution and the mention of stability; however, I had not linked the meaning of balance to offsetting something or in neutralising the importance of something. To further understand these meanings I went from the dictionary definition to my trusty Collins Thesaurus to find out other words associated with balance:

stabilise, level, steady, offset, match, square, make up for, compensate for, counteract, neutralise, counterbalance, even up, equalise, counterpoise, weigh, parity, fairness, impartiality, remainder, rest, difference, surplus, residue, composure, restraint, self-control, poise, coolness, calmness, strength of mind or will.

This little exercise of stopping my daily rush and actually reading through the definitions and alternative words for balance has made me pursue a deeper and more meaningful understanding of this word. Often we limit our understanding by choosing to only define a word with one meaning. I have had the image of a scale where the weight is distributed evenly to balance the scale and seen this as trying to even out

my work and family life; however, time is never evenly distributed and one or the other "misses" out. This has caused me concern and I have often battled over this issue; however, the alternate words for balance from the thesaurus have settled some things for me.

I can offset things in my life to stabilise what is happening so that I can feel happier. I can develop a fairness of understanding of how and why my time is distributed between my work and family. Balance does not always mean an even distribution, it can also mean the remainder or what is left over. Thinking about this has made me wonder about "the rest". After the toil of every day, what is left? This residue or surplus is the balance in my life. What am I doing with it and how do I handle it?

Each person has a different time allocation for the things they prioritise. My list of things to balance is different from yours. Also my understanding on the way that I balance these and feel satisfied will be different from your understanding. I was interested to note that other words associated with balance included: composure, restraint, self-control and poise. These are characteristics we try to practise and embed in our children and yet, we often forget that they form part of balance. I must admit that I had never considered coolness, calmness and strength of mind or will as part of the balance needed in my work, exercise, eating, life commitments, time, social networking, etc. But now that I have made these connections these words make perfect sense in understanding the reference to maintaining a balance. I am not sure that I will ever reach the ideal for balance in my life, but being aware, having a better understanding of what is meant by having a balance and making the effort to exercise balance in my life will hopefully make all the difference.

This edition of the journal has a range of articles from various disciplines and hopefully you experience a "balance" in topics. TEACH

> *I must admit that I had never considered coolness, calmness and strength of mind or will as part of the balance needed in my life*

[Photography: Stephanie Hattingh]

To be or not to be*

Ella Smith Simmons

General Vice President, General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Silver Spring, MD, USA

Introduction

"*Be*" is a fascinating word. It more than captures the attention and rigorously stimulates the imagination. It is everything to everyone all the time, yet poses a formidable challenge to be harnessed and presented in a meaningful way. The word "be" is most often coupled with "to" usually in a passive form. However, great implications result when the action verb form of "be" is used. This has to do with a conscious identity of active being. The Biblical text, Micah 6:8, "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (NIV), clearly emphasises the active form of "be".

We sometimes hear stories of individuals experiencing a loss of identity and how they struggled to recapture their own essence—their being. On the humorous side, there is a report that the actor Peter Sellers played so many different movie roles that he sometimes forgot his own identity. When asked once by a fan, "Are you Peter Sellers?" he briskly answered, "not today!" and moved on (Today in the Word, 1993). Did he just brush the fan off? Was he suffering from amnesia? Was he suffering from something even more serious—the illusion of life he created in his acting? In the book *The empire of illusion: The end of literacy and the triumph of spectacle* (Hedges, 2009), the author examines the illusion of literacy, the illusion of love, the illusion of wisdom, the illusion of happiness, and the illusion of society that characterise life today. Is this what we as individuals have become; is this our state of being? Is it true that all the world's a stage, and we—all the people—merely players?

Exposition and analysis

Mulholland (2000) declares, "We all have deeply ingrained perceptual frameworks that shape our lives in the world: Structures of habit, attitude, perspective, relational dynamics, and response mechanisms" (p. 33). These, he says, shape people's understanding of God, their understanding of themselves, and their understanding of others.

> **The only real freedom we have is the freedom of choice—to be, or not to be**

In the Micah 6:8 realm individuals' everyday lives show the perceptual frameworks shaping their interactions in all three of these relational realms of life. These frameworks—our worldview and ideology—"condition the way we respond and react to life situations" (Mulholland, 2000, p. 3). Jesus was working on shaping these three in the Beatitudes—the BE-attitudes (Matthew 5:1–11).

In this context, whether one is a student of Shakespeare or not, thoughts go to the famous "to be, or not to be" soliloquy from *Hamlet*. The theatrical soliloquy was, and even now, is often used to reveal the innermost thoughts of a character to public view. It is an act of bearing the soul. Hamlet says:

> To be, or not to be—that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them
>
> (Hamlet, Act III, Scene I).

Hamlet's soliloquy has become the focus of many analytical exercises. For example, one analysis characterises the passage as "a deliberation on the conflict between reason and passion" (Bugliani, 1995, p. 11). Another portrays the soliloquy as universal in perspective, that is, as the dilemma applied to the universal man / woman—sort of everything to everyone—the all in all decision. The writer asserts, "Hamlet, no less than Augustine, is working out a theorem, which is of general application based on a fundamental question—perhaps *the* fundamental question—concerning human life, the desirability of having it at all" (Jenkins, 1991, p. 13). This question—to be, or not to be—is that which comes at the juncture of freedom and bondage for every human being, because the only real freedom we have is the freedom of choice—to be, or not to be.

A more contemporary writer, Ross Douthat, appears to address these same issues in his book, *Privilege: Harvard and the education of the ruling class* (Privilege: Honour—to self, pleasure, source of pride, license), in which he reports in great detail on his transformation in his undergraduate experience at Harvard University. The theme of this Harvard post-graduation address, "privilege", has both a noun

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and verb form; yet, the discourse makes clear that in the Harvard educational process "privilege" is an action verb.

The title of Douthat's book reveals the content, as with Hamlet—an analysis of 'having it all'. The content depicts Harvard as a culture of privilege, of ambition and entitlement, as a stepping stone to high salaries and coveted social networks; the very best in intellectual, human and social capital—the act of privileging. On his graduation day and in his later reflections, Douthat says in what could be regarded as his definitive soliloquy, "the pull of privilege is too strong, my efforts to escape it too weak, too halfhearted. I seek the approval of men far more than the favour of God" (Douthat, 2005). These, his innermost thoughts now made public, reveal who he has become. Douthat says he entered Harvard seeking an education for the purpose of changing the world, with the idealistic aim of making the world a better place for all people and by advocating for those in need and distress. However, when faced with the fundamental question—*to be*, or *not to be*—he responded in the negative. He chose *not to be*.

Harvard held its 360th Commencement this past May. According to one of its released statements, it "was the public celebration of thousands of personal success stories, and a launching into brilliant futures" (Harvard Gazette, 2007); the final act of privileging. Harvard has produced eight presidents of the United States and more than 40 Nobel laureates, including the current president. Yes, these are they who know success, as measured by the world's standard.

Analysis of success: an application

Among Jesus' disciples, Judas was the one stunning success, by worldly standards. By the same standards, Peter was a groveling failure. Judas was successful both financially and politically and was well connected. He was a man of ambition and entitlement—a privileged man. He cleverly arranged to control the funds of the apostolic team and skillfully manipulated the political forces of the day to accomplish his goals.

On the other hand, Peter was a crude, impulsive failure. He was socially unskilled, brash and lacked true courage. He could not manage anything or lead others, for he could not control his own tongue or predict his own behaviour in a given situation. He did not think before he acted. Yet Peter demonstrated what Winston Churchill learned, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue—the courage to be— that counts" (Goodreads, 2007). Time has reversed judgments on these two disciples. Now, even by worldly standards, Judas is a villain and Peter a saint. It all has to do with the ultimate choice—to be, or not to be.

One would think this is a lesson learned; however, the world—and often Christians as well as the Church—continues to chase after the Judas success of financial wealth and political power. The paradox is that humans have learned how to make a living, but not how to make a life. People do not know *what* and *how* "to be".

Many students who graduate this year will define themselves by what they do in search of worldly fame and fortune, and will judge themselves and others by the degree to which they achieve fame and accumulate fortune through what they do. Albert

" *Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue— the courage to be—that counts* "

Ella Smith Simmons delivering the 2011 Avondale College of Higher Education Graduation Service Address

[Photography: Ann Stafford]

Einstein once warned that we should not seek to be successful, but rather should seek to be of value (Quotationspage, 2007). This implies relationship. True success is using one's educational attainments, power, position, connections—all one's gifts, talents, and resources—to make a positive difference in the world. This requires a person to remember *who* they are and *whose* they are. It also requires a daily positive response to the definitive question, to be, or not to be.

> *External religious practice or make-believe humility, role-play integrity cannot be a substitute for internal character and obedience*

Every graduate has an education with the knowledge and skills to go out into the world to make their mark. They must accept neither the world's definition of success nor its acquiescence to evil. They must make a difference for good. They must not only make, but *be* the sacrifice that aims to make the world a better place. For a world that is spinning out of control, they must be stability. For societies terrorised by violence and strife, they must be peace and harmony. For communities imprisoned by dogma, they must be change. For people shackled by injustice, they must be integrity. For the dislocated and disillusioned, they must be hope. For the disenfranchised and silenced, they must be voice. For those lost in sinful darkness, they must be a light of deliverance.

It is clear that knowledge becomes relevant only when it is translated into action—action that is the public expression of the individual's inner being. For true success, knowledge must become wise action; theory must become correct practice; and theology must become life. That is the lesson taken from Micah 6:8. The paraphrase of this verse in *The Message* reads:

> But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what GOD is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbour, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously (Peterson, 2002).

This conclusion comes after a most interesting soliloquy. The people of God who had gone astray again, each in his or her own voice, sought God in 'soliloquious' fashion in the verses that precede this verse. They revealed their inner longings to restore their relationship with God. Each one speaks for him/herself: How can I stand up before God? *What shall I do?* With what shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings? (Dybdahl, 2010; Nichol, 2002).

But they are confused, thinking that they can purchase or barter favour with God. Notice how the 'price' grows progressively higher. The customs expressed in this soliloquy seem to be based on the idea that the value Heaven placed upon an offering was calculated according to its cost. In spite of their declared relationship with God, the influence of heathenism prevailed in their minds. The questions raised here—the innermost thoughts made public—as with Hamlet, demand a negative answer.

They found, as all must find, that external religious practice or make-believe humility, role-play integrity cannot be a substitute for internal character and obedience. God did not desire their substance—material things or religious rituals, but rather required their essence—their being; not just their worship, but their will—their being; not just their service, but their soul—their being.

Romans 12: 1 and 2 make it clear that it is by the renewing of the mind that a person comes to be what God wants. The text says:

> So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you (Peterson, 2002).

Once we understand this and allow God to break through human cultures and traditions, disrupting these ways, He will then "call us to find our true identity, values, and purpose in life" (Mulholland, 2000, p. 74).

Conclusion and challenge

Hamlet's answer, when he speaks of his own individual plight and gives vent to his personal feelings, is most often negative. It is the choice of 'not to be'; yet this negative answer is not the play's final answer. In the end Hamlet comes to accept his purpose and the fact that guilt must be atoned for. The play "finally offers a hero who, in a world where good and evil inseparably mingle, is tempted to shun his lot in life, but comes to embrace it, choosing finally 'to be'" (Jenkins, 1991, p. 23).

While each person's purpose in life is vastly different from Hamlet's, they must also come to grips with the same inner parameters of *who they are*, and then choose to be. As graduates are about to enter a new phase in their lives, they stand at the crossroads of freedom and bondage. The question put, is answered only by the action chosen. Isaiah 61:1–3 calls for choosing to:

preach good tidings to the poor; …heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the prison for *those who are* bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that the Lord may be glorified (Andrews Study Bible, 2010).

This is what it looks like to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. So, which is it: To be, *or* not to be? That is the question; the question of whether one will suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or take up arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them. To be, or not to be. Choose **to be**. TEACH

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> *This is what it looks like to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God*

Kind hands, kind feet

Coralie Fraser
Kindergarten teacher, Avondale School, Cooranbong, NSW

Kind Hands Kind Feet

Words and music by Coralie Fraser

> *…Anybody hurting, anybody who needs somebody to care*

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A Western Plains boy's diary

Aspects of outback life in the 1930s, through a teenager's eyes

Wilf Rieger

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Introduction and background

Has learning about text types lost some of its lustre for your students; particularly boys? Does Studies of Society, HSIE, or History need a fillip to energise students' learning in your classroom? Could your Bible/Scripture/Studies of Religion program do with more vibrancy and relevance? And what about a little detective work, some historical research, a mapping assignment or a variation on some of these? Perhaps the reading of a boy's diary may become a *spring-board* for any one of a number of interesting learning activities.

It was a fortuitous find. "Might today's middle school students benefit from, or be interested in it?" I mused. I came across the unexpected 'treasure'—a boy's diary—in the dusty, derelict library of an old homestead in outback north-west New South Wales. Its yellowed pages were buried under miscellaneous cash receipt books, mildewed copies of *National Geographic* and *Reader's Digest* of pre-WWII vintage and some Victorian classics by Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

The diary had no front cover. It had been torn off, apparently by its diarist-owner, but the top of each page was carefully hand-dated, 1937, with the respective printed names for months and weekdays appearing next to entries. I was both puzzled and curious about the February 29 entry, given that 1937 was not a leap year. Furthermore, the diarist mentioned local people voting in an election on the first weekend in March. Yet, according to available records that I consulted later, no local, state or federal elections were scheduled for or held on that date—two puzzles, whose pieces were put together only much later.[1]

Before taking a closer look at the diary's contents and considering its historical and educational value specifically, it may be instructive, first, to make some observations and comments about diaries, in general, and then focus on children's diaries.

Diaries and journals

Diaries are very personal narratives—texts that are windows into the souls of their authors. The genre provides the writer with 'private space', vis-à-vis the Facebook-type flaunting of *Brand Me*, deplored by Hugh Mackay.[2] One can record anything at all in a diary, including: The mundane; the commonplace; comments on events and happenings; subjects on one's mind and issues in one's life, or personal thoughts, feelings and self-indulgent 'dreaming'. The latter group tends to be the product of left-brain activity that is deeper and more reflective and meditative[3] than just a record of everyday events.

Diary and *journal* are regarded mostly as equivalent terms. Although some purists would make a semantic distinction in respect to form and content, reserving the second term for texts that show daily, sequential entries, often associated with records of travels, journeys, voyages, the weather and daily business, whereas diaries are more personal and may be written on a more intermittent basis.[4] Perhaps it is neither 'here nor there'. A distinction of another kind, however, should be given more weight.

Adults' published accounts of their childhood, whether of early or later years, abound. Written in narrative or diary form, they range from those grounded in personal experience and fact—reminiscent of Roald Dahl's candid *Boy*[5] or

> *Diaries are very personal narratives—texts that are windows into the souls of their authors*

[Photography: Wilf Rieger]

hilariously blunt fiction[6] such as *The secret diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾*—to others differentiated by time, place and culture. The latter group might include classics such as *The diary of Samuel Pepys' clerk*[7], Leo Tolstoy's autobiographical portrayal of his childhood and the description by Joseph Lijembe[8] of his East African childhood.

Children's diaries

Diaries of child authors, in contrast, have rarely seen 'the light of publishing day'. Among exceptions are the diaries of Anne Frank[9] and Zlata Filipovic[10]. Both are very personal accounts of the youngsters' lives in extremely distressing circumstances[11]; the first set during the holocaust years of WWII in Holland, the second in Sarajevo during the 1990s Balkan war. In another recently published diary[12], schoolgirl Ma Yan from the village of Zhangjiashu, in China's remote north-west region, tells of her hopes and struggles to overcome poverty and access education.

Children's diaries capture the immediacy of their authors' experiences. The world is perceived organically, whereas adults' accounts of their childhood are reconstructions of the past that are reliant on memories mediated by the subtleties of time, maturity and intended or unintended 'fudging'. Thus the texts written by children are characterised, on the one hand, by openness, honesty and a search for answers to life's perplexities—as the authors are faced and have to come to terms with harsh and sometimes brutal challenges and realities—and innocence, naïveté, hope and trust, on the other.

For Linda Pollock,[13] her study of 12 historical (16th to 20th Century) British and American child and adolescent diaries demonstrated that "the path towards maturity is strewn with obstacles for the young people to negotiate and that they do not always find this an easy task." She also noticed that with increasing age and maturity, diarists

> displayed a greater ability to pass on information, to recognise and articulate the emotions possessed by themselves and others, as well as a deeper understanding of what makes people act in the way they do.[14]

She comes to the conclusion that diaries are not only

> a way of improving the use of language, and not only a source for tracing the development of a child's social sensitivity. They are also an aid to a child's comprehension of the world and life.[15]

Currawah diary, 1937

The title chosen for the 'retrieved' diary comes from the pastoral property on which it was found and where it was safely left. The original 'document' (see the respective photograph and the complete diary text) was faithfully copied, word for word—including any spelling errors or apparent mistakes.[16] Unfortunately, the diarist's name is not found anywhere in the text. Thus the author remains anonymous as there are no clues to his identity, but it is inferred from the text that the diarist is a male teenager—probably between 13 and 16 years of age—who has left school. Through this article, he has been given a voice and an 'assumed identity': *William*; Bill for short.

The settings for most of Bill's entries are the banks of the Bogan River, and several pastoral properties with 'sheep runs' near the NSW town of Brewarrina, on the Western Plains. The Western Plains is that vast land area to the west of the Great Dividing Range contained within the rough rectangle that is formed on a map by drawing a line from Forbes north to Moree, then west to Tibooburra, south to Wilcannia and then back to Forbes. Parts of this landscape—towns, villages, farms, fields, bush and grasslands—were inundated by floodwaters after the torrential rain of early 2012. In the diary, there is also reference to a lengthy train journey undertaken by Bill.

A number of things stand out from the diary and catch the reader's attention. The diarist neither feels the need to set himself in any social or geographical context, nor identify himself; or give a reason for embarking on his writing venture. Bill simply starts writing and then, after several months, ends without explanation. His entries seem 'frugal', literal, self-oriented, down-to-earth, concerned with the everydayness of outback life—work, chores, the weather etc.—and not unlike the diary entries of Oliver Meyer, a North American 'counterpart',

> *Children's diaries capture the immediacy of their authors' experiences*
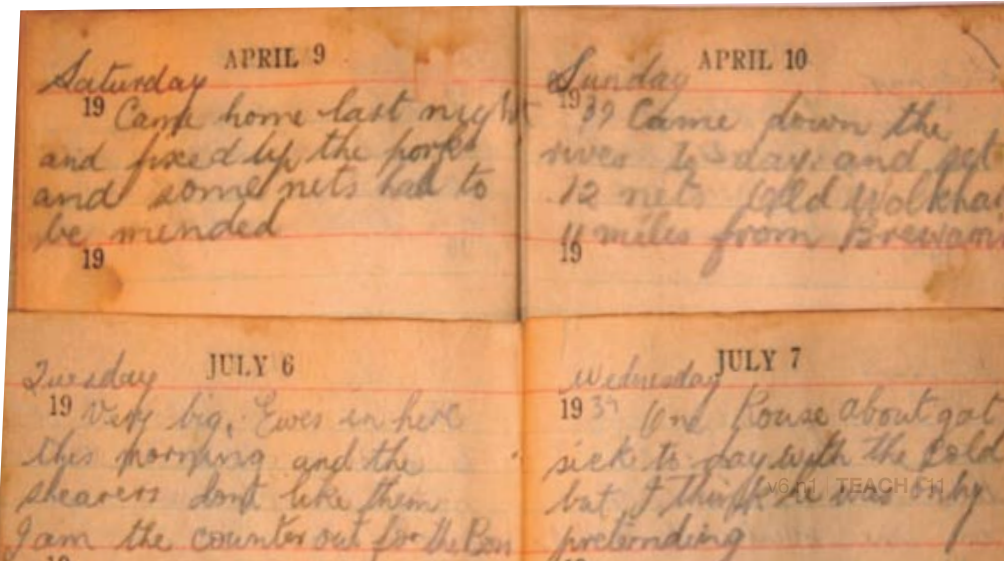
Currawah Diary, 1937

January

Wed. 6 Jack Murphy brought Elwood into hospital about 2 o'clock; very bad from booze. Dad is cook.

Thurs. 7 Murphy & Dad went to Bogan to see dam. I went and cut wood. Murphy carted 2 loads before dinner

Fri. 8 Murphy and I went and cut about 3 loads of wood before dinner; carted 2; A few heavy clouds about to-night. Went for a swim

Sat. 9 Yambacoona; Dad and I carted dirt and fixed the gate and road. Jack went to town to get the boss.

Sun. 10 Went down the soap works & got 6 ducks; ate 2; sent 4 home; Dad and boss went to town; found turtles nest

Mon. 11 Arose 5:30 am. Went and got 2 duck for dinner and got the rams and crutched a few. Dad is shooting out of the 303 now.

Tues. 12 Went and took rams out to the paddock. Very warm here this morning. Jack and I shot 10 ducks this evening. I shot 8 and Jack 2.

Wed. 13 Carted 5 loads of wood today, some very heavy wood. Saw large goanna and he was savage. Went fishing to-night.

Thurs. 14 Went shooting yesterday; saw two snakes black and brown. Shot a fox but only shot 9 ducks; a bad days shooting

Fri. 15 Murphy brought dad & I and Daph in from Yambacoona this morning. Today is very hot and sultry. Like rain

Sat. 16 Went up the town [Brewarrina] to the pictures; only fair. Saw Mr. Oliver about a job at crutching. Allan came in from Tarcoon.

Sun. 17 I went over to the garden and got a big water-melon

Mon. 18 Wallace had row with Arthur Townsend and came in home. Would not work. Went up the town; got a pass for Dad & myself to Corowa.

Tues. 19 Left Brewarrinna 11:30 am; got to Nyngan; had tea with Jim Anderson; had good trip; very hot travelling.

Wed. 20 Had a good trip to Corowa; only one died, arrived Corowa 11:30 in the night; unloaded the sheep; every drover on the booze; came back to Culcain [Culcairn]. Met Leala at the Post Office.

Thurs. 21 Slept in Culcain last night; came on to Junee Junction today. Saw Ray Morgan; had a good yarn; caught train to Cootamundra.

Fri. 22 Slept in Waiting room last night; caught train and came to Orange. Stayed in Orange till 4 o'clock; caught train to Bre[warrina].

[Historical images: Wendy Cox]

Sat. 23 On the way to Bre saw Overseer from Q [uantam- bone] Stn. & saw Jimmy Neale; he had 14 trucks of sheep from Gerlarcombone; 1,600 ewes.

Sun. 24 Went with Jack Cunningham and got a bee's nest (nearly two buckets of comb.

Mon. 25 Got another bee's nest; the bottom one very good nest

Tues. 26 Went out to Quantambone. I shot a few ducks; we got a sheep and some grapes. Pearson in good twist.

Wed. 27 We all went out to the bend near the shed; got bee's nests; one big one and two little ones

Thurs. 28 Drove out to the Tarrion Creek I found a big nest; We got one of Bill Clemson's nest; a beauty) got 5 ducks

Fri. 29 Drove out to Quantambone Stn; took out the blue bill Duck; got some grapes, 2 melons 1 squash and tomatoes) came home

Mon. 31 Missed the date for 3 [2] days.

February

Mon. 1 Dad went away with 5 trucks of sheep to Flemington & Allan went away to school; very sorry to see him go.

Tues. 2 Nothing doing here today; very hot; like rain. A very bad cyclone here to-night; trees down everywhere

Wed. 3 Cool here after the rain; this morning tin and lavatories laying on the ground everywhere. Caught two fish today

Thurs. 4 Went up the town and drew out £2-0-0 and then went and bought a lot of groceries. Got 2 gallons of petrol to go to Q Stn.

Fri. 5 Started to cut down the tree near Granges (the old dry one for wood.

Sat. 6 Fell the tree by 7 o'clock; pulled the tree down with a rope; some very good wood. (carted 4 loads) Killed a turkey

Sun. 7 Doug Tiller came in last night from Tarcoon. Went to Quantambone Stn. got grapes; brought Harry in (had big party

Mon. 8 Felt sick after the party last night (I fixed the mill; Dad and Wallace pulled the car to pieces; started cutting up the tree

Tues. 9 Daphne went to school today for the first time in 7 weeks) Christmas vacation (Mr Hogan) Teacher.

Wed. 10 Helped to clean car parts today; very much like rain here today.

Thurs. 11 Rained here last night; soaking rain; water holes full

Fri. 12 Still raining here to-day; water everywhere; nothing on the lagoon

Sat. 13 Jimbo got poisoned today. Daphne took him up the town.

Sun. 14 Car is nearly fixed today; tire is also all right; got net out of the river for Darkey Jones across river.

Mon. 15 Nearly got the car fixed today; only a few things to fix. Dad got a job today with Emery; had nearly 4 ins. rain.

Tues. 16 Have cut more wood today off the old dead tree but there is still a lot of wood to chop

Wed. 17 Washing day today. Dad is gone to work again to-day. Very Hot today.

Thurs. 18 Have been chopping more wood today; very hard; broke 1 axe to-day.

Fri. 19 Jack Cunningham and Murphy came down to-day to see about a party on Sunday night.

Sat. 20 Finished cutting the wood today; a great relief to have it cut

Sun. 21 Dud and Dug [Dad and Doug] came in to Bre[warrina] to-day from Tarcoon; brought in the camp things. Going to Milroy tomorrow

Mon. 22 Came out to Culgoa bridge today with Jim Grange; going to stop the night here; shot six ducks

Tues. 23 Came up to Milroy to-day; had dinner with shearers; good cook

Wed. 24 Started work to-day; very hot; never done too many.

Thurs. 25 Started 7:30 this morning; worked till 5:30; done a few more than yesterday.

Fri. 26 Feeling very sore to-day; done a fair tally to-day; helped press some wool.

Sat. 27 Worked up till 2 o'clock today then went and had dinner and came and washed down board

Sun. 28 Went out and shot 5 ducks, two quail and 4 pidgeons today

Mon. 29 * Went to work as usual this morning; had a big day. Got a 4lb. cod out of the net today

March

Tues. 1 Done more sheep than yesterday. The shed rats Langbein & Morris got an 8 lb. cod tonight.

Wed. 2 Never done many to-day; very hot; like rain; dry storms about tonight; heard fight [boxing?] on wireless tonight.

Thurs. 3 Had a few sprinkles of rain to-night; might rain tomorrow. The Rats got another fish tonight

Fri. 4 Darkey Jones went to town with the boss today; very bad; he hurt his back on the shute

Sat. 5 Voting Day to-day; over 70 cars went to the garden to vote. Shot 3 ducks today.

Sun. 6 Shot a few more pidgeons and ducks today but caught no fish. Had yarn to Herbie Blake.

Mon. 7 Very bad sheep we are on now; very daggy and dirty

Tues. 8 Have done over 26,000 now and the shearers are getting very tired and sick of it.

Wed. 9 Matty More left today; he was full of it; also Murv Blake. the sheep are too dirty and daggy

Thurs. 10 Had a pretty solid day to-day; have over 33,000 done now. Old Jordan was over here to-day to see about the lambs.

Fri. 11 Not so hard today; only picked up for 2 [shearers] and tared for two. The sheep are getting a bit better. But not burry

Sat. 12 Worked a bit over time to-day to cut out of a few sheep.

Sun. 13 Rained here a little to-day and still looks like more rain; Brought the sheep in from the paddock

Mon. 14 Crutched about 2,500 to-day; it is still raining hard here. Started to pick the Dags today

Tues. 15 Still raining here to-day and no crutching; still picking the Dags

Wed. 16 Worked half day Day packing and other half on board. Went to town with Murvin Blake. Saw them all at home.

Thurs. 17 Arrived [from] home here at 3:30 am. this morning from town; worked all day.

Fri. 18 Had big day today; done 3,094 today; it is the biggest day so far. nice and cool here to-day.

Sat. 19 Went down and put the traps in and got 4 perch out of one of them which was in the water

Sun. 20 Got nothing out of the traps to-day. Came back and went to town with overseer of Milroy Stn.

Mon. 21 Have nearly finished all the lambs to-day only about 3 runs to do tomorrow.

Tues. 22 Finished the lambs to-day and started the rams. some very big ones to do; six hundred

Wed. 23 Done about 300 rams today and have only about 250 to-do tomorrow. I am still on the wool table.

Thurs. 24 Finished the rams to-day at 4 o'clock and very glad to have them finished; got the money and came home.

Fri. 25 Went out to Cato this morning and got a few fish out of the nets for Friday.

Sat. 26 Went back to Cato again this morning and got a good few fish.

Sun. 27 Never went to the pictures last night as they were not any good. Naughty Marietta was playing.

Mon. 28 Caught some fish and smoked them today; very nice eating. Had a yarn to Sarce about going down the river.

Tues. 29 Went up the town and saw Sarce and he is going down the river tomorrow.

Wed. 30 Came down the river this evening with Bobby Lyell and saw Mr. Staggs about stopping down the river.

Thurs. 31 Caught 3 big fish this morning and had them for breakfast. Shot some ducks today.

April

Fri. 1 Went up to Yambacoona this morning and got a few parcels of the mail. Caught a 8 lb. cod this morning.

Sat. 2 Caught 2 fish this morning and shot 3 ducks. 1 shoveller, 1 black and one wood duck

Sun. 3 Bobbie Lyell came down the river today and went pig hunting but got none; only 12 ducks, 2 roos and fox. He got lost.

Mon. 4 Went up to Yambacoona today; saw boss about job on dam and collected a box of cartridges and shot some ducks.

[Historical images: Wendy Cox]

Tues. 5 Stopped at home half of the day today. Shot a big snake over 6ft long and skinned it; got a fox in a log.

Wed. 6 Went away out pig hunting on the other side and got 3 and six ducks.

Thurs. 7 Went up round Yambacoona Stn. to see if we could get any ducks; had dinner there.

Fri. 8 Sarce gave me a note to ring Bobbie Lyell to come and get us. Got lost for half the night .

Sat. 9 Came home last night and fixed up the pork and some nets had to be mended

Sun. 10 Came down the river today and set 12 nets [at] Old Wolkhara 11 miles from Brewarrina

Mon. 11 Caught 3 cod today and 17 perch so far.

Tues. 12 Wallace came down to collect the fish; 7 cod and a good many perch and Bream, 11/2 cwt.

Wed. 13 There was 9 cod in the nets today but I only [got] 7 as two got through the nets

Thurs. 14 Wallace came back down the river today; found Black Ducks nest; 10 eggs.

Fri. 15 Sent 11/2 cwt. away again today; running fairly well. looks a lot like rain.

Sat. 16 Dad and Wallace came down the river today and we all went to Yambacoona; to Dam

Sun. 17 Dad and Wallace fixed Dam; I came back from the Dam yesterday to see to all the nets.

Mon. 18 Dad took the fish in yesterday; the same weight as before 11/2 [cwt.] Rained here yesterday evening

Tues. 19 The fish are not running here now; Wallace came down but there was no fish for him.

Wed. 20 Still no fish and don't look like getting any

Thurs. 21 Only got about 30 lbs. today to take in; Cods are coming down the river dead everywhere

Fri. 22 Caught 3 pigs yesterday; only suckers. Shot a couple of ducks. Caught a 10lb. cod to-day and 9 perch.

[No entries between April 22 and June 30; no reason or explanation given]

June

Wed. 30 Afternoon; Started shearing [at] Milroy today; 25 shearers. I am shed hand; 93,000 to be done

July

Thurs. 1 Had a fairly good day today; Shearers all a bit stiff tonight

Fri. 2 Same as usual to-day only a few more sheep than yesterday.

Sat. 3 I finished up at 12 o'clock today; washed the board down and went and mended a tyre.

Sun. 4 A big game of poker on here to Day. Only a few winning and a lot losing.

Mon. 5 Very cold here to-day; a big dew here this morning. It is dark when we have breakfast & tea of a day.

Tues. 6 Very big Ewes in here this morning and the shearers don't like them; I am the counter out for the Boss

Wed. 7 One Rouse about got sick today with the cold but I think he was only pretending.

Thurs. 8 Had a meeting with the U.A. P. and discussions of the work in the shed for shearers & rouses.

Fri. 9 Francis Blake and the shed Rat Morris had a fight today. The rat won on points.

[Other undated entries in the diary: Wages earned and shopping list]

1 week of work £2 – 10 [2 pounds, 10 shillings]

Groceries   10/8   [10 shillings, 8 pence]
Freight   7/2
Petrol   8/4
              26/2   [= £1, 6shillings, 2 pence]

[No further entries; end of all entries]

in late 19th Century rural Iowa.[17] It appears that Bill has little time to spare, hence his relatively short entries, compared with Oliver Meyer's or the recorded journal entries of Harry Turton, a 15-year-old, travelling on the barque Fatima on a four-month voyage from London to Port Adelaide in 1850.[18]

Judging from the diary account, Bill's father was probably a Jack-of-all-trades: A hired hand; day labourer; seasonal worker; who did fencing, repairing sheds, droving and shearing sheep or *any* work that 'came his way'. And Bill followed in his father's footsteps. Australia, at the time, was still suffering the effects of The Great Depression. A few years earlier (1932), national unemployment stood at 30% and the basic wage was under £4-0-0.[19] This meant that boys, leaving school after six or seven years of primary education, had to 'earn their keep'. Only the sons (or some daughters) of well-to-do farmers and pastoralists could attend secondary boarding schools or colleges in large country towns or capital cities.

The reader sees Bill move almost in an entirely male adult world, except for the expressed regret of Allen going away to school (Feb.1). One presumes that the brief mention of Daphne (Jan.15 and Feb. 13) is a reference to his younger sister. With no other female figures appearing in the diary—meeting Leala at the Culcairn Post Office is an exception—one wonders regarding the whereabouts of Bill's mother. A combination of the harshness and isolation of the physical environment and the economic necessity to live off the land by fishing and shooting, not to mention the 'sparse' social environment, appears to bring out a determined self-sufficiency in young Bill that leaves little room for the expression of emotions and feelings in writing his diary. Bill neither 'pours out his heart' like Ma Yan, nor complains about his lot in life.

At this point it seems fitting to return to the question that was put at the beginning of this article. As part of their education, might students in today's world benefit from and be interested in examining the contents of this document? I believe there are some possibilities.

Springboards to learning

Depending on the level and interests of students and also teacher planning and syllabi, the diary might serve as a 'springboard' for any one or several 'stand alone' or 'associated' learning activities. (The article's 'picture bank' could act as a possible 'motivator'.) The activities could be incorporated in subjects like *Human Society and its Environment*, *English*, and *Studies of Religion*, but need not be limited to them.

Suggested learning activities on an individual or group basis could include:

- Under *Time, change and continuity*, research/examine/discuss changes in the community and in family life. Evaluate the effects of these on groups and/or individuals. Specifically: How might the diary of Bill's sister (Daphne) be different? Write an imaginary page of her diary. What part have advances in technology played in making rural life easier? In what ways may schooling have been similar/different to what students experience today?
- Under *Cultural change*: Read about life in 'Early Brewarrina' or other inland river communities, on historical websites. (There is often also much information on these websites about the history and culture of aboriginal tribes who lived on coastal or inland rivers; this may comprise a study of its own.) Undertake *an in-depth case study of cultural change* in relation to the community of which the students' school is a part.
- Mapping activity: Specifically—follow Bill's train journey and discuss what it might have entailed. Then trace the route of significant journeys, explorations or voyages that students might currently be studying. Discuss the importance of *primary sources* in relation to these historical events.
- Environments: Consider the effects of human and natural effects on environments. Specifically: The effects of introduced species, e.g.
    1. Carp—on native fish species and inland river systems.
    2. Foxes, rabbits, goats, pigs and cane toads—on landscapes.

> *A combination of the harshness and isolation of the physical environment and the economic necessity to live off the land appears to bring out a determined self-sufficiency*

[Photography: Wilf Rieger]

- Values education: Specifically, what character traits, 'come through' in Bill's diary? And what about Bill's spiritual side? Does he think about the 'big questions' in life? Church, worship, or scripture don't even rate a mention. Why might that be?
- Writing activities: Exploring text types and how they work; to which category of text type do diaries and journals belong? Why? Students consider commencing writing a diary/journal of their own. (There should be valuable 'spin-offs' in this activity). *Writing* and *reading* are regarded as transactional processes and the transactive relation between the two "leads to critical insights across texts as students generate and express new meanings."[20]
- Studies of Religion/Scripture: Discuss the part journaling might play in one's spiritual growth and journey; how prayer 'works' and the benefits of keeping a prayer diary/journal (including answers to prayer).

> *"Only the creativity and resourcefulness of teachers and students place a limit on learning."*

Review

In the above suggested learning activities, only the creativity and resourcefulness of teachers and students place a limit on learning. The number of possibilities that might be considered and explored and which might generate a rich and meaningful learning environment are exciting; the springboard for which may have been a yellowed-with-age Western Plains boy's diary, found in outback NSW. TEACH

Endnotes and references

[1] A calendar search revealed that 1932 was the nearest preceding leap year when February 29* fell on a Monday. It is conjectured that the original owner of the diary—probably an adult—made some initial entries and then discarded it. Several years later, the discarded diary was 'passed on' to, or acquired by the teenager, who tore off the cover (most likely with the original owner's name on it) and the first few pages; starting his entries on Wednesday, January 6, 1937.

An answer to the puzzle regarding the date of the recorded voting day also came to light. In 1937, a federal election did not occur until October 23. However, on the day in question—the first Saturday in March—Australians voted in a referendum concerning the Commonwealth Government's proposals for the amendment of the Constitution (See *Australia through time* (1999). Sydney, NSW: Random House Australia, p. 291.), thus confirming the veracity of the diary entry.

[2] Mackay, H. (2012). The marketing of Brand Me. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, weekend edition, news review, March 3–4, p. 22.

[3] Shields, M. (2012). Journaling. A presentation given at the SALT Conference, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW, March 15–17.

[4] Cf. www.ehow.com/how_8169607_historical-diaries-journals.html, accessed February 22, 2012.

[5] Dahl, R. (1992). *Boy*. London: Penguin.

[6] Townsend, S. (1982). *The secret diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾*. London: Methuen.

[7] The diary chronicles personal affairs and historical events set in the second half of 17th century London.

[8] Lijembe, J. (1967). The valley between: A Muluyia's story. In Fox, L. (Ed.). *East African childhood*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

[9] Frank, A. (1960). *The diary of Anne Frank*. Translated from the Dutch. London: Hutchinson.

[10] Filipovic, Z. (2006). *Zlata's diary: A child's life in Sarajevo*. New York: Penguin.

[11] References to and extracts from children's diaries in WWII can also be found in Wallis, S. and Palmer, S. (2009). Children's diaries from WWII. *Bedeutung. 1*(3).

[12] Ma, Y. (2004). *The diary of Ma Yan: The struggles and hopes of a Chinese schoolgirl*. Edited by Pierre Haski and translated from the Mandarin by He Yanping. New York: Harper Collins.

[13] Pollock, L. (1984). An exploratory analysis of children's diaries. In H.Cowie (Ed.). *The development of children's imaginative writing*. London: Croom Helm.

[14] Ibid., p. 106.

[15] Op. cit., p. 105.

[16] The few *supplied* words—not in the original—are placed in square brackets, i.e. [ ] and semi-colons have been inserted to separate some expressions and to facilitate easier reading. The relatively few spelling errors in the diary may reflect not only the ability of the diarist, but also perhaps indicate the emphasis placed on Spelling in the NSW Primary English Curriculum of the 1930s.

[17] Oliver Meyer's diary, in beautiful copperplate, has been preserved together with other historic Iowa children's diaries by the State Historical Society of Iowa and can be accessed on: http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISORROOT

[18] Harry Turton's journal may be accessed on http://www.theshipslist.com/accounts/turton.htm

[19] *Australia through time*. (1999). Sydney, NSW: Random House, pp. 272, 273.

[20] Dahl, K. and Farnan, N. (1998). *Children's writing: Perspectives from research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Eternal H&S Issues

Schools partner with parents by providing a safe environment for their children. To help keep children safe, adults working and volunteering with children comply with mandatory regulations and submit to police checks. This is an important step in maintaining an arena of safety in schools. Most schools also include in their curriculum a component that educates children in protective behaviours, designed to alert a child if an adult's behaviour crosses the boundary of safe relationships. These protective behaviours are taught in the context of all persons, whether they are known to the child or are strangers.

I remember when the phrase 'stranger danger' was popular in schools. A catchy phrase, it was designed to raise children's awareness to the danger of sharing information with unknown adults, taking gifts from them or accepting invitations to go with them. I also remember hearing an interesting story that related to 'stranger danger'. A Boy Scout troupe went camping in rugged bush and during the course of the weekend, one of the young boys somehow became separated from the group. Volunteer search and rescue teams were called in and they began the painstaking process of combing the rugged terrain in search of the small lad. Hour after hour they searched; up hills, down steep gullies and along creek beds, but to no avail. They retraced their steps, covering the same ground twice, but there was no sign of the child. Finally, in an area quite close to where the boy had last been seen, a volunteer noticed a patch of colour almost hidden by the undergrowth. Investigating, he discovered the lad safe and well, but reluctant to emerge from his hiding spot. For hours, while the volunteers had combed the bush, calling his name, the child had deliberately remained hidden. He had both seen and heard those who were searching for him but fear of what might happen to him if he went with a 'stranger' motivated him to stay concealed. While this story is an extreme example of 'stranger

danger' gone awry, it raises a salient point; children are influenced by the words of adults they know and trust.

One other way that children learn who can be trusted is to watch how people they already know and trust interact with others. Children will take their cues from the significant people in their lives. When we consider a goal of Christian Education is to help children have an encounter with Jesus Christ and build a relationship with Him, this point becomes significant. It raises the following questions:

- Is it possible for children to learn about Jesus without learning to know Him?
- Will children ever desire a relationship with Jesus if he remains a stranger to them?
- What role do teachers play in the discipling of their students?

Christian teachers have a significant role. They have the opportunity to introduce their students to Jesus, so that they want Him as a friend. One such way of doing this is by teaching about Jesus, but even more important is their modelling of a personal relationship with Jesus in the day to day events of school life. Teachers can share what a relationship with Jesus Christ means to them; they can model prayer, and share personal testimonies from everyday life. These ways all send a clear message to students that Jesus Christ is a friend who can be trusted.

Albert Einstein is given credit for the words, "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." Christian educators recognise that the world is a dangerous place, not just in the physical realm, but also in the spiritual realm. If teachers in Christian schools stand by and do nothing to intervene between their students and the spiritual dangers that abound, they are guilty as charged by Einstein. TEACH

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TEACHR

Can leadership help teachers deal with change-associated challenges?

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Introduction

Life in the modern world is fast, complex, uncertain and compressed. This presents new problems and challenges for school systems and the teachers who work in them (Fullan, 2005). The compression of time and space create accelerated change; evidenced by growing innovation, overload and intensification in teachers' work. It is undeniable that teachers and principals in Australian schools, increasingly, are expected to address an array of social issues and societal problems previously external to their professional domain (Mitchell et al., 2002, p. 19). Furthermore, government safety and welfare concerns have resulted in new legislation and regulations, culminating in additional levels of accountability for educators.

> *Teachers indicated that they faced two specific major challenges as a result of the changes in their professional working environments: scarcity of time and increased likelihood of litigation*

The research study

School leadership research has shown that the role of the principal, in particular, significantly influences the success of school change and improvement (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; McEwan, 2005). Little formal research has been done within Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) regarding the impact of challenges associated with change on teachers in their professional working environments; given the observed effects of change within this education system.

This article presents further findings from a longer study about leadership and teachers dealing with change (Matthes, 2011). These findings—the results from *qualitative* data analysis—support and complement conclusions based on *quantitative* data—previously published in *Teach Journal of Christian Education, 5* (2), 34–41. The two *research questions* below, in the qualitative phase of the study, specifically relate to *primary teachers' perceptions* working in schools operated by ASA:

- What challenges are primary teachers facing as a result of changes in their professional working environment?
- What is the relationship between the principal's leadership characteristics and primary teachers' ability to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change?

Method

The 28 teacher interviewees were a representative sample of primary teachers employed by ASA in terms of gender, age, experience, and geographical location. Twenty-four interviews were completed face-to-face and four over the phone.

Three questions formed the basis of the semi-structured interview schedule, leaving opportunities for further probing of interviewees' initial responses. Interviewees were asked:

1. "What are the most significant areas of challenge you face in your teaching role as a result of changes in your professional working environment?" (relating to the first research question)
2. "What are the things that your principal is doing to assist you that you consider to be effective in helping you deal successfully with the challenges of change that you face?" (relating to the second research question)
3. "What more do you think that your principal could do to assist you that you consider to be effective in helping you deal successfully with the challenges of change that you face?" (relating to the second research question)

Data obtained from the interviews were transcribed; then coded, categorised and inductively analysed. This process included the generating of themes and an exploration of the interaction between them.

Findings and discussion

Major challenges faced

Teachers indicated that they faced two specific, major challenges as a result of the changes in their professional working environments: *Scarcity of time* and *increased likelihood of litigation*. The more generalised challenge related to *under-resourcing* in several areas of school operations.

Scarcity of time

The highest recurring challenge reported by the teachers was the scarcity of time (see Table 1). One teacher expressed it in this way:

Scarcity of time makes it difficult to plan more thoroughly, to commit oneself to the effort of innovation, to get together with colleagues, or just to reflect on your own (Teacher 4; abbreviation: T4).

The essence of the above comment was repeated in various forms by many of the teachers. There was "no time for the thinking aspect of teaching and learning" (T5). Typically teachers reported "spending long hours to keep up with the paperwork" (T24) and, "we don't even have enough time to teach all that the curriculum requires with the increased classroom interruptions" (T12). It was also commonly reported that additional time was required by teachers to make up for the decrease in parent support in the classroom. Nowadays, school is seen as being all about "time management" (T16). One reported, "spending less time with my family" (T20) just to get the required tasks completed.

A very common and somewhat surprising response by interviewees was that they now had insufficient time left in their life to contribute in their local church to the extent that they once did—an apparent stressor for some. Another teacher expressed the "need to say 'No' [to tasks] in order to keep afloat" (T3).

For these teachers the scarcity of time was due to the increase—compared with previous years—in teachers' professional role expectations. Areas perceived as having increased most in workload were: Handling paperwork relating to government requirements, meeting occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements, reporting academic results, submitting requests for government resources, and preparing for accreditation. Time is now consumed not with teaching but, increasingly, with "paperwork required by government and school administration" (T6).

Another cause identified by teachers as an impingement on their time was the increasing difficulty to get parents to be involved in school activities. One teacher reflected:

Parents seem less and less able to spare time themselves, any more, to come in and help with little routines in the classroom or on excursions, I don't think it's because they don't want to, it's just that in most families both parents are working, leaving little spare time remaining. I am finding it harder and harder each year to keep up the parent involvement in things like changing readers and helping with excursions (T25).

A further area of expressed concern was an increase in the quality of extra-curricular school activities expected of teachers; often in order to market their school in a positive light. As one teacher put it:

Table 1: Change-associated challenges

Responses from interviews	Frequency (n = 28)	Percent
Major challenges		
Scarcity of time	24	85.71
Increased likelihood of litigation	23	82.14
Generalised challenge		
Under-resourcing	16	57.14

The Infants school concert is bigger than Ben Hur and the underlying pressure is there by parents and administration to keep improving on it, year after year (T19).

It also seemed, according to another teacher:

Children are needing more time. Teachers are rapidly becoming a significant role model and need to give a greater amount of time to children in extra-curricular activities and behaviour management (T2).

Teachers highlighted the rapid curriculum changes and the 'flow-on' effect of having to generate classroom approaches and change assessment procedures and resources. As one teacher observed—and many agreed—there is now a "continual expectation of [new] documentation: Outcomes, behaviour, incidences, et cetera" (T27) every time the curriculum changed or new regulations were introduced; a seemingly frequent occurrence.

Typically, teachers considered that there were greater parental and government expectations, in terms of providing special programs, for talented, gifted and special-needs students and that teachers were taking on responsibilities that were once the role of parents. In the words of one teacher: "Having a pastoral heart is a major part of teaching in a Christian school context" (T10), and this takes time.

Perceptions of taking longer to complete normal classroom tasks and implement classroom management were expressed. This was an outcome of more open enrolment policies, with greater acceptance of students from a range of different cultures, religious backgrounds, academic abilities and behavioural attitudes. Teachers mentioned that increasingly, there were now "changes in student behaviour [with many students] more emotionally affected" (T15). Consequently,

Another cause identified by teachers as an impingement on their time was the increasing difficulty to get parents to be involved in school activities

many activities took added time because teachers were "dealing with diverse [student] values [and still had to] maintain a cohesive whole" (T21). Complex behavioural issues thus led to greater time consumption. One teacher mused, "Teachers are replacements for the increasing number of parents who are no longer a part of the student's family unit" (T3).

Surprisingly, teachers did not identify the devolution of administrative tasks from school leaders to teachers as a source of increased workload that contributed to scarcity of time. Yet analysis of teachers' description of time-consuming duties identified many of them as previously in the domain of administrators.

Increased likelihood of litigation
The second major area of challenge was the increased likelihood of litigation against teachers. Eighty-two per cent of interviewees identified this as a challenge (Table 1). This finding was unexpected; as all interviewees belonged to a Christian church-based education system where litigation is very infrequent. However, one teacher stated:

> I sometimes experience fear that I am like a flammable liquid, waiting to be ignited. I have resorted to not taking children on excursions anymore, in case something happens to a student (T28).

> *The lack of resources seemed to be in six areas*

All the teachers knew someone, or they themselves had experienced an 'encounter' with the law in relation to a school matter. They indicated that sometimes what they had heard was most likely exaggerated, but the facts were never communicated to them and this may have highlighted the perception of this challenge. Interviewees felt that, generally, employing bodies—both private and public— seemed to desert rather than support teachers involved in law cases; a very disconcerting situation. A teacher's comment summed up this concern as follows:

> At the whim of a parent's accusation, I was suspended from my duties. I didn't even know what the accusation was; meanwhile I didn't have a chance to defend my innocence as the rumour mill ran rife. I felt very vulnerable, with little support and not much information through proper channels (T13).

Teachers saw the need for a "school-wide implementation of change and procedure for [teachers'] protection" (T13). But again, all this takes time. Another teacher stated:

A teacher friend of mine is no longer in the [ASA] system, teaching. His career was cut short, based on an accusation that was never proven. It seems often that we only receive admin support when the 'chips are up' (T24).

Several teachers were of the opinion that the internal politics of the system makes it difficult for teachers when they fall 'out of favour' with their local communities. One teacher expressed it this way:

> Being a teacher in the church system can be great when things are going well. However, if the going gets tough and you fall out of favour with administration or local community politics, [there's] back stabbing and the need to look over your shoulder can be overwhelming (T17).

Under-resourcing
The third major challenge reported by teachers was being under-resourced to carry out their duties. (57.1%; see Table 1). "Under-resourced" interpreted as, not being given opportunities to develop their knowledge, access information, or obtain adequate support, to fulfil specified role tasks. The lack of resources seemed to be in six areas. First, how to transfer curriculum changes into the classroom. Second, how to deal with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Third, what programs to adopt to address students with special needs (e.g. English as a second language, gifted and talented, learning support). Fourth, how to deal with the greater range of student behaviour now encountered. Fifth, they felt that there was also pressure for them to adopt the latest technology, but to them there seemed little willingness for schools to finance and provide time for them to develop in this area. Sixth, there was a perceived need for more training in mentoring and preparing other staff for new roles. Two examples are illustrative of these points:

> When there are changes in the curriculum we are often too busy to attend an in-service day; however, it is the very thing that we need. When there are new expectations of us in regard to dealing with KLAs or the way to assess, we need to feel confident that we know what to do (T6).

> Technology is changing at such a rapid rate I feel a little left behind in what I know I could be doing if only I knew how (T19).

Some teachers commented on what they thought was a "lack of assistance to provide staff with up-to-date approaches in a constantly changing curriculum" (T27). Despite working in a large school, there were teachers who, nevertheless, reported that there was "no real support from colleagues; and a

Figure 1: Dealing successfully with change: Principal's actions; model 1
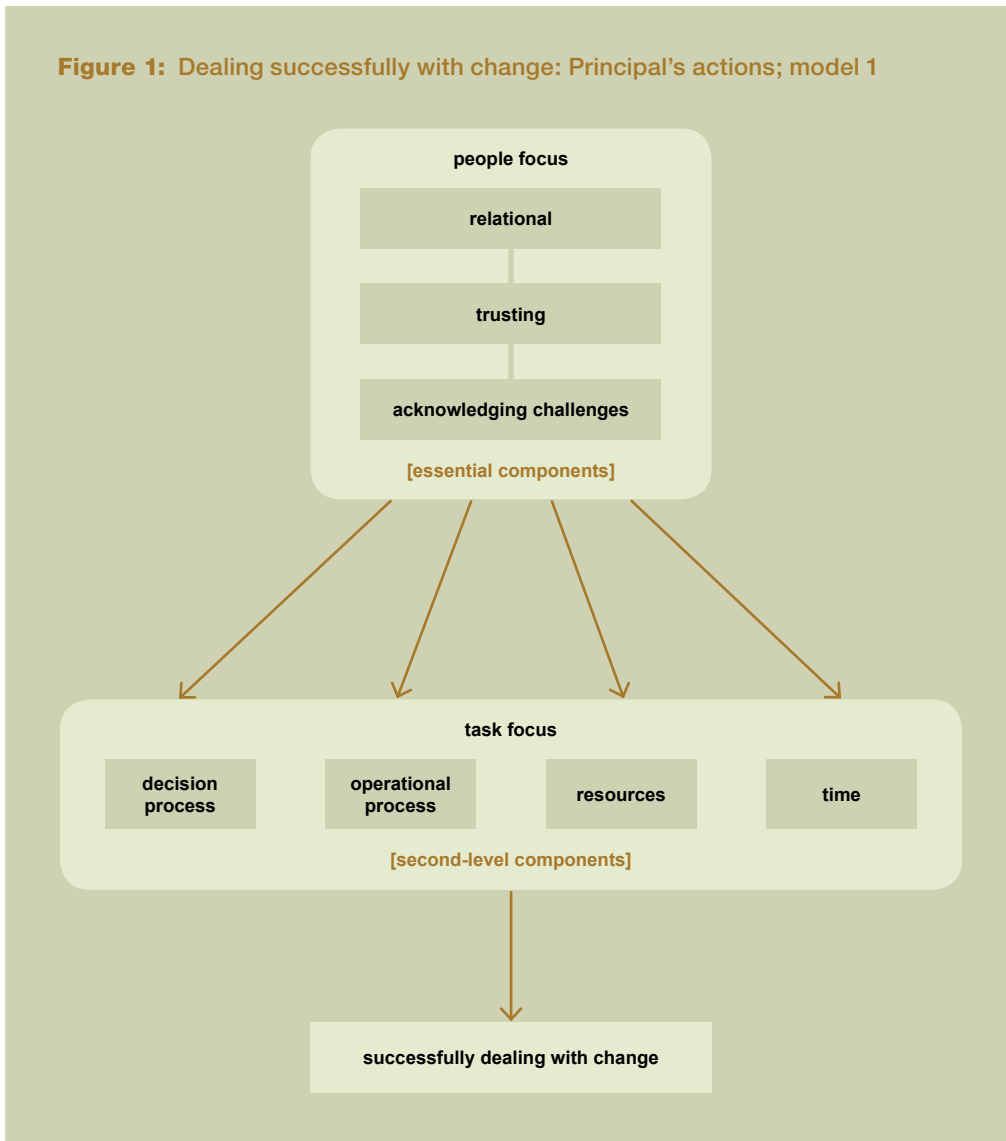
feeling of isolation" (T8). In dealing with curriculum changes, beginning teachers expressed they "would like to be shown what we have to do" (T25). Needing help to, "begin new units of work and acquire new teaching styles to match students' various learning needs" (T2), were also considered areas that required support. "Implementing professional development even though the budget is tight" (T17) and, "inducting new staff" (T11), were thought to be important by many teachers, as well.

It can be seen from the teachers' perspectives that change is presenting them with a number of significant challenges. Next, the article looks at responses to the second research question.

Dealing with change: What principals are doing
A principal's action model

The second research question dealt with the relationship between the principal's leadership characteristics and primary teachers' ability to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change. In exploring this topic, the following interview question was put to teachers: "What are the things that your principal is doing to assist you, that you consider to be effective in helping you deal successfully with the change you face?" The teachers' responses and the associated discussions are presented below.

> *Despite working in a large school, there were teachers who, never-theless, reported that there was 'no real support from colleagues; and a feeling of isolation'*

Interviewees' responses, when carefully analysed, highlighted that effective principals' actions were not discrete acts, but consisted of a complex interaction of multiple factors. Initially, some responses appeared confusing and even somewhat contradictory. However, teachers generally agreed on school leaders who effectively helped them deal successfully with challenges posed by change. They were identified, primarily, as being people-oriented; displaying appropriate positive attitudes to teachers (*people focus*). They also generated systems in supporting teachers to complete their tasks (*task focus*). Further, teachers' responses indicated that this *people focus* construct was essential if leaders were to be successful in assisting teachers deal with change-associated challenges. Indeed, if the leaders were considered to lack a people focus, the systems they put in place, good as they might be, appeared to have only a minimal impact in supporting teachers.

The interviewees also identified, on a second level, four *task focus* components that assisted teachers in dealing successfully with the challenges associated with change. However, there was no general agreement on the relative importance of these respective tasks. Some interviewees viewed all these tasks as important while others gave different priorities to the four *task focus* components. This may have been influenced somewhat by interviewees' personality, position in the school and/or their desire to have greater involvement in the administrative process within their school.

The interconnections between the various actions that principals need to adopt, if they are to enhance the ability of teachers to deal successfully with the change experienced in their professional environment, are shown in Figure 1.

People focus construct

Analysing teachers' responses indicated that the *people focus* construct consisted of three components:

• relational
• trusting
• acknowledging challenges

First, *people focus* included a *relational* component which described a leader who demonstrated interest in, and indicated the value of his/her staff by the personal qualities used when interacting with them. Interviewees described principals who effectively assisted teachers in dealing with change-associated challenges as, approachable, supportive, giving encouragement, ready to listen and discuss issues, and willing to implement good ideas.

> *Teachers' responses indicated that this people focus construct was essential if leaders were to be successful in assisting teachers deal with change-associated challenges*

Second, *people focus* included a *trusting* component which described a leader who gave teachers the freedom to be different and unique in their approach to doing their job. Of one leader it was said: "He supports my decision and teaching style" (T20). Another said, "I feel trusted [by leaders]" (T12). This bestowed trust was reciprocated by teachers. Further, it was acknowledged that it was not always possible to be consultative; at times trust had to be exercised:

> Change can occur quickly; sometimes you can't always communicate all aspects of the change to everyone's satisfaction. You have to trust admin, when and where you can't always collaborate. Sometimes, we've got to sort out information into what's important, what's really important; and avoid overwhelmingness (T11).

Third, the *people focus* included an *acknowledging challenges* component. This described leadership that was willing to verbalise that change—particularly mandated change—might cause stress, anxiety and pressure and also accepted the doubts expressed by teachers. Another teacher described a 'buffer zone',

> where anyone of us can go back to digest and work through implications, for us as individuals. This is in contrast to isolating ourselves from each other and the change requirements (T26).

One teacher observed about her principal: "[He] acknowledged my doubt and worked with me to sort through it" (T15). A comment, echoed by several teachers, was:

> The stress and worry that I was feeling from the pressure of things changing, was observed by my principal and she gave me strategies and suggestions to cope which indicated she knew how I was feeling (T5).

In the interview dialogue about how ASA, as an organisation, was dealing with change, stresses were identified by teachers in terms of frustration and doubt. For some, this took the form of doubting the efficacy of some of the change: "Will these changes and this new system work?" (T22). "Is it really necessary?" (T16). "What will my role in the new structure be?" (T27). Others expressed doubts about the ethics and ideology of the change.

These expressed doubts and anxieties appear to be normal in the cycle of change. However, effective leadership is aware of the difficulties associated with change and recognises the stresses that teachers experience.

Task focus construct

Analysing teachers' responses indicated that the *task focus* construct was comprised of four components:

- appropriate decision-making processes;
- appropriate operational processes;
- appropriate resource allocation processes; and
- sufficient time allocations.

First, the *task focus* construct incorporated appropriate *decision-making processes*, where the leader consulted teachers in the decision-making process. The leader provided collegial support, was consultative, collaborative and facilitated a team focus. The leader was seen to join in with team meetings contributing good suggestions. Teachers' comments included:

> My principal emphasised, from the outset, collaborative processes in staff meetings to enhance collegial support. Group ownership of the process empowers…I can say, we own things together here at our school (T15).

It was pointed out to the interviewer: "When our leader used the team to work together, we had a purpose and got a lot more done" (T7). One teacher said:

> My principal developed more open, face-to-face and consultative communication generally, and more consciously, within a team focus. The team focus enabled staff to share the natural, common pressures and concerns associated with the changes (T22).

Another interviewee noted: "We were blessed; the school was ready for change" (T28). The researcher asked him how he identified this 'blessing' and how the leader harnessed it. His response was:

> He met with staff individually and as a group to understand their concerns and needs. He shared his concerns but also what he wanted our vision to be with respect to our core concerns as a school. He endeavoured to have us see that he had to face mandated change from the conference [regional administration], but as a staff we could own it and transform it at the school level so that we could manage the mandate. He developed a more conscious team approach, across the year levels, to enhance the change process and the necessary moral and practical support needed to carry out the changes. Most of all he emphasised, from the outset, collaborative processes at whole staff meetings, and where appropriate, with parents and students. They too are affected by change(s) and need a chance to understand where we're going as a school and why. It was this understanding of the process that empowered the staff (T28).

Staff collaboration was a returning theme; as illustrated by this observation:

> After a school-wide review, which, as you know, has included some outside consultancy, we had a strong sense of how we could change this culture, especially with respect to staff welfare. I believe welfare and morale go together; from the way staff conduct meetings to how we support each other in [student] discipline situations. We've come a long way in the last few years (T29).

Further comments mentioned leadership that was open-minded and contributed good suggestions to team meetings; leadership that "respects my calling and passion and gives room for its expression without legalistic constraint and expectation" (T4).

Second, the *task focus* construct included appropriate *operational processes*. The latter were considered appropriate if they were presented or implemented in a systematic and open manner. This included leaders delegating responsibilities without micro-managing delegated tasks, sending clear communication to teachers and adopting a 'small step' approach that saw gradual implementation of change. These leaders had processes in place which emphasised the purpose, meaning and reasons for change. As one teacher commented: "At school we need to have structures and processes in place to work with change" (T12). Another said:

> It's difficult at times coping with what 'has to be', or so we're told. It has helped at times to get a chance to talk as a staff about the changes occurring over the whole of society, not just education. Mind you, a 'whinge' is helpful—even though it may not directly solve anything as such (T18).

Other responses mentioned that effective leaders: Linked change imperatives and processes to appropriate delegation of responsibilities, allowed time for a shift in mind-sets and for change implementation and, in particular, did not force imposed change" (T9). Moreover, one interviewee credited his principal with claiming: "[A process of] small steps towards core change is more realistic than grand change forced quickly on paper" (T26).

Third, the *task focus* construct included appropriate *resource allocation processes*. Resource allocation was deemed appropriate if teachers were provided with opportunities for professional development and role fulfillment. Effective principals found practical solutions to challenges faced by teachers, as evident from several comments: "[He/she] offers to teach lessons to provide an example" (T14). The principal "tries to find solutions to lessen the load of paperwork" (T1). Others reported their leader as: "Giving hands-on, relevant

> *Appropriate operational processes included leaders delegating responsibilities without micro-managing delegated tasks, sending clear communication to teachers and adopting a 'small step' approach that saw gradual implementation of change*

information" (T27); "being willing to send me out on a course" (T20); "teaching me how to do the job" (T3), and "providing a mentor to assist with [new] technology" (T7).

Interviewees also commented that, for teachers to be able to deal successfully with change, principals needed to address the issues relating to resources, knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their essential tasks. This was achieved through principals offering and providing opportunities for professional development, networking with others, advanced study, personal guidance, and induction for new staff members. Also, effective principals were reported as putting policies in place for

behaviour management, arranging teacher visits to other schools, and providing support in disciplining students.

Fourth, the *task focus* construct included providing appropriate *time allocations*. Leaders recognised that there is a *time* issue if teachers were to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change. Effective leaders found ways to lessen the time burden as indicated by the following interviewee responses: "My principal provides time to talk about issues and planning, et cetera" (T17); he/she "gives 90 minutes release time a week" (T13) and further, he/she "gives me valuable time to be more reflective in my classroom approach" (T21).

Figure 2: Dealing successfully with change: Principal's actions; model 2
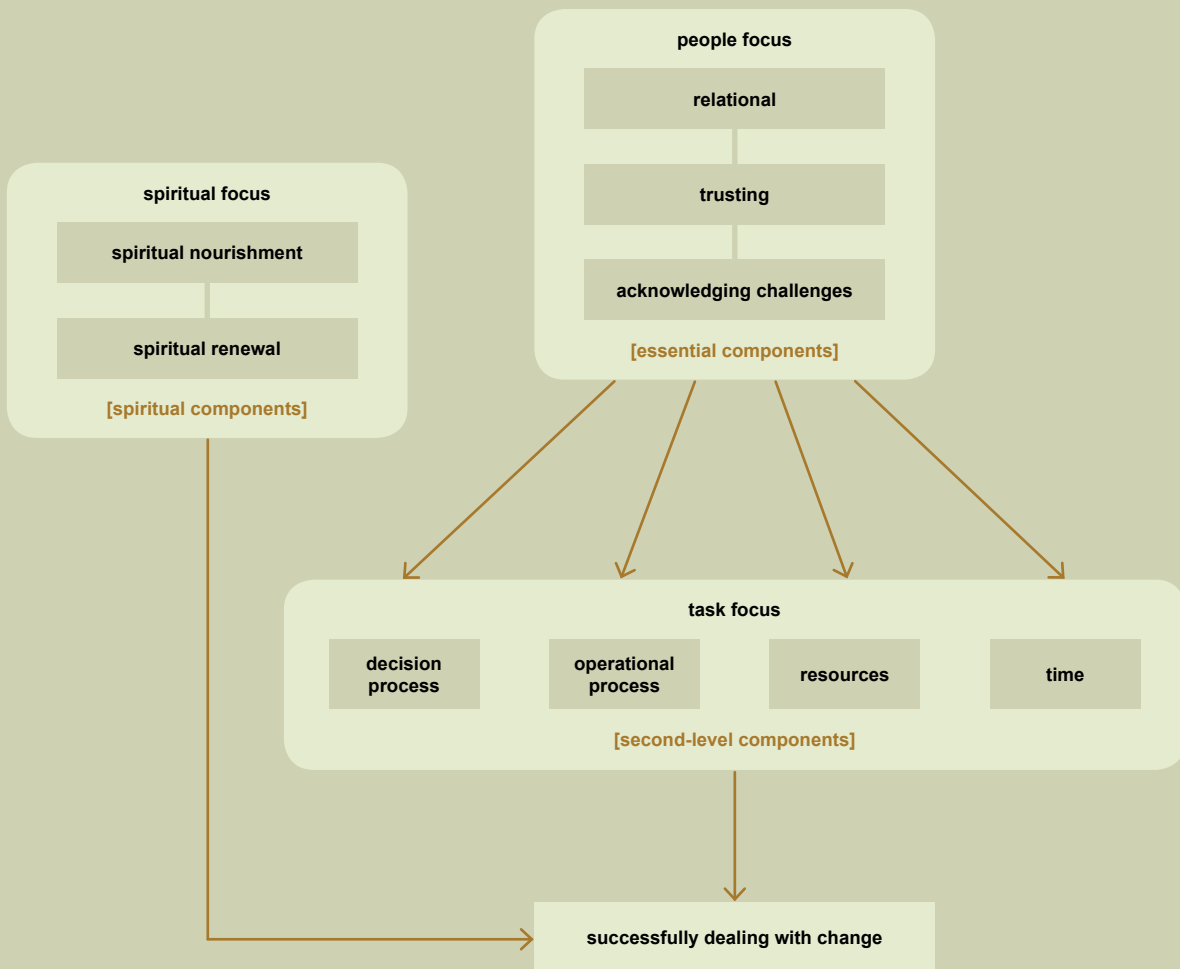
Review

Leaders were seen to be most effective in helping teachers deal with change-associated challenges in their professional work environments, if they adopted both a people focus *and* a task focus approach. However, it needs to be emphasised that *the people focus was of primary importance to teachers*. Indeed, when leaders in a school overly focus on a *task* paradigm to the exclusion of a *people* paradigm, tension and frustration seem to occur.

Although 20 of the 28 teachers gave responses relating to their increasing dependence on God in their role as a teacher in a Christian school, it is interesting that the *spiritual focus* does not appear to be linked distinctly to either the *people focus* or the *task focus*. This should merit further investigation.

For many teachers, the spiritual dimension encompassed the values and beliefs that inspire and provide direction in their lives. Renewal in this area was critical for individuals' sense of peace and purpose and to withstand the challenges of daily life. Furthermore, spiritual enrichment was perceived as an essential component of a staff developmental program.

Spiritual enrichment could take the form of prayer, reading, listening to music or enjoying the beauty and serenity of nature. It was reported that some principals encourage spiritual enrichment by having retreat days held in a quiet setting away from the school. A typical retreat begins with an inspirational presentation and time for discussion followed by quiet time alone to reflect.

Further data are needed to explore possible interconnections between teachers' expressed spiritual dimension and other constructs in the model; that may enhance the *Principal's actions, model 2*, illustrated in Figure 2.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research led to a number of conclusions; summarised as follows:

1. Teachers identified the big challenges: Essentially a *scarcity of time* to accomplish an ever increasing list of demands as part of their professional role and the *likelihood of litigation*—a relatively recent challenge, that left them feeling threatened. There was also the perception of *under-resourcing* which needed addressing.
2. To enable teachers to deal with change-associated challenges, it is imperative that leaders primarily have a *people focus*—above all, being relational and generating trust when dealing with people—followed by a *task focus*, but they should also strengthen the *spiritual* dimension of teachers' lives. Also, it is important for leaders to understand the interaction across these domains.
3. A *people focus* is a pre-requisite for generating systems to facilitate the process of adapting to change. Notwithstanding, there may still be difficulties because of teachers' individual dispositions.
4. To be effective in faith-based schools, leaders need to develop a sense of mission and spiritual purpose as part of their role set in assisting teachers to successfully deal with change-associated challenges.

The study was limited in being unable to examine subgroup differences. Also, the researcher did not have the option to perform follow-up interviews to tease out nuances of teachers' views. Both of these areas could be further explored. The study, nevertheless, should provide leadership at the system and school level with valuable insights about the perceived needs of employed teachers during a time of rapid change. TEACH

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> *When leaders in a school overly focus on a task paradigm to the exclusion of a people paradigm tension and frustration seem to occur*

An initial response to the Gonski Report

Review of funding for schooling—the final report (2011)

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On Monday, 20th February, 2012, the eagerly awaited *Review of funding for schooling—the final report*[1] by David Gonski, was released to an assemblage of educational leaders amid tight security in Canberra. I was among the assembled group. After signing confidentiality agreements and relinquishing mobile phones, we were allocated some time to consider the contents of the report prior to briefings by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, David Gonski, AC and also Peter Garrett—the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth.

Given that there has not been a comprehensive review of funding of schools in Australia since 1973, the anticipation from a broad range of stakeholders was high. The PM gave high praise to the Gonski Report likening it to a set of specifications to construct a school system of Ferrari status. However, her analogy of Australian education currently being like a second-hand car which resembled a 'bomb', was not well received by Gonski. He was quick to respond that Australian education was above average and that he had found in his tours of schools and meetings with key stakeholders, that Australian educators were committed and passionate and were delivering quality educational outcomes.

The perception of Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) is that the Review Panel has delivered an intelligent, clearly articulated and transparent set of recommendations accompanied by a model for providing an appropriate level of funding to all Australian students, independent of whether they were being educated in the government or non-government sector. Gonski expressed that the Review Panel had endeavoured to be 'sector blind' in the development of their recommendations and that arresting the decade-long slide of education standards was of prime importance.

The *Programme for international student assessment* (PISA) demonstrates this slide between 2000 and 2009. In 2000, Australia was ranked second in the world in Reading; yet by 2009 this ranking had slipped to seventh. A similar trend may

> *The Review Panel has delivered an intelligent, clearly articulated and trans-parent set of recommend-ations accom-panied by a model for providing an appropriate level of funding to all Australian students*

be noted in Science, with Australia slipping from third to seventh. However, the greatest decline was in Mathematics where Australia fell from sixth to thirteenth place. While many students continue to perform at a high level in Australia there is a long 'tail' of underperformance which significantly impacts the national PISA average.

Gonski's report proposes a $5 billion increase in educational spending. This represents an overall increase of approximately 15% to the current education spending in Australia. The Review Panel noted that, on average, 3.5% of GDP is spent by OECD countries on education. Australia lags behind this average with an investment of 3.0% of GDP on education. The report highlights the need to address this shortfall, noting:

> Studies have shown that it is both the quality of education (measured by student outcomes) and its quantity (years spent in schooling) which contribute to a country's economic growth and the wellbeing of its population.[2]

For the proposed recommendations from the Review Panel to move from a set of proposals to tangible improvements in student outcomes in Australia, the Government will need to address a range of matters. Finding the funds, over time, for implementation of the 41 recommendations will be first and foremost, as both the Prime Minister and Minister Peter Garrett reiterated, within the constraints of the Federal Government's commitment to returning the budget to surplus in 2013. Further, there will need to be a period of extensive consultation and negotiation with all stakeholders regarding the development and implementation of a new School Resource Standard (SRS). In addition, it must be noted that finding additional money to drive an improvement in educational outcomes may be in vain, if funds are not directed to strategies in the teaching and learning domain.

The Australian educational landscape is complex with many interest groups—Federal and State governments and opposition parties, state and private school providers, teachers unions, and parent

lobby groups. The rhetoric in the media highlights a broad range of perspectives ranging from highly supportive to extremely critical. The Review Panel's recommendations are sound. There is something in the recommendations for all educational sectors; however, it is now critical for the government to respond in detail to the recommendations made in the report by the Review Panel. The common response at the launch of the report in Canberra was that 'the devil is in the details'.

In essence the report primarily recommended the creation of a School Resource Standard (SRS), against which all Australian schools would receive funding. Federal, state and territory government funding would be combined when determining a school's allocation against the standard. Government schools would receive the full value of the SRS in funding, while most non-government schools would receive a portion of the value of the SRS, depending on their socio-economic status (SES). Non-government special schools, majority indigenous schools, schools which served remote communities where there were no other schools, and schools with no capacity to charge fees would receive 100 per cent of the value of the SRS. The Review Panel estimated that the value of the SRS was approximately $8000 per primary student and $10,500 per secondary student in 2009 dollars.

They also estimated that the most disadvantaged non-government schools would receive funding at 90 per cent of the SRS, while the least disadvantaged schools would receive between 20 to 25 per cent of the SRS. All non-government schools would be assumed to provide a minimum of 10 per cent of the value of the SRS through private income. It was recommended that the measurement of socio-economic disadvantage be based on the current SES model until a new, improved model could be developed. The Review Panel also recommended that the replacement model measure the capacity of non-government school parents to contribute resources to a school, rather than the amount of resources actually received by schools.

Apart from the base level of funding, schools would receive additional loadings for being located in remote communities or for having, small populations; indigenous students; and students with poor English-language skills. They estimated that schools would receive the equivalent of between 40 and 100 per cent of the value of SRS for each indigenous student, depending on the proportion of indigenous students at the school. Schools with a high proportion of students with limited English language proficiency would receive between 15 and 25 per cent of the value of the SRS per student.

The Review Panel also noted that additional funding for students with disabilities would be provided, but this was provisional on agreement by the states and territories of consistent definitions of disabilities and their severity, and that as a consequence, it was currently impossible to estimate the value of any loadings for students with disabilities. The Review Panel recommended that all of the loadings be made available to all schools, regardless of sector.

Christian schools in Australia rely on appropriate levels of government funding to operate. Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) welcomes the following elements of the Review Panel report: The overall level of funding for schools; improved funding arrangements for all students with disabilities regardless of the school they attend; more accurate measures of the cost of educating a student to an acceptable level; funding certainty for a twelve year period with annual indexation; and equal recognition of government and non-government education providers as contributing to building social capital in Australia.

Higher funding levels alone will not lift Australia's educational standing. School improvement is to a significant degree dependent on the quality of teaching and learning occurring in classrooms.[3] Countries such as Finland and the Asian tigers of South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai—China, have set the example.[4] Adventist schools in Australia look forward to strategically utilising funding to support its passionate educators in the delivery of excellent teaching and learning practices while expanding our focus on eternal outcomes. TEACH

> *School improvement is to a significant degree dependent on the quality of teaching and learning occurring in classrooms*

Endnotes

[1] *Review of funding for schooling, the final report* (2011). Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

[3] *McKinsey report* (2007). How the world's best performing school systems come out on top.

[4] Jensen, B. (2012). Catching up: Learning from the best schools in East Asia. Melbourne, Vic: Grattan Institute Report No 2012.3.

TEACHR

What considerations are important for fostering the faith development of senior students?

A case study of two schools with campus churches

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> *It is generally accepted that Christian schools, in addition to offering quality education also aim to influence the development of each student's personal faith*

Abstract

Campus churches, situated on school grounds, are growing in number within Christian education systems in Australia. In this relationship, the school partners with the campus church in providing a community of faith. This case study investigated senior students' perceptions of the factors positively influencing their faith development at two K–12 Christian schools with campus churches. A review of the literature pointed to a strong connection between adolescent faith development and social context, but noted research gaps in the area of the school-church nexus. Data were gathered from senior students, school staff and campus church members, employing an emergent mixed-method approach, through the use of a questionnaire, focus group interviews and unstructured staff interviews. The data, when analysed, revealed that faith development for senior students is more likely to occur when six key factors are taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of faith-based activities and programs, namely: *Perceptions about spirituality, influence of the school's special character, relevant content, social context, emphasis on discipling through involvement, and positive relationships with school/church personnel.*

Introduction

Christian schools may be viewed as an extension of the Christian church. In fact, schools and affiliated churches increasingly share the same property. It is generally accepted that Christian schools, in addition to offering quality education, also aim to influence the development of each student's personal faith. This is evident in curricular and extra-curricular activities that Christian schools offer and in some instances, through their connection with campus churches. Christian schools work in partnership with 'the church' at large, acting as a support for the beliefs and lifestyle it espouses.

Not only are Christian schools increasingly connected with an affiliated church, but it is becoming commonplace that the intentional establishment of campus churches is specifically aimed at providing a spiritual home for the school's students, staff and families. These communities of faith are evident in a number of private school systems such as the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA), Catholic and Anglican as well as in Assemblies of God, Baptist and Parent Controlled Christian Schools, among others. There is a growing trend to intentionally use the existing church on campus or plant a new church community on the school campus in an effort to encourage the transition of un-churched students and their families into a Christian faith community.

What is unknown, however, is the effectiveness of this partnership, and to what extent this school-church nexus environment influences the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of students in regards to their personal faith development and affiliation with the campus church community.

The study
Need and purpose

Little research has been conducted to examine the relationship between Christian schools and campus churches in general, and SDA schools and campus churches in particular. Presently, little is

known also about the dynamics of the relationship between schools with campus churches in regards to the transition of students and their families into the church community. Further, there appear to be difficulties in evaluating the effectiveness of a school-church nexus as an outreach tool. On those accounts alone, the study may be regarded as valid and timely.

The study attempted to find out what factors influenced the faith development of senior students within the environment of a school-church nexus, with the intention that the research might contribute to addressing the lack of credible knowledge in this area and provide some practical guidance to educators and pastors.

The research questions

The focus question for this study was, "What are senior students' perceptions of the factors that positively influence their faith development within the environment of a school-church nexus?" In addition, the following subsidiary questions were utilised to guide the collection of data:

1. What are the senior students' perceptions of spirituality, and do they consider themselves to be spiritual?
2. What school-related factors are perceived by senior students to positively influence their personal relationship with God?
3. What proportion of senior students have an affiliation with the campus church, and what form does the affiliation take?
4. Within the case study schools, what factors are perceived by senior students and staff to impact senior students' attendance at campus church events?

Setting and participants

Two K–12 schools were chosen for this case study. Both had campus churches, although the campus church of School One (S1) was set up after the establishment of the school itself. In the case of School Two (S2), the campus church pre-dated the school's location on the same property. Both schools had a relatively low ratio of SDA students in relation to the total school population.

A total of 139 Year 11 and 12 students from S1 and S2 participated in the study; the students were a representative sample of students in the school system to which S1 and S2 belonged.

Literature Review
Adolescents as social beings

Human beings are fundamentally social creatures inherently influenced by the surrounding social environment in which they find themselves (Aronson,

1995; de Souza, 2009; Noller & Feeney, 2006). Adolescence, in particular, is a time when the social environment significantly impacts on behaviour and belief (Aronson, 1996; Fowler, 1981; Ozorak, 1989). The social environment of both churches and Christian schools plays a significant role in the development of belief and behaviour (Barrett, Pearson, Muller & Frank, 2007; Regnerus, Smith and Smith, 2004), but the impact of a school-church nexus on faith development has not been the focus of formal research efforts.

Spirituality, religiosity and faith

Three terms are central to this study: Spirituality, religiosity and faith. Although spirituality is usually associated with religious belief, it is widely recognised that spirituality is somewhat distinct from religion or religiosity (Newberg and Newberg, 2006). Wakefield (1983) highlights a broadening of the term *spirituality* which (Kline, 2008, p. 166) maintains encompasses "the feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviours that arise from a search for the sacred". From a Christian perspective, the term *spiritual* can mean, "the dynamic, holistic, maturing relationship between the individual believer and God, and between the individual believer and others" (Pettit, 2008).

Religiosity is often contrasted with spirituality; the former being identified with structure, institutions, rituals and theology, while the latter is described as an individual phenomenon related to inner meaning and experience of transcendence (Tacey, 2006). De Souza (2009, p. 3) believes it is necessary to "identify spirituality as something distinct from religion while recognising the obvious links between the two".

The third term of significance is *faith*. Faith is the meaningful experience that helps us move beyond our everyday existence to make sense of the world (Fowler, 1981). Both Westerhoff (1976) and Smith (1979, as cited in Fowler, 1981, p. 9) perceive faith as a deeply personal and dynamic phenomenon, whereas religion is connected to traditions and viewed more as an *expression* of faith. Faith also involves the loyalty, values and concerns of an individual, and how they know and express these concerns (Evering Jr., Wilcox, Huffaker and Snelling Jr., 1998). The term *faith development*, adopted in this study, describes the development of a Christian faith by which an individual "sets one's heart upon" Jesus Christ (Smith, 1979, as cited in Fowler and Dell, 2006, p. 42).

Faith development and adolescence

Faith development from infancy to adulthood is influenced by a variety of factors, such as a person's upbringing, personality and temperament, social experiences, conscience development, parenting

> *Three terms are central to this study: spirituality, religiosity and faith*

Figure 1: Development of the research study
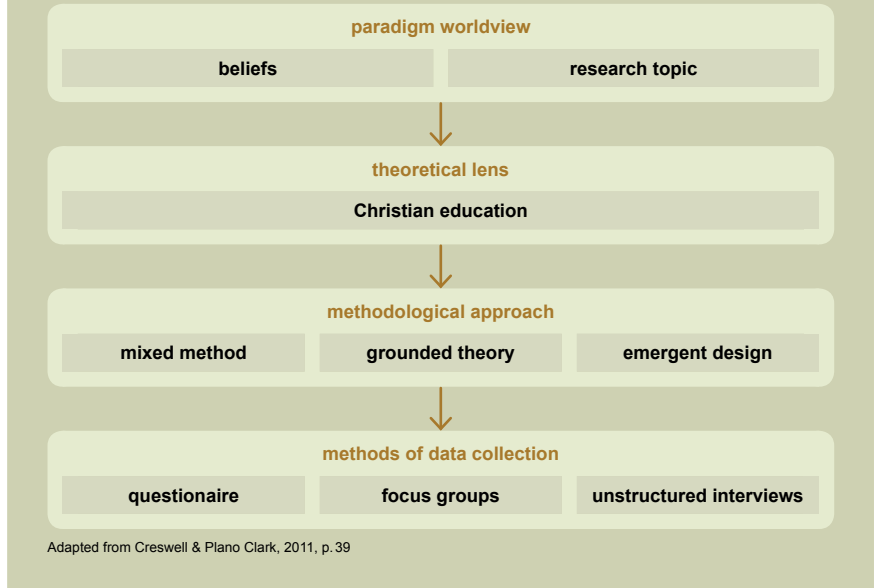
paradigm worldview

| beliefs | research topic |

↓

theoretical lens

Christian education

↓

methodological approach

| mixed method | grounded theory | emergent design |

↓

methods of data collection

| questionaire | focus groups | unstructured interviews |

Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 39

> *Faith development, awakening spirituality and even religiosity, rarely occur in isolation from the social context*

style in the family, religious exposure and life experiences (Habenicht and Burton, 2004). Faith development, awakening spirituality and even religiosity, rarely occur in isolation from the social context (Childs, 1992; Pettit, 2008). Relationships take on heightened importance and Aronson (1995, p. 28) notes "that the more faith an individual has in the expertise and trustworthiness of the other person, the greater the tendency to follow his lead and conform to his behaviour". Adolescence is also characterised by a search for and formation of personal identity, a key aspect of adolescent development (Fowler, 1981). The combination of relationships and social awareness that occurs within a community, (family, school, club, church), has the potential to influence faith development to some extent. The influence may be either positive or negative.

The literature reveals that the impact of schools functioning as faith communities is largely unknown. Wighting and Liu's (2009) study, however, found a clear correlation between religious commitment and a sense of community within the school setting. One notable exception to the lack of research on faith development within SDA schools comes from the Value Genesis study (Hughes, 1993; Gillespie, Donahue, Boyatt and Gane, 2004). Although this study does not specifically deal with the school / campus church nexus, it does make connections between SDA schools and Christian commitment among students. The study found a

measure of positive correlation between students' Christian commitment and attendance at a SDA school (Hughes, 1993, p. 67).

School-church nexus

The influence of a campus church as a factor impacting adolescent faith development in the school setting is only at the level of a hypothesis. It has yet to be confirmed by valid and reliable research evidence.

SDA schools in Australia often function in conjunction with an already existing church. However, as previously noted, there has been a recent phenomenon where campus churches have been planted with the aim of providing a community of faith that includes un-churched students and their families (Lemke, 2010). The plan is to achieve this aim through intentional strategies and the team efforts of campus church leaders, school administrators, staff, and chaplains. According to Lemke (2010), several SDA schools in Australia are experiencing the benefit that an integrated campus church has on the faith development of students. There is scarce research, however, that differentiates between the faith development of adolescents in a Christian school *with* a campus church, compared to those in a Christian school *without* a campus church. Articles dealing with factors influencing the transition of students into the faith community of a campus church seem to be absent from the literature.

The research method

The research approach used in this study was an 'emergent mixed method design' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.54), which is built on the framework of 'grounded theory' (Fraenkel and Warren, 2006; Yin, 2009) as the process of inquiry. Figure 1 illustrates this process.

All senior students in the participating schools were invited to complete the questionnaire. A total of 139 senior students responded. From this cohort of S1 and S2 students, focus groups were chosen that were representative of the total of participating students. In addition, unstructured interviews were conducted with three senior Bible teachers, two school chaplains, two principals, and two campus church pastors.

Data collected through the mixed method mode were analysed following a 'convergent parallel design'. This required that the data from both the *quantitative* and *qualitative* approaches be compared and related to inform final interpretation.

Results

Students' perceptions

Spirituality

In response to the first question in the questionnaire, "Do you feel that you are a spiritual person?" two-thirds of the sample population (68%) responded "yes". The students' perceptions of spirituality were discussed during the focus group interviews in response to focus group question one. The responses regarding what the students' perceived spirituality to be, ranged from 'being in the presence of God' to '[knowing] who you are'. When the students were asked if spirituality was the same as religiosity, the general consensus was 'no'.

The ideas associated with religion that emerged from the focus groups were: Rules, physical ritual, following strict guidelines, and attending church. Spirituality on the other hand, was associated with comments about belief, faith, relationship, and connection with a deity. One response, typical of several, said, "Religion is more like rules and stuff and spirituality is more like having faith, rather than rules". This was supported by the student who claimed, "I don't go to church, but I'm still spiritual".

School-related factors positively influencing students' relationship with God.

After coding the focus groups' responses, three school-related factors emerged as significant in positively influencing the students' relationship with God. Ranked by the participants in order of importance; these were:

1. Experiencing God through the daily culture of the school which included daily exposure to Christianity, the atmosphere or ethos of the school, daily prayer in the home-room, morning devotions and the availability of Christian resources such as Bibles. One student summed up the general opinion of the focus groups with the comment, "I think daily exposure [to Christianity] is pretty important because it covers everything", while another shared, "What changed my life was morning devotions".

2. Experiencing God through aspects of the school program such as the regular Biblical Studies / Religion classes, voluntary Bible studies, and class camps.

3. Experiencing God through social connections with peers, friendship groups, teachers, the school chaplain and the campus church pastor. For the majority of students, social connection was a positive factor with a focus on "positive examples from teachers" and the insights of friends. An exception was noted in one of the focus groups and highlighted that relationships also have the potential to *negatively* impact on other students' relationship with God.

Students' affiliation with the campus church

The question, "Which religion do you belong to?" was an optional question for students to answer. The results showed that about one third of the students chose not to answer this question. Of those who answered the question, 34% were affiliated with Protestant Christianity, 14% were Catholic or Orthodox, 8% belonged to a non-Christian religion, and 10% indicated they were Seventh-day Adventist. The results indicated that at least 58% of the sample population align themselves with Christianity. Of the total survey population, 7% attend the campus church on Saturday mornings. Almost 70% have never attended the campus church on Saturday mornings, while another 23% indicated they rarely or sometimes attended the campus church service. Overall, 78% of the sample population has been associated at least once with the campus church in some form through the involvement of the school in the church program.

When asked, "Would you be interested in visiting the campus church?" the combined S1 and S2 responses showed, 63% *were not interested* in visiting the campus church, 27% *were interested*, and 10% *did not give a response*. Just over 50% of questionnaire respondents indicated that they had been invited by someone to attend the campus

> *Overall, 78% of the sample population has been associated at least once with the campus church in some form through the involvement of the school in the church program*

church at some point during the time they had attended the school, while 40% indicated that they had not been invited, and 8% did not respond.

Over half of the respondents (58%) indicated that they knew the campus church pastor. The variables to the response of this question included how long the students had attended the school, and how long the current campus church pastor had been at the church.

Students' and staff's perceptions

Factors likely to impact on students' attendance at campus church events

In focus groups, students were asked to identify factors currently impacting their attendance at the campus church, and in a subsequent question, they were asked to identify factors that *would* impact their attendance if they were in place.

The responses of the four focus groups' fitted into two categories. The most reported impacts on students' attendance at campus church-related programs/activities were, connecting socially, and being involved. Across all focus groups, *social connection* and *involvement* were perceived

> *The most reported impacts on students' attendance at campus church-related programs / activities were, connecting socially, and being involved*

as equally important (11 responses for each category). *Personal interest* was an additional minor factor that was also identified by one focus group.

Examples given of *connecting socially* were, friends and family who were also attending, school staff attendance, encouragement, and a positive atmosphere. Correspondingly, examples provided for *involvement* were, compulsory participation in events, where and when the school was involved; voluntary involvement in programs or worship; special occasions; and what was summed up as, involvement in the whole experience of being there.

When asked, "What factors *would influence your decision* to attend activities at the campus church?" the four focus groups' responses fell into two categories: *Social connection* and perceived *relevance to students' lives*. Social connection included friends and family attending ("the people who go there"), food, acceptance, advertising and special events such as combined school worship programs. Perceived *relevance* covered the factors of relevant youth programs ("like coping with…teenage pregnancy, sex…"), guest speakers ("aimed at us"), music, and convenient times.

Themes

Three significant themes emerged 'across' all the focus groups' responses. These were:

1. Social interaction is a highly significant factor for teenagers' willingness to participate in spiritual events.
2. Involvement did not increase their spirituality, but the data indicated that it increases their attendance at spiritual events that are geared towards spiritual growth and faith development.
3. Relevance: voluntary involvement depends on the perceived relevance of the activities.

The unstructured staff interviews provided data that revealed the staff perceptions of the school-church relationship, and the factors staff members believed to be impacting students' attendance at the campus church. Most staff indicated that the occurrence of students transitioning into the campus church community was rare, however, evidence of individual senior students who had made this transition were mentioned. Furthermore, staff members perceived social factors as significant to the transition of students into the campus church community, which aligned with the results from the focus group interviews.

Figure 2: Key considerations for strengthening the impact of a school-church nexus on the faith development of students
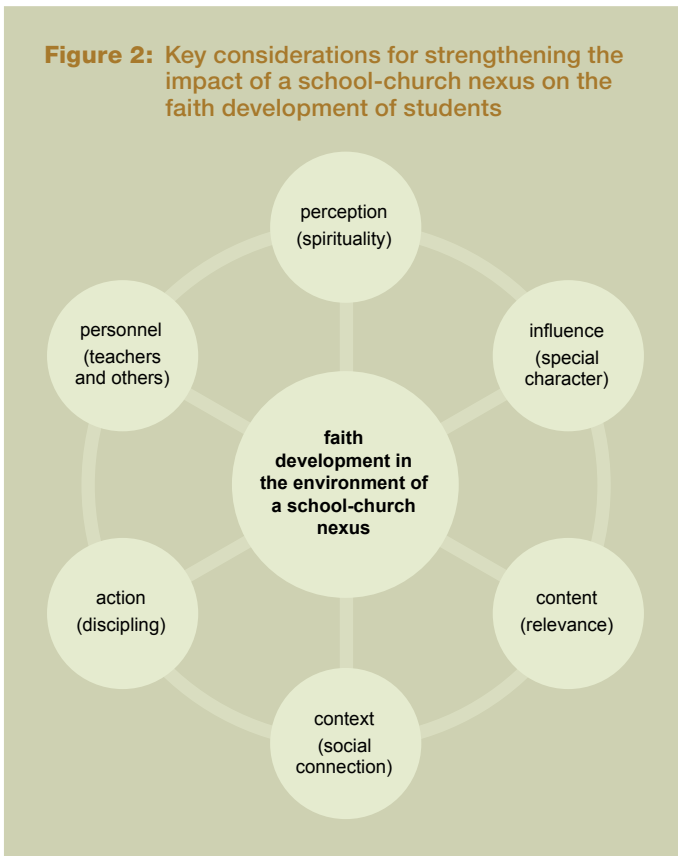
Discussion
Key considerations
Schools with campus churches are well situated to help students' transition into a church community. The results of this study, however, demonstrate that the mere presence of a campus church does not guarantee or necessarily facilitate this transition. The research findings did not explicitly outline factors contributing to faith development of students, but gave an overall picture of six key considerations for strengthening the impact of a school-church nexus on the faith development of students. Six key considerations were synthesised from the subsidiary question results. The model in Figure 2, illustrates the six key considerations, which are described in greater detail below.

1. Perception (spirituality)
This is the mindset that senior students have in relation to the area of spirituality and religiosity. Senior students perceive spirituality as more authentic and meaningful than religion. Students are more likely to be interested in particular programs or events that present Christianity from a personal perspective rather than a church organisational perspective.

2. Influence (special character)
The *special character* of a school, as evidenced in its daily culture and ethos, emerged as the strongest factor, both in emphasis and frequency, for helping students develop a relationship with God. School culture is also strongly connected to teaching staff who are modelling Christianity every day to students through aspects such as daily prayers and morning devotions, that according to the students, positively impacts their own personal relationship with God. This indicates the importance of incorporating the *special character* of the school in its curricula, plans, programs and activities by teaching personnel committed to the Christian faith of the school.

3. Content (relevance)
Students indicated their desire for programs to be relevant to the contemporary culture in which they live and for programs to deal with issues they are facing. This has implications for the content, style and delivery of any progam in either the school or church arena. Whether it is biblical, relational or lifestyle-focused, *relevance to students* emerged as a key consideration.

4. Context (social connection)
The results of this research indicate that faith development for adolescents is best facilitated in a social context. Therefore, spiritual events and programs with a strong social component in terms of *who* is involved, *what* is involved, and *where* events are held are more likely to appeal to senior students. This finding was strongly supported by the literature.

5. Action (discipling)
Involvement was perceived as a significant factor in attending campus church activities. Involvement and participation are also crucial to the process of discipling in which students make an intentional decision to accept Jesus as their Saviour and Lord of their lives. Focus group comments indicated that the key action of schools/churches seeking to build the faith of senior students should be that of discipleship, where students are given opportunity to actively participate in faith building activities such as service projects, small group and individual Bible study groups, prayer support groups, and chapel programs with opportunities for leadership by students; where appropriate.

6. Key personnel (teachers and others)
A range of significant personnel was identified in this research as contributing to the faith development of students. Teachers emerged at the top of the list, followed by peers, families, and then church and school pastoral care staff. The implication is that teachers by the very nature of their position are 'significant others' to their students. All relationships are important to students; however the influence of teachers is more direct, frequent and consistent than any other key personnel.

Christian Schools, therefore, will benefit from being staffed with committed, authentic Christians who have a passion for God and their students, who can model Christian living in their relationships, and integrate Christian principles into their teaching.

The results suggest that each of the six key considerations, if implemented, could provide an environment within a school-church nexus that would be conducive to the faith development of students. The focus groups responses revealed that in some instances this was happening in the case study schools, but the responses also pointed to a degree of disconnect between the schools and the campus churches with a tendency for their operations to be mutually exclusive. Based on this study, it can be posited that in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in helping students with their faith development, each school and campus church should develop a symbiotic relationship, or at the very least, some common goals. Table 1 provides a summary of the six key considerations and their implications for the school-church nexus, as discussed above.

The special character of a school, as evidenced in its daily culture and ethos, emerged as the strongest factor, both in emphasis and frequency, for helping students develop a relationship with God

Table 1: A descriptive summary: Key considerations for strengthening the impact of a school-church nexus on the faith development of students

Key consideration	Description	Implications for schools and campus churches
Perception	Spiritual not religious	Take this particular mindset into consideration when planning events and programs
Influence	Special character	Strengthen the *special character* of the school culture
Content	Relevance	Consider the culture of students in the planning and implementation of programs
Context	Social connection	Be aware that adolescent faith development happens within a social context
Action	Discipling	Mentor students through involvement and leadership in both school and campus church activities
Personnel	Teachers and others	Build strong relationships that are authentic and safe

> *Intentionally strength-ened special character includes having com-mitted staff members who authentically model their faith in their everyday lives and through their teaching*

One notable omission in the results is any reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in changing the lives of the students. Is not known whether this is due to the nature of the data collection process, the mind frame of the student sample, or other reasons. Thus, it could be argued that a seventh key consideration, *prayer for guidance and openness to God's voice*, be included in the model. This would recognise that planning can provide an optimum environment for faith development, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes changes in the hearts of individuals.

Conclusion and recommendations

Each school is unique, so caution should be used when applying the results of this research, although the six key considerations are sufficiently generic to apply to most schools in the Christian schools sector. With this in mind, three recommendations emerge from this study:

1. Schools and associated campus churches that are intentional about the faith development of students—particularly in the senior Years—should note the six key considerations emerging from this study (perceptions, context, personnel, influence, action and content) when planning and implementing spiritual programs, projects and other related activities.

2. Where a campus church exists, school and campus church leaders should engage in substantive communication about the relationship between the two identities and how they can be best merged into one community of faith. Discussions should

be held to articulate the purpose of the relationship between the church and the school.

3. Faith-based schools should intentionally strengthen the *special character* of their school environment. This includes having committed staff members who authentically model their faith in their everyday lives and through their teaching.

This study shows that while a school-church nexus can provide an environment conducive to adolescent faith development, it was not strikingly evident in the two case study schools. What did emerge were six key considerations that may facilitate faith development in senior students when factored into the planning and implementation of spiritual programs and activities. These six key considerations are perceptions about spirituality, influence of the school's *special character*, relevant content, social context, involvement in discipling, and positive relationships with school and church personnel. TEACH

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Boys' music education
Using the Boy's Music Ecosystem model to better understand successful teaching practices

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Abstract
Experienced music educators rate their senior class of musicians by often using the terms exceptional, talented, average, limited, unremarkable or apathetic. This summative evaluation considers class size, academic results, willingness to participate in extra curricula musical activities or post secondary school career choices in the music industry.

Such characterisation by teachers raises the question: To what extent does this determination depend on the individual traits of the students, their musical experiences or the personal influence of their music teachers? This pilot study examined this question by comparing six cohorts of senior musicians over the six years of their secondary school music education within an action research context. Through the use of the Boy's Music Ecosystem model (Collins, 2011) and interview results, the study revealed six themes that point to successful practices in boys' music education and the possible benefits of a longitudinal view across a boy's entire secondary school music experience.

> *The study revealed six themes that point to successful practices in boys' music education and the possible benefits of a longitudinal view across a boy's entire secondary school music experience*

Introduction
At the conclusion of each teaching year my colleague and I (the two researchers involved in this study) review the performance of the senior music class, usually around the time their final grades are released. Students are viewed as individuals but often characterised as a group, labelling them as exceptional, mixed or sometimes a disappointing class. These labels are not derived from their academic grades only. Discussion includes the students' involvement in musical activities outside the classroom and the school, their approach to study and each other, their relationships with us as their teachers and their past experiences in music education.

After almost a decade of team teaching the senior music class, the researchers wanted to understand, what contributes to the quality of each class' achievements and to whom or what

can it be attributed? This question forms part of a broader field of inquiry into the specific needs and motivations of boys in music education.

A review of literature
The field of boys' music education is small and often appears as a subsection of broader areas of research, such as Gender and Music Education or Adolescent Boys Development. These research fields tend to yield comparisons between boys and girls (Green, 1993; Brotz,1992; Abeles & Porter, 1978; Dews & Williams,1989, O'Neill & Boulton, 1996) in areas as broad as fine motor skill development, instrumental choice and creativity. The field of boys in music education has however gained momentum, after a period of focus on girls' academic development in the 1980s, and in Australia is championed by researchers such as Biddulph (2008) and Lashlie (2007).

Neuroscience has added a further dimension by examining brain function and behaviour in adolescent boys (Dahl, 2004; Feinberg, 2006). While this research has focused on understanding boys' approach to learning and social development, it has not been widely connected to boys' music education.

An area of boys' music education that has been investigated more fully is the area of singing. This area of research began to gain momentum when Koza (1993) coined the phenomenon the 'missing males', which referred to the lack of males involved in specific musical activities such as singing. Later research in fields such as education, psychology and health have examined this issue (Ashley, 2002; Hall, 2005). In *Perspectives on men and singing*, Harrison et al. (2011) take a broad view of boys and singing, presenting further research into this field. Currently the research points to a highly complex mix of physiological, psychological, social, cultural and emotional influences on boys and singing, and is highly specific to individual music programs.

While research into select musical activities with a focus on boys is a very important field for music teachers, a music program rarely consists of one activity. It is more than likely that a music program

will have multiple musical activities occurring simultaneously, catering to different age groups, instrumental levels and interests. The ability to identify, understand and evaluate this environment for its successes, flaws, hidden protocols and unintended outcomes is just as valuable to a music teacher as knowledge of better practice in a singular musical activity.

A succession of research projects has examined the reasons why, between the ages of 12 and 14 years, many boys change or cease their musical activities. These projects have identified specific teaching strategies, peer influences and elements of school culture that affect how boys make decisions about their musical activities. The outcome to date has been a better practice model, known as the Boys Music Ecosystem (Collins, 2009 & 2011), that can assist music teachers in strengthening their music programs for boys.

Boy's Music Ecosystem

The Boy's Music Ecosystem model emerged from a study that examined the teaching strategies, social influence and wider school issues that encouraged boys to remain involved in musical activities beyond the first two years of their secondary school education (ages 12–14) (Collins, 2005). This model identified six essences (success and accomplishment, interest and positive attitude, praise and acceptance) and seven elements (relationships, student character, teaching strategies, school culture, parents, role models and peers) that work together to either positively or negatively affect boys' continued involvement in musical activities past their early secondary school years. Further development of the model (Collins, 2009; 2011) incorporated research on boys' psychology and findings by Lashlie (2007) and Biddulph (2008).

All essences and elements were retained but the emphasis and interactions were refined. From research into the practices and structures used in programs that had high levels of participation, diversity and achievement it was discovered that boys needed to experience all six essences in order to continue with musical activities into their final years of secondary school.

This model can be used as a lens through which teachers can examine their own programs. It promotes the use of successful practices based on broad themes such as, how boys experience success and praise through their school culture and distinct teaching strategies rather than specific activities in programs. Clear identification and articulation of aspects supporting or hindering boys'

attachment to music can then lead to more informed decisions regarding curriculum, budgeting and staffing.

Research focus

The pilot study that follows is the initial use of the Boys Music Ecosystem (Collins, 2009 & 2011) as a 'better practice' model to evaluate an individual music program. The research project was designed to reveal a holistic and detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the selected music program by focusing on specific class groups over a given period.

Method

This is a case-study completed within a participatory action research methodology, potentially being the first cycle within a whole school subject program evaluation, supporting development and supervision. Data were collected from the teacher/researchers.

The school

The pilot study was carried out in an independent, pre-school to Year 12 (P–12), co-education (Prep–Year 2) and all boys (Year 3–Year 12), school in Australia. At the time of the study, the school had close to 1500 students.

The Music Department, involving eight staff (part-time and full-time), taught music to every year level, P–12. In Years 3–6 there were selective music classes for students who show above average abilities in both music and academic studies. During Years 7 and 8 (first years of secondary school) students received one semester of academic music as part of a larger rotation of arts activities. From Year 9 onwards students could elect to take music as an academic subject. Class sizes in academic music were typically 12–18 students.

Co-curricular music activities for Years 7–12 allowed participation in performance ensembles that rehearse weekly, and both perform and tour regularly. These ensembles included different levels of choirs, orchestras, concert bands, jazz bands and instrumental ensembles. Many boys' musical ensembles included students from the equivalent girls' school, which was just over two kilometres away. Currently, the combined program consisted of 18 ensembles involving around 400 students, staffed by both classroom teachers and specialist instrumental teachers.

Selection and categorisation of Music classes

Prior to the evaluation interview, in-depth discussions between the two researchers developed a set of criteria by which classes could

A succession of research projects has examined the reasons why, between the ages of 12 and 14 years, many boys change or cease their musical activities

Figure 1: Boy's Music Ecosystem (Collins, 2011)

role models

parents

peers

teaching strategies

relationships

school culture

student character

praise and acceptance

interest and positive attitude

success and accomplishment
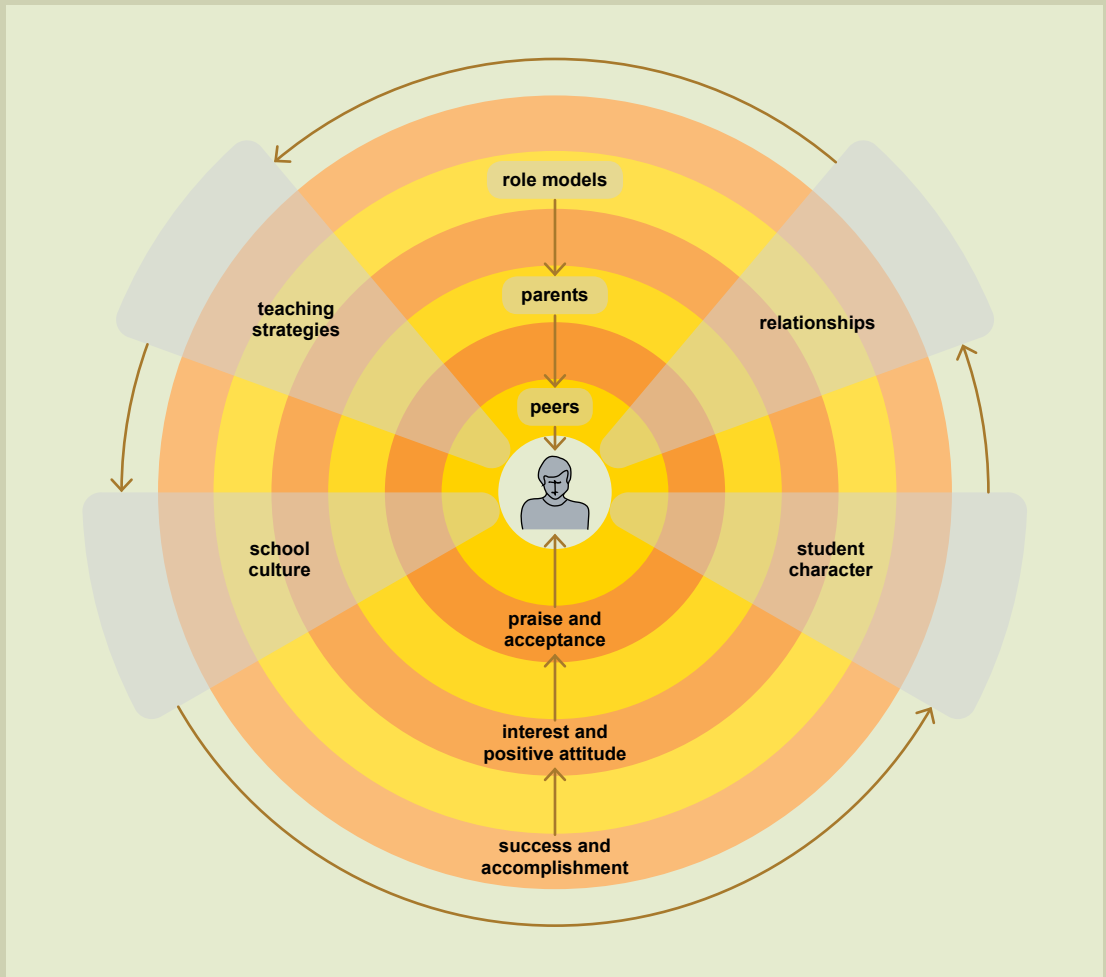
Process elements are dynamic and interactive both between themselves (circular arrows) and as they penetrate experience of the 'essences'. Broad concepts of element outcomes become focussed as they impinge on an individual.

Each student is encapsulated within three 'spheres' of intensifying relational elements that influence by creating or 'operationalising' the experience of the 'six essences'.

All experiential 'essences' are essential and delivered to the student from an encompassing 3D environment. Most broadly from more distant and diffuse relationships: *Role models* filter perceptions of success and accomplishment, *parents* mediate affirmation and support both interest and positive attitudes. Of greatest importance is *peer* praise and acceptance of the person as well as the performance, processes influenced by parental opinions and behaviours.

be categorised as exceptional, mixed ability or underachieving. The selection criteria included the following measures:

1. Level of achievement in their final school examinations;
2. Level of involvement in academic program (students could select the standard music course or the extension music course);
3. Level of involvement in co-curricular ensembles (within the school);
4. Level of involvement with musical activities outside of the school;
5. Level of leadership within the school music program (including roles as music captains and music tutors);
6. Level of musical study at a tertiary level.

In order to create a useful data group upon which to base the evaluation interview, six Year 12 graduating classes were chosen from the nine that the two researchers had team-taught. The rubric derived from the criteria above (Table 1) was used to characterise these six classes as exceptional, mixed or underachieving.

The music experience of each class during their six years in secondary school was then reviewed to identify any significant patterns. This table proved an invaluable reference tool during the evaluation interview as comparisons between the classes were easily highlighted and debated.

Development of the interview protocol

In order to utilise the model as an evaluation tool, a series of themed interview questions were designed and used in a semi-structured interview format to focus on the elements of the model, while providing flexibility for new revelations and connections to emerge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The design of both the questions and the interview process, considered the position and perspectives of the participants. Since the model is designed to assist music teachers in evaluation of their programs, and they may struggle to engage with objectivity (Gall et al., 2010) the questions are ordered and formatted in such a way as to examine a given issue from multiple perspectives in order to provide internal validation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

> *The music experience of each class during their six years in secondary school was then reviewed to identify any significant patterns*

Table 1: Selection criteria for categorising classes as exceptional, mixed ability or underachieving

Selection criteria	Exceptional classes	Mixed classes	Underachieving classes
1. Level of achievement in their final school examinations	Majority of class achieved at or near the top of the grade range	50% of the class achieved at or near the top of the grade range and 50% achieving at or below the mid grade range	The majority of the class achieved at or below the mid grade range
2. Level of involvement in academic program	Majority of students electing extension program	Approximately 50% of students electing extension program	Less than 50% of students electing extension program
3. Level of involvement in co-curricular ensembles	Students involved in two or more co-curricular music ensembles	Students involved in two or less co-curricular music ensembles	Students involved in one or less co-curricular ensembles
4. Level of involvement with musical activities outside of the school	More than 50% of students involved in musical activities outside of school	Between 25% and 50% of students involved in musical activities outside of school	Less than 25% of students involved in musical activities outside of school
5. Level of leadership within the school music program	100% of students involved in some form of leadership in the music program	60% of students involved in some form of leadership in the music program	Less than 30% of students involved in some form of leadership in the music program
6. Level of musical study at a tertiary level	More than 30% of students continued onto either tertiary music study or involvement in musical activities at a tertiary level	Between 10% and 30% of students continued onto either tertiary music study or involvement in musical activities at a tertiary level	Less than 10% of students continued onto either tertiary music study or involvement in musical activities at a tertiary level

As experienced teachers of the senior music classes, leaders in the Music Department and decision-makers regarding the design and operation of the Music program, my colleague and I filled the dual role of researchers and interview participants. Thus, we were 'complete insiders' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As participatory research, the study utilised specific planning and verification procedures to maintain validity.

Data analysis

An audio recording of the evaluation interview was transcribed and coded using a Narrative Research Design (Creswell, 2008). Soon after the interview the principal researcher, made a log of personal interpretations and emotional reactions to the content and experience of the interview (Gall et al., 2010). This was an important 'litmus test' during and after the coding of the interview data to ensure that the emerging themes were representative of both researchers' views. This process was strengthened through a collaboration process, inviting comment on the identified themes from the second researcher (Creswell, 2008).

Results

The evaluation process revealed both expected and unexpected results. As expected, themes emerged, which will direct decisions on teaching practices, curriculum development and placement of staff and budget priorities in the coming years. However, a longitudinal pattern also emerged, indicating that specific events may influence boys' music experience. These two interrelated areas of findings provide a micro and macro view of the boys' music experience.

Class size

During the interview process an additional factor came to the fore. It became clear that participation numbers could be influencing the achievement levels of the six classes. Both exceptional classes had over 12 students; both mixed classes had between 8 and 12 students and the underachieving classes had less than 7 students. This result appears to support the finding from the Boy's Music Ecosystem that highlighted the need for a critical mass of boys involved in musical activities to positively influence school culture and overall achievement.

Themes

Thematic analysis of qualitative interview data usually results in between five and seven themes (Creswell, 2008). This study yielded six themes:

> *The students in the exceptional classes worked effectively as a team and supported one another within and outside their musical activities, and friendship groups often mirrored musical groups*

1. Be involved (with your peers);
2. Classroom teacher in Year 7 to 10;
3. Motivation;
4. Parental support;
5. Boys as role models;
6. Messages from the school culture.

Although the content and underlying issues amongst the themes overlap at times, they present an important view of the principle influence factors in a boy's music education.

Be involved (with your peers)

Music education is a multi facetted experience. Singular involvement in academic music is not enough. Comparing the class groups, students in the *exceptional class had greater involvement* in multiple musical activities at a variety of levels. This may help explain their higher levels of achievement in academic music and continued involvement in musical activities after completing secondary school. Essentially, these class groups chose a richer musical life.

The students in the *exceptional classes worked effectively as a team and supported one another* within and outside their musical activities, and friendship groups often mirrored musical groups. In addition, individual students *displayed a stronger sense of self and a high level of respect for one another*.

> **Researcher 2:** I think the crucial thing that is starting to emerge is that you have to be involved in things [musical activities], you can't just do music in class, you actually have to be involved in ensembles to get the whole experience…so you are actually in class with your friends who you sit and make music with.

Large school musical events where senior musicians mentor younger musicians in tutorials and massed school performances, were also found to be significant.

> **Researcher 2:** This is where the sequential [mentor] program is so important, so the younger student can see that if they do this and this and this, they can be as good as the role model standing next to them.

The musical activities that seemed to have the greatest impact on students' overall musical achievement were the touring programs. These programs are carefully designed to capitalise on the students' friendship groups at specific and sensitive periods in their musical and personal development. It was found that the exceptional and higher achieving students in the mixed classes all participated fully in this touring program.

Researcher 1: It is also the tour grouping…we take the top groups [all year 10–12 students] or the middle groups [generally Years 9 and 10]. We would never take the youngest and oldest group away together.

Researcher 2: We carefully decided what their social needs were and worked on the peer relationships.

Researcher 1: We also take a group of singers and band musicians away together to break down any rivalry or bias that might exist.

The evaluation revealed that when comparing the music touring experience of the exceptional and underachieving class, the former were involved in two extensive international tours, whereas the underachieving group were only exposed to short regional tours.

Classroom teacher in Years 7 to 10

The academic music experience of the different classes fell into two sub-themes: teaching strategies and the individual teacher's connection with the students. The students in the *exceptional classes were exposed to a teaching style which allowed significant student choice* in content and learning styles while the *underachieving classes were exposed to a teacher-led strategy*. Interestingly, the mixed classes consisted of more students who had not been at the school during their Year 7 to 10 years, and therefore had highly varied learning experiences, both in style and content.

Researcher 1: They had more than one person [teacher] telling them "that's good", but they had multiple people giving varied feedback.

Researcher 2: And we included the whole class in giving feedback all the time and they [the students] got to see where they stood in comparison to everyone else…We let them make their choices and then guide them in their choices.

Researcher 1: Rather than making their initial choices for them and then allowing them to comment.

Researcher 2: And we only intervene when they are about to crash and burn.

Researcher 1: But even then, we always outline why things are a bad idea.

Researcher 2: And we tend to use examples of past students to illustrate our point [students the boys would have known].

While examining the differences in teaching styles, *the narrative teaching strategy was identified as being of significance*. All classes would have

experienced this teaching style to some extent, but the underachieving class to a far lesser extent. This difference may be linked to the propensity for underachieving classes to seek external rather than internal recognition for their musical activities, and may also relate to a subsequent theme, motivation.

The Music teacher's connection with the students emerged as an important factor. The *exceptional and mixed classes were taught by a team of teachers* who had complimentary but individual personalities. The team was made up of both male and female teachers and although not explicitly planned, usually worked in pairs consisting of one male and one female teacher. As a team, the staff had a variety of teaching experience and expertise. Each teacher bought different skills and foci to the team, including the use of technology in the classroom, recording techniques, effective evaluation and peer learning.

The modelling of effective teamwork by the staff may have influenced the students. Similarly, exposure to different teaching personalities may have allowed them to connect more readily with at least one of the teachers. Each member of this team of teachers was also overtly passionate about music learning and music making. The lack of these factors is highlighted by the experiences of the *underachieving classes who experienced only one teacher* for the majority of their Year 7 to year 10 music experience; one who chose a more teacher-centred and reserved approach to music learning.

Researcher 2: There are a couple of things you need to line up in order to make it all happen [for the boy]. There has to be the right staff member and the right circumstance. If you haven't got the right teacher you can actually poison the students' interest in that activity.

Researcher 1: What are those things that have to line up?

Researcher 2: Personality, passion and the ability of the teacher.

Researcher 1: Because they might be a nice person, but if they aren't passionate or able then the student doesn't get everything they need.

Motivation

A common thread throughout the evaluation interview was the motivation of the students to be involved in musical activities. The *exceptional and mixed classes had a strong sense of 'giving back'* to the music program in their senior years and relished the opportunity to mentor younger musicians. They often did this through tutoring younger musicians and accompanying them on tours, activities for which they would receive little public recognition.

> *The students in the exceptional classes were exposed to a teaching style which allowed significant student choice in content and learning styles while the underachieving classes were exposed to a teacher-led strategy*

Conversely, the *underachieving class only involved themselves in musical activities where they would gain personal recognition*, such as school wide rock competitions. This may have been due to the respect they gained from the broader school population for displaying their musical abilities through a pop genre (rather than other styles of music). The external praise received may satisfy their extrinsic motivations.

A difference was found between the groups regarding their preferences for how to label themselves as musicians. *The exceptional classes and some members of the mixed class liked being labelled as musicians* whereas the members of the *underachieving classes made a point of being identified as specific types of musicians* such as a rock drummer or jazz guitarist. Where these choices stem from was a topic of much conjecture during the evaluation interview, and led to broader questions about the prevailing school culture and view of musicians during their secondary school years.

The different types of interpersonal relationships exhibited by the students emerged as an external manifestation of their internal motivations. The exceptional and mixed classes openly supported each other, even when they were not friends, whereas the underachieving classes tended to 'gang up' to pull another student down.

Parental support

The variable nature of each student's character, their relationship with their parent(s), and the parent(s) approach, motivation and involvement in their child's musical activities, were all discussed. These factors led to the conclusion that parental involvement and interaction with the music program needed to be handled on an individual basis.

However, when comparing the exceptional and underachieving classes, a consistent factor became apparent. Although the majority of the *parents of the exceptional students supported the musical activities of their boys, they allowed them significant leeway in their choice of interests*. Essentially, the boys steered their musical choices. A large number of the *parents of the students in the underachieving classes, however, were more vocal and autocratic about the musical choices their sons made*. It appeared that the lack of choice afforded these boys actually drove them to pursue different musical activities than those their parents encouraged. This often created stress within the family unit, which led to the development of resentment of musical activity in general.

> *The exceptional and mixed classes openly supported each other, even when they were not friends, whereas the under-achieving classes tended to 'gang up' to pull another student down*

Boys as role models

Although the students had interacted with exceptional adult male role models through the music program, the peer-mentoring program seems to be the key motivator. From the perspective of the researchers, the numerous testimonies from boys who had grown under the guidance of an older boy, was a strong indicator of the vital role this program can play.

> **Researcher 1:** By the sounds of it the most powerful role models are the older [students] to [the] younger students.

> **Researcher 2:** Definitely, but it has to be only a few years, not a Year 12 boy to Year 1 boy, it works best with a Year 12 boy to a Year 8 boy.

Interestingly, the *underachieving classes had either not chosen to or had not been given the opportunity to experience this specific type of role modelling during Years 8 and 9* and were reluctant to involve themselves in the mentoring experience in Year 12.

Messages from the school culture

Comparing the different classes it became clear that events outside the music program could send both positive and negative messages about musical activities and masculinity to the boys. These messages concerning the place and appropriateness of musical activities in a boy's life came from both the school leadership and the boys themselves.

In this school, the weekly school assembly forms the key event at which administrators set the agenda for the student body. Over the period of this study, there was a significant change in the messages from the school leadership about being a boy and a musician. This change was significantly influenced by a new senior staff member being put in charge of the weekly school assembly. The focus of assembly moved from valuing a liberal, almost 'Renaissance man' culture to a primarily sports focus with arts and other activities being reported briefly at the end of assembly or not at all.

How the musicians interpreted this change seemed to depend on the year they were in when it happened. The exceptional classes saw it in a positive light, as it made them more unique from the common school culture. For the 2007 graduating class, this change occurred when they were in Year 11. By this time, they had already established their place in the school culture.

Researcher 2: They were seen as being a little outside the common culture—.

Researcher 1: —and they liked that.

Researcher 2: Yes they did, it reinforced their sense of identity, it is a part of the school where they feel safe to be themselves, and where they are appreciated for what they do, they are not sporty and they are not always the high academic achievers.

However, for the 2010 graduating class, the change took place when they were in Year 8. Lashie (2007) found that this age is a time when boys are more influenced by peers than by role models. This culture change may be a factor that contributed to this class being an underachieving group. The 2011 graduating class experienced this change in Year 7. As a new group to the secondary school the senior staff member leading assembly probably had a strong influence on how these boys interpreted the explicit and implicit school culture.

This perplexing issue was highlighted in the interview when comparing the response of a boy from an exceptional class with responses of underachieving classes to the tension between sportsman and musician.

Researcher 2: And the students saw that he [the exceptional music student] could do these two things [sport and music] successfully, he was confident enough in his ability and confident enough in himself as a person to say, for me, music is the most important thing.

Researcher 1: The more the other students gave him a hard time, the more confident he became and he was willing to take on their misconceptions. But as you look at the underachieving groups, the more of a hard time they were given by students [for their musical activities] the less confident they became.

It is understandable that the sporting culture is strong. Involvement in sporting activities is compulsory from Year 7 to year 10, whereas musical activities are not. With close to 800 boys participating in sporting activities (compared to 300 in musical activities), most students are able to recognise an elite sportsman and have experience on which to base an understanding and appreciation of the achievement. It is more difficult for the student body to understand and appropriately acknowledge an elite musician.

Implications

The Boy's Music Ecosystem model was found to be a valuable tool through which to view a music program. Specific structures and processes can now be put in place to address the themes that emerged from the evaluation interview.

Peer Relationships: The importance of sustained friendships across the music program will be utilised by an expansion and diversification of the touring program. Since friendships grow through shared experience and interests, academic and co-curricular music experiences will be more closely partnered in the future.

Teachers: The standard and style of teaching will require better quality controls and planned rotation of staff will allow all students to receive the team teaching approach.

Motivation: With the development of the selection criteria for classes (Table 1), it will be possible to identify underachieving classes earlier in their music education. The current study revealed a strong focus on extrinsic motivation and personal judgement in underachieving classes. It may be beneficial to extend these students' skills in critical and artistic discernment. This could serve as a stronger theme through the entire music curriculum.

Parents: The initially contradictive theme that calls for both support and space from parents will be incorporated more openly in the music program. Parents will be better informed regarding the role of touring and large musical activities in the development of both independence and teamwork.

Boys as role models: The development of teamwork skills, mutual respect and interpersonal skills amongst students and staff will be targeted from Year 7. Potentially underachieving groups will be identified and managed at an early stage. This may take the form of more specific mentoring opportunities.

School culture: Acknowledging and capitalising on the broader effects of arts education could change many aspects of the school culture and benefit the current perception of music education for boys at the school. In addition, more open and explicit discussion between the music department and school leadership about the implicit messages that boys understand about being a musician have already begun to take place. Not only are the messages from administrators important, but the manner in which boys interpret those messages and, in some cases, reflect back those messages to teachers, peers and parents.

Further research

During the evaluation process, school-wide events often arose as factors that may affect a boy's music experience. In the Boy's Music Ecosystem model, these influences and events are 'School Culture' elements. The impact of such events on all aspects

"Acknowledging and capitalising on the broader effects of arts education could change many aspects of the school culture and benefit the current perception of music education for boys at the school"

of the boys' music and school experience warrants further attention.

This study focused on school-based musical activities, ignoring other music experiences. The influence of musical experiences prior to entering secondary school (Year 7) will be investigated in a separate study. Also worthy of investigation is the impact of the weekly private instrumental lesson.

Other initial findings that warrant further study include:

- The apparent three-year cycle of exceptional, mixed and underachieving classes.
- The possible connection between the approach that each Year 10 cohort of students has to music on the approach that the Year 7 cohort of students then takes to music.
- The influence of strong peer groups on adjustment to shifts in school culture.

Overlaying the students' school experiences with their approach to their musical activities could yield new understandings and may be the next evolution of the Boy's Music Ecosystem model.

This pilot study has revealed interesting aspects of one music program in one school context. The model needs to be tested in a variety of educational settings in order to prove its validity. Similar studies in co-educational and girls' school settings may reveal which essences and elements are specific to the cultural and social influences of a boys' single sex educational environment and those that are common to all school music programs.

Conclusion

The evaluation of this music program against a better practice model has facilitated the emergence of themes that are being used to strengthen the program. This study has highlighted a possible cycle of classes in terms of achievement and involvement, the connection between role modelling by boys at a crucial stage, influence of school leadership and the importance of positive peer groups. **TEACH**

> *Overlaying the students' school experiences with their approach to their musical activities could yield new under-standings and may be the next evolution of the Boy's Music Ecosystem model*

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Using bendable and rigid manipulatives in primary mathematics

Is one more effective than the other in conceptualising 3D objects from their 2D nets?

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Abstract

The usefulness of manipulatives in the primary maths classroom has been frequently asserted. The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of two different types of manipulatives, *bendable* and *rigid*, as aids for the conceptualisation of 3D solids from 2D nets (fold-outs of solid geometrical shapes) within the NSW Stage 2 Mathematics Curriculum.

Contrary to initial expectations, the bendable nets, although more attractive to pupils, did not prove superior to the rigid variety. In fact, the most noticeable advances in conceptualisation followed teaching experiences using the rigid nets. Although this was a preliminary study and the sample sizes were too small to support solid conclusions, it is suggested that the data were sufficiently robust to warrant further investigation.

We suggest that the lower than expected results for the bendable nets may be explained, partially, by the reduced conceptual demands made by these more 'obvious' shapes. Correspondingly, the greater mental visualisation required when working with the rigid nets may have produced heightened student conceptualisation.

Introduction

In mathematics the term "manipulatives" is generally applied to any structured or unstructured materials and objects—which are physically handled by students—that allow them, actively and safely, to explore maths concepts and ideas. It has been recognised over several decades that the perceptive use of manipulatives enhances mathematics learning among primary and secondary students (cf. Yabsley, 1962; Dienes, 1964; Martinie and Stramel, 2004; Reys et al., 2007; Shaw, 2002) and some attention has also been given to their geometrical applications (Obara, 2009). Barger and McCoy (2009) have even argued the value of manipulatives for teaching geometry at tertiary level. However, little appears to have been done on the use of manipulatives in relating 2D nets to their corresponding 3D solids at the Stage 2 mathematics curriculum level. Further, although manipulatives may be constructed which allow differing degrees of 'manipulation' by the student, and which thus display different levels of correspondence to the concept under investigation, there have been no reports of the relative effectiveness of these different types of manipulatives. This study presents preliminary results from such an investigation.

Geometry is one of the oldest branches of mathematics. It has important connections to most other mathematical disciplines and much of life's experience. Despite its relevance, recent decades have seen geometry's substantial displacement by other topics in the mathematics classroom. These considerations suggest the importance of those geometry topics retained in the current primary curriculum and of instructional strategies which enhance their assimilation.

> *Geometry is one of the oldest branches of mathematics. It has important connections to most other mathematical disciplines and much of life's experience*

The tests deliberately included some shapes not represented in the manipulative sets, to test depth of understanding rather than prior knowledge and skills

The manipulatives

A rigid 2D net corresponding to any regular 3D solid, such as a prism, cube or pyramid, may be cut out of any flat medium. Similar 2D nets can be made which do *not* correspond to any 3D solid, due to the transposition of one or more sides. Some materials allow the construction of such nets with the additional capability of bending up into their 3D solid, thus providing a more obvious correspondence between the two forms. It should be noted here that care must be taken with terminology when discussing nets. For example, Ainge (1996, p. 346) defines a net merely in terms of the bendable variety, being a "plane diagram showing all faces of a 3D shape, which can be cut out and folded to construct the solid".

The medium chosen for this study was flute board—a safe, plastic sheet product available from office supply stores in a variety of bright colours. Cost, ease of handling and storage considerations suggested sizes for the 3D solids in the order of 3–6 cm side length. The bendable examples were made by systematically cutting away one side of the sheeting with a "V" cut using an angled picture-framing trimmer.

Two different sets of 2D nets were designed and constructed, each including examples which did correspond to 3D solids, and others which did not. Five solids were represented in these sets: Cube, rectangular prism, hexagonal prism, square-based pyramid and triangular-based pyramid. One set consisted of rigid nets and the other of bendable nets. Each set consisted of 15 different nets.

Figure 1: Primary students reacted to the manipulatives with enthusiasm

Methodology

The following processes were completed before data collection commenced: Ethical clearance; consent from school administrators, parents and the class teacher; scheduling of class periods with the teacher and the preparation of resources and materials.

To begin, the Grade 4 class was split into two groups of 12 students with the assistance of the supervising class teacher. Originally it was intended that these two groups be approximately equal in ability but, as will be seen, the pre-test indicated that in the context of this study Group A was more able than Group B. However, this may have ultimately proved an advantage to the study, since it provided results for groups of different ability. A maximum of seven 50-minute time periods was allocated to the investigation by the class teacher. The study was consequently configured within these constraints; some time slots in the seven periods being available to the class teacher for regular maths.

Two worksheets were constructed: W1 (bn) corresponding to the bendable nets and W2 (rn) corresponding to the rigid nets. Both worksheets consisted of 15 questions, where each question related to a particular net. Students were allowed 90 seconds with each net during which to answer the appropriate worksheet question, after which the nets were rotated. As later explained, these worksheets were used in the periods following the familiarisation exercises.

Three 45-minute tests of identical format and structure were also constructed. These were designated T0 (pre), T1 (bn) and T2 (rn). Each had the same number and type of questions in each section. Although each included different selections of nets every attempt was made to produce three tests of similar difficulty. Appropriate to Grade 4, the 3D polyhedra included were:

- Prisms: Triangular, rectangular, pentagonal, square and hexagonal;
- Pyramids: Triangular, square, hexagonal, and pentagonal; and
- Cylinders and cones.

These tests included some shapes not represented in the manipulative sets with which pupils would have experience. This was done deliberately to test depth of understanding rather than prior knowledge and skills. The principal features of these tests were questions relating to whether or not a given 2D net accurately corresponded to any 3D solid, and if so, which one. These were paper tests, for which the pupils did not have access to the nets. The worksheets and tests were deployed according to a sequential schedule.

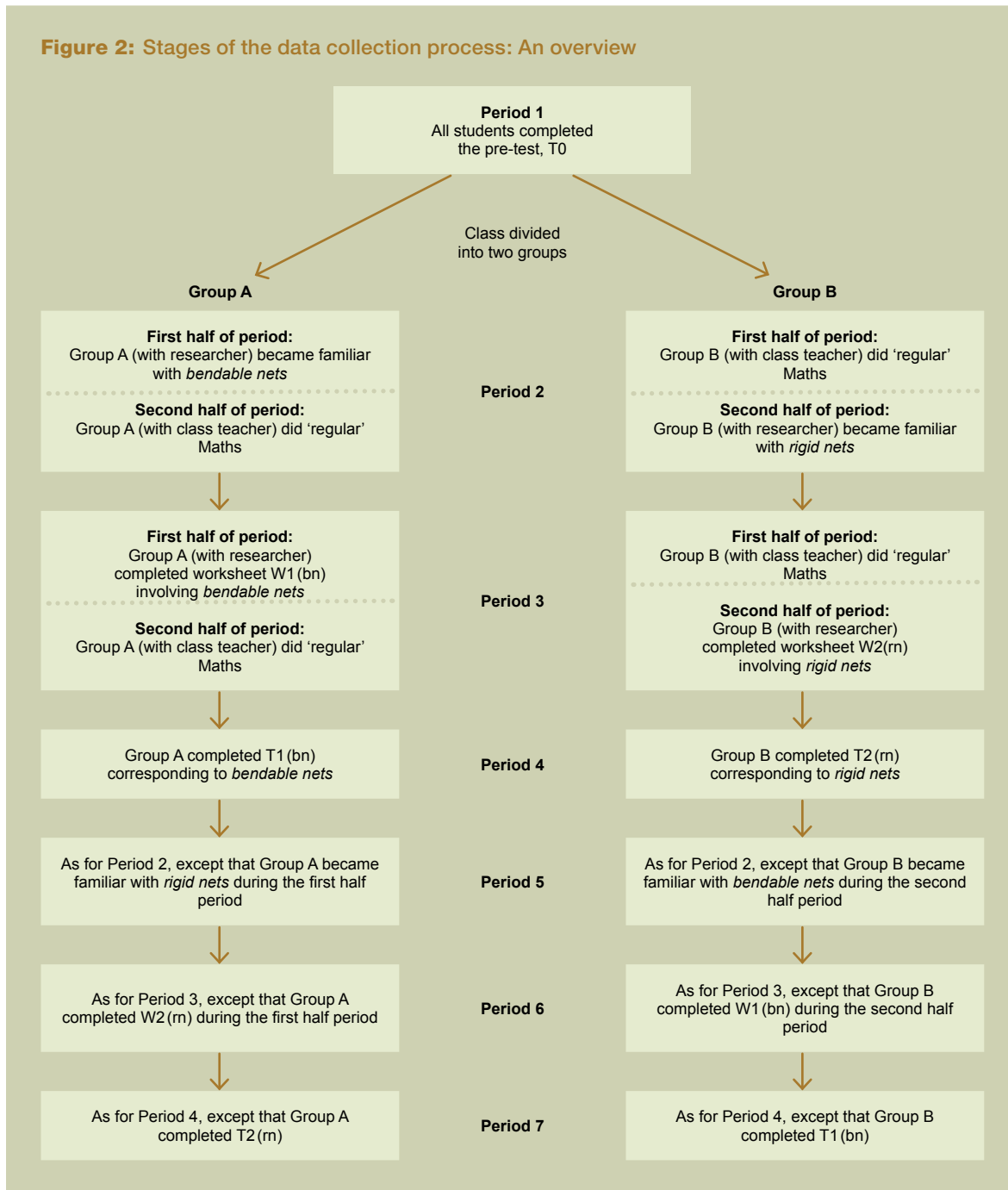The *sequence* of the data collection process is illustrated by Figure 2.

Results

The following analysis only included the scores of those students who completed all three tests. This reduced the sample size down to nine students in each group. Table 1 shows the mean test percentages obtained and the *t*-test data emerging from comparisons of the (means of dependent samples) results from Tests 1 and 2 to those from Test 0. Right-tailed *t*-testing was performed since

The analysis only included the scores of students who completed all three tests

Figure 2: Stages of the data collection process: An overview

Period 1
All students completed the pre-test, T0

Class divided into two groups

Group A

Group B

Period 2

First half of period:
Group A (with researcher) became familiar with *bendable nets*

Second half of period:
Group A (with class teacher) did 'regular' Maths

First half of period:
Group B (with class teacher) did 'regular' Maths

Second half of period:
Group B (with researcher) became familiar with *rigid nets*

Period 3

First half of period:
Group A (with researcher) completed worksheet W1 (bn) involving *bendable nets*

Second half of period:
Group A (with class teacher) did 'regular' Maths

First half of period:
Group B (with class teacher) did 'regular' Maths

Second half of period:
Group B (with researcher) completed worksheet W2 (rn) involving *rigid nets*

Period 4

Group A completed T1 (bn) corresponding to *bendable nets*

Group B completed T2 (rn) corresponding to *rigid nets*

Period 5

As for Period 2, except that Group A became familiar with *rigid nets* during the first half period

As for Period 2, except that Group B became familiar with *bendable nets* during the second half period

Period 6

As for Period 3, except that Group A completed W2 (rn) during the first half period

As for Period 3, except that Group B completed W1 (bn) during the second half period

Period 7

As for Period 4, except that Group A completed T2 (rn)

As for Period 4, except that Group B completed T1 (bn)

The largest increase in test mean followed the teaching experience involving the rigid nets

this study was searching for test improvement only. Also shown are the associated "p" values and the Cohen's effect size values, "d". Table 2 shows the mean percentages for the worksheets W1 (bn) and W2 (rn).

As may be seen from Table 1, the overall outcome of both "net" learning opportunities was an improvement in mean test scores of about 14%, a change that is significant and 99% certain for Group A and 94% certain for Group B (just below the convention for significance, this being greater than 95%). For each, the associated Cohen's effect size measure "d" was greater than 0.5, indicating a large effect. Further, the largest increase in test mean followed the teaching experience involving the rigid nets. This was true for both groups and to a very similar degree. For Group A (the more able group) there was a 3.2% mean increase in test mean following experience with the bendable nets and a further, much larger improvement of 10.9% after the rigid nets. Group B showed a 9.6% increase in test mean following experience with the rigid nets and a further increase of only 4.0% when exposed to the bendable nets.

The right-tailed *t*-test analysis strengthened this observation. For our small sample size the critical *t*-value corresponding to a 98% significance level was 2.90. As may be seen, the T2 (rn) / T0 (pre)

Table 1: Test results for both groups

Group A		
Result for T0 (pre) (pre-test)	**Result for T1 (bn)** (following learning experience with bendable nets)	**Result for T2 (rn)** (following learning experience with rigid nets)
65.7%	68.9%	79.8%
$\longleftarrow$ $t_{21} = 0.46$ $\longrightarrow$		
$\longleftarrow$ $t_{31} = 2.95$ $\longrightarrow$		

Group B		
Result for T0 (pre) (pre-test)	**Result for T2 (rn)** (following learning experience with rigid nets)	**Result for T1 (bn)** (following learning experience with bendable nets)
55.8%	65.4%	69.4%
$\longleftarrow$ $t_{31} = 2.89$ $\longrightarrow$		
$\longleftarrow$ $t_{21} = 1.72$ $\longrightarrow$		

Table 2: Worksheet results for both groups

Group A	
Result for W1 (bn) (following learning experience with bendable nets)	**Result for W2 (rn)** (following learning experience with rigid nets)
75.3%	71.5%

Group B	
Result for W2 (rn) (following learning experience with rigid nets)	**Result for W1 (bn)** (following learning experience with bendable nets)
55.7%	77.9%

comparisons for both groups gave *t*-values very close to, or exceeding, this critical value, with p-value < 0.01. This indicated that the improvement following instruction with rigid nets was very unlikely to be a chance result. Each associated Cohen's "d" effect size measure was approximately 0.7; considerably greater than 0.4, the level suggested by Hattie (2012) as indicating large effects. However, the T1 (bn) / T0 (pre) comparisons gave results which were less significant for both groups. Interestingly, the different ordering of the tests appeared not to have greatly affected these results. These data suggest that the teaching experience using rigid nets produced a statistically significant improvement in test score, whereas this can not be said of that involving the bendable variety.

Clearly, one possible explanation of these disparities is that T2 (rn), which followed the learning experience involving rigid nets for both groups, was easier than T1 (bn). The reason why T1 (bn) and T2 (rn) had each been associated with just one type of net was to facilitate comparisons between the two groups. However, different levels of test difficulty would compromise these comparisons. In order to check this possibility, T1 (bn) and T2 (rn) were retrospectively submitted to four academic peers with mathematical experience, all of whom were asked to complete them and compare their difficulty. All four rated the tests as very close, there being no predominant judgement of one being more difficult than the other. This implies that the results obtained were not an artefact of uneven test difficulty.

Another objection which might be raised is that since the tests themselves feature "rigid" nets, i.e. ones drawn on paper, it is somewhat predictable that students will perform best after completing learning experiences with rigid nets. There may be some validity to this point and further work could be done on devising a more objective means of evaluation.

Conclusions

For Group A there was clearly a much bigger improvement in conceptualisation following class experience with the rigid nets than with the bendable variety. This was contrary to our initial expectations and gave rise to the suspicion that some of this improvement may be simply attributed to accumulating experience, since this group experienced the rigid nets last. However, Group B showed a similar pattern with a reversed order of contact, suggesting that the experience factor was not significant.

Students using the bendable nets could identify their 3D shape and whether or not they 'worked' by actually bending and seeing. It is then no surprise

that the worksheet results showed higher levels of performance when using the bendable nets than for the rigid variety. This was particularly true of the less able Group B, which might be expected. It is important to note here that providing such an opportunity to experience success is of primary motivational importance to teaching students of lower ability.

When learning with rigid nets, students had to identify the corresponding 3D shape and decide whether or not they 'worked' from their flat configuration alone. They were therefore forced to manipulate the shapes in their minds rather than with their hands, focusing on mental rather than physical processing. Thus, although not performing as well for the worksheet, it appears that the rigid nets required and developed superior abstract thinking in identifying 3D shapes from flat nets, giving rise to more significant performance improvements in the written test.

There are additional ways in which this study could be developed. Larger sample sizes would allow a better assessment of the very tentative findings of this study. It would also be of interest to test these conclusions using a different type of instrument, as noted above. A gender comparison of the conceptualisation of 3D shapes might also prove instructive.

As evident from Figure 1, pupils thoroughly enjoyed working with the manipulatives, the bendable variety being definitely the more popular. This supports the idea that the use of a range of tactile experiences in the classroom not only diversifies 'assimilation' pathways, but makes learning more enjoyable. **TEACH**

The use of a range of tactile experiences in the classroom not only diversifies 'assimilation' pathways, but makes learning more enjoyable

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Exploring worldviews: A framework

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Abstract

In an educational environment where multicultural and multi-faith classrooms have become the norm, it is essential that teachers are aware of, and are knowledgeable about contemporary worldviews.

This article provides a general framework for exploring a worldview—in terms of defining, analysing, developing, testing and refining it. As part of this process, several contemporary major worldviews—theism, pantheism and naturalism—are examined and compared, before some classroom implications are considered and conclusions drawn.

> *Each individual has a personal worldview; even if the individual is unaware of, or cannot articulate it*

Worldview defined

"Not another suicide bomber?" commented Joshua, as the family sat watching the evening news together. "Why do they do that, Mum?" Joshua is typical of children, growing up in the 21st century, who have been repeatedly exposed through the visual media, to people performing extreme and often violent acts; the motivation for which may be predicated by a personal worldview.

What is a worldview? In their seminal book, Walsh and Middleton (1984, p. 32) assert, "A world view provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world." Solomon (1994, p. 1), citing Sire (1988), comments, "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world [and which] helps us by orienting us to the intellectual and philosophical terrain about us." Olthuis (1985, p. 29) defines a worldview as "a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and future in it." He continues: "It is the integrative and interpretative framework by which order and disorder are judged, the standard by which reality is managed and pursued."

A scanning of general literature also reveals the term may be viewed as a mental construct or set of postulated coherent basic beliefs (not necessarily religious) with assumptions that may be totally or partially true or false. Furthermore, a worldview informs decision making, influences reasoning and perceptions, and assists in understanding the world on a day-to-day level, as well as providing a reason for existence and a role in the world. It is a standard or ethic by which humans live.

Each individual has a personal worldview (Christian, 2009, p. 73); even if the individual is unaware of, or cannot articulate it. Its formation may be unconscious or conscious. This is clearly evidenced by the influence of pop culture and how modern media in all their technological formats—the purveyors of materialism, consumerism and societal 'desires'—vie for 'allegiance' and imperceptibly shape one's worldview. In this kind of social environment it seems needful to have a conscious awareness of, and evaluate contemporary society's prevailing values and ideals.

The characteristics of a worldview

A contemporary worldview usually includes a number of common features. It is intuitively developed and does not require individuals to have higher or university education, to 'come up' with some answers to life's most basic, yet 'deep' questions; such as: Who am I? Where did I come from; and how did the universe begin? Where am I going? Why am I here? What is going to happen to me? These are questions that invite corresponding answers regarding one's identity, origins, future, *raison d'être*, and the subject of 'life after death'.

A world view is often presented as a metanarrative that ties all the concepts of origin, purpose, and destiny together. It is generally developed over time as individuals engage in cultural experiences, family interactions, religious experiences, education, challenging personal experiences, social interactions, and the expectations of society. For most individuals it takes formal shape around 20-25 years of age. However, it can be communal as well as personal, because shared vision promotes community. Olthuis (1985, p. 29) points out, "[it] may be so internalized that it goes largely unquestioned." Another feature of a worldview is that it potentially offers both a view *of* life and a vision *for* life by proposing ethical and moral standards and values (Walsh & Middleton, 1984, p. 31). Moreover, it may be further refined, deepened, and codified into a philosophy or creed such as Christianity, New Age, Buddhism or Islam.

Children are not born with a worldview. Parents (or significant adults), society and culture—together—play a significant role in facilitating a child's emergent worldview. Teachers may also assist in this development, either overtly or covertly, by exposing children to new insights, experiences and information. As children mature, their understanding of, and reasons for, adherence to a given worldview may be modified or altered.

Three major worldviews are competing for allegiance in today's global society (Lennox, 2009, pp. 28, 29; Rasi, 2001, p. 5; Sire, 1990; p. 40). They are:

- *Naturalism*—with its 'loose' sub-groups of agnosticism, atheism, existentialism, Marxism, materialism and secular humanism.
- *Theism*—which may be divided into Christianity, Islam and Judaism; all of which are monotheistic.
- *Pantheism*—which includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and New Age.

Expressed in terse general premises, naturalism contends: God is irrelevant and either does not exist or it is impossible to determine God's existence. All reality is explained in terms of physical elements, forces and processes and that everything can be explained on the basis of natural law. Theism asserts that God exists; is infinite and personal. He is the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. In pantheism, God is perceived as impersonal; nature is God, so all forces and workings of nature are divine; everything is God (Rasi, 2000; Geisler, 1999; Solomon, 1998; McCallum, 1997).

It should be noted, however, that not all philosophies or religious beliefs are easily catalogued within the three outlined, well-defined major worldviews and their respective premises. Panentheism, for example, is a worldview that combines elements of theism and pantheism. According to Culp (2009, p. 1), "Panentheism understands God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to traditional theism and pantheism".

Discovering, developing and testing a worldview

All worldviews have a set of beliefs that require some measure of commitment. Because individuals may not always be consciously aware of these beliefs, they are sometimes surprised by what they *really* believe. For example, various aspects of a belief system may be more explicitly revealed, even challenged, when a person is confronted with difficult or changed circumstances. That person may then be compelled to make sense of a personal world that may be spinning out of control, with the consequence that the person's worldview eventually may be consolidated, modified, or rejected.

Walsh and Middleton (1984, p. 35) suggest that by answering four fundamental questions which tap the core of any worldview, a person's faith commitment or belief system can be discovered. The questions:

1. *Who am I?* Addresses the nature, meaning and purpose of human existence.
2. *Where am I?* Deals with the nature and extent of reality.
3. *What is wrong?* Seeks an answer to the cause of suffering, evil, injustice and disorder.
4. *What is the remedy?* Explores ways of overcoming hindrances and obstacles to personal fulfilment.

Each question may assist in discovering and determining a worldview, but not in evaluating it. A theological or philosophical system can support the evaluation process as it offers a systematic conception of faith, belief and reality.

According to Nash (1992, p. 55) and Naugle (2002, p. 327), three criteria—coherence, reality and practicality—need to be applied when *evaluating* the strengths and weaknesses of a worldview. The evaluation should test whether the worldview fits together in a coherent and consistent manner; if the worldview data adequately explain the totality of human existence; and whether the belief system works and can be applied in everyday life. If these criteria are met satisfactorily, then a person probably is well on the way to discovering and developing a personal worldview.

Probing and refining a personal worldview

Nash (1992, pp. 26-30) and Sire (2004, p. 20) similarly outline major themes, or presuppositions that also may be used to describe a worldview. The themes, *God, ultimate reality, human kind, knowledge, ethics* and corresponding, accompanying questions that are applicable for each theme, represent an extended exploration of the general premises of naturalism, theism and pantheism posited above.

Because worldviews inform and define a person, a worldview is more than a personal feeling. It can provide a sense of communality, purpose and direction in life, outline cherished and venerated values, inform decision making and recommend standards of conduct. In a 21st century multicultural classroom, it is inevitable that a variety of worldviews will be expressed and encountered. Some may be in conflict or even be perceived to be at 'war' with one

Because worldviews inform and define a person, a worldview is more than a personal feeling

another (Lennox, 2009, p. 15). This is exemplified by the intellectual distain which atheists such as Richard Dawkins show for theists—which sometimes is reciprocated—or the current controversy in NSW over the teaching of Scripture and / or Ethics Classes in public schools.

By carefully considering the questions, issues and strategies mentioned above, teachers are encouraged to utilise a framework for discovering, developing and testing their own worldview. In the process they will become aware of the various worldviews that are evidenced in textbooks, curriculum materials and educational policies, among others, in the contemporary educational environment; overtly or covertly. It is expected that Christian teachers are able to articulate their worldview because, as Van Dyk (2000, p. 87) suggests, "It controls what you believe not only about the big picture, but also about subject matter, about children, and about the purposes of your efforts in the classroom".

Belcher (2003, p. 20, 34) collected data; recording the comments of Christian pre-service teachers' about worldviews. She concluded that, even though the pre-service teachers professed to have a biblical worldview, there was a discontinuity between the "talk and walk" of their worldview. In her research, Belcher posed four questions similar to those of Walsh and Middleton's (1984, p. 35): Who am I? Where am I? What is wrong? What is the solution? Table 1 provides a sample that is typical of the pre-service teachers' responses that Belcher recorded, illustrating the difference she noticed between the *articulation* and *application* of a worldview.

It seems evident that a worldview is demonstrated in the way people live, their concept of reality, and their understanding of society, the world and their place in it. It is indicated by the pattern of a lifestyle, not a reaction to a specific situation. Sometimes a person may state a particular belief or worldview but his or her actions may not always match the words. It is the consistency of actions and overall behaviour that most clearly demonstrates what a person really believes, and what might constitute his or her worldview. The position, that profession, is only authenticated by action, i.e. genuine believing leads to doing, finds support in the millennia-old admonitions of New Testament Scripture (cf. Matthew 5:19; 7:21–24; 25:34–36; James 1:22–24).

Worldviews: Similarities, differences and distinctives

Figure 1 illustrates that everyone has similar basic questions about their identity, origins, future, purpose and the subject of life after death. However, people, as individuals, handle these questions differently. Some people choose to accept a holistic worldview or codified belief system because, for them, it supplies the most satisfying answers to these questions. They like the idea of a metanarrative. Others may be unaware of the need to answer the big life questions until a crisis arises in their lives. This may lead to choosing a set of disparate and fragmented ideas to help them cope and make sense of their world in tough times. Still others are suspicious of a codified or systematic set of beliefs. They prefer a worldview that is constantly changing and feel uncomfortable with a historical metanarrative.

In post-modern western society, there is a growing conviction that it is unnecessary for a worldview to include a metanarrative or to entail a systematic, codified belief system. It is claimed, disparate and eclectic presuppositions from a variety of faith traditions and worldviews can 'fit together'—despite apparent contradictions—and answer life's 'big questions'. Understandably, this contemporary conceptual framework encompasses the idea that spirituality and religion are separate entities.

Table 1: A sample typical of pre-service teachers' responses to *Who am I?*
(Belcher, 2003, p. 29)

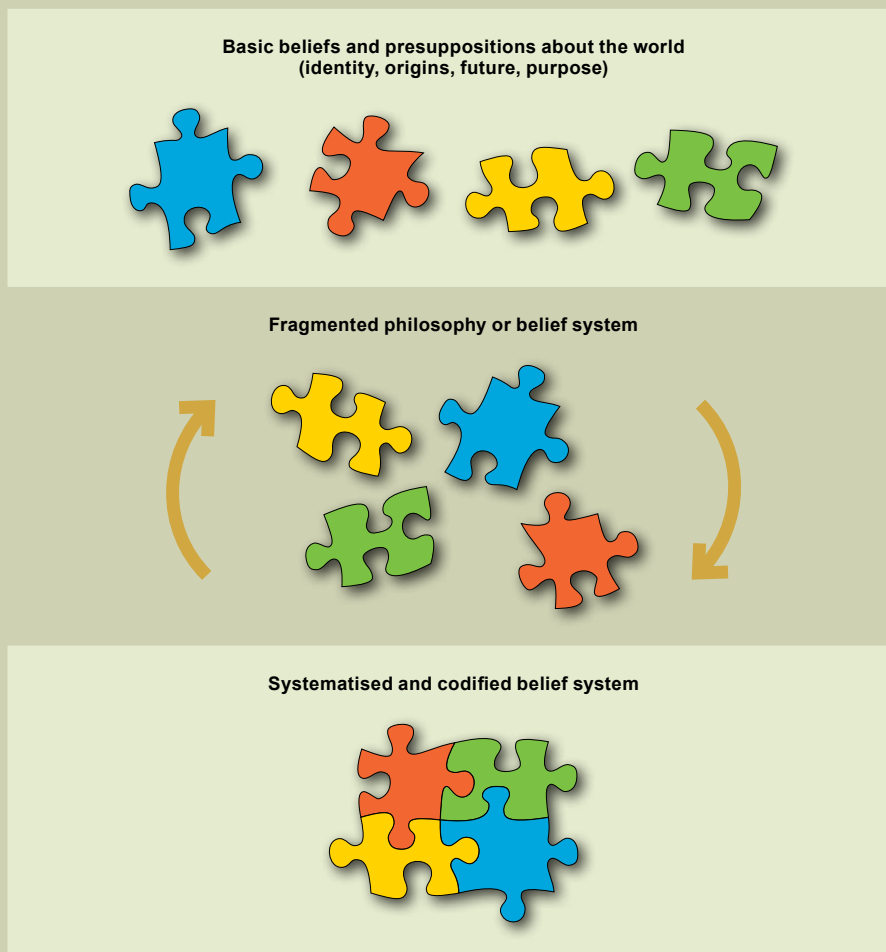| Worldview question	Most common response (Teacher-focused)	Less common response (Bible-focused)
Question 1: Who am I?	I am a teacher. I am what I do. I love children. I teach to make a living.	I am a person created in the image of God. I have been created for a purpose and a plan. I am to fulfil God's plan for my life and for his glory within teaching as a calling upon my life. I am to foster redemptive relationships between God and man. I am living covenantal history.

In contrast, theism—and Christianity in particular—is a more systematised, codified worldview with a set of specific, organised beliefs that form a metanarrative. Theism considers spirituality as an important and integral aspect of religion. Interestingly, it may lead to two extremes. When the adherents of a systematised, codified worldview become extreme in their naturalistic interpretations and reject theism, they move towards atheism; a worldview that considers God (or gods) to be only a human construct. On the other hand, when the adherents of a systematised and codified worldview become extreme in their literalist canonical interpretations and eschew rational discussion, they move towards fundamentalism. This type of worldview has long been associated with a 'closed-mind' psychological phenomenon (Rokeach, 1960), where a person refuses to entertain, much less accept, any evidence contrary to his or her worldview.

Having examined and considered various aspects of a worldview framework it is deemed appropriate now to inspect a more detailed analysis of one organised sub-group belief system (among the many that exist) within naturalism, theism and pantheism, respectively. Table 2 has been adapted from Rasi (2000, pp. 10–11) and used with permission. It lists examples of beliefs and premises that 'sustain' the worldview of each sub-group—according to 11 parameters—and enables the reader

> *This type of worldview has long been associated with a 'closed-mind' psychological phenomenon*

Figure 1: Representation of a fragmented philosophy or belief system *vis-à-vis* a codified and systematic one

Basic beliefs and presuppositions about the world
(identity, origins, future, purpose)

Fragmented philosophy or belief system

Systematised and codified belief system

to tease out similarities, differences and distinctives. It also provides a useful context for the worldview statements articulated by several of the students, in the section of the article that follows.

Of immediate interest, in scanning the beliefs are the apparent intersections, disjunctions and the lack of any consensus across the systems; other than that there is no *irrefutable* supporting evidence for what are mostly and essentially metaphysical issues. There is, however, a clear division between naturalism and supernaturalism; with biblical Christianity and New Age falling into the latter category. In spite of this, vast gaps exist between the 'truth claims' of the two systems. There is also an intersection, to some extent, between Naturalism and New Age in the 'human predicament' and 'solutions' parameters. On the whole, however, the three worldviews represent discrete systems. Consequently, it seems to defy logic to fit disparate and fragmented ideas from the three worldviews together, into a coherent meaningful worldview.

Worldviews in the classroom

Table 2 may assist teachers to reflect on their own worldviews, as well as act as a framework and reference point to discover the source of some of the values and beliefs of the students whom they teach. In a present-day classroom, teachers can expect to find a diversity of worldviews being formed. The following responses, articulated by three tertiary students, illustrate this point:

> "I mainly believe in evolution but do not rule out creation. I am not sure if there is a purpose to life, but I hope so. I do not believe that there is a "God" as such—but I do believe there is something more. I believe that pain and suffering are just a part of life—but I see Karma as a major part of why you do the right thing. I do not believe there is something after death, but I hope there is" (Student 1).

> "Where did I come from? I came from a loving Father in Heaven who created me and knows me better than I know myself. Where am I going? When my life here ends I believe I will go to the grave and "sleep" until the second coming, the return of Jesus. He will cover my mistakes with his sacrifice. His grace and mercy will save me. Why am I here? What purpose do I have? I do not know the plans my God has for me, but my life has relevance because I know he made me for a reason. I trust him" (Student 2).

> "I believe the origins of humanity come from evolution. I believe that humanity is survival of the fittest in general, but each individual has a purpose within themselves. I do not believe that God exists. I would honestly love to believe in

God and accept him, but with findings of science, I cannot. I believe that pain and suffering come from sin, but it is also part of humanity in the sense that there needs to be a balance of good and bad. As nobody knows what happens at death (I would love for something to happen to me after death), I believe (98%) that nothing happens. I do not believe that history has an actual meaning, but provides us with events that make us build a more positive life" (Student 3).

It should not be too difficult to identify aspects of the three worldviews in Table 2 reflected in the students' responses, given above.

When considering students' worldviews, it may be beneficial for educators to recognise some existing similarities and the common 'deep life questions' with which each worldview has to 'wrestle'. A promising common ground for bringing together differing worldviews may be the area of values, where values such as compassion, fairness, excellence, humility, honesty, trust, thankfulness, self-control—among others—may find ready acceptance.

Sometimes, however, differences may need to be addressed. If students feel disconcerted because of the incompatibility of their worldviews, less learning is likely to occur. The educator, by encouraging a non-threatening and safe environment within the classroom, may provide an opportunity for each student to engage in an honest look at his/her personal worldview.

Conclusion

The writer has argued in this article that in the current multicultural and multi-faith educational milieu, teachers need to be aware of and knowledgeable about a range of worldviews.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the definitions and information presented, issues raised, questions posed, strategies suggested and criteria posited should provide practitioners with a basic workable framework for dealing with worldviews.

Also, because educators are 'culture carriers' and education does not occur in a vacuum, it is essential that they recognise their unique role, and have an appreciation of their own worldview before they can celebrate and understand someone else's. As they strive to consistently promote and implement cross-cultural communication, practitioners may be required to go beyond their comfort zone. As noted by Warren and Taylor Warren (1993, p. 25), understanding that every "culture is as inhumane and as benevolent as every other," will encourage educators to be less likely to sit in judgement regarding the 'successes' or 'failures' of any worldview. TEACH

> *"A promising common ground for bringing together differing worldviews may be the area of values"*

Table 2: An analysis of sub-groups' belief systems within major worldviews: Secular Humanism, biblical Christianity and New Age

Worldview parameter	Naturalism Secular Humanism	Theism Biblical Christianity	Pantheism New Age
1. Ultimate reality	Inanimate matter and energy that have always existed	An infinite, transcendent God, who acts in the universe and is knowable by human beings	The spiritual universe, which is god / mind / one / all
2. Nature of God	There is no such thing, because God is a myth	A personal (triune), creatively active, omniscient, sovereign being, who is the source of morality	An impersonal and amoral god / mind / one / all
3. Origin of the universe and life	The universe is eternal and operates as a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system. Or, according to the Big Bang Theory, the universe appeared suddenly and inexplicably	Created by God by the power of his word, to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system	Manifestations of the eternal god / mind / one / all
4. Means of knowing truth	Human reason and intuition working through and confirmed by the scientific method	God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ and through the Bible, human conscience and reason illuminated by God the Holy Spirit, and confirmed by experience	Trained introspection plus channelled revelations of god / mind / one / all
5. Nature of human beings	Complex "machines"; highly evolved animals	Physical-spiritual beings with personality, created in God's image, capable of free moral decisions, now in a fallen condition	Spiritual beings, a part of god / mind / one / all, temporarily residing in material bodies
6. Purpose of human life	Self-fulfilment, pleasure, service and betterment of the next generation	Establishing a loving relation-ship with God, realising personal potential, serving fellow humans, enjoying this life and preparing for eternal life	Transition toward progression (or regression) until union with god / mind / one / all is achieved
7. Basis of morality	Majority opinion, contemporary mores, the best traditions, particular circumstances, or individual conscience	Unchanging character of God (just and merciful), revealed in Christ and in the Bible	Inner impulses and inclinations; there is no "right" or "wrong" behaviour
8. Human predicament	Ignorance of reality and true human potential; bad laws; incompetent government; lack of human understanding and cooperation; polluted environment	Sin is a conscious rebellion against God and his principles; an attempt to enthrone humans as autonomous and self-sufficient creatures; as a result, the image of God became defaced and the entire world suffered	Ignorance of reality and of true human potential; lack of comprehension of supernatural communications; inattention to environmental balance
9. Solution to the human predicament	Better education, more support to science, technological progress, just laws, competent government, improved human understanding and cooperation and care of the biosphere	Spiritual rebirth involves faith in divine redemption through Jesus Christ and leads to a new life of loving obedience to God, adequate self-understanding, proper human relationships and care of earth and its environments	Change in consciousness, which leads to better self-understanding, human relations, and care of the biosphere—self-redemption
10. Death	Final end of existence in its entire dimension	For some Christians it is an unconscious parenthesis. For other Christians it is an entrance into another conscious state	An illusion; entrance into the next stage in cosmic life
11. Human history	Unpredictable and without overarching purpose, guided both by human decisions and by force beyond human control	A meaningful sequence of events, guided by free human decisions, but also supervised by God; moving toward the fulfilment of God's overall plan	An illusion and / or a cyclical process

Adapted from Rasi (2000, pp. 10–11), used with permission.

Endnote

* This article, in part, has been adapted for publication in *TEACH* from the book by Barbara J. Fisher, *Developing a faith-based education: A teacher's manual*. Terrigal, NSW: David Barlow Publishing, 2010; with the permission of the author and the publisher.

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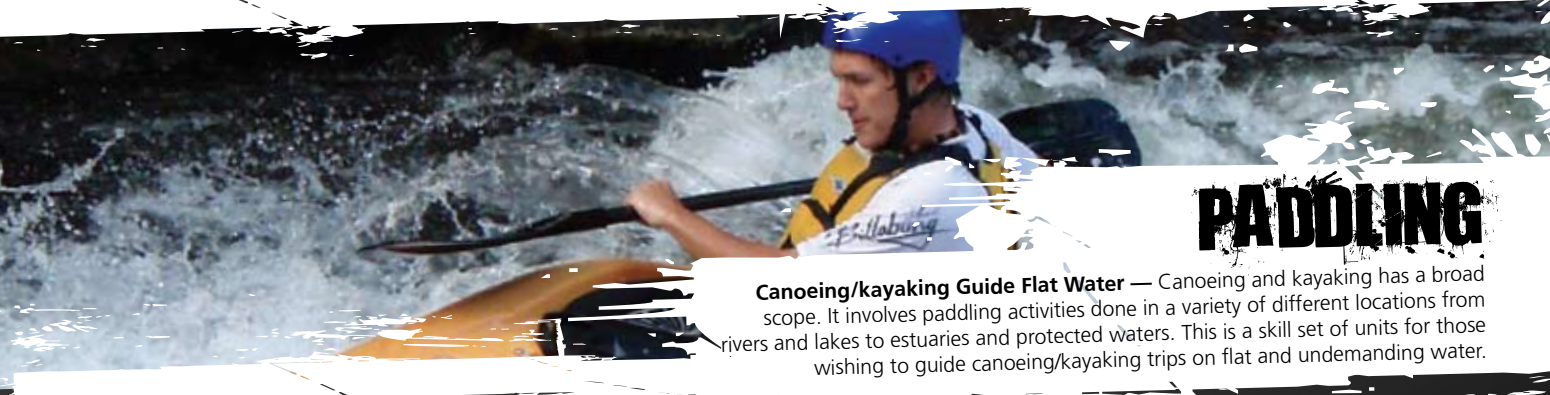
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Prepare, manage and care: Reflecting on challenges and change

Veronika Chester
Retired teacher

I was a rather lonely figure standing in the empty playground wondering what lay ahead of me, as a beginning teacher in the sole-charge school. When I finally stepped into the classroom—twenty-six desks and an empty blackboard—I knew I had my work cut out to be ready for the six grades in my care.

What did my experiences teach me—from that first empty classroom, to different schools in several countries—that I would have shared with that nervous, young teacher?[1]. There have been challenges and changes over the years. In spite of these and above all, I would commend: Prepare, manage and care! These have been the guideposts in my teaching journey. Along the way I listened to and learned from my students who implicitly taught me: Know your 'stuff', have good classroom management and show you really care. How have these principles worked for me? How have they guided me through challenges and change?

Programs, timetables, classroom décor: Where does one begin? Preparation! I have been constantly reminded that preparation is everything. There is personal preparation of the heart—believing in one's calling and relying on God for wisdom and strength. Then there is the day-to-day planning and organisation. Planning and preparation go hand in hand. With an overall plan the individual lesson plans were easier to implement. As a pre-service (student) teacher I had become fairly adept at following a timeline for a multi-grade lesson, but in

> **I realised that making that first day special was a way to show my respect for students**

[Photograph: Veronika Chester]

'real life' it was another thing to keep that momentum going hour after hour, day after day. What happens when the timeline comes adrift?

I learned to have things 'up my sleeve' as backup. It was important to provide activities that were relevant and engaging for students who finished assignments, such as word games, problem solving cards, reading activities and personal projects. These became incentives for students to work well and they also helped in the challenge of classroom management. I soon learned that a forest of waving hands and a babble of queries are not conducive to a happy learning environment.

The first day of school set the tone for ongoing success and I found that the preparation for that first day was well worth the effort. Having an interesting worship and focusing on a catchy classroom motto also made for a good start. Furthermore, providing interesting activities on that first day set a positive tone for learning. I realised that making that first day special was a way to show my respect for students. This helped to engender respect from them, and laid the foundations for positive teacher-student relationships and sound classroom management.

I learned early that preparing the classroom to provide an attractive environment was also worthwhile. When teaching in a dingy little clubhouse that substituted for a classroom, on a tropical island, I asked for a small budget for some curtains. I bought material, cut it in half lengthwise to have enough for all the windows, and then sewed the curtains with a borrowed sewing machine. Soon I had them ready to hang. My efforts were well rewarded when the children arrived and a little voice beside me whispered, "O Miss, the curtains look so pretty". The curtains at least deflected attention from the rats and cockroaches that often scampered across the rafters.

Classroom management and preparation go hand in hand and I found there were many different aspects to managing students. Getting students involved in helping to set aims for the classroom was something I fine-tuned over time, but I realised that the "catch children being good" maxim, together with affirmation and encouragement as I moved about the classroom, went a long way towards having a happy classroom and helping students stay on task.

In the '*angst*' of trying to do everything right I needed to be reminded that it was important to make learning fun. It isn't just about games, though there are many ideas for games that can enhance the teaching of a subject or act as revision. Boys, especially, enjoy some classroom competition. For me it became a challenge to find ways to make school interesting and fun within the context of a positive learning environment. When meeting past students, many have reminded me that the excursions, concerts, community outreach and other fun activities still provide positive memories of their school days. I'm not sure whether the Maths and Writing activities were quite so readily remembered.

Prepare, manage and care; is there a priority? I discovered that preparation and classroom management were not quite so challenging when I focused on what was best for the students in my care. It was easy to become discouraged when there were difficult students, but it was worth the effort—taking time to listen, trying to understand and praying, when it was appropriate. True caring should be shown across the whole range of the teaching spectrum and I found that even tasks that are considered more onerous, such as playground duty, could provide opportunities to show that I cared. I am personally grateful for the help given to my own children by caring teachers who remembered birthdays, planned special times and took time to find out how they were coping; especially during the difficult adjustment of returning from overseas mission service.

Later in my teaching ministry I found that communicating through journaling was a way to understand my students better and to provide written help and encouragement. Comments from students also provided some insights in improving my preparation and classroom management. I just wish I had done it sooner.

I have already alluded to changes that occurred during my teaching ministry. As that young teacher surveying that empty classroom I had no concept of future changes I would face. I knew nothing of photocopying, laminating or anything remotely related to a computer. My trusty fraction cake, Cuisenaire rods and a few counters were my "stock in trade". It would be years before we even played calculator games to enhance our Maths lessons.

There were few colourful resources; so I drew charts on butchers' paper. And as for the plethora of beautifully presented reading materials, they were still in the future. Janet and John had to provide the reading experience for my young readers; enhanced by what enthusiasm I could generate through discussion and questioning.

From the Gestetner to the electric typewriter, from the comptometer to the computer, from encyclopaedias to Wikipedia, these were just some of the changes in technology. With whiteboards and smart boards, laptops and iPads, my chalkboard is a thing of the past. Nevertheless, true caring involves embracing changes that can add to the growth and development of students. I had to adapt. At the little primary school for expatriate students at Sonoma College in Papua New Guinea, we embraced the 'fledgling' computer—a *Microbee* that was set up for the College students. Because of limited electric power it was run off two tractor batteries. My primary students were given access to the computer for Maths games, Reading activities and general quiz questions which were set up to make learning fun and to introduce them to computer technology.

I may never be a computer whizz, but I recognise how technology can benefit students with special needs, provide extension activities and complement classroom management and organisation. The challenge is not to let technology or resources take the place of a caring, engaged and enthusiastic teacher.

Much more could be said about change:
- Changes in curriculum: How often have I had to change my writing style to adapt to new curriculum directives?
- Changes in discipline: Who would believe that I was once encouraged to use the cane?
- Changes in classroom dynamics: In former times I could help a shy, anxious child learn to read while sitting on my lap. A hug was a special comfort to a hurting child!

Despite all the changes, one can still find ways to be there for one's students, to care for their needs. Teachers can still use encouraging words, taking time to listen and share. And journaling is still an empathetic tool today, even if it occurs (within established boundaries) through email, *Facebook* or blog.

Prepare, manage and care! The pathways to positive learning may be somewhat different today but caring, effective management and ongoing preparation are still the key essentials for any teacher facing that empty classroom. And I believe, they are still valid guideposts for today's teachers facing the new challenges and changes that lie ahead on their teaching ministry journey. TEACH

The challenge is not to let technology or resources take the place of a caring, engaged and enthusiastic teacher

Endnote

1 That young teacher is now retired. Having reflected on her teaching journey, she wants to pay tribute to her *alma mater*—Avondale College—and the professional help and preparation she received as a "trainee teacher". With God's help she was able to build on that foundation to value encouragement, find fulfilment and over the years 'navigate' through the many encountered challenges and changes.

BOOK REVIEWS

Where has Oprah taken us?

Stephen Mansfield (2011). Nashville, TE: Thomas Nelson.

Michele Robertson

Former missionary in Papua New Guinea; Recruitment Officer for QANTAS; retiree

***Where has Oprah taken us?* by Stephen Mansfield is a book which is important to Christians living in a New Age world. New York Times best-selling author, Stephen Mansfield, traces the life of Oprah Winfrey from her troubled childhood to her metaphoric rise in talkback television and her subsequent New Age belief systems which she promotes to her audiences of over 700 million viewers. He has drawn on other authors for her biographical sketch but his important contribution is to define why the Baby Boomers fell for the New Age faith, when Christianity failed to meet their spiritual needs. This book will give the reader a greater understanding of Eastern religions and how their teachings have been redefined by Oprah's charismatic gurus to mean something that they were never intended to mean and then—combined with various strategies from the human potential movement—to produce a 'designer religion'.**

Christian fundamentals, too, are reworked and reshaped to give them a New Age flavour. Guru Zukav claims that history has been unkind to Lucifer, a being who has been terribly misunderstood. He is, in fact, the "enlightener", who brings the knowledge necessary to free man to become like God. Marion Williamson, a Jewish atheist, wrote a 1,200 page verbal download, completely reversing everything that Jesus ever taught, and then promoted it on the Oprah Show. Another guru advocated that spiritual partnerships should replace marriage—when the relationship was no longer evolving, it should be discarded. Oprah aspires to lead out, together with the Pope, in a world "day of prayer".

Oprah's grandmother—and later her father—shaped her Christianity in the absence of her wayward mother. With plenty of 'sass' from a young age and gifted with a range of skills and talents, this intelligent young woman picked up a job in radio, then television and 'in next to no time' had her own chat show. The rest is history. A great divide, however, occurred in her life. Listening to a sermon one Sunday, she discarded the Christianity of her father, because of a very petty reason.

For the first ten years of the Oprah Show, she was known as the Queen of Sleaze. She knew that sex and violence appealed to the masses and no subject was sacred. A revolt by thinking Americans and criticism from influential newspapers and universities made her decide to change her ways. Out of the seediness of her programs grew the thought that she could do better and that she should delve into spirituality instead, and seek to lift people up. Her friends told her she was an "anointed one" and an "apostle of truth" and with this encouragement, she and her chosen gurus, started on a mission to re-arrange the 'souls' of every member of her vast audience.

Stephen Mansfield raises questions such as: Is it possible that the Oprah fame factor could entrench ideas in the souls of Americans that would otherwise never be taken seriously? Could a blend of religious faiths gain sway simply because Oprah proclaimed it and not because it gave any evidence of truth? Could she reshape the nature of religion in the entire world by creating a new faith out of the personally meaningful elements of many faiths? Does fame trump truth?

Mansfield makes the point that Oprah, as a wonderfully gifted human being, should have been grateful for the many blessings that a loving God gave her and she should have received these gifts with gratitude and humility. She should have searched for what was eternally true, rather than creating a hybrid faith—a second hand spirituality taken from the lives of others, a faith determined by limited minds and 'screwed up' emotions.

In exposing Oprah's beliefs and frailties, Mansfield does it with grace, respect and gentle reasoning. This is a book that I found hard to put down. The New Age movement is alive and well in my own family and it gave me necessary insight and understanding into a faith system that appeals to many who are educated, financially comfortable and who are desperate to find meaningful spirituality without too many strings attached. If the goal is a one-world religion, then Oprah Winfrey, as a media personality, is certainly advancing its dubious cause; which is why I recommend that every Christian discerningly read this book. **TEACH**

Science is everywhere

Howitt, C. (2010). Perth, WA: Author.

Sandra Ludlow

Early Childhood Course Convener, Faculty of Education and Science, Avondale College of Higher Education
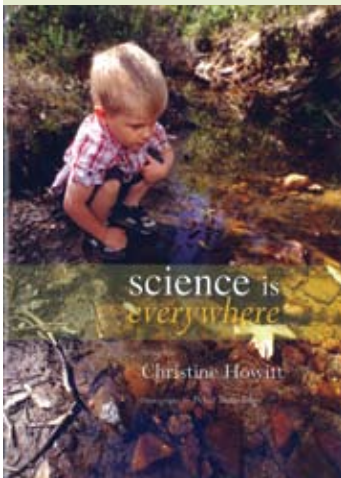
This book demystifies and answers Joe's question '*Where do you find science?*' Young Joe and his Mum wander their neighbourhood and manage to discover that science is in fact everywhere!

Written for 3–7yr olds, Howitt's writing style instantly connects the intended audience with Joe's quest, inviting them to go on Joe's journey with him; to posit their own suggestions, wonderings, discoveries and answers, as they identify with Joe's neighbourhood.

Illustrator Bowdidge's colourful real life photography—with its quirky juxtapositions—adds humour and intrigue to Joe's journey. Throughout the book the author and illustrator intentionally invite the reader to go on their own neighbourhood journey, and open their eyes and senses to discover the *science* that is actually around them. By so doing they develop dispositions to learn. Howitt's text, together with Bowdidge's photography, has achieved the stated objective of "*assisting children to ask more questions… to discover and explore more about their amazing world*" (Howitt, 2012).

The author invites teachers and parents to use the book as a provocation for research, in such a way that children will develop a love of learning and an appreciation for God's creation. Hopefully this awareness will also foster an interest in sustaining and maintaining their world. The *practical parent notes* at the end of the book scaffold discoveries and conversations that will strengthen children's development and learning in maths, literacy and visual arts, as well as the sciences.

For the classroom teacher the book's potential as an initial provocation to research cannot be overstated. It has manifold possibilities as a provocation for emergent and negotiated integrated projects, at both the preschool and infant school level. Teachers and children could explore their own environments armed with collection bags, clipboards, and digital and video cameras. The possibilities are endless and are only limited by one's imagination. Revisiting these walks, through the *100 languages* of children will broaden and deepen the child's meaning making. Rarely does one find in one short book such an open ended resource!

When viewed through the lens of the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, (2009), the book fosters in children a/an:

- Strong sense of belonging to their world
- Sense of respect for their environment (Outcome 2)
- Sense of becoming that emerges through a developing sense of self-confidence in their ability to: Think, hypothesis test, explore and experiment (Outcome 4)
- Ability to transfer and adapt learning from one context to another, (Outcome 4)

- Ability to make meaning from text and express their ideas, (Outcome 5)
- Ability to use information technology to represent ideas and thinking (Outcome 5)

In an age when children are spending less time outdoors connecting with the environment, when fewer school leavers are choosing to study science at tertiary level, this book is an intriguing invitation to young children to get out and experience the wonders of science through all of their senses. *Science is everywhere* is a must have for all early childhood teachers' professional libraries. **TEACH**

Visible learning for teachers: Maximising impact on learning

Hattie, J. (2012). London: Routledge.

Cedric Greive

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education and Science, Avondale College of Higher Education

John Hattie's research is powering the current focus on the quality of teaching in Australia. His previous book (*Visible learning*) used a statistical measure (effect size) to compare the learning outcomes of all factors claimed by research to have an impact on student learning.

His new book, *Visible learning for teachers: Maximising impact on learning*, focuses on teaching practices that have maximum impact on learning. Hattie uses the word 'practice' very deliberately, for the term 'teaching practice' embodies the skills of a professional practitioner. In his view, a professional teaching practitioner is much more than a person who simply earns a living as a teacher. A professional teaching practitioner is a person who uses every opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills that characterise teaching expertise.

Hattie argues that five elements are essential in the professional approach to teaching. These include:

- a professional frame of mind;
- the ability to assess learning both formally and informally and provide a constant flow of feedback;
- the ability to plan with both students and curriculum in mind;
- an adaptive expertise in the classroom;
- a team approach to student-learning.

Teachers with a *professional frame of mind* desire and strive to have their students learn. They are confident in their existing knowledge and skills and they believe that they can encourage optimal learning in their students. Teachers with a professional frame of mind see difficult situations as challenges and they get satisfaction from resolving them. They remain buoyant and positive and communicate enjoyment, enthusiasm, optimism and warmth in relation to the teaching-learning process. They also continually seek information about the learning process and employ both formal assessment procedures and informal questioning and observation. Moreover, they are not locked into any given instructional paradigm but remain flexible and seek the most effective means of promoting learning in the given situation. Finally, teachers possessing a professional frame of mind are not just willing, but eager to exchange ideas and resources with other professionals.

Professional teachers need to know the current state of learning at any point in the learning journey of their students. This means that they use *a range of assessment techniques* that include informal continuous (rapid assessment), formal formative and formal summative methods.

Hattie suggests that feedback should target four levels of activity: Task mechanics; task processes; self-regulation; and metacognitive/conceptual/predictive understanding. The informal continuous assessments involve questioning and observation. Brief notes can be jotted down in an annotated roll or similar document. In this way, the professional teacher learns the quirks of individual students—they become real people, are known and liked and can be provided with specific experience and/or assistance. Informal continuous assessments allow the teacher to provide ongoing (rapid) formative feedback that encourages and motivates students.

Formal assessments involve specific tasks that are assigned and considered (assessed) by the teacher. Formative assessments permit adjustments to be made to a planned sequence of lessons so that they can be altered to better suit the immediate needs of students. Summative assessments provide teachers with the means of evaluating the overall effect of the lesson sequence. Feedback from all assessment activities should be timely, appropriate and encouraging. It should also be pointed and focused on student activity. Feedback should indicate what *is* working, what is *not* working and why. It should encourage persistence, with potentially successful activity.

The book's author argues that a professional teacher should see *planning* as a team process and the team should discuss teaching activities in reference to an overall structure. Even so, he argues that individual classes should have a point of reference, a direction and a selection of strategic instructional processes. The point of reference revolves around the students: Their current state of knowledge (their preconceptions) and skills and those personal attributes that impinge upon learning. These attributes include students' interests and motives in relation to learning, their confidence and their ability to persist. Direction is provided by a detailed knowledge of the curriculum structure, blended with an intimate knowledge of the subject matter. Professional teachers' knowledge and experience allows them to select a sequence of appropriate learning activities and tailor these to the students' needs (in Hattie's terms, instruction is 'differentiated').

Tailoring means adjusting the tasks so that they lie in the 'Goldilocks' zone of optimal challenge for each student (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development). In order to achieve this, teachers need to work with 'flexible groupings' of students. Placing learning activities in the 'zone' also increases the likelihood that both surface and deep (conceptual) learning will simultaneously occur. To Hattie, planning is more than an arrangement of a sequence of activities. Each lesson has its own learning outcome, introduction, lesson flow and conclusion. Hattie advocates that each approach to a learning activity be overtly metacognitive and skills-based. The plan for each lesson should be documented in a way that is lean but sufficient.

In Hattie's view, *each lesson* conducted by a professional teacher *is a real-time fluid interaction* between students and teacher and the nature of that interaction may not be fully predicted ahead of time. He uses the term 'flow of the lesson' to indicate the potential mercurial turns that lessons can take. The professional teacher learns to 'read' student-responses and adjusts the pace of the lesson and even the direction of the lesson accordingly. The aim is the promotion of learning, not the completion of some arbitrary task. Questioning and observation permit the teacher to provide formative feedback that encourages students to persist with the learning task. The ability to adapt on the run, while simultaneously managing a range of competing lesson elements, is the indication of teaching expertise. The professional teacher remains fully aware of these adjustments and alterations and can defend them.

Finally, Hattie contends that teaching is an odd blend of individual and team activity. The team needs to agree on details of broad structure, direction and learning outcomes. Communication within the team and between team members needs to be regular, free, confident and open. This is sometimes difficult for some teachers; for they tend to treat their own classroom as a castle and events that occur within, belong within. However, if student learning is to be the predominant aim, then open communication needs to be established and each teacher must be encouraged to develop expertise. On the other hand, professional teaching also requires individual effort, individual preparation and individual documentation. Yes, documentation! The sub-theme of the book presents teaching as a profession. Professionals keep records of their activities and can account for their decisions and actions.

The book is directed toward the professional or aspiring professional teacher and suggests rather than preaches. It does however include practical applications that can expand a teacher's repertoire. **TEACH**

Email from Asia

David Arthur

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

It was a most interesting experience—reading over the original article for *TEACH* entitled, "It's not about me" (Volume 4, No 2, 2010), and to consider what has changed during the intervening period. It prompted some serious thinking. Is the title still just as apposite as it was back then?

Updating from last time: Meg* graduated at the end of that year, and went off to study overseas at the place of her dreams. From time to time she appears on '*that*' social networking site and shares bits of her fascinating journey of Christian growth within a secular university environment. It will be good to meet again sometime and explore her progress towards becoming "a thinker" rather than "a mere reflector".

My 'young' Christian colleague Jeffrey* recently decided, that after six years of teaching, the Lord was calling him to a different mission field. Right now his work is mainly doing translation, but his real passion is to become a Christian minister. He is already a lay preacher, and there is no doubt that God has something amazing lined up for him.

Jeffrey and I had often prayed for another Christian teacher to come to our school and, in time, those prayers were answered. For a year or more the three of us enjoyed sweet fellowship at our lunch and prayer times, and support was there for whichever one of us was "weak and heavy laden". But now, it seemed like it was all going to come to an end, as both of them announced their intentions to move on. Added to this, we (my wife Adele and I) also were in the middle of making the tough decision, about whether to stay or go. Eventually we decided to do "one last year". Each week we picked up the burden of encouraging each other to 'finish strong'.

> "*But I'll gladly exchange it all for a transformed life; a student who bravely steps out and makes a decision for God*"

David with students

[Photograph: David Arthur]

It was about this time that, quite by 'accident', I discovered there are other Christian teachers at our school. OK, so maybe that sounds amazing to you, but in our situation, this kind of 'information' is not exactly trumpeted from the rooftops. Now the building of another small cell group has begun again —new people and a new dynamic. However, we need the same supportive fellowship and serious cultivation of the "we are not alone" slogan.

Life at school sometimes drifts lazily along, and sometimes it feels like the waters of a grade six rapid. Our team in my department gets a lot of satisfaction from helping to make students' dreams come true; dreams for further study in the 'land of heart's desire'. One of the challenges of trying to combine counselling and administration is the delicate balance between 'comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable'. In classroom teaching, the main aim always is to teach the subject effectively and efficiently, but in the background the 'tune' is still the same: "Make a positive difference in your world, be the change you want to see, stand up for what you believe, and don't be afraid to be different". As for me, I'll cheerfully do a swap. You can have all the top grades, honours degrees, awards of various shapes and sizes, and recognition for what the world thinks is indispensable. But I'll gladly exchange it all for a transformed life; a student who bravely steps out and makes a decision for God.

Life outside of school (thankfully there actually is one!) has a lot of colour and variety—exploring new places on foot or by bicycle, building relationships with family and friends, doing the short walk to and from school through typical big-city suburbia, fixing all manner of broken things from toilet seats and lights to helping 'broken' people, going on holidays, coping with language problems, and being part of a very supportive home group. There is generally something new around every corner.

What does the future hold here, in this place? It's a bit of a mystery, but as long as we never forget that we work for the Master and not our boss, it will be the most satisfying and exciting thing we could do, and the best place to be right now. I'll keep you posted. Or should I say, 'emailed'.

Shalom, David. TEACH

*Pseudonyms

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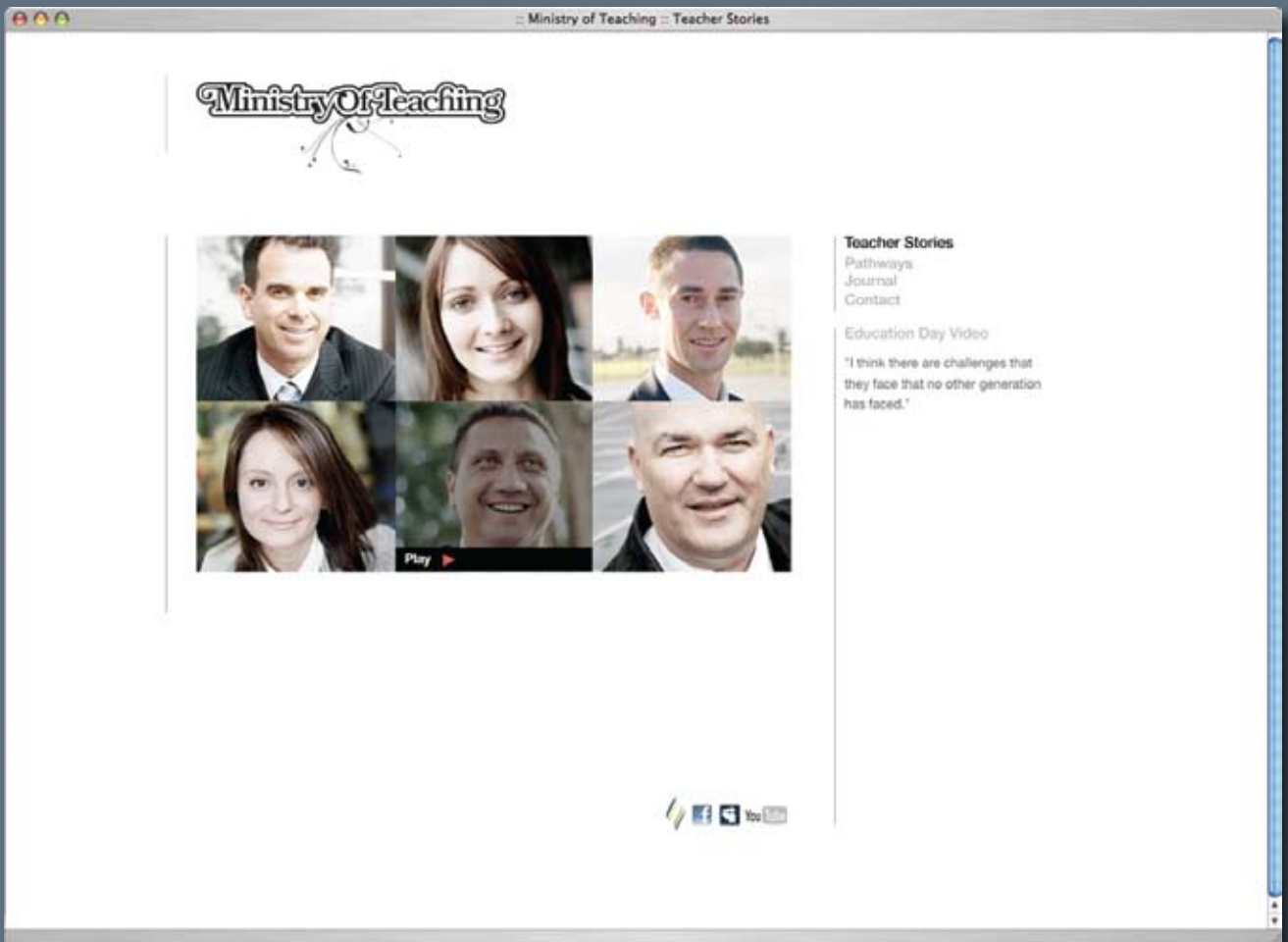
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